

**HICKORY WITHE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (HWPC)
GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION OF
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

The following guidelines are intended to assist staff and volunteers in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions between staff and/or volunteers and children and youth in HWPC's programs or activities. These guidelines are intended to assist in identifying and stopping those behaviors that may be inherently harmful to children or youth. These guidelines are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. When exceptions to these guidelines are made, they should be reported to the Session.

1. All staff and volunteers who work with children or youth agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth.
2. A volunteer at Hickory Withe Presbyterian Church is an active member of HWPC in good standing for a minimum of 6 months. Any exception to this requirement requires Session approval.
3. For church service, nursery coverage is for children from birth until five years of age. Children five years or older are expected to attend the church service. The back pews in the church are reserved for parents to sit with children who may need to be removed during the church service.
4. For Sunday school, your child's five year old birthday determines when he/she will be moved to the Pre-School Sunday school class for ages five through seven years of age.
5. Young children under the age of 13 should not be left unattended without an adult.
6. There are at least two volunteers in the nursery to provide adequate care for our children.
7. For the safety of our infants and crawlers, volunteers under the age of 16 years old are not allowed to "volunteer" or "help out" in the nursery. One adult is always present with an approved teenage volunteer.
8. Programs for infants and children under twelve (12) years old will have procedures so children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them. Sunday School teachers will be responsible to "hand off" children to their parents/legal guardians after the class has concluded. Children/infants in the nursery will follow the sign in and sign out procedures.
9. An adult should not be alone with a child in semi-public or closed spaces. It is recommended that the door remain slightly open if teaching one child in a classroom setting.
10. If a teacher is left alone with a classroom of children, the teacher should err on the safe side and leave a door slightly open.

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11. It is recommended that children under the age of seven use the restroom in the nursery.
12. Only female adults can accompany children to the restroom who need assistance using the bathroom.
13. An adult should make sure the bathroom for older children (eight years of age and above) is not occupied before allowing the children to use the facilities. If possible, an adult should stand in the hall while children are using the restroom.
14. In more high-risk situations, such as the playground, it is recommended that two adults be present per group, so one can always be able to leave when needed (e.g., bathroom trips, Band-Aid trips, etc).
15. First aid kit is located on the top shelf that is on the left side of the window in the nursery.
16. Staff and volunteers respond to children and youth with respect, consideration, and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. Staff and volunteers portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience and maturity. They will avoid any appearance of favoritism.
17. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from using physical punishment in any form as behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to a child, youth, the individual involved or others. In the event of unusual circumstances, behavior management must be conducted in the presence or view of others.
18. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading/shaming punishment, or mechanical restraint for behavior management.
19. One-to-one counseling with children or youth is done in an open or public place where conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. Two adults should be present at all times.
20. Parents should approve the photographing of children/youth before posting of the photograph on Facebook, the church's website, or the church's bulletin board.
21. Email or texts are not sent to children/youth without including a parent in the communication.

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22. Parents or guardians are to complete written permission forms before staff or volunteers transport children and youth for a church sponsored program or activity. Driving alone with a youth should be avoided as much as reasonably possible, with particular care extended to troubled teens.
23. Church sponsored retreats/programs - Staff and volunteers are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children or youth in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room or other room. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children or youth participating in one open space such as a church basement or camp lodge.
24. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.
25. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities involving children or youth.
26. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
27. Any verbal or non-verbal sexual behavior with a child or youth is prohibited. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth, making sexual gestures or making sexual comments to or in the presence of any child or youth. Discretion should be used since innocent gestures may be misinterpreted.
28. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) on the church's property, in any church program or activity or otherwise in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
29. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on the church's property, in any church program or activity or otherwise in the presence of children or youth.