



# **East Liberty Presbyterian Church**

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## **Child Safety Policy**

Approved by ELPC Session on  
April 20, 2010

## **CHILDREN WE SERVE**

East Liberty Presbyterian Church serves children and youth who are engaged in the programs sponsored by our congregational life together. ELPC also serves children and youth by hosting the events and programs of a number of community organizations and ministries who provide a range of services and programs offered to young people. We maintain a commitment to doing all that we can do as a Session, Staff and Congregation to ensure the safety of all the children who walk through the doors of this church – whether engaged in an ELPC-sponsored ministry or engaged in a program hosted at ELPC. Our policies reflect our commitment to ensuring that ELPC is a safe haven for all children and youth who enter the Cathedral of Hope.

Many of the groups we serve – through internal programs or by hosting another organizations' program -- include those listed below. Our policies are extended to ALL groups who serve children at ELPC, including who are not included in the list below.

Church School  
Nursery  
EECM Tutoring  
Childcare (ELPC sponsored and Outside Group sponsored)  
Extended Session  
Kids-counseling  
Kids in Worship  
Bathroom  
Teens who come on their own  
Basketball  
Special Events  
Community Groups NA/AA, TRAC  
Club 116  
Hope Academy (Weekends, week, group classes, private lessons)\*ELPC  
overnights  
VCS  
EECM Camp  
ELPC Meeting - Childcare  
Off Site (field trips, mission trips)  
Joyful Noise Choir

## **WHO MAY WORK WITH CHILDREN AT ELPC**

In order to ensure the safety of children who participate in any programs held at ELPC – whether sponsored by ELPC or by an outside group –the following screening guidelines shall be administered for all adults who work directly with children and youth at ELPC (or who provide supervision for ELPC-sponsored events off-site)

- **Act 33/34 Clearance Policy**

Act 33/34 Clearances must be obtained by:

1. All ELPC Staff (FT, PT, Temp, Etc.)
2. All Staff of sponsoring agency/organization hosting an event at ELPC who provide direct oversight for a program that includes children or youth (inclusive of an event that serves adults but offers childcare for children or youth).
3. All Volunteers (age 18 and older) who work directly with children – for ELPC and non-ELPC sponsored events.

- **FBI Clearances**

Throughout our country there is a move toward including FBI Clearances among the regular screenings for all employees and volunteers who work directly with children. ELPC will move toward the adoption of similar policies. The following persons shall obtain FBI clearances :

1. All new employees
2. Employees who work directly with children or serve on Security
3. Volunteers who work with children and have lived in PA for 3 years or less.
  - ELPC will pay for this clearance review for all ELPC staff and volunteers who serve ELPC sponsored work with children.
  - Those who have received an FBI clearance check through another employer/agency may submit a copy of those to ELPC, once the Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries has viewed the original.

**Procedure for submitting and renewing clearances for ELPC Staff and Volunteers**

1. Clearances for staff or volunteers of ELPC programs will be filed and paid for by ELPC
2. Completed Application for clearances (Act 33/34) shall be returned for filing to ELPC before volunteering or beginning employment.
3. Staff and volunteers who have submitted their completed forms to ELPC may receive a 30 day grace period extending from their first day of work or volunteer service where they can work/volunteer while awaiting the return of the forms.
4. Clearances for staff and volunteers must be renewed on this basis:
  - a. *For staff and volunteers with five or more years of service:* Every five years.
  - b. *For staff and volunteers with less than five years of service -* every three years with Internal/Security audit annually
  - c. *For Hope Academy teaching artists -* Renew annually.
5. All clearances will be treated as confidential. Returned reports will be viewed by the Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries and/or the direct supervisor for ELPC employees.
6. A criminal record does not automatically exclude a person from volunteer work and/or employment at ELPC. ELPC will follow the

state guidelines with respect to which crimes exclude a person from volunteering or employment (see **Attachment A**). ELPC staff reserve the right to exclude a person from volunteer work or employment on the basis of their criminal record, and will rely on the discretion of Pastoral or Supervising Staff or Personnel Committee to make determination.

### **Additional Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers working with Children and Youth**

- All ELPC staff and volunteers who will work with children shall complete an application, which will include at least two references. The Supervisor and/or Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries shall contact references prior to the hiring of staff or approval of volunteers.
- Volunteers and Staff working directly with children/youth should reflect a history of working with children and youth in their application materials. The Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries will review all applications for ELPC Staff and Volunteers working directly with children at ELPC.
- New volunteers must participate in a Six Month Orientation with another cleared and trained “veteran” volunteer.
- Volunteers must be at least five years older than the children or youth they are supervising. Youth must be in 6<sup>th</sup> grade or up to volunteer as a helper with younger children.
- All staff, ELPC volunteers working with children, and leaders of outside groups must complete an internal training on ELPC Child Safety Policies. A training workshop shall be offered at least twice annually. Staff, Volunteers and Leaders of Outside Groups may watch a Training video on our Child Safety Policies, and provide written verification that they have completed this training in the interim time between trainings. **All must attend a training workshop within the first year of their service, including the Supervising Personnel of Outside Groups.**

## SUPERVISION

The following policies are with respect to how Staff or Volunteers shall provide safe supervision to children and youth at ELPC, for ELPC-sponsored or endorsed activities as well as for outside groups hosting an event or program at ELPC. Additionally, these policies are in effect when ELPC is providing chaperones for off-site, ELPC-sponsored events.

## GENERAL STATEMENT

1. ELPC maintains a commitment to extending the hospitality of Christ to all persons, regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexual identity, ... We also recognize that communities of faith are places where persons come for sanctuary, for a visible witness to God's mercy and healing, and to participate in a community through which the Holy Spirit can inspire them toward service. Therefore we likewise recognize the need for all persons within our congregational life to work together to ensure that ELPC is a safe haven for all persons – physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc. Child safety must therefore be a collective effort – a partnership between parents/caregivers, ELPC staff, ELPC volunteers, congregation members, and staff and volunteers of outside agencies who utilize ELPC space for events and programs.
2. Children may not be in any area of church without supervision of a parent/caregiver or approved adult (see above).
  - a) No child under 18 shall be alone or unattended in any area of the church.
  - b) Exceptions:
    - Transition times (between Church School and worship, between HA classes, etc.)
    - bathroom for children in grade 6 and up.
    - A youth in grade six or up can “pick up” a younger child from their class/lesson/activity **with prior parent/caregiver notification to the teacher/leader.**
3. All persons seeking to use any space at ELPC (internal or external) must reserve space through the ELPC Business Administrator, and then only utilize the space that has been approved for their use.
  - a) Unauthorized persons may not observe any classes or programs offered to children or youth.
  - b) Unauthorized persons may not be present in a “kid zone” while ministries offered to children are in progress (ie bathrooms reserved for children's use).
4. All persons attending any program at ELPC (whether sponsored by ELPC or an outside group) must sign in at the Security and Hospitality Desk.

- a) Note: All members of a group must sign in individually so that ELPC has a record of all persons attending an event.
  - b) Exception: Persons do not need to sign in on Sunday morning for worship.
5. Should an adult find a child alone or unattended, they are to notify ELPC Staff who shall accompany the child to the Security desk where they will wait for their parents.
  6. Parents/caregivers of all children participating in ELPC sponsored programs must complete a registration form, that will include information needed to best ensure each child's safety (i.e. allergies, emergency contact information, transportation/pick up information). These forms may be event-specific, or they may be general registration forms.

### **BATHROOM**

1. ELPC encourages parents/caregivers to ensure that their child has used the bathroom prior to their participation in classes or short programs at ELPC.
2. While at ELPC, parents/caregivers of children who are in grade five and younger must accompany their children to the bathroom while their children are in their care.
3. When children are participating in a program at ELPC under the supervision of staff or volunteers, the following rules apply:
  - a) When possible, two adults will take a group of 2 or more children to the bathroom.
  - b) When two adults are not available, it is ideal to maintain the "rule of three" – meaning that three persons would travel to the bathroom together to ensure safety of all persons.
  - c) When there is the need for one adult to take one child to the bathroom:
    - a. Bathroom - exterior door open
    - b. Classroom - exterior door open only if only two left in room.
4. When an adult takes a child to the bathroom, the Adult is to stay at Exterior Doorway/Hallway Entrance. The Adult is to maintain verbal contact with the child.
5. For children in Grade Six and up – students may go to the bathroom unaccompanied by an adult, after notifying supervising adults. Students must be back in 5 minutes.
6. The Rule of Three must apply when anyone is using the showers at ELPC, up through Grade 12.

### **EXTENDED SESSION**

1. Annually, all parents of children participating in Extended Session are asked to complete a registration form. The form shall include parent/caregiver contact information - cell number; location; child's nickname, special needs etc. as well as who is authorized to pick up their

- child at the end of church. All new families shall accompany their child to the Extended Session classroom and complete a registration form upon their first visit to Extended Session.
2. New Parents are asked to accompany their child to Extended Session, and to sign them in, and sign them out at pick up.
  3. Parents of children returning to Extended Session shall sign their child out at pick up.
  4. As Extended Session Teachers serve on a rotational basis, all parents must complete an “Extended Session Ticket” **each week**, and give it to their child when the children leave for Extended Session. The “ticket” will include the following information: Child’s Name, Adult Picking Up the child, and any Special needs or Allergies.
  5. ELPC Staff – either Educational Ministries Assistant or Seminary Intern – will accompany all children to Extended Session and ensure that said information is gathered for each child each week. This person will also wait with the Extended Session classes until every child is picked up by their designated caregiver.

## GENERAL SUPERVISION

1. Children and youth must be supervised by a minimum of two approved persons for ELPC-sponsored children and youth events held on-site or off-site. ELPC will provide chaperones for our sponsored events. **Approved Persons** may be adults 18 years or older who have completed the application, screening and training process and/or a student in grade 9 or above who has received training and orientation to this role. (Note: High School Students shall always be supervised by an approved adult)
2. Outside groups must provide a minimum of two chaperones for every event, according to ELPC safety standards (screening and adult to child ratios).
3. **Parents and Guardians** are responsible for the supervision of their children for all Worship Services and Public Events (ie Rally Day Picnic, Oktoberfest, etc). Additionally, Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children when their family is at ELPC but not participating in a program offered to children and youth (i.e. meetings).
4. **Adult: Child Ratios:** 1:3 - Nursery; 1:5 - Preschool; 1:7 - K-5<sup>th</sup> grade; 1:1-10 - 6<sup>th</sup> grade+
5. **For Private Lessons/Tutoring:**
  - 1:1 supervision is acceptable only if a 2<sup>nd</sup> adult is in auditory contact range and has the potential to see inside classroom where lesson is occurring.
    - i. Second Adult must be either an Approved staff/volunteer or child's Parent/Caregiver
    - ii. In order to maintain visual contact either the classroom door must be left open, a clear glass placed in the center panel of each classroom door, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> adult may sit in the classroom.

## TRANSPORTATION

1. ELPC staff and volunteers are not permitted to transport children and youth home from ELPC events.
2. If there is an Emergency, a child can be transported home only if all of the following guidelines are in place:
  - a. Adult providing transportation must have their drivers' license cleared with ELPC insurance company.
  - b. Must have an adult approved by child's parent/guardian to receive child when they arrive home (receiving adult must be listed on registration form).



- c. Rule of Three – No adult may transport a child in a car alone. Another adult must be present, unless the adult is transporting a sibling group home.
  - d. Must have confirmed permission from "parent/guardian" to transport child for specific emergency occasion.
  - e. If available - use Church Van.
3. If parent/guardian is more than 15 minutes late to pickup the child, ELPC staff and/or volunteers will make several attempts to reach parent/guardian at contact numbers provided. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, staff/volunteers will attempt to contact the Emergency Contact provided by the parent/guardian. If a parent, guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached after one hour, ELPC Pastoral Staff or his/her designee will begin the process of determining if CYF should be contacted.

### Transportation

#### **ELPC events:**

1. Adults who provide transportation for events involving children must:
  - Have their drivers' license cleared with ELPC insurance.
  - Have been approved through clearance/screening process if only adult in the car.
2. The ELPC van should be the primary mode of transportation. When the group exceeds the amount that can safely fit in the van, a personal vehicle may be used.
3. When more than one vehicle are being used, vehicles should, caravan to and from the event.
4. The "Rule of Three" shall be applied.

### Dismissal

#### **ELPC sponsored Events:**

1. Two adults shall stay until all children and youth are dismissed (Sunday AM, too).
2. Youth who travel on their own to and from ELPC must fill out a Sign Out Sheet that indicates their mode of transportation and emergency contact number.
3. Youth who participate in club one sixteen shall have their parents/guardians complete a registration form on which parents/guardians shall indicate approved modes of transportation for their child.
4. Special Events – All children and youth participating in special events sponsored by ELPC must complete a Permission Slip (including emergency pick up)

### **Outside Groups:**

1. Supervising Staff of an external group utilizing space at ELPC for an event, activity, ministry, etc. shall stay in the building until all children have been dismissed from their program.
2. Two approved adults shall be present until all children are dismissed from an outside program.

### **CHILDCARE**

1. Childcare is available at ELPC for public worship services on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, as well as during church school classes by an approved and trained childcare provider.
2. Childcare can be arranged by request for ELPC meetings, programs or events. Childcare provided for ELPC meetings, programs or events will be paid for by the sponsoring ELPC committee. Childcare must always be coordinated at least 3 days in advance of the program or event.
3. Childcare at ELPC shall be provided by an approved childcare provider. For ELPC sponsored events, this can be coordinated through the Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries.
4. Outside groups must provide childcare for their events by a qualified individual who meets the ELPC security standards.
5. Outside groups must prearrange childcare as well, and reserve the appropriate rooms through the Business Administrator.
6. **Children may never be left unattended in any room of the church, nor may they be left with an unapproved childcare provider.**

### **Off Site Supervision**

- Off-site supervision of children and youth shall reflect the same standards and ratios as in-house supervision for all ELPC sponsored events.

### **Mandated Reporting**

1. All persons who work with children or youth at ELPC are considered to be subject to the Pennsylvania State Law for Mandated Reporting of the suspected abuse of a child under age 18.
2. Individuals suspecting abuse may call the PA Childline services and report their concerns, or avail themselves of the assistance of an internal ELPC Response Team who can place the call with them.
3. ELPC Safety Training will include information about mandated reporting.

### **ELPC Internal Response Team**

- Shall include Senior and Associate Pastors, as well as five other congregation members with expertise serving children and their families. Additional members shall include those with professional experience in the areas of Social Work, Child or Family Therapy, Medical Professions, Law and/or Law Enforcement.
- This Team shall serve as a supportive and referring presence to those in crisis, including: to an individual suspecting, observing or alleging abuse, the child or children in crisis, the family of the children in question, alleged perpetrator when an ELPC member.
- The Team shall serve by:
  - praying for those in need,
  - referring persons to supportive ongoing resources,
  - maintaining confidentiality,
  - advising on internal ELPC follow up – with respect to the individuals involved and larger policies of ELPC.

### **Communication**

1. ELPC and Hope Academy staff members are not to have personal communication with children and youth engaged in ELPC programs outside of the auspices of their job, unless approved by their supervisor.
2. Every effort should be made to contact the parent/guardian of a child or youth directly as a conduit for communication with their child.
3. Communication with a child shall be coordinated through a program staff person, unless otherwise indicated or approved.
4. As many ELPC volunteers are members of ELPC and engaged in friendships with the families of children as part of our congregational life together, it is understood that volunteers may have interaction with children and youth outside of the parameters of their role as a volunteer. However, all of those interactions must be approved by the child's parent/caregiver. ELPC claims no responsibility for the actions of a volunteer who interacts with a child or youth outside of the realm of their volunteer position, supervised by the Staff of ELPC.
5. ELPC staff and volunteers are discouraged from engaging in personal communication with ELPC children or youth on Social Networking sites. When such communication does occur, ELPC staff and volunteers are encouraged to block personal information from the access of children or youth. Interaction may occur on ELPC group sites.
6. Hope Academy Teaching artists are prohibited from communicating with their students via Social Networking Sites.

## **Recommendations**

The ELPC Child Safety Task Force respectfully submits the following facility recommendations to ensure the comprehensive welfare of children and youth at ELPC:

1. The installation of clear glass in all classroom and office doors, in place of the frosted glass currently installed.
2. The installation of phones (for internal use only) that can contact the Security Desk in the following locations:
  - a. Third Floor Hallway (near ladies bathroom, outside of Music Room)
  - b. Gym
  - c. Ground Floor Hallway outside of youth rooms
3. The installation of security cameras, that would have a console for viewing at the Security Guard's desk (under the counter), in the following places:
  - a. Nursery (if only one camera is installed, this is the location)
  - b. Hallways
  - c. Stairwells (especially main stairwell)
  - d. Pre-school classroom on Second Floor.
  - e. Exterior doors (Highland Entrance and Staff Entrance in particular)
4. That all bathroom windows would be bolted shut (they provide a falling hazard in an area with little/no adult visual supervision)

## **Child Safety Policies – Attachment A**

Convictions of crimes under Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes or equivalent crime in another jurisdiction will exclude persons from employment at ELPC and from working with children at ELPC as either a volunteer or employee. Convictions of the following crimes may exclude persons from other volunteer opportunities at ELPC as well, at the discretion of supervising staff.

Chapter 25	(relating to criminal homicide)
Section 2702	(relating to aggravated assault)
Section 2709.1	(relating to stalking)
Section 2901	(relating to kidnapping)
Section 2902	(relating to unlawful restraint)
Section 3121	(relating to rape)
Section 3122.1	(relating to statutory sexual assault)
Section 3123	(relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse)
Section 3124.1	(relating to sexual assault)
Section 3125	(relating to aggravated indecent assault)
Section 3126	(relating to indecent assault)
Section 3127	(relating to indecent exposure)
Section 4302	(relating to incest)
Section 4303	(relating to concealing the death of a child)
Section 4304	(relating to endangering welfare of children)
Section 4305	(relating to dealing in infant children)
Section 5902(b)	(relating to prostitution and related offenses)
Section 5903 (c) (d)	(relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances)
Section 6301	(relating to corruption of minors)
Section 6312	(relating to sexual abuse of children)

Or an equivalent crime under federal law or the law of another state.