

# Bridwell Heights Child Protection Policy

We believe that the promise of the covenant of grace is to believers and their offspring. The covenant is the same in essence in both the Old and the New Testaments. Indeed, the grace of God for the consolation of believers is even more fully manifested in the New Testament. Thus, rather than rescinding the covenant promise to believers and to their offspring in the New Testament, God reaffirms it. He declares that “the promise is unto you, and to your children” (Acts 2:39). He promises, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, and your house” (Acts 16:31). He affirms that if even one parent is a believer, the children are “holy” (1 Cor. 7:14). Moreover, our Savior admitted little children into his presence, embracing them and blessing them, saying, “Of such is the Kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14). Our children are baptized into Christ and are members of his visible church. For this reason, the whole congregation is obligated to love and receive them as members of the body of Christ. For “we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13), and therefore are members of one another. Christ claims the little children as his own and calls the congregation to receive them in love and commitment, endeavoring to assist their parents in Christian nurture by godly example, prayer, and encouragement in our most precious faith.

For this reason, it is the policy of Bridwell Heights PCA that we commit ourselves to the safety, welfare and protection of our children and youth participating in the programs and activities of the church. The abuse of our children or youth will not be tolerated in any form from any individual. If the instance of sexual abuse appears to be in violation of state law, the incident will be reported to law enforcement authorities and/or county or state agency as required by state law. Individuals who have been convicted of, or plead guilty or no contest to sexual, mental or physical abuse to children or adults shall not be accepted to work with our children or youth in any capacity. No untrained persons will be permitted to work with children or youth.

## **To facilitate this goal, we have established the following guidelines.**

Volunteer workers must be screened using the following 5 steps.

1. [A written application.](#)
2. A personal interview.
3. Reference checks.
4. Must be a communicant member for a minimum of one year.
5. [Criminal background check.](#)

All nursery workers and Sunday school teachers must be at least 18 years old. Nursery “helpers” can be 11-17 year old girls and can assist regular nursery workers if additional help is needed.

All nursery workers, nursery “helpers” and Sunday school teachers must have completed the child protection training as defined by the Session.

A minimum of 2 nursery workers will be assigned Nursery duty whenever children are present. Nursery workers (and Sunday school teachers if working in pairs) must be of the same gender so that they can facilitate accountability and responsibility while displaying propriety to all. (Normally the Nursery workers will be staffed with women.)

Parents should fill out an information card before leaving children in the nursery. Information should include a cell phone number so that a parent can be contacted/texted in the event a child cannot be

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consoled or a need arises which requires a parent. Once a parent has an information card filled out and turned in, they will be given a unique numbered marker for each child left in the nursery, with the matching marker left with the information card. The parent's unique marker(s) will be used when returning to the nursery after the service as authorization to pick up their child(ren). This system will ensure that any special needs are identified and that children are returned only to those who have the proper matching marker (or those to whom the person has authorized to pick them up).

To help facilitate the 2 person rule and display propriety in Sunday school classes using only one teacher, windows have been installed in all of the Sunday school rooms (with the exception of the library room which adjoins the sanctuary and is typically used for high school and college aged class). An assigned person will periodically monitor the classrooms, nursery and building to 1) Offer assistance to nursery or teachers when necessary, 2) Make sure that everyone is in their proper Sunday school class, 3) Welcome and give assistance to any visitors or late comers and 4) Make sure that the building is secure. This responsibility will be rotated among volunteers so that no one member is always responsible.

To facilitate accountability and protect our youth, bathroom visits for young children during Sunday school can be accomplished by escorting the child to the bathroom, checking the bathroom for vacancy and then allowing the child to use the bathroom privately while waiting outside to prevent any other adults from entering. In Sunday school classes utilizing two teachers, one of the teachers could escort the child, leaving the classroom door open for greater accountability while only one teacher was inside the room.

Sunday school rooms with only one teacher can place a sign in the window indicating that a child needs to use the bathroom and the "rover" can escort the child whenever they make their regular rounds. This would be accomplished in the same manner with the rover escorting the child to the bathroom (through the public hallway), checking the bathroom to ensure vacancy while the child waited outside and then allowing the child to use the bathroom privately while they waited outside to prevent other adults from entering. Once the child emerged from the bathroom, the rover would then escort the child back to the Sunday school room.

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## Written Application and Screening Form

### Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Information

I am:  Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed

Do you have any children?  Yes (How many? \_\_\_\_\_)  No

### Membership Information

How long have you been a member of Bridwell Heights PCA? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Date Joined \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any other ministries and activities that you have participated in.

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### Prior Experience

Have you taught or cared for children in any church or parachurch ministry before?  No  Yes

Please describe (including dates and places).

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Please describe any training, education or other factors that would apply to your ministry to children.

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### Training

I attended BHPCA "Child Protection Training" on \_\_\_\_\_.

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## Personal Commitment

In dependence on the Holy Spirit and by God's grace,

I will be faithful and dependable in this ministry.

I will seek to learn more about ministering to children as information and training are available.

I will faithfully pray for the children under my care.

I commit myself to continuing personal spiritual growth.

I commit to knowing when I am scheduled to serve and arriving on time to serve.

I have read, understand and commit to abide by the policies contained in the Child Protection Policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal References

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Verification of Information

The information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize BHPCA to contact any references or organizations listed in this application. Furthermore, I authorize such references and organizations to provide BHPCA with any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children. I release BHPCA, its agents and all such references and organizations from any and all liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you, and I waive any right that I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf.

I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and I know and understand the contents thereof. I sign this release as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement that I have read and understand.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Consent for a Criminal Background Check

BHPCA is authorized to perform a criminal background check on me for the purpose of allowing me to work with children under their care.

Name: (First) \_\_\_\_\_ (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (Middle) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reports are confidential and will be viewed only by the Chairman of the Screening Committee and filed in the applicant's secure file. Personal information is protected under the Privacy Act and will be guarded accordingly.**

Note: Any reported misdemeanor or felony will be discussed with you by the Chairman of the Screening Committee and MAY be grounds for denial of application to work with children.

## Personal Interview Questions

These questions should be used at a minimum with other follow up questions as dictated by the interview.

- 1) Have you ever been accused or convicted of child abuse in any form?
- 2) Do you think that you have a gift for working with children?
- 3) Do you enjoy working with children?
- 4) Can you commit to following the policies contained in this Child Protection Policy?
- 5) Is there anything else that we should be aware of before entrusting you with the youth of our church?

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## Background Check Information

The following sites will be used for the background checks.

[www.nsopw.gov](http://www.nsopw.gov) Sexual Offender Registry

[www.employment.screennow.com](http://www.employment.screennow.com) National registry of criminal convictions, motor vehicle violations in TN and Social Security number verification.