

Child and Youth Protection Policy  
Adopted by the Session of First Presbyterian Church on December 17, 2007

The purpose of this policy is to provide the safest environment possible for our children and volunteers. The policy provides processes and procedures for the conduct of youth programs. The Christian Education Ministry Team (CEMT) is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Section 1: Scope. This policy applies to all church activities, regardless of location, for children age birth to 18.

Section 2: Volunteer selection.

- A. Volunteers called to serve child or youth ministries shall exhibit the following characteristics. They should be loving, trustworthy, patient, and nurturing. They should demonstrate Christian tenets by example, be guided by the doctrines of the church, and respectful of the polity of the church. Volunteers should be members of First Presbyterian Church for at least one year. Church leaders charged with the responsibility of calling volunteers for children's and youth ministries shall prayerfully respond to God's call to seek members who demonstrate these characteristics. Volunteer candidates will provide the information on the "Volunteer Form" (appendix 1). The session of FPC will approve volunteer teachers for Sunday School and Logos bible study. The CEMT will approve all other volunteers.
- B. First Presbyterian Church will conduct a criminal records check on all child and youth volunteers who have direct, extended personal contact with children or youth. These volunteer positions include, but are not limited to, Sunday School teachers, Logos bible study teachers, Logos recreation leaders, Logos worship skills leaders, Logos table parents, chaperones for weekend retreats, Sunday night youth fellowship leaders, vacation bible school small group leaders, the Logos Peacemaker, Logos coordinators, and child and youth choir volunteers. The CEMT of FPC will determine additional volunteer positions that require a criminal records check.
- C. The CEMT may accept satisfactory prior criminal records checks conducted by other organizations within the past year such as schools, Boy Scouts of America, or the U.S. armed services.
- D. The church business administrator will maintain in a secure location a roster of completed criminal record checks with only the general finding of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". In the event that the business administrator position is vacant, the senior pastor will designate an alternate from the staff. In the event of an unsatisfactory finding, the senior pastor and a CEMT elder will counsel the individual, and ensure that the individual does not serve as a child or youth volunteer.

Section 3: Two adults will be present in child or youth classrooms. CEMT elders or pastors may grant exceptions to this portion of the policy with advanced notice.

#### Section 4: Training.

- A. Volunteers: First Presbyterian Church will conduct training for volunteers annually. Volunteers shall attend the training or make arrangements with the church to make up the training. Training will cover child abuse prevention, severe weather plans, building evacuation, and basic first aid.
- B. Children and Youth: First Presbyterian Church will teach our children and youth age appropriate child abuse awareness training annually.
- C. Emergency evacuation and severe weather drills will be practiced annually.

Section 5: Volunteer Drivers. All volunteers who serve as a vehicle driver shall have a current license and shall obey traffic laws. Volunteer drivers shall be at least 25 years old. There shall be two or more child or youth passengers in the vehicle.

Section 6: Overnight trips and chaperones. Volunteers who serve as chaperones for overnight trips shall be at least 21 years old. If the event includes both genders, then chaperones will be of both genders, with at least one chaperone for every five children or youth. Sleeping accommodations shall be such that chaperones sleep with their corresponding gender group.

Section 7: Suspected abuse reporting procedure. Any volunteer who suspects an incident of child abuse has occurred shall notify the activity leader and one of the pastors. Appendix 2 of this policy is an abuse report form to be used as a guide in reporting suspected abuse.

- A. Any volunteer personally witnessing any occurrence of or encountering a situation which presents suspicion of the occurrence of abuse is required to report the situation to the activity leader and a pastor immediately after the occurrence. The reporting volunteer will complete a "Suspected Abuse Incident Report Form" (appendix 2).
- B. Any report of child abuse made by a minor about their care by a parent, guardian, youth, adult, or FPC volunteer, no matter how unlikely the report may seem, shall be relayed to the activity leader and a pastor immediately after the occurrence. The reporting volunteer will complete a "Suspected Abuse Incident Report" noting the words originally spoken by the minor and the minor's conduct and demeanor observed concerning the incident.
- C. In the case of any occurrence of a possible violation of this policy, the following steps should be taken to ensure the security of the children and youth involved and to protect against physical, emotional, or psychological injury to all persons involved:
  - Safeguard the child or youth.
  - Report the incident immediately to the activity leader and a pastor.
  - Do not leave the child or youth unsupervised while reporting the incident.
  - Under no circumstances should the accused be given access to the alleged victim.
  - Do not personally confront the alleged violator.
  - Follow the instructions of the activity leader and the pastor.

D. The chair of the Personnel, Evaluation, and Planning (PEP) Ministry Team will initiate an investigation within 24 hours of receiving a “Suspected Abuse Incident Report Form”. He or she will appoint a three member committee to investigate the report. The committee will include one member of the PEP, one member of the CEMT, and one ordained pastor of FPC. The members selected from PEP and CEMT may be the chairs of those ministry teams. The committee will meet as soon as possible and may refer the matter to law enforcement officials or other PC(USA) organizations when necessary.