

Child Wellness (Volunteers)

I. Purposes

To Protect Children and Students

- East Glenville Community Church (EGCC) seeks to provide a caring and safe environment for children in all phases of church life.

To Protect Volunteers and Staff

- Through a comprehensive screening process and safety guidelines, false accusations and legal liability will be reduced.

To Help Volunteers and Staff

- Through clear guidelines, volunteers and staff will be more free to engage in positive, whole ministry relationships with children. While this Policy specifically addresses the volunteers who comprise the ministries of EGCC, the intentions within this document apply to Staff along with the wording of the parallel Child Wellness (Staff) Policy.

To Honor God and Uphold our Biblical Foundation

- East Glenville Community Church seeks to express God's love of children and provide for their personal wholeness. This caring community seeks to prevent child abuse of any form to our children and youth and to minister to victims of abuse and their families. The Bible is foundational to our understanding upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand.

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16 NIV)

And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! (Matthew 18:5-7 NIV)

- Our goal in response to these Biblical mandates is to maintain a safe, secure, and loving place where children may grow: a place where caregivers, teachers, and leaders (both paid and volunteer) minister appropriately to their needs.

II. Child Wellness Policy

- East Glenville Community Church desires to be a safe place for all children and adults who attend any activity. At times, children are victimized by people they know and trust. The church is not immune to child abuse. Incidents of child abuse or neglect cut across racial, social, economic and religious boundaries. Although no organization or individual

can assure complete protection, this manual reflects East Glenville Community Church's commitment to help protect children from harm and applies to all volunteer and compensated workers of East Glenville Community Church.

- East Glenville Community Church will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Your cooperation in this commitment not only reflects your concern about children's safety in this society, but also your willingness to take steps toward halting child abuse and its detrimental effects.
- For the safety and protection of our children and workers, all people who participate in church-sponsored activities with children are required to comply with the guidelines provided in this manual.

III. Definitions - In this manual the following definitions apply:

- Adult – Any person age 18 or older.
- Child or Youth – Any person under the age of 18.
- Compensated Worker – Hourly, salaried, part-time or full-time employee who works with children at any church-sponsored activity.
- Volunteer Worker – Any non-compensated individual who works with children at any church-sponsored activity.
- Child Abuse – An act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health welfare. The law typically uses the following definitions and explanation in determining whether abuse of a child has occurred (Child Abuse Family Court Act, Section 1012 (e,f)).
 1. Physical Abuse – Any non-accidental physical injury caused by the child's caretaker. Physical abuse may result from over-discipline or from punishment which is inappropriate to the child's age or condition. A physical injury, threat of injury or creation of a real and significant danger of substantial risk of death, disfigurement or impairment of bodily functions. Such injury or threat of injury, regardless of intent, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by non-accidental means. Examples: asphyxiation, bone fracture, brain damage, skull fracture, subdural hematoma, burns, scalding, cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions, internal injuries, poisoning, sprains, dislocations, gunshot, and stabbing wounds.
 2. Physical Neglect – Means a child less than eighteen years of age whose physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or is in imminent danger of becoming impaired as a result of the failure of his parent or other person legally responsible for his care to exercise a minimum degree of care.
 - a) in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or education in accordance with the provisions of part one of article sixty-five of the education law, or medical, dental, optometric or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so; or

- b) in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship, by unreasonably inflicting or allowing to be inflicted harm, or a substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment; or by misusing a drug or drugs; or by misusing alcoholic beverages to the extent that he loses self-control of his actions; or by any other acts of a similarly serious nature requiring the aid of the court; provided, however, that where the respondent is voluntarily and regularly participating in a rehabilitative program, evidence that the respondent has repeatedly misused a drug or drugs or alcoholic beverages to the extent that he loses self-control of his actions shall not establish that the child is a neglected child in the absence of evidence establishing that the child's physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or is in imminent danger of becoming impaired as set forth in paragraph (i) of this subdivision; or (ii) who has been abandoned, in accordance with the definition of other criteria set forth in subdivision five of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, by his parents or other person legally responsible for his care.
3. Sexual Abuse – Any contacts or interactions between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. It includes physical contact (fondling, sexual intercourse) and nonphysical contact (exhibitionism, child prostitution, pornography, and voyeurism).
4. Medical Neglect – Refusal or failure by caretaker to obtain and/or follow through with a complete regimen of medical, mental, or dental care for a condition, which if untreated, could result in illness or developmental delays.
5. Mental Abuse/Neglect – A pattern of acts or omissions by the caretaker that result in harm to a child's psychological or emotional health or development.
6. Educational Neglect – The child's caretaker is directly responsible for the failure of the child to attend school or an approved alternative program of study.
7. Bizarre Discipline – Any actions in which the caretaker uses eccentric, irrational, or grossly inappropriate procedures or devices to modify the child's behavior.
8. Corporal Punishment – A form of physical punishment that involves the deliberate infliction of pain as retribution for an offense, or for the purpose of disciplining or reforming a wrongdoer, or to deter attitudes or behavior deemed unacceptable. The term usually refers to methodically striking the offender with the open hand or with an implement, whether in judicial, domestic, or educational settings.

IV. Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse

- In an effort to create the safest possible environment with East Glenville Community Church, several abuse prevention measures will be used. These measures include screening of paid and volunteer workers for past child abuse convictions, provision for regular training on child abuse issues to paid and volunteer staff members, use of the two adult rule, standards for appropriate classroom discipline and open classrooms.

- Basic Qualification for Volunteers - Volunteer workers must have been active attenders or members of East Glenville Community Church for at least six months prior to the time they begin serving with children/youth in any capacity. This person must meet eligibility requirements of attending training, completing background check and reference checks.
- Notwithstanding the above, occasionally the need for assistance with a ministry, in order to fulfill the church's desire to ensure adequate supervision of the children, requires the need for volunteers who do not attend or are not members of the East Glenville Community Church; such volunteers may only serve as long as accompanied and supervised by an approved volunteer.
- Screening of Staff and Volunteers - The following procedures reflect East Glenville Community Church's commitment to provide protective care for all children and workers who participate in church sponsored activities.
 1. All compensated and volunteer workers must complete the following procedures before participating in any church sponsored child or student activities.
 - a) Complete a standard application and disclosure form with references.
 - b) Attend orientation/training activities as needed.
 - c) Sign a written acknowledgement stating they have received and reviewed copy of the Abuse Prevention Policies and Procedures Manual of East Glenville Community Church.
 - d) A ministry designated coordinator shall interview applicant prior to ministry assignment.
 2. No person, who is known to have been convicted of a crime against a child, will provide services in any church-sponsored children's or youth activities. Results of criminal background checks for other offenses will be weighed by leadership on a case by case basis.
 3. All compensated and volunteer workers are subject to background checks for the purpose of obtaining information regarding criminal history or child abuse findings.
 4. Applications and the results of any screening will be kept confidential by authorized church staff.
- Two-Adult Rule - Teachers and volunteers will be assigned in teams of two or more per church nursery, Sunday school class, junior church class, other child care, and youth meetings. Other church-sponsored groups of children or youth, whether they meet at the church or elsewhere, must have two or more adult sponsors present. During certain small group settings such as Sunday school, youth group and other small groups where several classes or activities are going on simultaneously, a roaming supervisor acts as the second adult. The act of taking a child aside for a few minutes to speak with them while in a large group setting or to minister randomly does not violate this policy as long as they are in an open/public setting where they are visible to other adults.

- Classroom Discipline
 1. The goal of discipline is to bring a child into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ through correct behavior and actions. It is recommended that the teacher/volunteer instill an atmosphere of respect: respect for God, respect for God's property and respect for self and for others.
 2. Encouragement for positive behavior is a more effective tool than focusing on misbehavior. Close communication with the parent/caregiver is encouraged to better understand a child's learning and coping mechanism.
 3. Prepared teacher and an orderly classroom set the expectation for the day. Additionally, nursery workers, classroom teachers and large group staff are expected to be "on duty" and maintain their focus on the children/youth in their care. With the exception of emergencies, it is recommended that cell phones not be used for personal use during this time.
 4. Under no circumstance is corporal punishment allowed. If a situation seems unmanageable, seek intervention from the designated ministry coordinator.
 5. Physical contact by adults is allowed if necessary for safety such as fight intervention, self-defense or to prevent self-harm.
- Open Classrooms - Classrooms or group meetings will be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents or other volunteer church workers. The designated ministry coordinator will conduct brief observations during meeting hours. Classrooms and group meeting places will be open to view (uncovered windows or doors open).
- Gifts - No staff, either paid or volunteer, are to give personal gifts to individual children or young people without the prior knowledge of the parent(s) or responsible leadership. Because gift giving can be a form of buying loyalty or silence, gift giving should be done on a group basis or for special occasions only. Gifts may not be elaborate but should be modest and appropriate to the occasion.
- Secrets - Children of abuse hold inappropriate secrets. No child or youth will be separated from the class/group and asked to keep a secret.
- Diapering and Bathroom needs
 1. Diaper changing will take place in the presence of another person. Disposable gloves are provided and must be worn for each diaper change. Gloves are to be disposed of in the trash container immediately following each diaper change.
 2. Children in the process of toilet training will need a signed consent from parent to allow volunteers to assist in the bathroom.

3. Only approved volunteers will accompany children to the bathroom and must never be alone with a child. Leave the door ajar while the child/ren care for their own bathroom needs or have another adult in the room with you. If a child truly requires help in the bathroom, ask another adult to be present and keep the doors open.
- Appropriate Touch/Inappropriate Touch
 1. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love:
 - a) Meet children at their eye level by bending down or sitting.
 - b) Listen to child/student with your ears, eyes and heart.
 - c) Touch a child's shoulder, arm or hand while listening or speaking to them or walking to an activity.
 - d) A side-by-side hug is an appropriate expression of greeting, comforting or helping to quiet a child.
 - e) A light touch to a hand, shoulder or back when encouraging or distracting is acceptable.
 - f) Gently hold the shoulders or chin of a child whose behavior needs redirecting. Another tool to address behavior is to ask the child to "look at me". This helps the child re-focus and is a familiar command of children receiving therapy for autism and ADHD.
 - g) Hold a preschooler who is crying.
 2. Touches to be avoided:
 - a) Kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you.
 - b) Extended hugging and tickling or prolonged physical contact of any kind.
 - c) Touch a child anywhere that is covered by a bathing suit.
 - d) Carrying an older child (kindergarten and older) or sitting him/her on your lap.
 - Injury or Illness
 1. Separate injured or ill children from other children to the extent possible.
 2. Isolate area where blood or body fluid may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc.
 3. Contact parent/guardian.
 4. Cleaning supplies are in the custodial closets (in the men's restroom near the narthex and behind the kitchen near the bathrooms).
 5. Wear disposable vinyl gloves in any clean up. Dispose and seal up soiled material and gloves.
 6. Inform custodians of soiled area to receive thorough cleaning.
 7. Complete an incident report, found in the nursery bathroom area, kitchen and children's resource room; hand in the completed form to the designated ministry coordinator.
 8. The ill child will be sent home.
 - Health and Medical Needs - It is the parents' responsibility to inform children's ministry staff of any food allergy. Teachers should not give a child with food allergies any snack without first consulting with a parent or the allergy guide for the children.

- Overnight Trips - Situations where staff members are taking children or young people out of the area for long periods of time or for overnight outings are to be carefully planned. Only known staff and volunteers will be permitted to chaperone the trips.
- Class or group day outings - Teachers and leaders who are planning to take their class or group of children on an outing will provide the plan to the director overseeing the designated ministry coordinator.
- Alcohol, weapons, drugs, abusive or unsafe behavior
 1. The children and youth programs will be governed by the policies of the East Glenville Community Church as a whole.
 2. Prescription medications and over the counter medication will only be provided to the child or student by their parent/guardian or upon expressed written consent in special circumstances, provided that prescription medications shall only be administered with a physician's directive.
 3. Horseplay and running in the hallways and Sanctuary are discouraged due to possible injury and disruption of other ministries. Cruel, abusive, and rough behavior and language will not be tolerated.
- Guidelines for Student Ministry (Junior High/Middle School and Senior High)
 1. A minimum of two adults must be present regardless of how few students are in attendance.
 2. Organized events on or off the church campus will be staffed with a minimum of 1:10 adult to students.
 3. The Director of Student Ministries or one so delegated must be informed in advance of all organized activities held on or off the church campus. Parental permission will be secured for off-site activities with a minimum of two adults present. All activities for students, on or off the church campus, must be scheduled on the official church calendar.
 4. Overnight events that are attended by students of both genders must also be chaperoned by adults of both genders. Students and leaders of opposite genders must sleep in separate rooms.
 5. It is recognized that certain counseling and ministerial situations may preclude the presence of two adults and that the general guidelines for supervision of workers should not restrict situations where individual and immediate counsel and guidance is necessary. However, such counseling should only take place in a public place or where there is a clear view of the session, such as with a closed door with a window. Counseling other than "immediate" must be pre-approved by the Pastor. It is the policy of this congregation that youth leaders are to have no one-on-one meetings with youth except in cases where the Youth Leader determines one on one counsel

and guidance is needed and in such case permission of the Pastor or Elder Board is obtained in advance.

- **Driving Policies**
 1. The designated leader of the event must know each person designated to provide automobile or van transportation to or from church. The driver must:
 - a) Be at least 18 years old.
 - b) Have a valid state driver's license, qualified for the vehicle being operated.
 - c) Have no record of convictions for the past five years for drunken driving, driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license or reckless endangerment.
 - d) Be certified as a student and child worker.
 - e) Have proof of insurance and provide a copy of their accident history.
 2. It is highly recommended that a driver never be alone in a vehicle with a student or child not his own.
 - **Emergency Procedures**
 1. Fire Safety and Evacuation - See attached East Glenville Community Church's Emergency Action Plan. All teachers and ministry heads are to be trained in this procedure.
 2. Incident and Injury - In the event of an incident or injury, ask the designated ministry coordinator or another teacher to contact the parents. Fill out an incident report and report the incident to the parents.
 3. For serious injuries or illness - Call 911 and as warranted, contact parents and complete incident report to submit to ministry director.
 - **Incident reports** - All incident reports are handed in to the designated ministry coordinator. Follow up procedures will be followed as needed. All reports are filed in the church office. (Blank forms are kept in the kitchen and in the bathroom areas between the two nurseries.)
 - **Dangerous misconduct** - If a child/youth loses control of his/her behavior, it is important that the adults in charge remain calm. Any children/youth in the room are to be asked to go to another room/area and two adults remain with the child/youth who is out of control. If the child is unable to be calmed, the parent is to be contacted as soon as possible. In cases where there is an immediate danger of self-injury or injury to another, a 911 call is warranted. East Glenville Community Church does not train in the use of physical restraint. Physical contact by adults is allowed if necessary for safety such as fight intervention, self-defense or to prevent self-harm.
- VI. Reporting Child Abuse
- If East Glenville Community Church receives an allegation of child abuse, it will respond with the utmost concern to the victim, parent or other party making such an allegation. The accused will be treated with dignity and support. Without clear and convincing

evidence to the contrary, East Glenville Community Church personnel will assume that such complaints are made in good faith. Persons making such complaints should have no doubt that East Glenville Community Church takes them seriously and will take appropriate action. When it becomes necessary to report suspected child abuse or neglect, the protection of children must be the most important concern.

- Those volunteers who are mandated reporters and are required to notify NYS Protective Services, should also notify Pastors/Elders as well.
- Volunteers in children's and student's ministries are not mandated reporters (except those otherwise required to report). As a person of trust, however, a child or youth may reveal abuse to a church volunteer or the volunteer may observe questionable behavior that needs reporting. In these cases, the volunteer needs to report any disclosure or questionable behavior to one of the Pastors or Directors of Children's and Youth Ministries.
- Because we believe children and youth are our most important concern, East Glenville Community Church has adopted the following guidelines for reporting:
 1. Treat each allegation of child abuse seriously.
 2. Attempt to assure the safety and protection of persons who have been allegedly harmed.
 3. Pray for the church and all persons affected by the allegation.
 4. Immediately begin documenting all procedures observed in handling the allegation. Documentation is to include the following facts:
 - a) Date and Time
 - b) Location
 - c) Who was present?
 - d) Observations or statement of child's disclosure as reported
 - e) Name and contact information of report
 5. Immediately notify the Director of Children's Ministry or the Director of Youth Ministries. The staff person must immediately notify the Pastor/Elder Board of the allegation. The Elder Board shall make a decision for the required next step, which may include:
 - a) Notification to New York State Protective Services.
 - b) Immediate notification to the parents.
 - c) Immediate notification to the church's insurance company.
 - d) If the accused has assigned duties within the life of the church, the Pastor/Elders have the option to temporarily relieve him or her of his or her duties until the investigation is concluded.
 - e) Once notification to the New York State Protective Services is made, in providing care to the alleged victim, the accused and their families, the Pastor/Elders and church staff should under no circumstances be drawn into a discussion of the truth or falsity of the allegation which could contaminate an official investigation. Do

not assign blame or take any steps that involve establishing or negating the allegation.

- f) Observe confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused until advised to the contrary by the Pastor/Elders.
- g) Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child or student is secured.
- h) If the media or other parties contact anyone from the church about a pending allegation of child abuse, they should be referred to the Pastor/Elders. Only they or their designee should make comments about the allegations, and only after consultation with the church's attorney and will include the steps the church has taken to protect children, such as the development and implementation of this manual, and the care and concern the church has for all parties involved. The privacy and confidentiality of all involved shall continue to be of primary concern.