

COLLEGIATE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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PURPOSE

Members of Collegiate Presbyterian Church believe we are called by God to provide and maintain a safe nurturing environment for all children and youth under the age of 18, while in the care of the Church, during any CPC sponsored or cosponsored event. We recognize CPC is a church that is unlocked and open to the public. The following guidelines are for church sanctioned, scheduled events. Therefore, in accordance with our Christian principles we have established policies and procedures to assist us in protecting the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of the children and youth who participate in CPC sponsored activities. Implementing policies and procedures for persons who work with children and youth will guide and protect the adults who work with them.

DEFINITIONS

Our commitment as Christians calls us to take steps to maintain a safe and nurturing environment for children and youth. To that end we strive to provide for children and youth

- ❖ A place free from hazards
- ❖ Adequate and age-appropriate supervision during church sponsored activities and programs
- ❖ Age appropriate and reasonable learning and recreational activities

Our call as Christians includes preventing the following types of inappropriate conduct:

1. Physical Abuse: Any physical contact intended to force or do harm, any hitting or touching in anger, or any form of neglect.
2. Emotional/Verbal Abuse: Using mean spirited speech to hurt, including insults, name calling, belittling remarks, unfavorable comparisons with other children or youth, shaming, or deliberately causing fear.
3. Spiritual Abuse: Using Scripture or church authority to coerce, control or shame; using threats about condemnation from God or making threats about God withholding love to control behavior.
4. Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim including fondling private parts, oral, genital, or anal penetration, sexual intercourse, forcible rape, suggestive sexual comments/or provocative behavior, showing pornography (sexually explicit materials), exposing sex organs, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

PRINCIPLES OF CHILD PROTECTION

Protecting children from harm involves four interrelated policies and procedures.

- a. Providing for appropriate selection and screening of workers (both paid and volunteer) to maintain a caring and nurturing staff.
- b. Training workers (both paid and volunteer) in the Child Protection Policies and Procedures.
- c. Ensuring adequate supervision of children and workers in order to reduce risks.
- d. Implementing a written response plan should an accident or abusive incident occur.

A. Selection and Screening of Workers

Collegiate Presbyterian Church will exercise reasonable care in selection, screening, and training of both paid staff and volunteers. Procedures for paid staff screening and volunteer screening and training are described below.

1. Procedures for Paid Staff Screening

- a) All paid employees of Collegiate Presbyterian Church will be required to complete an Employment Application.
- b) After an application is received, prior employment and volunteer service as well as personal references will be checked. At a minimum, personal references will be contacted and written memoranda will be made of the contents of those telephone conversations, and prior employment and church service references will be verified by phone.
- c) Any prospective employee who has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse shall not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they will have contact with children or youth.
- d) Criminal background checks will be performed on each applicant after the applicant has signed the appropriate authorization, prior to being enlisted as a paid staff member. Church Administrator oversees and reports compliance/non-compliance to staff supervisor, or, if necessary, the personnel committee. After the initial background check, criminal background checks will be performed on all paid staff members every 3 years or as deemed necessary. Paid staff with a criminal history that includes a conviction for violent or sex related felony/serious misdemeanor will not be allowed to work with children or youth. In the event of criminal history, two members of the pastoral staff and one member of the Personnel committee will gather to address and make a decision about the applicant's ability to work with children and youth and in what capacity.

- e) After reviewing the applications of the applicant, standard interview questions will be used in personal interviews with employee applicants, checking all references, and receiving a criminal background check report. Interview sheets will be completed with the results of the interview. These sheets will be kept in the employee personnel file, along with the reference check memoranda and application. A separate file will be maintained permanently on each paid staff worker.

2. Procedures for Volunteer Screening

- a) All volunteers working directly with children and youth will be required to complete an application that lists their experiences working with children and youth, both volunteer and paid, as well as personal references.
- b) Personal references may be telephoned and written memoranda may be made of the contents of those telephone conversations. If such documentation is obtained, it will be kept on file in each volunteer's personal confidential file.
- c) All volunteers working with children and youth will be required to sign a release form to be kept on file, allowing Collegiate Presbyterian Church to complete a criminal background check upon initial appointment and every three years thereafter.
- d) Volunteers with a criminal history that includes a conviction for violent or sex-related felony or serious misdemeanor will not be allowed to work with children or youth. Any criminal history results will be reviewed by two members of the pastoral staff.
- e) A confidential file will be maintained on each volunteer working with children and youth, and will be accessible only to authorized individuals.
- f) Volunteers under 18 may work with children and youth under the supervision of adults. Youth must be at least 3 years older than the children/youth they are working with. These minors must fill out the same application as adults.

B. Training Workers

- 1) All workers (both paid and volunteer) will be trained on the Child Protection Policies and Procedures, when hired/enlisted and whenever the policy is updated.
- 2) A copy of "The Child Protection Policy and Procedures" will be provided to each volunteer and paid worker when enlisted/hired and whenever the policy is updated. A copy of the policy will be readily available in the church office and on the Church's website.
- 3) Each volunteer or paid staff will be required to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of the policy and willingness to abide by it. Signed statements will be kept on file with the volunteer or paid worker's application.

C. Ensuring Adequate Supervision of Children and Workers

Collegiate Presbyterian Church will provide proper supervision of children and workers (both paid and volunteer) to reduce risks and ensure a safe environment for children. Outside of specifically scheduled programs and events, parents/guardians are responsible for providing adequate supervision for their children. Established principles of child protection emphasize the importance of three related principles for reducing risk: reducing isolation, increasing accountability, and maintaining appropriate balance of power. Specific risk management strategies that address each of these principles are described below:

Child Protection Principle	Risk Management Strategies
Reducing Isolation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Maintain an adequate and appropriate number of adults present with children2. Meet in open locations3. Meet at reasonable times of the day4. Invite parents to visit unannounced
Increasing Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Issue job description for everyone2. Maintain more than one adult present with children in most cases3. Tolerate no secrecy
Preventing Misuse of Influence and Control	Pair children of similar ages in isolated or potentially sensitive situations (e.g. going to the bathroom)

In accordance with these principles, the following policies will be followed for all staff and volunteers working with children.

- 1) All staff and volunteers working with children and youth in organized activities shall observe the “two-person rule” and/or the “open-view rule” at all times. The “two-person rule” requires that employees, volunteers, and supervisors will avoid situations in which one worker (either paid or volunteer) is alone with children or youth. Additionally, the two-person rule requires these two individuals to be unrelated. If the two-person rule is not feasible or practical, then the “open-view rule” must be observed. The “open-view rule” requires the interior of the occupied room to be visible to outside observers. An open door, a split door with one half open or an observation window or opening meets the requirements of this rule.
- 2) Church attendance for six months is required for full volunteer service working with children and youth ministries. During the initial six-month period, prospective volunteers may participate under the direction of another adult, who has been active in the church for more than six months.

- 3) Parental/guardian permission shall be obtained in advance in writing for each child's regular involvement in church sponsored programs and activities. Good faith attempts will be made to get permission from guests participating in church sponsored programs and activities.
- 4) Adequate teacher/student ratios will be maintained. These ratios are described as follows:

Birth – 2 yrs.	1:4
3 yrs. – 5 yrs.	1:5
6 yrs. – 8 yrs.	1:6
9 yrs. – 11 yrs.	1:10
12 yrs. – up to 18 yrs.	1:15
- 5) Parents/guardians will be informed that they are welcome to make visits to their child's classroom or meeting area at any time, announced or unannounced.
- 6) Care shall be taken to release children only to their parents/guardians or to other prearranged individuals. Youth (middle school and older) may be released to themselves.
- 7) Children, ages birth through kindergarten, will be checked in and checked out only to their parent/guardian or another previously approved adult.
- 8) Clergy, youth leaders, choir directors, teachers, volunteers and paid staff may not drive individual children or youth without a good faith effort to obtain written permission of the child's parent/guardian.
- 9) In a non-educational context with children ages birth through 5th grade, the use of movies or other media rated other than PG requires written parental permission. Curriculum used in an educational context, such as Workshop Rotation and Club CPC, is available for parental review.

D. Response Plan and Reporting Procedures

Collegiate Presbyterian Church will treat any suspected child abuse seriously and will follow appropriate reporting procedures. For effective reporting and follow-up to occur it is essential to have appropriate documentation of any suspected problems. Therefore, any person who believes that a child's physical health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect when the child was involved in a church-related function shall report the incident in accordance with the procedures described below:

- 1) A volunteer or paid worker who suspects an incident of abuse in accordance with this policy will immediately report to the Head of Staff (or his/her designee) the situation.
 - a) The Head of Staff (or his/her designee) will make a decision about whether the reported suspicion falls under the auspices of the Child Protection Policies and Procedures.
 - i) If it does not, the Head of Staff (or his/her designee) will review with the reporter what needs to be done to rectify the situation.
 - ii) If the situation warrants, the Head of Staff (or his/her designee) will continue with the following procedures.
- 2) At the discretion of the Head of Staff (or his/her designee) the accused may be suspended.
- 3) The reporter and Head of Staff (or his/her designee) will make written documentation of everything done and said.
- 4) The Head of Staff (or his/her designee) will immediately notify the parents/guardians of the alleged victim and respond to their questions and concerns.
- 5) Should the situation warrant such action, the Head of Staff (or his/her designee) will call the Department of Human Services or the Police to report the situation, and will follow up with the appropriate paper work.
- 6) The Head of Staff (or his/her designee) will, as soon as practical, inform members of the Session of the alleged incident and convene a special meeting.
- 7) The Head of Staff (or his/her designee) or Clerk of Session will provide assistance to the alleged victim and accused and his/her family in obtaining counseling.
- 8) The Head of Staff (or his/her designee) or Clerk of Session will notify the insurance carrier, and comply with its investigation, comply with the legal and state authorities in their investigation, prepare a written statement, and designate a spokesperson to respond to media inquiries.
- 9) The Head of Staff (or his/her designee) or Clerk of Session will inform the affected volunteers and paid staff of the need for confidentiality, and respond to the concerns of other parents.
- 10) All procedures followed in the disposition of the allegation will be documented.
 - In the event that a pastor on staff is under suspicion of abuse, the member of the Personnel Committee receiving the report must report the allegation to the Presbytery's Chair of Committee on Ministry and to the Pastor to the Presbytery. In the event that the Head of Staff is under suspicion of abuse, those who suspect abuse must report to another pastoral staff member and one member of the Personnel Committee. The following procedures will be followed with the other pastoral staff member and Personnel member substituting for the Head of Staff.

- 11) In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to their staff supervisor for further action, including reporting to Head of Staff (or his/her designee) and reporting to authorities/Department of Human Services as may be necessary.

POLICY DISSEMINATION AND REVIEW

Information about the Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be included in the information given to new members. Each new worker (volunteer or paid) will receive a copy of the policy and will be required to sign a covenant indicating they have read and are willing to abide by this policy. The congregation will be informed about the purpose and contents of the policy and procedures annually at the Annual Meeting of the congregation in the Children and Youth Spiritual Formation Report. Copies of the policy and procedures will be kept in the Church office, and on the Church website. Each new staff member and volunteer will receive a copy of the policy. The policy will be reviewed by the Children and Youth Spiritual Formation Committee every three years, or when necessary to comply with changes in laws, customs, or insurance requirements and report the review to the Session for action on any suggested revisions.

COVENANT FOR LEADERS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

I consider this a vow to God, and a covenant between myself, Collegiate Presbyterian Church, and the children and youth with whom I will work and their families.

During my time with Collegiate I will live as a Christian called to service in God's realm.

I understand that I have been entrusted with the safety and welfare of all the children and youth assigned to me. At all times, I will guard their physical safety as well as their emotional well-being.

I understand that I have been entrusted with the spiritual health of all the children and youth assigned to me. At all times, I will care for their faith development. I will care for their needs for friendship and security and I will work to build a caring, loving community within the classroom and within the church.

I will take care of my own physical and spiritual health.

I understand that I must be careful of "suggestive" situations. I will follow the two-person rule or the open-view rule at all times. If someone requests time alone with me, we will meet in sight of others, but not necessarily where others can hear us.

I will never touch a child or youth in anger.

I will use appropriate signs of affection and Christian caring. I will respect the feelings of those who do not enjoy even the slightest casual touch.

I will guard my language. I will not swear or use inappropriate language in the presence of children or youth.

I will set a good example of respecting the property of others, and I will be a good steward of God's earth.

I will report suspected abuse of children and youth in my care using the guidelines set forth in this policy.

I have read the CPC Child Protection Policy and Procedures and covenant and agree to abide by these statements. I understand that if I do not abide by this agreement, my volunteer services can be terminated at the discretion of the Church staff and/or Christian Education Committee. By signing below, I am acknowledging this covenant between me and Collegiate Presbyterian Church.

Signature of Volunteer/Worker

Date

Under 18 Parental Agreement

Date

APPLICATION FORM FOR THOSE WORKING WITH MINORS

This form is to be completed for any position (paid or volunteer) involving the supervision or care of minors. This is being used to provide a safe and secure environment for the activities and programs of the church.

Name _____
Last First Middle Maiden

DL# _____ Date of Birth _____
(Identity MUST be confirmed with a driver's license.)

Present Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Occupation _____ Work Phone _____

If less than one year:

Previous Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Occupation _____ Work Phone _____

Have you ever been arrested for, charged with, under probation for, or convicted of either sexual or physical abuse? _____ Yes _____ No. If yes, please explain: _____

(Turn over to complete)

Personal References (3 Non Relative)

Name

Address

Telephone

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I, the undersigned, authorize any references or churches listed in this application to release any and all records or information related to working with minors. The Church Staff or their designee may contact my references and appropriate government agencies as deemed necessary in order to verify my suitability as a worker. I understand that the personal information provided in this application will be held in strict confidentiality.

Signature _____ Date _____

**AUTHORIZATION
TO ACQUIRE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

I, the undersigned, authorize Collegiate Presbyterian Church to acquire a criminal background check on me.

Print Name

Signature Date

Address

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Social Security Number _____

Date of Birth _____

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Reason for report _____

Date of incident _____ Time _____

Event/Activity _____

Name of Reporter _____ Class/Group _____

Title _____

Name(s) of Child(ren) _____ Age(s) _____

_____ Age(s) _____

_____ Age(s) _____

Quote the child's/youth's first words verbatim: (there is no need to question the child further) _____

Briefly describe child's/youth's demeanor/appearance: _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

What action did you take? _____

Has the incident been resolved? ____ Yes ____ No

Explain: _____

Were there any witnesses? _____ Yes _____ No

Names: _____

Signatures of witnesses (if possible): _____

Report submitted to: _____

Date: _____