

**EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**SAFE CHURCH POLICY GUIDELINES**  
**FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**  
Approved by Session October 03, 2004

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In order to maintain a safe, secure and caring environment for all members, friends and guests who participate in any church-related activities at Eastridge Presbyterian Church, the staff and volunteers will be directed by the following guidelines and procedures. Eastridge Presbyterian Church recognizes that situations may arise in which the ideal application of these guidelines and procedures may be impractical, but our goal should always be to create as safe and secure an environment as possible for all participants in any church-related activity.

The Safe Church Policy Guidelines of Eastridge Presbyterian Church shall seek to achieve the following goals:

- To prevent child abuse from occurring in conjunction with any Eastridge Presbyterian Church-related activities and Church-sponsored activities;
- To develop a process to assist in the screening and selection of staff and volunteers who will work with children and youth;
- To create an environment in which the likelihood for abuse is reduced;
- To develop awareness about child abuse among children, parents, staff and volunteers; and,
- To outline notification of child protective services, police or other appropriate agencies in cases in which there is a good-faith allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The Safe Church Policy Guidelines of Eastridge Presbyterian Church revolve around the following concepts: Selection and Screening of Staff and Volunteers; Age/Gender/Capacity; Number of Volunteers Needed in Various Situations; Education; and Procedure for Reporting Abuse/Incidents Occurring on Church Grounds or at Church-Sponsored Activities.

### **SELECTION AND SCREENING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

- All staff and volunteers shall complete a "Volunteer Information Form" and "Release of Information Form." All information obtained pursuant to the "Release of Information" form will be used only for purposes of selection and screening of volunteers and viewed only by the Head of Staff and the Chair of the Personnel Committee. Said information will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Head of Staff's office.
- All staff and volunteers shall be subject to reference checks and background screening.
- All staff, volunteers, and temporary or occasional workers shall sign a "Covenant Agreement" stating that they understand and agree to follow the Safe Church Policy and shall be asked to annually renew their "Covenant Agreement."
- All volunteers shall be selected based on the review and judgment of the Christian Education Director, and/or the Director of Youth Ministries, and/or the Associate Pastor and/or the Head of Staff.

## **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ABUSE/INCIDENTS THAT OCCUR ON THE CHURCH GROUNDS OR AT CHURCH-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

- All incidents shall be reported to the Head of Staff, the Christian Education Director, or the Chair of Personnel Committee, immediately both verbally and in writing using the Incident Report Form.
- If the Head of Staff is named in the incident, the incident shall be reported to the Christian Education Director and the Chair of Personnel Committee. If the Christian Education Director is named in the incident, the incident shall be reported to the Head of Staff and the Chair of Personnel Committee.
- The Head of Staff and the Christian Education Director shall be responsible for informing/reporting the incident to the parents, proper authorities or governmental agencies.
- Should an incident of abuse be reported to you or should you become aware of an incident or abuse, you should follow the Incident Process, as follows, in order to ensure proper handling of the situation:
  - Listen;
  - Ask only the questions necessary to assure the child or youths immediate well-being;
  - Reassure the child or youth or adult by letting them know you will help. Do not make any promises, specifically, do not promise that you will not tell anyone, as you will need to report the incident.
  - Maintain confidentiality by only speaking of the incident with the Head of Staff or Christian Education Director.
  - Complete the Incident Report Form.
  - The Christian Education Director or Head of Staff shall speak with the child, youth or adult as soon as possible.

# EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

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All information on these pages is confidential and will be handled in such a manner as to protect your confidentiality. The contents will only be reviewed by the Head of Staff and/or the Chair of Personnel Committee and/or the Director of Youth Ministries and/or the Director of Christian Education. Page Two of this Form will be viewed only by Head of Staff and/or the Chair of Personnel Committee.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time at current Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

With which age groups are you comfortable working?

For which activities do you wish to volunteer?

Please briefly describe your talent(s) in working with children/youth.

Please briefly describe how your current relationship with God equips you to work with children/youth.

Please list two references that are not relatives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that the above information I have provided on this Volunteer Information Form is accurate to the best of my abilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## COVENANT STATEMENT

---

The congregation of Eastridge Presbyterian Church is committed to providing a safe, secure and caring environment for all members, friends and guests who participate in any church-related and sponsored activities. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a sanctuary for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through their relationships with others in our church family.

In keeping with the sacrament of baptism, we have committed ourselves and our resources to the nurturing of our children. We acknowledge that children cannot grow in faith and wisdom if they are frightened, distrustful or anxious. They cannot learn and grow in their faith in God if those who represent God to them behave in ways that are unloving, untrustworthy, or unfaithful to the covenant we made with them at their baptism. We promise the children of Eastridge Presbyterian Church that we will be committed to providing the structure, education and policies that will keep them safe from the possibilities of harm or abuse. In that context, we will screen volunteers, train them, and ask that they abide by the Safe Church Policy Guidelines established by Eastridge Presbyterian Church. We will ask that all volunteers working with children/youth:

- Complete a "Volunteer Information Form",
- Complete a "Release of Information Form", and
- Sign a "Covenant Agreement" stating that they understand and agree to be guided by this "Safe Church Policy Guidelines: and renew their covenant annually. All temporary or occasional volunteers must sign a "Covenant Agreement".

As a volunteer working with children at Eastridge Presbyterian Church, I agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth, to observe the "Two Adult" rule whenever possible, the "Open Door" / "Line of Sight" policy, especially if two adults are not available, and the supervision requirements for youth working in ministries with children. I agree to commit myself to participation in training and education regarding our "Safe Church Policy Guidelines" as part of my commitment as a volunteer, and to report promptly any abusive or inappropriate behavior to the Head of Staff, Christian Education Director, or Chair of Personnel Committee. By signing below, I state that I have read and agree to abide by this covenant statement in my volunteer role with children's ministries at Eastridge Presbyterian Church. I also agree to renew this covenant yearly as a part of my ongoing commitment to service with the children/youth in our church.

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Signature of Applicant

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Print Full Name

---

Date

---

Signature of CE Director

---

Print Full Name

---

Date

# RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I understand that as a condition of my employment, my name will be checked against the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Adult/Child Protective Services Registers. A check of these registers is necessary to ensure that I meet provider standards.

The purpose of this check will be to determine if my name is being maintained on either register as a result of previous abuse/neglect allegations which have been investigated and have not been determined to be unfounded.

To the best of my knowledge, I do not have a conviction or prior history of adult or child abuse/neglect or maltreatment. Neither have I been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude.

I hereby authorize the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to release information contained on the Adult or Child Protective Services Central Register including the information that a record has been found to:

Eastridge Presbyterian Church  
1135 Eastridge Drive  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68510

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Applicant/Employee)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date Signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed or Typed Name of Applicant/Employee)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Social Security Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Names Used in Past Twenty (20) Years  
(Please Print or Type)  
(Use back of sheet if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Other Names Used in Past Twenty (20) Years  
(Please Print or Type)  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Names Used in Past Twenty (20) Years  
(Please Print or Type)  
(Use back of sheet if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date of Applicant's Birth)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Home Address of Applicant/City/Zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date Witnessed)

*This release becomes void ninety (90) days after signature by Applicant/Employee*

# EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INCIDENT REPORT FORM

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Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
(A separate form should be completed for each child involved in order to keep the information confidential)

Address of Child/Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number of Child/Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) who witnessed the Incident:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe incident as seen/heard and actions taken:

Please document any additional relevant information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Upon completion of this form, immediate contact should be made with the Head of Staff, the Chair of Personnel Committee or Christian Education Director.*

*This form should be given to the Head of Staff, the Chair of Personnel Committee or Christian Education Director.*

*This form may be used to report any incident, accident, or suspicion of abuse as well as an accident.*

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- All staff, volunteers, and temporary or occasional workers shall sign a "Covenant Agreement" stating that they understand and agree to follow the Safe Church Policy and shall be asked to annually renew their "Covenant Agreement."
- All volunteers shall be selected based on the review and judgment of the Christian Education Director, and/or the Director of Youth Ministries, and/or the Associate Pastor and/or the Head of Staff.

## **AGE/GENDER/CAPACITY**

- For the purpose of the Safe Church Policy Guidelines, the following definitions shall apply:
  - Leader/Adult – Anyone over the age of 21.
  - Youth Helper – Anyone 15-21 years of age.
  - Youth – Anyone 12-18 years of age.
  - Child/Children – anyone younger than 12 years of age.
- In order to volunteer to work with children and youth, the prospective volunteer should preferably be at least three (3) years older than the group with whom they are desirous of working.
- Drivers for any Church-related activity shall have a valid drivers license and be at least 21 years of age and be able to provide proof of insurance.
- Leaders/Adults of both genders shall accompany children and youth on any overnight Church-Related activity.

## **NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN VARIOUS SITUATIONS**

- A minimum of two leaders/adults who have completed the “Volunteer Information Form”, “Release of Information Form” and the “Covenant Agreement” or members of the Church Staff shall be present during all children and youth Church-related and sponsored activities.
- Male and female children and youth shall sleep in separate areas on any overnight activities with appropriate leader/adult supervision.
- There shall be at least one (1) leader/adult and a youth in a vehicle transporting youth and children for any off premises Church-related or sponsored activities.
- If it is infeasible or impractical for two adults to be present in a room during a Church-related or sponsored activity, we shall maintain an “open door” or “line of sight” policy whereby others may observe the activities at all times. For example, curtains on windows are open, doors between classrooms left open, or room doors left open.
- A single child or youth shall not be alone in a room with a volunteer or staff without observing the “open door” or “line of sight” policy.

## **EDUCATION**

- The Christian Education Committee, in conjunction with and under the direction of the Christian Education Director and Associate Pastor or Head of Staff, shall provide annual education programs related to abuse and the Safe Church Policy Guidelines.
- The annual education programs shall consist of age appropriate content for each age group and address the specific needs and development of children, youth, adults, volunteers, staff, members and guests of Eastridge Presbyterian Church.
- All staff and volunteers shall participate annually in one of the education programs prior to working with children or youth.

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that the above information I have provided on this Volunteer Information Form is accurate to the best of my abilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

PAGE TWO

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime (not including minor traffic offenses) either a misdemeanor or a felony?

Yes: \_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_ If yes, please use the space below to explain fully.

# EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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---

Signature of Applicant

---

Print Full Name

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Date

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Signature of CE Director

---

Print Full Name

---

Date

Annual Review: I have read and reviewed the Eastridge Presbyterian Church's "Covenant Statement" regarding our commitment to being a "Safe Church" and hereby renew my commitment to abide by this covenant in the coming year as I serve children at our church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Full Name

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Date

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Signature of Applicant

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Print Full Name

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Date

# RELEASE OF INFORMATION

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The purpose of this check will be to determine if my name is being maintained on either register as a result of previous abuse/neglect allegations which have been investigated and have not been determined to be unfounded.

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Eastridge Presbyterian Church  
1135 Eastridge Drive  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68510

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Applicant/Employee)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date Signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed or Typed Name of Applicant/Employee)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Social Security Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Names Used in Past Twenty (20) Years  
(Please Print or Type)  
(Use back of sheet if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Other Names Used in Past Twenty (20) Years  
(Please Print or Type)  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Names Used in Past Twenty (20) Years  
(Please Print or Type)  
(Use back of sheet if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date of Applicant's Birth)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Home Address of Applicant/City/Zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date Witnessed)

*This release becomes void ninety (90) days after signature by Applicant/Employee*



# EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INCIDENT REPORT FORM

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Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
(A separate form should be completed for each child involved in order to keep the information confidential)

Address of Child/Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number of Child/Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) who witnessed the Incident:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe incident as seen/heard and actions taken:

Please document any additional relevant information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Upon completion of this form, immediate contact should be made with the Head of Staff, the Chair of Personnel Committee or Christian Education Director.*

*This form should be given to the Head of Staff, the Chair of Personnel Committee or Christian Education Director.*

*This form may be used to report any incident, accident, or suspicion of abuse as well as an accident.*

