PORT MATILDA BAPTIST CHURCH
YOUTH MINISTRY POLICY

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Definitions

The term "youth" used throughout this document is defined as any person under the age of 18 or in high school. Other terms such as "students", "children", or "kids" are used synonymously with the term "youth".

The term "parent" used throughout this document is defined as the parent or legal guardian of the youth.

Policy Explanation

1. The purpose of this policy manual is to provide information about what is expected of parents, students, and youth leaders in youth ministry programs at Port Matilda Baptist Church. Many questions are answered in the following page, and all parents, students, and youth leaders are required to review this policy and sign the attached form, verifying receipt of the policy.
2. Policy Specifics - This policy applies to all individuals involved in Port Matilda Baptist Church sponsored youth activities. This includes guests or friends attending youth meetings, events or outings. This policy manual will be provided to all families with student(s) in all Port Matilda Baptist Church youth programs. This policy outlines the screening, education, and evaluation of youth leaders and volunteers.

Vision Statement

We strive to provide students with the knowledge and tools necessary to passionately pursue Jesus Christ.

Mission Statement

- To be a resource to parents and to help them in their God-given responsibilities to be the Spiritual head of their households and train up their children in a godly way.
- To show students their need for Jesus and their ability to come to him, no matter what they have done.
- To provide students, clearly and often, with a biblical description of the gospel and why it matters.
- To show students that being a follower of Christ is far more than a one-time decision. Rather, it is a life given completely to Christ in every way imaginable.
- To help students in their journey with Christ so that they can pursue him on their own as well.
- To disciple students in such a way that they may eventually become spiritual leaders themselves.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

1. Parents are responsible for their children until the time the activity is scheduled to begin and after the activity's scheduled ending time.
2. Parents are expected to provide or arrange transportation to/from Port Matilda Baptist Church sponsored youth activities.
3. Parents are welcome to observe Port Matilda Baptist Church sponsored youth activities at any time and may directly supervise their child(ren) if so desired. Unless the parent is an approved volunteer, and is scheduled to volunteer at that time, the parent will not be responsible for the

supervision of other youth during Port Matilda Baptist Church sponsored activities.

4. Parents are responsible to follow the established check in/out procedures for the nursery.
5. Parents are responsible to ensure youth meet all registration deadlines and follow the dress code.
6. Port Matilda Baptist Church may take pictures of youth ministry events. The images may be used on the church website or other media to promote the church. Attached to this policy is a Picture Release Form. Parents are responsible to complete this form to either grant or deny permission to use the image of the youth for promotional purposes. Port Matilda Baptist Church will not use the image or video of a youth without written consent from the parent.

Students with Exceptionalities or Medical Considerations

Parents must notify Port Matilda Baptist Church of any special needs or accommodations required for their child(ren) to be successful in participating in youth activities and events. If a child(ren) has a medical, emotional, or behavioral diagnosis that requires differentiation, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the Children's Ministry Leader or Pastor.

In the event that a child is struggling to successfully participate in youth activities or events, due to an exceptionality, the Youth Leadership Team will take the following steps to ensure the child is supported:

1. Reach out to the child's parent(s) to discuss concerns
2. Work with the parent to develop a specialized support plan for the child (this may include having a youth leader to serve as a 1:1 support for the child, seating accommodations, noise-cancelling headphones, or a parent attending to support the child)
3. Communicate routinely with the parent(s) regarding the plan to make changes as necessary

If attempts to make contact with a child's parent(s) are unsuccessful, the Youth Leadership Team has the right to suspend the student from ministry activities for an amount of time determined by the Youth Leadership Team. The student and family will be treated with respect and love, and the student is welcomed back to ministry activities after the suspension period or when the Youth Leadership Team is able to make contact with the parent(s) to develop a specialized support plan for the child.

Off-campus/Overnight Trips

In the event that a child on a specialized support plan desires to attend an off-campus or overnight youth activity, the following safety measures must take place:

1. If a child requires 1:1 support, a parent must be willing to attend the event with the child. Although the parent does not need to be a youth leader, the parent must meet the following requirements: be a member of PMBC and provide all necessary volunteer clearances to the Children's Ministry leader or Pastor. If attending, the parent will not be considered a youth leader and therefore will not be in charge of supervising any youth other than his/her own child.
2. All medication must be checked in and administered by a PMBC youth nurse.
3. All specialized equipment (noise cancelling devices, fidgets, etc) will be stored in a specific location when not in use and be in the care of a designated youth leader.

Given that every situation and circumstance is unique, the Pastor reserves the right to determine if/when

students may not participate in specific activities or events. It is the responsibility of the Youth Leadership team to ensure student safety, reasonableness of participation, and the effectiveness of the event, and for these reasons a student may be barred from attending.

Check In/Check Out Procedures

A standardized check in/check out procedure will be utilized to keep track of the youth participating and for the safety of students, parents, and volunteers. Parents, youth, and volunteers are expected to comply with the check in/check-out procedure.

YOUTH PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

General Behavior

Young people are expected to conduct themselves in a way that would be pleasing to God. This is exemplified by the following:

- refrain from using offensive language
- refrain from using all illegal substances
- build others up instead of tear them down (gossip)
- show respect for all people and ideas
- refrain from inappropriate contact with one another

Deadlines

Holding older youth accountable and giving them deadlines fosters responsibility, helping them to be better equipped for high school, college, and adult life.

1. Deadlines for registration materials are in place to ensure that materials are received by the leaders in time to register the group for events and to increase the likelihood that the group will be able to attend, receive hotel preferences, receive early registration discounts etc.
2. While the youth have primary responsibility, parents should ensure that all registration deadlines are met.

Dress Code

This policy is to ensure that all youth dress in a modest and appropriate way for all youth activities. We expect the parent/guardian to provide guidance to ensure that students make good decisions in their dress and appearance while engaged in youth activities and outings.

1. If a youth leader determines that the clothing worn by a youth to a youth activity is not modest and appropriate, a same sex youth leader will inconspicuously pull aside the youth to discuss the expectations for clothing worn to youth activities and provide suggestions for appropriate attire.
2. If there is a second instance of a dress code violation, the youth will again be pulled aside to discuss the dress code and will be offered suggestions for appropriate attire. At this time, the parent will be notified of the dress code violations.
3. If subsequent dress code violations occur, the youth will be provided appropriate clothing if possible or will be removed from the activity and sent home.

Note: only same sex leaders will discuss dress code concerns with youth. In other words, no male youth leader will discuss dress code concerns with a female youth. Likewise, no female youth leader will discuss dress code concerns with a male youth.

Dress Code Specifics

At Port Matilda Baptist Church, we firmly believe that it is the duty of believers to sacrifice their own worldly rights for the betterment of other believers. Therefore, we abide by a dress code that we feel best helps students pursue Christ unhindered by the people around them. For that reason, we abide by the following dress code rules:

- Shirts should be long enough to cover the belly (no crop tops, mid-rise/belly shirts, etc.)
- Shorts should be long enough to reach a student's fingertips when the student is standing straight up and dangling his/her arms freely at his/her sides
- Pants with holes that expose the thigh above the fingertips of a student who is standing straight up and dangling his/her arms freely at his/her sides are not permitted
- Clothing with inappropriate language or themes (sexualized characters, curse words, nudity, innuendoes, etc.) are not permitted
- Yoga pants are permitted ONLY if the student's shirt comes below her bottom
- During swimming activities, male students are permitted to have their shirts off, but they must have appropriate shorts that come to the waist and do not come above their fingertips when the student is standing straight up and is dangling his fingertips freely at his sides
- During swimming activities, female students must wear a ONE-PIECE swimming suit that fits in such a way that their private areas are not exposed

Failure to abide by these rules may result in a student's parent needing to either bring the student new clothing or the student's inability to continue as part of the activity.

Youth Discipline Policy

In this environment, discipline is defined as training provided to develop or improve a skill or behavior. The focus of discipline is on the future and growth of the youth. It is done in love and concern and is not designed to create fear or guilt. The number one rule in ministry with students is that everyone should be treated with the kind of respect, love, and support to which Scripture calls us.

Clear rules, expectations and consistent messages about behavior are the key to effective discipline procedures. Occasionally, students have trouble following the rules or display disruptive behavior. In these cases, the following steps are taken.

Discipline for minor offenses

1. The leader talks with the student, defines the problem behavior, and communicates the desired behavior.
2. If the student continues to exhibit the problem behavior, the leader gives a warning to the student.
3. If the problem behavior continues, the student is removed from the activity (but remains visible to the leaders). Sometimes a short break is all that is needed. The student is warned at this point that further disruptive or inappropriate behavior will result in contact with the student's parent(s).

4. The final step with problem behavior is contacting parents to inform them that the student may not continue participation in the event and to determine how supervision will be transferred back to the parent. In most cases, the student is welcomed back at the next ministry activity.

Zero Tolerance

There is zero tolerance for severe or illegal behavior such as assaults, possession of weapons, theft, destruction of property, sexual activity, or any other behavior that could put students or others in danger. For these types of offenses, the procedures are:

1. Immediate removal of the student from the ministry activity and personal family contact by the event director, pastor or elders.
2. If the offense is an illegal activity, the police are contacted.
3. The student may be suspended from ministry activities for an amount of time determined by the Event director in consultation with the pastor or elders.
4. The student and family will be treated with respect and love, and the student is welcomed back to ministry activities after the suspension period or when it is determined that (s)he is ready to respect the rules of the ministry.

LEADER PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

Supervision of Students

The youth ministry staff and volunteers are responsible for the supervision of students during ministry activities, including observing the environment and equipment for unsafe situations, removing students from potentially dangerous conditions, and reporting problems immediately. Ministry staff and volunteers will complete mandatory screenings as per the Child Protection Policy included in this document. Ministry staff and volunteers will ensure that anyone who has not been screened and approved for ministry service does not have unsupervised access to students. Port Matilda Baptist Church will not permit any member to volunteer with youth until they have been approved by the Youth Leadership Team.

Parents are responsible for their children until the time the activity is scheduled to begin and after the activity's scheduled ending time. Activity leaders are responsible for publicizing activity times. When students arrive at any church ministry or program, they are expected to remain in that program until the program ends and supervision is transferred back to parents. Students may not leave the program early unless consent from the parent is directly communicated to youth ministry staff and/or volunteers. A student's failure to follow this policy will be considered unacceptable behavior, and discipline policies will be enforced.

Youth ministry leaders are not responsible for students who do not show up at a ministry activity, even if a parent believes they are at the activity. Parents are welcome to ask youth ministry staff about the attendance of their child at ministry activities, including one-on-one mentoring meetings. Providing attendance information to parents is not considered a breach of confidentiality.

When participating in activities, which occur in Port Matilda Baptist Church owned or rented locations, Youth group aged students may use the restrooms without an escort, as long as they inform an adult leader where they are going. That leader will watch to ensure they return. All other youth will be escorted to the restroom by the volunteer.

In the case of students with a specialized support plan, youth leaders may be designated to serve as a 1:1 support for a child to assist with providing accommodations. These accommodations are outlined in the child's specialized support plan that is developed in collaboration with the parents and Youth Leadership Team.

Supervision of Youth at Activities Involving PMBC Youth and Other Youth

Port Matilda Baptist Church Youth occasionally participates in activities with youth groups from other churches or with youth that are not affiliated with another church. If this event occurs at a site owned or rented by the host church or organization, Port Matilda Baptist Church youth and volunteers will defer to the Children's policy from that church/organization. In the event the other church/organization does not have a policy for supervision of youth, or the other church/organization's Children's Policy is not as stringent as this policy, youth and volunteers will follow this policy.

Child to Adult Ratios

Port Matilda Baptist Church considers the following child to adult ratios in the Nursery to be best practice and will try to adhere to ratios outlined in this policy and the PMBC Children's Ministry policy.

- Youth group for children in 6th grade through 12th grade; no more than 15 children to two adults.

Unplanned Situations with Only One Adult

Occasionally, leaders will find themselves without another adult present due to unforeseen circumstances. The following procedures should be followed.

- Notify the Pastor/Leader - the adult leader should inform the Pastor or a current board member. The Pastor or designee will advise the adult leader about what to do (e.g., cancel the activity, proceed with the activity, notify parents).
- Visible location - Any time there is only one adult present, the group must be in a visible public location with an unobstructed window or an open door if indoors.
- Multiple students present - A leader should not be alone with one student (except in prearranged mentoring meetings described below). If a leader finds him/herself alone with a student for a ministry activity, the activity should be canceled, and the parent notified.

Youth Serving as Leaders

Our youth leadership team firmly believes in the importance of discipleship and the need to train up younger believers so that they too can use the gifts that God has given them for the benefit of the church. In an effort to do this, the youth leadership team may choose to offer the opportunity of Student Leader to youth students that we feel have shown the gift of leadership and have used their personal time as a student to lead other students closer to Christ. The role of Student Leader is held only after a student has graduated. The goal of our Student Leader program is to disciple young people for 3 years with the goal of them possibly becoming a regular leader at age 21 or higher.

The role of Student Leader includes the following:

- The Student Leader must be committed to always having godly conduct in all areas of life, inside and outside of our student ministries.

- The Student Leader will never be responsible or in charge of students in the youth program. Rather, the Student Leader role is to learn how to be a leader so that he or she will eventually be a regular Youth Leader.
- The Student Leader must show good morale and loyalty to the Youth Leaders.
- The Student Leader must obey the Youth Leaders and recognize that they are still over them.
- The Student Leader must have the mindset of helping students passionately pursue Christ.

Cell Groups

Some ministries use breakout rooms for small group times. There may be times when a room will only accommodate one small group at a time. When this occurs, windows should be unobstructed (curtains or blinds open) AND the door left open. The small group leader should place him/ herself in visible sight of the hallway/entrance so that they may be seen from outside the room. An adult leader should periodically walk by the breakout rooms to ensure these policies are in effect.

Communication Outside of Ministry Activities

Only individuals who are approved advisors for the Youth Ministry should be communicating with students outside of ministry activities. Individuals not approved for this specific role should limit communication to sharing program information through phone calls to the home phone (not the student's cell phone), emails to students and parents, and written information sent to the home.

As part of developing caring relationships with students, screened youth advisors are encouraged to contact students outside of ministry activities. An advisor's primary role in relational ministry is as spiritual caregiver, the one who listens and supports. Accordingly, communications with students should primarily be about listening, supporting, and encouraging students in their faith, life, and participation in youth ministry activities.

Advisors should seek the advice of the Pastor when they have questions or concerns about communications with students.

Safety in Communications

The guiding principle for contact with students is transparency - communication must be visible to others and documented. Volunteers are required to notify the Youth Pastor weekly of any contact with youth outside previously scheduled activities. The following chart provides examples of how different types of communications can be made visible.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS	
Mode	**Ways to make contacts visible, documented**
Phone	If the parent answers, identify yourself and the reason for your call "This is Mary, one of the youth advisors. I'd like to talk to Joe about tonight's program." Advisors may email call updates to the Youth Pastor
Written Note or letter	Postcard (visible) or keep a photocopy of a note/card

Email	Copy Youth Pastor and save copies
Social Networking Site	Public messages or document private messages via a printout and a cc: to the Youth Pastor
Text Message	Save messages

The Pastor will immediately forward any concerns found during the routine reviews of communication between youth advisors and students to the Pastor and Eldership.

One-on-One Mentoring Meetings

One-on-one meetings between students and screened advisors are an important part of ministries with junior and senior high students. The following guidelines should be followed:

Parent permission

- Students in Junior High - Youth advisors must complete the Parent Permission form for 1:1 mentoring meetings for Junior High Students. Parents must sign and indicate permission on this form prior to the proposed one-on-one meeting. Parents must provide written permission for each 1:1 mentoring meeting.
- Students in Senior High - At the beginning of each school year, and when students enter the program mid-year, parents will be informed that advisors may occasionally meet with students one-on-one. Parents will be asked to sign the Parent Permission Form for 1:1 mentoring meetings for Senior High Students. If the parent requests notification prior to each 1:1 mentoring meeting, the youth advisor must notify the parent prior to the scheduled 1:1 mentoring meeting via phone or e-mail.
- Visible Location - Meetings should take place in a visible area in a public place (e.g., coffee shop, restaurant, visible park area). Adult leaders should never meet with a student in a private home unless the student's parent or another screened adult is in the home and can view the adult and student at all times. The location should be within a couple miles of the church, or the student's home or school (i.e., advisors should not be planning one-on-one meetings at the beach or other destinations outside the local community).
- Driving Students - Adult leaders may drive students to and from meetings if they inform their supervisor of this arrangement in advance and they adhere to the guidelines listed in "Driving Students."
- Inform supervisor of meetings - Before meeting with a student, the following information should be provided by the advisor to the Youth Director (or designee):
    - Name of student
    - Date and time of meeting
    - Location
    - Whether the student will be driven by the adult leader
    - Names of any other youth or adults who will be attending

Physical Contact between Leaders and Students

Respect, safety, and appropriate boundaries are the guiding principles for physical contact between youth ministry leaders and students. The guidelines below are intended to avoid contact that is or may appear threatening or inappropriate. Ministry leaders and volunteers should avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

Some positive and appropriate forms of affection for youth are listed below:

- Brief hugs or side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes, high-fives, hand slapping, fist bumps
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, shoulders or arms of youth
- Arm around shoulders
- Holding hands during group prayer

The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with youth in a ministry setting. It should be noted that many of these behaviors are used by offenders to groom youth and their parents for later molestation and can be construed as sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses
- Sitting on laps, except when feeding an infant in the nursery or consoling upset children
- Touching, other than noted above
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, or other private rooms
- Occupying a bed with a youth
- Wrestling or Tickling
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by a youth to an adult or adult to a youth
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples: “You sure are developing,” or “You look really hot in those jeans.”
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing
- Giving gifts or money to individual youth
- Private meals with individual youth (outside mentoring relationships)

Off Campus Trips or Activities

Any activity that does not occur in a Port Matilda Baptist Church owned or rented location is considered to be an “Off Campus” activity. It is best practice to have two adults supervising students at off campus trips/activities. While this is not always possible, Port Matilda Baptist Church will attempt to abide by this best practice at all times. One exception is when students are being transported in vehicles (see procedures under Driving Students). For unplanned situations where only one adult is present with students, the procedures outlined under “Unplanned Situations with Only One Adult” are followed. For example, during off campus trips, sometimes a student or advisor needs to break off from the main group for some need. If only one adult can break from the main group, (s)he should take several students, not one, even if it’s only one student who has the need to leave the main group.

The nature of some off-campus activities requires students to be without direct adult supervision for some of the time (e.g., ski trips). In these cases, students should never be alone (at least in pairs), they should be told how to reach a ministry leader, and they should be given clear instructions about geographic boundaries and time limits. Designated youth leaders will accompany students on off campus trips and activities. Parents may also accompany youth; however, the parent must meet the following requirements: be a member of PMBC and provide all necessary volunteer clearances to the Children's Ministry leader or Pastor. If attending, the parent will not be considered a youth leader and therefore will not be in charge of supervising any youth other than his/her own child.

Driving Students

Port Matilda Baptist Church youth ministry volunteers will not transport youth that participate in Youth classes unless prior arrangements are made with the child's parent/legal guardian.

Anyone driving students for ministry activities, including one-on-one mentoring meetings, must be a screened volunteer, at least 21 years of age, and have had a driver's license for at least 1 year. In no circumstance is a car to be used for transportation that has more occupants than seatbelts in the car. Youth may not be transported by a volunteer on a motorcycle. In the event, there are not enough drivers available, parents must be notified.

All volunteers that drive youth to activities must provide a copy of their driver's license, insurance and vehicle information to the Youth Director, who will maintain this documentation at the church office. This information will be updated yearly at the beginning of each school year. The Youth Director must be notified in advance of all transportation arrangements involving youth.

Overnight Events

Parents/legal guardians must provide written permission for students to participate in specific overnight and/or off campus trips. The permission form is attached to this policy. Whether an on-campus sleepover or an off-campus trip, male and female students must sleep in separate rooms with adult leaders of the same gender, or separate sides of one large room with adult leaders between the two sides. Ministry leaders will make sure that students do not enter the sleeping quarters of students from the opposite gender. Students and adults are required to wear modest sleep attire.

Designated youth leaders will accompany students on overnight events. Parents may also accompany youth; however, the parent must meet the following requirements: be a member of PMBC and provide all necessary volunteer clearances to the Children's Ministry leader or Pastor. If attending, the parent will not be considered a youth leader and therefore will not be in charge of supervising any youth other than his/her own child.

Relationships

A leader may not date a student under any circumstances, with one exception. If a student becomes a student leader, as defined in this policy, and a dating relationship with another student exists, either the dating relationship is to be put on hold or the leader shall step down from the leadership role until such time that both members of the couple are no longer high school students.

Rules Regarding Student Relationships

The Port Matilda Baptist Church Youth Leadership Team firmly believes that a mature dating relationship

is not dominated by the need to have constant physical contact. Also, the difference in age of students in the Youth Ministry leads us to believe that most physical contact between a guy and girl student is non-beneficial to the ministry as a whole. For that purpose, we abide by the following rules:

- Students are permitted to hold hands so long as both students in the relationship have permission from their parents. Port Matilda Baptist Church is not required to get a written consent from the parents. Rather, it will be decided on the word of the students.

- Physical touch (i.e. hugging, kissing, arm around the shoulder, sitting on each other's laps, etc.) are all forbidden. Failure to abide by these rules may result in the ejection of the students from the activity and subsequent pick up by parents.
- Regarding friendships, students are not permitted to engage in any way that the youth leadership team has not deemed appropriate (i.e. no games that include the touching of any private area of a student or leader).

Emergencies and Injuries

Emergency Forms

The parent or legal guardian is required to fill out the Youth Health Information and Release form and the Assumptions of Risk and Release of Liability Form for each student at the beginning of the school year if the student plans to participate in Youth Ministry programs at Port Matilda Baptist Church. These forms must be completed by the parent or legal guardian of any student who joins Port Matilda Baptist Church in the middle of a school year prior to that student participating in any Port Matilda Baptist Church Youth Ministry Programs.

Medical Emergencies Occurring During Scheduled Sunday Service

In the event of a medical emergency in the Youth classroom or Youth breakout meeting during scheduled Sunday morning church services, the adult will deal with the medical emergency while the second volunteer (which can include youth volunteers) will notify the Pastor or Board Member. The Pastor or designee will contact the parent/legal guardian via text message or in person and call 911 or the police as needed.

Medical treatment for Non-emergencies Occurring During Scheduled Sunday Service

In the event a youth needs medical treatment, but it is not a medical emergency (sudden onset of illness for example), the parent/legal guardian will be notified as soon as possible and will be asked to pick the youth up from the activity prior to the scheduled ending so that the appropriate non-emergency medical treatment can be sought at the discretion of the parent/legal guardian.

Medical Emergencies at “Off Campus Activities”

In the event of a medical emergency during a youth activity that does not occur in a Port Matilda Baptist Church owned or rented location (and is therefore an “off-campus” activity), the adult volunteer will obtain the needed medical care for the youth. This can include taking the youth to a local urgent care center, Emergency Room, and/or calling 911 to obtain emergency treatment. Parent/legal guardians will be

notified of the medical emergency and corresponding treatment as soon as possible.

Medical Treatment for Non-emergency Circumstances Off-campus

In the event a youth is at an off-campus activity and needs medical treatment, but it is not a medical emergency (sudden onset of illness for example), the parent/legal guardian will be notified as soon as possible and will be asked to pick the youth up from the activity prior to the scheduled ending, so that the appropriate non-emergency medical treatment can be sought at the discretion of the parent/legal guardian. If the parent/guardian is not able to pick up the youth prior to the scheduled end of the activity, the parent/guardian will be asked to provide direction on medical treatment.

Threats of Violence against Others or Harm to Self

Youth ministry leaders may receive information that a student or other person has thoughts or desires to harm themselves or others. This information should be taken seriously and should be reported immediately to the Youth Director or a pastor. If the student seems to have the imminent intent to do harm, a leader or volunteer should stay with the student, and call the mental health crisis line (CAN HELP) at 1-800-643-5432 or 911.

Criminal or Potentially Dangerous Activity

911 or local emergency numbers should be called immediately in cases of suspected criminal or dangerous activities on the church campus or near ministry activities. Documentation of all medical treatment, other emergencies, and other events is shared with the Youth Director or Pastor. Upon the conclusion of the emergency or non-emergency medical treatment, conclusion of reporting alleged child abuse to Childline, or any other event in which Port Matilda Baptist Church could potentially be held financially liable, the adult volunteer involved is required to complete and sign an incident form. The incident form will be reviewed by the Youth Director, the Pastor, and the parent. Each will sign the form to indicate that he/she reviewed the form. The incident form will be filed at the church office.

YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP ROLES

The Youth Leadership Team consists of the Children's Ministry Leader and the Pastors. The Children's Ministry Leader and Youth Pastor each report to the Pastor and elders. Each of these leaders is responsible to recruit and train new volunteers to assist in these youth ministry programs. Additional associates, volunteers, and helpers will be added by the Youth Leadership Team as determined for events and as the ministry develops.

Youth Leaders have a tremendous responsibility when working with young people. Parents are encouraged to share any information that may help the leaders better understand and mentor their child. Events such as death, divorce, problems in school, etc. are very stressful to children and young adults. Providing this information can ensure that the youth leadership is "there" for them during that time. All shared information is kept confidential.

Port Matilda Baptist Church Child Protection Policy

Mandated Reporting

According to the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law updated in December 2014, the following adults are among the list of considered mandated reporters and are required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse:

- A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization.
- An individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.
- An individual supervised or managed by a person listed above, who has direct contact with children during employment.

Reporting of Child Abuse

All church employees are mandated reporters. All volunteers who work in the church nursery, youth programs, as well as worship team leaders (if they are responsible for a child under the age of 18) are covered under the definition of a mandated reporter of child abuse. If an employee or volunteer is alerted to an allegation of child abuse, the volunteer must immediately report the allegation to the PA Child Line. Alleged child abuse must be reported via telephone at 1-800-932-0313 or online at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.

If an allegation is discovered during a Sunday morning service, the volunteer may use the laptop in the back of the auditorium to report the allegation using the online reporting form. If the wireless internet is not working in the auditorium, the volunteer may report the allegation via the telephone number above or will be escorted to the church office by one of the Elders to report the allegation of child abuse via the online portal.

If the volunteer is notified of the allegation of child abuse during a meeting that does not occur on a Sunday morning, the volunteer must report this allegation using the telephone number or the online portal as soon as the volunteer returns home from the meeting. After the volunteer completes the required notification via PA ChildLine, the volunteer is required to notify the Pastor of the nature of the alleged abuse and confirm that it has been reported to PA ChildLine. The Pastor will complete an Incident Form and maintain a file of incident forms at the church office.

Staff and Volunteer Training on the PA Child Protective Services Law

All staff and volunteers identified as mandated reporters of child abuse are required to complete training on mandated reporting of child abuse every three years. The University of Pittsburgh offers an online course entitled "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania" which satisfies this requirement. This course can be accessed via this link: www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu. Copies of the Mandated Reporter training certificate must be forwarded to the church secretary, who maintains a record of such training and sends reminders to each volunteer six months prior to the expiration of the previous training.

Volunteer screening requirements

In addition to all church employees, any church member who wishes to volunteer in the nursery, Youth, or any other Port Matilda Baptist Church sponsored program in which the volunteer works directly with children is subject to the Pennsylvania Child Protective Safety Law. This law indicates Port Matilda Baptist Church must have hard copies of the following clearances:

- PA Child Abuse History Form
- PA State Police Criminal Background Check
- FBI Fingerprint Record Check*

*The FBI fingerprint record check is only needed if the prospective volunteer has lived in another

state at any time in the last ten years. If the volunteer has lived within the state of Pennsylvania continuously for the last ten years, the volunteer must sign a form to confirm they have not been convicted of any offense that would preclude the individual from volunteering with children.

These clearances must be renewed every five years for each volunteer. Port Matilda Baptist Church will ask each volunteer if (s)he has current clearances. If so, the volunteer is asked to provide copies to the church secretary. If the volunteer does not have current clearances, Port Matilda Baptist Church will pay for the required clearances.

The church secretary is responsible to maintain a list of all current volunteers who are subject to the required screenings. The church secretary must maintain the clearances for each of the volunteers and is responsible to remind volunteers and the supervisor of the appropriate program six months before the previous clearances expire.