

## SPRY CHURCH SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY

### PURPOSE

Spry Church's purpose for establishing this Safe Ministries Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth.

### STATEMENT OF COVENANT

As a Christian community of faith committed to ministry to and with children, we pledge to conduct all our activities and ministries in such a way that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all children and youth entrusted to us. We will use technology, the internet, and social media sources in a way that reflects Christian morals and values. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of volunteers, and we will be responsible in overseeing our programs and events and in training our staff, so that they are able and equipped to minister to children in Jesus' name. We will report and respond to all suspected incidents of abuse as is required by state law and our moral conscience and we will be prepared to minister to the families of both the abused and the perpetrator.

PROCEDURES: We adopt these **minimum** standards for our ministries with children and youth.

#### 1. Screening and recruiting

- a. All ministry volunteers with children and youth will have completed an application listing standard contact information and their gifts for that ministry.
- b. All ministry volunteers will be interviewed by the pastor, Director of Children's or Student Ministry, or a Children's Ministry Leader before they begin working with children or students.
- c. All ministry volunteers will demonstrate an active relationship with this church of at least 6 months before being allowed to independently supervise children.
- d. All new ministry volunteers will be required to complete a Spry Church Volunteer Application, PA request for Criminal Background Check, Child Abuse History Clearance, and FBI Criminal History Report or Volunteer Affidavit. Clearances will be updated every five years.
- e. In addition to 1d., all church staff will be required to complete an online sexual abuse training video every five years.
- f. All applications, clearances and reports shall be kept as a part of an applicant's confidential personnel file. All forms shall be kept in a locked file on the church premise.

## 2. Supervision

- a. Two adult rule. There will be 2 unrelated adults in each classroom. If this is not possible, there will be a roving teacher who moves amid the classroom during the program period.
- b. No person shall independently supervise an age group unless he/she is at least 5 years older than the oldest student.
- c. No person under 18 shall be considered as one of the 2 adults.
- d. All designated safety doors shall be closed and locked during the program period.
- e. In the case of young children or an extreme circumstance, doors to the children's bathrooms will always be propped open when occupied simultaneously by a child and adult volunteer.
- f. Sign-in and sign-out procedures for the children should be understood by the supervising adult volunteers. No children should be released to any adult, including other family members (husband, wife, aunt, uncle, etc.) without the proper the matching sticker.
- g. Training for ministry volunteers shall occur at least once a year and teachers shall be trained to recognize the signs of abuse.
- h. Registration materials for activities in which children are outside of the direct supervision of their parents/guardians shall require signed written permission forms that include pertinent health information in order to participate.
- i. If the participants are old enough to understand, they shall sign a covenant of participation listing rules and responsibilities when appropriate.

## 3. Reporting

- a. Upon receiving information of abuse, the volunteer, as a mandated reporter, will immediately report the incident to Childline & Abuse Registry 1-800-932-0313 and then report the incident to the Pastor, Director of Children's Ministry or Director of Student Ministry. A written report, form CY47 will be completed and submitted to Children, Youth and Families of York County (717-846-8496) or the county in which the incident occurred.
- b. If the abuse happened on church property by church volunteers or staff, they shall immediately be removed from contact with children until the incident reported has been resolved. This should be handled in a discreet manner, and they shall not be banned from other church ministries.

## 4. Responding

- a. A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse will be initiated. All allegations will be taken seriously, and nothing will be covered up.
- b. The Church Council President is the only person/s authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements should be directed to the Lead Pastor.
- c. If the allegation is against a staff person or pastor, the Church Council President will be contacted immediately.
- d. Pastoral support will be available to all persons involved in the incident as indicated.
- e. To protect all involved, persons who are on site and accused of abuse, if on site, will be immediately and discreetly removed from the ministry setting until the situation is resolved.
- f. Should the alleged victim need medical attention, a call for medical transport will be arranged. If the victim is under 18, the parents/guardians will be contacted unless they are named as the alleged perpetrators. For a victim under 18 years of age, a report will be made immediately to Child Line by the individual receiving the information. If the victim is a vulnerable individual over 18, a report will be made to local law enforcement.
- g. The names of local, professional abuse counselors will be recommended to individuals involved. Possible local agencies include
  - YWCA York (717) 846-5400
  - T.W. Ponessa (717) 845-2425
  - Arrow Counseling (717) 755-0011
  - Meadowlands Counseling (717) 851-6340
  - True North Wellness Services (717) 843-0800
  - Pennsylvania Counseling Services/York Psychiatrics 1-855-272-1653