



Sewickley Presbyterian Church

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Volunteer Clearances Explained & FAQs

Sewickley Presbyterian Church remains committed to the health, well-being, and safety of our students. We thank you for your cooperation as we strive to act responsibly for the sake of our children.

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, Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) requires background clearances to be obtained.

The table below defines which activities require clearances and which do not:

Activities that require clearances	Activities that do not require clearances
Lead teacher for Sunday School	Reading a story (one time) to a Sunday School class with a lead teacher present
Assistant teacher/helper 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	
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.)
Kids' Night Out helpers	
Club 345 helpers	
Mentors for youth	

Per the CPSL, 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

What clearances am I required to obtain?

All Church/Parent volunteers must obtain the following clearances:

1. PA Child Abuse History Clearance
2. State Police Criminal Background Check
3. The Report of Federal Criminal History Record (fingerprinting) is also required if:
 - a. You have not resided within the state of Pennsylvania during the past 10 consecutive years.

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



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How do I obtain my clearances?

- Complete all forms and submit them to Business Administrator.
- The information may also be found on the Sewickley Presbyterian Church website: www.sewickleypresby.org.

Is there a cost associated with obtaining clearances?

- If you have NOT lived in the state of Pennsylvania for the past 10 consecutive years, there is a fee of \$23.25 for the Federal Criminal History record (fingerprinting). Otherwise the clearances are free at this time.

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 five years 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?

- An individual who suspects abuse directly and immediately reports the abuse.
- The following steps should be followed if you suspect abuse while in your volunteer capacity:
 - 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.
 - DO NOT LEAVE CHILD, CHILDREN, OR YOUTH ALONE TO REPORT THE INCIDENT.
 - DO NOT PERSONALLY CONFRONT THE ALLEGED OR ACCUSED VIOLATOR OF THE POLICY.



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- 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.