



Sewickley Presbyterian Church  
**LIVE · GROW · SERVE**

414 Grant Street | Sewickley, PA | 15143  
www.sewickleypresby.org

## Church/Parent Volunteer Information Frequently Asked Questions

Changes to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) impact the requirements for who is permitted to serve as a volunteer working with youth and children, effective immediately. This document is meant to assist potential volunteers. Whether you are interested in helping at a single event or volunteering over a period of time, CPSL requires background clearances be obtained. Additionally, changes in the law indicate that Church/Parent volunteers will now be considered “mandated reporters” who are required to report suspicion of child abuse to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. The table below defines which activities require clearances and which do not. For activities not listed in the table, consult with the Business Administrator to determine the necessity for clearances.

<b>Activities that require clearances</b>	<b>Activities that do not require clearances</b>
Lead teacher for Sunday School	Reading a story (one time) to a Sunday School class with a lead teacher present
Assistant teacher for Sunday School	
Leading activities and volunteering at Vacation Bible School	Hosting a church event at a residence where church staff are present with the youth/children
Children's choir volunteer/helper	Being an Usher or a Greeter at the church
Chaperones for mission trips	Youth (under 18 years old) helping with children's activities
Helping with childcare for any church event (Sunday morning, church dinners, special events, etc.)	Leading or helping with an event that is not being put on for children, but where children may be present (Day on the Lawn, Church Picnic, etc.)
First Friday helpers	
Club 345 helpers	
Mentors for youth	

### What clearances am I required to obtain?

All Church/Parent volunteers must obtain the following clearances:

1. PA Child Abuse History Clearance: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
2. PA State Police Criminal Background Check:  
<http://www.psp.pa.gov/Pages/Request-a-Criminal-History-Record.aspx#.VLfJljjg-Uk>
2. The [Report of Federal Criminal History Record \(fingerprinting\)](#) is also required if:

- You have not resided within the state of Pennsylvania during the past 10 consecutive years
- [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index\\_dpwNew.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpwNew.htm)

If a potential volunteer has resided in Pennsylvania consecutively during the prior 10-year period, he/she must also complete the Volunteer Affirmation Form (page 4) to affirm in writing that he/she is not disqualified from serving as a volunteer under the CPSL.

### **When do the new clearance requirements go into effect?**

If you have already volunteered within Sewickley Presbyterian Church and have the above valid clearances, you may continue to volunteer without providing new clearances/certifications until July 1, 2016. The fingerprinting or affirmation is still required.

- If you have not volunteered in Sewickley Presbyterian Church during the 2014-2015 school year, you may not volunteer until the required clearances/certifications are received and reviewed.
- If you have existing clearances with another organization (school, another church, the YMCA, etc.), we must see the original and have a copy on file before you may volunteer here. These are acceptable until 3 years after the date issued.
- After July 1, 2016, all Church/Parent volunteers will need to have up to date clearances/certifications on record with SPC prior to serving as a volunteer.

### **How do I obtain my clearances?**

- Information regarding how to obtain clearances is hyperlinked on page two of this document. The information may also be found on the Sewickley Presbyterian Church website: [www.sewickleypresby.org](http://www.sewickleypresby.org)

### **Is there a cost associated with obtaining clearances?**

- Yes. Detailed information may be found on the hyperlinks. The following costs are associated with each clearance:
  - o PA Child Abuse History Clearance - \$10 (waived as of July 25, 2015)
  - o PA State Police Criminal Background Check - \$10 (waived as of July 25, 2015)
  - o Report of Federal Criminal History Record - \$25.75 and fingerprinting at an approved location
    - Remember, the Federal Criminal History Record is not required if Church/Parents volunteers have resided in Pennsylvania for the prior ten consecutive years and swear/affirm in writing that they meet requirements for volunteering

### **What if I can't afford to obtain clearances but still want to volunteer?**

- Sewickley Presbyterian Church will determine this as requested.

### **Once I receive clearances, to whom do I submit them?**

- Original clearances must be brought to the Business Administrator.

## **How often must I update my clearances?**

- Clearances must be updated within 36 months of the date on the clearance.
- The church will notify you prior to your clearances expiring.

## **What does the term “mandated reporter” mean?**

- A mandated reporter is someone who is required by law to make a report of child abuse if they have “reasonable cause to suspect a child is a victim of abuse.”
- All church/nursery school employees are mandated reporters.
- Volunteers, including Church/Parent volunteers, are now also considered mandated reporters based upon recent changes to the law.

## **What do I do if I suspect child abuse while in my volunteer capacity?**

- Legislative changes require that the individual who suspects abuse directly and immediately report the abuse.
- The following steps should be followed if you suspect abuse while in your volunteer capacity:
  - o REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY TO CHILDLINE AT 1-800-932-0313 OR FILE ELECTRONICALLY AT [HTTPS://WWW.COMPASS.STATE.PA.US/CWIS/PUBLIC/HOME](https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home)
    - If notifying by telephone, then a CY47 form must be completed and mailed within 48 hours to local Child Protective Services.
  - o DO NOT LEAVE CHILD, CHILDREN, OR YOUTH ALONE TO REPORT THE INCIDENT.
  - o DO NOT PERSONALLY CONFRONT THE ALLEGED OR ACCUSED VIOLATOR OF THE POLICY.
  - o REPORTER MUST INFORM THE PERSON IN CHARGE, TYPICALLY THE SENIOR PASTOR, IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. IF THE SENIOR PASTOR IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE, THEN THE MATTER SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE DESIGNATED HEAD OF STAFF OR THE ADMINISTRATOR.

## **Is training for mandatory reporting available?**

- A free three-hour training is available online at [www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu).

Sewickley Presbyterian Church remains committed to the health, well-being, and safety of our students. We thank you for your cooperation with us in implementing requirements resulting from changes to the Child Protective Services Law.

## Volunteer Affirmation

A Church/Parent volunteer who has been a resident of Pennsylvania during the entire previous ten-year period does not need to submit a Report of Federal Criminal History Record (fingerprinting) if this Volunteer Affirmation is completed.

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, would like to serve in the position of an unpaid volunteer for the Sewickley Presbyterian Church. Under penalty of law, I affirm that I have been a Pennsylvania resident during the entire ten-year period prior to my signing this Volunteer Affirmation. I am aware that the Sewickley Presbyterian Church will be relying upon this Volunteer Affirmation for the purpose of complying with Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law ("CPSL"). I further affirm that I am not disqualified from service as a Church/Parent/volunteer by reason of having been convicted of any of the following offenses under Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code or of an offense similar in nature under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of Pennsylvania:

- 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 death of child)
  - Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children)
- Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children)
- A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses)
- Section 5903(c) or (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)
- A felony offense under the act of April 14, 1972 (P.L. 233, No. 64), known as The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, committed within the five-year period immediately preceding today's date
- The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the above offenses

I hereby affirm that the information contained in this Volunteer Affirmation is correct. I further affirm that in the event that I am arrested for, or convicted of, an offense that would constitute grounds for denying my further participation as a Church/Parent volunteer, or if I am named as a perpetrator of child abuse, I will provide the Sewickley Presbyterian Church with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that I have been listed as a perpetrator of child abuse in the statewide database.

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Signature of Church/Parent Volunteer

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Date (mm/dd/yyyy)