

Policies

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Wallenpaupack Church Policies

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Counselling Benefit Policy

Purpose and Intent

Wallenpaupack Church has partnered with Foundations Christian Counseling (i.e., Foundations) to provide subsidized, professional Christian counseling (i.e., the benefit) for eligible individuals and/or couples who regularly attend Wallenpaupack Church. The church hopes that subsidizing the cost of counseling sessions will help to remove barriers for those who could benefit from such services. This reflects Wallenpaupack Church's commitment to the holistic wellness of those who come through their doors, recognizing the inextricable link between spiritual and mental wellness. This investment also aligns with Wallenpaupack Church's mission to support spiritual growth.

Eligibility

- Must have attended Wallenpaupack Church for at least 3 months
- Must attend regularly, defined as at least 3 out of 4 weeks per month
- Ongoing regular church attendance is required for ongoing eligibility

Application Process

- Interested individuals should complete the online benefit application form
- Applications are reviewed by the church staff person designated as the Wallenpaupack/Foundations liaison and a determination is made within one week of the request. If an application is being denied, a second reviewer from church leadership (paid staff, Board of Administration, etc.) must be brought into the decision to affirm/reject the denial. All decisions will be documented.
- Completion of any intake, application processes as proposed by Foundations

Counseling Terms

- The benefit will cover 50% of the intake and 50% of 5 counseling session costs, with adjustments possible on a case-by-case basis.
- Upon completion of the initial sessions, benefit recipients may apply for a renewal, subject to a review process to assess ongoing need, eligibility, and funding availability.
- If the renewal is approved, the recipient may receive another 5-session block.
- Each approved 5-session block must be used within 6 months of the block's first session. Unused sessions within the 6-month period will be forfeited.

- Missing 2 sessions results in forfeiting the balance of the benefit.

Confidentiality

- Information shared during *counseling sessions* is confidential and benefit recipients can trust that their privacy will be respected and protected per the terms of their signed releases with Foundations.
- The Pastoral Release offered by Foundations is *optional* and Wallenpaupack Church is committed to adhering to the terms of that release if signed by the benefit recipient.
- The Release of Information for *billing*, required by Foundations and Wallenpaupack Church for purposes of administering the benefit, allows the Church to limited pieces of information as outlined in the release, strictly as related to attendance, billing, etc.

Commitment to Support

Wallenpaupack Church is committed to provide a supportive environment, fostering well-being through their partnership with Foundations.

Communication Protocol

Clear communication between benefit recipients, the church, and Foundations is essential for a seamless partnership. Regular updates and open dialogue, as allowed by any signed releases, contribute to the success of the program.

Review and Update

This policy will be reviewed every 6 months or when the church's subsidy balance is 75% spent, whichever is sooner.

Emergency Situations

In case of emergencies, participants should contact appropriate emergency services or hotlines. This partnership does not substitute for immediate crisis intervention. Crisis intervention is appropriate for when someone is (or is around someone who is) homicidal, suicidal, and/ or is subjected to a dire situation where they are failing to thrive.

- Wayne County Crisis Hotline: 1-833-557-3224
- Pike County Crisis Hotline: 570-992-0879
- VIP for Wayne and Pike Counties (domestic and intimate partner violence): 570-253-HELP
- National Suicide Hotline: 988

Adopted on: February 19, 2024

Adopted by: Board of Administration, Wallenpaupack Church



Spiritual Development Reimbursement Policy

Purpose and Intent

This policy reflects Wallenpaupack Church's commitment to appreciating and investing in the spiritual well-being of our volunteers. The reimbursement aims to offset costs associated with participating in pre-approved retreats, fostering personal and spiritual growth.

Eligibility

- Volunteer Leaders
 - Defined as those serving regularly with the responsibility of having oversight over other volunteers
 - Examples: Grow Group mentors, ministry leaders
- Volunteer teachers/facilitators
 - Defined as those serving regularly in leading/teaching others in the congregation
 - Examples: WallyKids Leaders, WallyRoots Leaders, Grow Group leaders
- Volunteers must have been in their eligible role for a minimum of 6 months or two semesters (the second semester need not be completed if the event is mid-semester), demonstrating a sustained commitment.

Event and Location Eligibility

- Pre-approved events
 - Orange Tour (for youth leaders)
 - Weekend to Remember (for couples)
 - IF Gathering (for women)
- Pre-approved locations
 - Camp Orchard Hill
 - Spruce Lake
 - Rock Mountain Bible Camp
 - Pocono Mountain Bible Conference
- Additional events require case-by-case approval
- Additional pre-approved events and locations may be added at any time

Reimbursement Terms

- Up to \$100 reimbursement available annually for volunteer leaders who oversee other leaders (i.e., Grow Group Mentors, Ministry Leaders, etc.)
- Up to \$50 reimbursement available annually for volunteer teachers and facilitators (i.e., WallyKids Leaders, WallyRoots Leaders, Grow Group Leaders)
- Those serving multiple eligible roles receive one yearly reimbursement at the highest eligible amount
- Reimbursement can be utilized once per calendar year

Application Process

- Eligible volunteers must request approval via the designated online form at least two weeks ahead of the event.
- The church's preferred payment method is reimbursement after the attended event, supported by a paid receipt, facilitated through an online submission process.

Compliance

- Volunteers are expected to adhere to the terms outlined in this policy to qualify for reimbursement.
- Any exceptions should be communicated and approved on a case-by-case basis.

Review and Update

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to ensure its effectiveness.

Adopted on: February 19, 2024

Adopted by: Board of Administration, Wallenpaupack Church



Inclement Weather Policy

Purpose and Intent

To provide a standard by which inclement weather-related delays and cancellations for on-site Wallenpaupack Church activities are decided and communicated. The policy aims to prioritize the safety and well-being of the Wallenpaupack Church family, including attenders, volunteers, and staff during inclement weather conditions.

Monitoring Weather Conditions

The church leadership (i.e., paid staff and Board of Administration) will monitor weather conditions closely by paying particular attention to forecasts and updates from reliable weather sources, plowers, etc. to best ensure they are making the most informed decisions to the best of their abilities.

Coordination with Local School System

The church may align its decisions with the local school system, although not necessarily. If the schools in Wallenpaupack Area/Wayne Highlands School Districts are closed or have delayed openings due to inclement weather, the church will may follow suit, but will take other factors into consideration (i.e., timing of event, reason for delay/closure, etc.).

Communication Methodology

The Director of Operations will share church-wide decisions through multiple forms of communication, including:

- Text messages
- Social media updates
- Church website and app
- Email distribution

Communication Timeliness

Timely communication is important. In the event of inclement weather, decisions regarding church activities will be communicated within a timeframe that is fair to attendees and those who are volunteering. To the greatest possible extent, the following timeframes will be adhered to:

- Sunday Morning Worship Services
 - Church leadership will have a plan by 8pm on Saturday
 - All Volunteers will be notified by 9pm on Saturday
 - The church will notify the congregation by 7am
- Groups, Meetings, Classes and Other Regularly Scheduled Programming
 - All decisions will be made the day of activity
 - The decision will be communicated at least 2 hours prior to the associated start
 - The point-person for activities in this category will be responsible for making the decision and communicating it to relevant parties
- Special Events
 - Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis
 - The urgency and nature of the event will be taken into consideration

Safety of Volunteers

Volunteers involved in church activities, such as worship teams, WallyKids Leaders, greeters, hospitality, and tech, are not expected to jeopardize their safety. Their well-being is a priority.

Remote Options

For certain activities, the church may explore virtual options as an alternative during inclement weather conditions.

Review and Update

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to ensure its effectiveness.

Adopted on: February 19, 2024

Adopted by: Board of Administration, Wallenpaupack Church



AI Usage Policy

Context

For the purpose of this policy, Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the use of algorithms, computational models, and software applications to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. This includes but is not limited to tools such as Planning Center, Calendly, Mail Chimp, and ChatGPT or other similar platforms (i.e., Claude AI, Microsoft Bing AI/copilot, etc.).

- **What AI Does Not Mean**

AI, as used in this context, does not imply autonomous decision-making or independent thought. It is a tool designed to assist and augment human capabilities rather than replace them entirely.

Uses of AI

- **Inspires Thinking or Refines Thoughts – Never the Sole Creator**

AI tools are encouraged for inspiring creative thinking and refining ideas. However, it is crucial to emphasize that AI should never be considered the sole creator. The final output should reflect the discernment and unique insights of human contributors.

- **Supports and Scales, Not Replaces Relationships**

AI should be employed to support and scale efforts, particularly in administrative tasks, but should never completely replace the personal touch and relational aspects of pastoral care, community building, and leadership. Human connection remains paramount.

- **Stewards Time**

Utilize AI to manage time efficiently, allowing staff to focus on more strategic and impactful aspects of their roles within the church. This includes optimizing workflow and enhancing productivity, emphasizing productivity in church leadership.

- **Automates Repeat Behaviors**

AI tools may be employed to automate repetitive tasks, such as data entry, scheduling, common workflows, freeing up valuable time for more meaningful and creative work.

- **Serves as a Research Tool**

Recognize AI as a valuable research tool, aiding in the collection and analysis

of information to inform decision-making processes. Emphasize ethical sourcing and utilization of information.

- **Amplifies What We Can Do/Accomplish**

Acknowledge that AI has the potential to amplify the impact and reach of the church's activities, allowing for more effective communication, outreach, and ministry.

Need for Attribution and Transparency

Staff and Ministry Leaders are encouraged to exercise discernment in determining appropriate attribution, considering the level of reliance on AI versus human creativity and effort.¹

- **When Attribution is Encouraged**

Attribution is recommended when AI tools play a significant role, similar to utilizing external source material (e.g., publicly recognizing a borrowed sermon series from another church, pastor, or author). Examples warranting acknowledgment include instances where AI generates complete drafts, substantial portions of work or provides core source material.

- **When Attribution is Not Required**

Attribution is not required when AI serves to inspire thinking, provide initial outlines, or refine original ideas. Instances not necessitating attribution are those in which AI-generated ideas are comparable to tasks that might be assigned to an intern without explicit credit.

Platforms in Use

The church utilizes AI platforms, including Planning Center, Mail Chimp, ChatGPT, Claude, Sermon Shots and others. These platforms serve various functions, such as automating processes, enhancing communication, and supporting creative endeavors.²

Responsible AI Use

Staff members, including ministry leaders, are responsible for using AI tools ethically and in alignment with the values and mission of the church.

Accountability and Oversight

Pastors are designated to oversee AI usage, ensuring compliance with this policy and addressing any concerns that may arise.

¹ Standardization: Given the evolving nature of AI in this context, there is currently no standardized approach to citation. Wallenpaupack Church recognizes this, and when widely accepted guidance on citation emerges, the current attribution policy will be re-evaluated.

² Usage: Given the AI-related platforms being created and updated each day, additional platforms may be utilized (or not) before this policy is updated in six months.

Training and Development

Staff members are encouraged to engage in continuous learning and development related to AI tools. Training resources will be provided to ensure that staff can maximize the benefits of these tools.

Privacy and Data Security

Maintain high standards of privacy and data security when using AI tools, especially when handling sensitive information. Adhere to established protocols and best practices.

Compliance with Platform Policies

Staff members are expected to adhere to the terms of service and policies of the AI platforms they use. This includes respecting intellectual property rights and using the tools in a manner consistent with legal and ethical standards.

Periodic Review

Regular reviews of AI usage within the church will be conducted to assess effectiveness, address any emerging issues, and explore new opportunities for improvement.

Communication and Collaboration

Foster open communication among staff members and ministry leaders regarding their experiences with AI tools. Encourage collaboration and shared learning to maximize the benefits of AI across the church.

Revision and Updates

This policy will be periodically reviewed (at least every 6 months due to the rapid advancements in AI usage) and updated as needed to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in supporting the church's mission.

Adopted on: February 19, 2024

Adopted by: Board of Administration, Wallenpaupack Church