

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
SOUTH BEND, INDIANA**

Operating Policies for All Children's and Youth Ministries

Child Protection Policy

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

Operating Policies for All Children's and Youth Ministries Child Protection Policy

Preface

As the First Presbyterian Church of South Bend, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well being of children is vital. This policy is intended to ensure that Church activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable children.

These policies were developed to establish a proactive policy to help keep children and adults safe on Church property and at Church activities. Need for such a manual was fueled by national awareness of numerous incidents of child sexual abuse and accusations of child sexual abuse in church settings. Whether substantiated or not, these have had a profoundly devastating effect on the individuals and churches involved. The church, as a trusting, loving, and open place, is particularly vulnerable to this problem.

This manual establishes a policy intended to minimize the possibilities for abuse and the opportunities for false accusations. These guidelines are intended to provide a safe, secure environment for the nurture of all children of God.

The primary purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and well being of children and youth by providing clear instructions about the operation of Church-related children's and youth ministries. We request the cooperation of the adults in our Church who must abide by the stringent guidelines of this policy.

Child and Youth Safety Takes Priority

The greatest priority of our Church's children's and youth programs is to help young people, through teaching of the Bible and the example of the leaders, to acknowledge God as their Creator, accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, and affirm the Holy Spirit as their ever-present guide. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse, or endangerment directly contradicts this priority and the values of the Church.

A Higher Standard

As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, every worker at the Church must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. All workers must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place.

Policy Standards and General Christian Moral Standards

Workers in children's and youth ministry are expected to observe these policies and guidelines as well as the other Christian standards of moral behavior.

Supervision of Children's and Youth Ministry Workers

Adequate Supervision of Child and Youth Workers

Church staff and volunteers who supervise youth workers are charged with the diligent enforcement of these policies. Violation of these policies is grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or re-assignment from youth work for both volunteers and staff, at the discretion of the Church. Supervisors and all youth workers who suspect any unhealthy or abusive activities must discuss their suspicions promptly with the Director of Christian Nurture, the Associate Pastor(s) or the Pastor/Head of Staff.

Worker to Child Ratios

The Church must maintain the following ratios of ministry workers to children whenever feasible. **Two adults** must be present in the room during child and youth programs. At no time should one adult be alone with one child or youth.

Recommended Worker to Child Ratios:

PROGRAM	WORKERS	CHILDREN
Nursery	2	6
Toddlers	2	10
Sunday School	2	10
Youth Programs	2	10

Child Security Procedures

Drop-Off Procedures

No child or youth should be left in a program area without the leader present. Supervision for all programs will begin at least fifteen minutes before the stated starting time and continue up to fifteen minutes following the program ending time.

Elementary Age Bathroom Procedures

1. An adult should escort a group of children of any age to the rest room. It should be the aim to always go as a group. Try to avoid taking a child to the rest room alone. If it is necessary to take a child to the rest room alone, observe the open door policy.
2. If a child must be sent to the rest room alone, establish a short time frame for the child's return to the classroom.

Open Door Policy

At no time will anyone working with children have a one-on-one meeting behind closed doors. For your protection, keep your door at least partially open.

Field Trips and Special Events

1. Off-site activities must be pre-approved by the Director of Christian Nurture, the Associate Pastor(s) or the Pastor/Head of Staff. There must be at least two leaders present on any field trip or special event.
2. Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in each field trip or special event. Duplicate forms must be taken by the leader on each field trip.
3. The staff in charge will ensure appropriate adult/child ratios.
4. When transporting children in an activity, all drivers must be over the age of 21 and have an Auto Safety Form (see Appendix) on file with the Church office. The number of persons per car must not exceed the number of seat belts. All occupants must use seat belts or age appropriate child restraints at all times.
5. License plate numbers, cellular phone numbers and any telephone numbers where the group may be reached must be on file in the Church office prior to the trip.

Overnight Procedure

1. Situations where staff members/leaders are taking young people out of the area for long periods of time (for example: work camps, conferences, etc.) or for overnight outings are to be carefully planned. Use known, proven staff/leaders along with any “rookies” so that staff/leaders who are new are not left alone with the young people in a situation where there are no other staff members/leaders to observe. Under no circumstances may one adult be allowed to take youth on an overnight outing by himself/herself.
2. All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the Director of Christian Nurture, the Associate Pastor(s) or the Pastor/Head of Staff.
 - a. A proposed itinerary must be submitted to the pastoral staff prior to any overnight activity. Please use Field Trip Planning Form. (See Appendix.) It is requested that the itinerary be submitted at least three weeks before the event, when possible.
 - b. Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in each field trip or special event. The leader must take duplicate forms on each overnight trip.
3. There will not be overnight activities for children younger than third grade unless it is a specific parent/child activity.
4. Separate sleeping areas for male and female participants must be provided.
5. Appropriate adult/youth ratios must be ensured by the staff/leaders in charge.
6. If the group is coeducational, there must be at least one male and one female adult to accompany the group.

Proper Display of Affection

We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. We have implemented a touching policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children and youth:

1. Hugging and other forms of appropriate physical affection between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our Church setting, with reasonable limitations.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child or youth. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a four-year-old to sit in a nursery worker's lap and give a kiss on the cheek, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and youth leader to behave this way.)
3. Touching should be initiated by the child or by the youth. It should be a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based upon the adult's emotional need.
4. Casual touch – gentle contact during activities may occur in the form of pats of children's heads, shoulders, arms or hands. Physical discipline must never be used. (See below.)
5. Touching and affection is best given publicly, in front of other volunteers and children/youth. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when it is open to observation.
6. Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. As ministry workers our behavior must foster trust at all times; it should be above reproach.
7. A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child.
8. Church workers are responsible to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others.
9. Church workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with their ministry leader, the Director of Christian Nurture, the Associate Pastor(s) or the Pastor/Head of Staff.

Discipline

Any interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider a child's dignity. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, training corrections, and positive reinforcement. Reinforce good and appropriate behavior with praise and thanks. Should a disciplinary problem arise, keep the following in mind:

1. Physical punishment or humiliation will not be used.
2. The child should know the consequences of his/her behavior ahead of time, if possible.

3. Punishment should never be harsh or severe.
4. Children should not be allowed to discipline each other.
5. Time-out is an acceptable method of redirecting a child having difficulty. A good rule of thumb is one minute of time-out per year of the child's age (i.e., a 5 year old child could sit out for 5 minutes). If time-out is used, the child is removed from the group, but is not left unsupervised. A chair in the corner of the classroom is acceptable.
6. If a situation arises that cannot be handled by the staff members/leaders, the pastoral staff or designee should be contacted for advice.

Dating

At no time shall any staff member or leader working with youth pursue a dating or romantic relationship with a youth participant. Staff should always be cautious with students with "crushes" on staff members/leaders.

Gifts

Staff, leaders, and volunteers are not to give gifts to individual children or young people without the prior knowledge of the parent(s) and/or supervisor. Because gift giving can be a form of buying loyalty or silence, gift giving should be done on a group basis for special occasions only. Gifts should not be elaborate and should be appropriate to the occasion.

Incident Reports

An Incident Report must be completed by the activity leader/person observing the incident immediately following any accident that causes an injury or serious incident requiring discipline. The report should be given to the Director of Christian Nurture or Associate Pastor(s), who will notify the parent(s), and the Pastor/Head of Staff.

Parent Contact

If a parent shares a piece of information with a program director or leader, such as upcoming hospitalization, etc., this should be recorded on the Child/Youth Information Form.

Special Needs

Parents/guardians will notify the Church if their child has any special need that would require adaptations to the program. They will work together with the family, leaders, and/or special consultants to provide reasonable and appropriate adaptations that will allow for a positive experience for all involved.

Photography Policy

It is considered appropriate for photographs of children to be posted within the Church. If any photo is to be published publicly, including a brochure or website, parental approval will be obtained beforehand, in writing, for each photo used (see Photo Permission Form in Appendix).

Accident/Incident Reports

Any automobile accidents or injuries involving staff, leaders, or participants in Church-sponsored programs or activities should be reported immediately. A written report should be provided on the appropriate Accident/Incident Report Form. One copy of the report should be given to the Director of Christian Nurture or Associate Pastor(s) and one to the parents.

Worker Selection and Supervision

The following guidelines will be used as the Church reviews applicants for positions in children's or youth ministry:

Minimum Age

All paid workers must be 16 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults in a volunteer capacity, but they may not take the place of adult workers.

Confidential Interviews

All applicants must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. Interviews will be conducted by the appropriate staff member and a program representative. A team of interviewers may be used. Church policy and guidelines should be discussed during the interview.

Six-Month Rule, Exceptions

Prospective volunteers must have been a member of the Church or a regular attendee of the Church for at least six months or if not, have completed the application and background check required of employees of the Church who have contact with children or youth. A "regular attendee" is a person who attends a regularly-scheduled worship service on a twice a month basis. Individuals who are not members or have not participated for six months, may, at the discretion of the appropriate staff member(s), including at least one member of the pastoral staff, serve as a volunteer under the direction of a screened Church member.

Survivors of Child Abuse

Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood sexual or physical abuse needs the love and acceptance of the Church family. A person's experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their suitability as ministry workers. Applicants who are survivors of abuse should discuss this in confidence with the person who conducts the confidential interview. If applicants are uncomfortable doing so, they may have the interview conducted by a pastor. When evaluating candidates, the following factors will be considered if an applicant is a survivor of child abuse:

1. whether the applicant has previously committed an act of child abuse or molestation (anyone who has maltreated children may not serve in children's or youth ministry);
2. the extent of professional counseling the applicant has received;

3. the opinion of references, especially professional counselors who have served the applicant;
4. the opinion of leaders in other churches or youth organizations in which the applicant has been involved; and
5. how closely the Church is able to supervise and monitor the position for which the applicant is applying.

Application Forms

All applicants, for paid staff and volunteer supervisory positions, **must** complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information (see Appendix). All records will be kept confidential.

References

Church leaders will check **at least** two references for each worker. The references will be checked by phone, mail, e-mail or in person. Whenever possible, the two references should include: one person who has known the applicant well for an extended period of time, a former supervisor, and a member of the applicant's immediate family. For applicants for compensated positions, references from additional former supervisors may be checked. *A reference checklist or report of contact (see Appendix) will be completed by the person conducting the reference check.*

First Aid Training

Church **employees** who supervise young people must maintain current certification in Basic First Aid and Basic CPR (or their equivalent). The Church will pay costs for this training. Employees will be paid for attending training. New employees must get this certification within 90 days of the start of their employment. Nursery workers and others serving young children may also want training in infant and toddler CPR. Other workers are encouraged, but not required, to get training if they frequently accompany children and youth on adventure activities: water sports, camping, home-building mission trips, etc.

Criminal Background Check

Criminal background checks are required for all paid staff and supervisory volunteer positions, including program staff, clerical staff, custodial staff, child care providers, and middle school/high school teachers/leaders. Background checks will NOT be required for those volunteers whose contact with children and youth is occasional. However, a person who has undergone a successful background check should always supervise those individuals.

Signatures on Guidelines

All applicants must agree by signature that they understand the guidelines pertaining to their positions and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants sign the printed Guidelines forms that are appropriate to their position. Staff members or volunteers who work with several ministry areas should sign the appropriate form for each ministry area.

Confidentiality of Information

The Church will keep confidential all information received in the applicant selection process, including criminal background checks. Selection information will be marked as such and stored with limited access afforded only to the pastoral staff, the Director of Christian Nurture and others they feel have a need to know. Reports will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Finance Office.

Delays in Receiving Information

While the Church is waiting for background information and references, applicants may begin working in contact with children. During this time applicants can work only if closely supervised by a certified supervisor. Failure to receive satisfactory responses in a timely manner may result in dismissal or withdrawal of the offer to work with the child or youth ministry program.

Classification of Workers According to Their Duties

In order to screen workers appropriately to their responsibilities, the Church will categorize workers into two categories: primary and secondary. Please note that the terms primary and secondary do not refer to the ages of children served, but rather to relative levels of responsibility and risk.

Primary workers – All paid staff, nursery coordinators, and supervisory-level positions (paid or unpaid, including middle school/high school teachers/leaders).

Secondary workers – Nursery volunteers, assistants, Church School volunteers, group leaders, and any volunteers who assist someone else in the teaching, care and supervision of minors.

Guidelines for Nursery Workers

Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The Church has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone who has custody or supervision of nursery age children.

Before You Begin

1. **Six-Month Rule** – All workers must be members or regular attendees of the Church, as defined in the Operating Policy, for at least six months before working in the nursery. Individuals who are not members or have not participated for six months, may, at the discretion of the appropriate staff member(s), including at least one member of the pastoral staff, serve as a volunteer under the direction of a screened Church member.
2. **Completion of Application** – All nursery workers must complete and sign an Application Form (see Appendix).
3. **References** – After gaining the applicant's permission, Church leaders will contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by Church leaders. The Church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in Church work previously.
4. **Interview** – All nursery workers must be interviewed by a nursery and Church leader to determine their suitability for nursery work. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.
5. **Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines** – All nursery workers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

1. **Two-Person Rule** – **Two workers must be present** in each nursery room at all times. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of injury or child abuse. Second, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. The Two-Person Rule can be satisfied by having a roamer who is assigned to move from room to room during sessions.
2. **Only assigned workers may be in the nursery.** There are two exceptions to this rule: nursing mothers and parents called to the nursery to calm an upset child.
3. **Only the parent(s) or persons certified in writing** by a parent, can receive their child from the nursery.
4. **Corporal Punishment** (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate at First Presbyterian Church of South Bend activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Nursery workers must consult a nursery leader or other Church leader if they need help with discipline techniques.

5. **Workers must report suspected or observed child abuse to local law enforcement, including the South Bend Police, Child Abuse Protection Services of St. Joseph County, or the St. Joseph County Prosecutor.** Indiana Code §31-33-5. In addition to contacting the appropriate authorities, workers must report suspected or observed child abuse to the nursery leader, the Director of Christian Nurture, or a pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.
6. **Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.** This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.
7. **Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved** from nursery duty at the sole discretion of the Director of Christian Nurture or a member of the pastoral staff.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:

Signature _____ Date _____

Guidelines for Children's and Youth Teachers

Note: We live in an age where sexual misconduct and child abuse is a reality in our society. The Church has implemented policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone teaching children at First Presbyterian Church of South Bend.

Before You Begin

1. **Six-Month Rule** – All workers must be members or regular attendees of the Church for at least six months before teaching Sunday school. Individuals who are not members or have not participated for six months, may, at the discretion of the appropriate staff member(s), including at least one member of the pastoral staff, serve as a volunteer under the direction of a screened Church member.
2. **Completion of Application and Release Authorization** – All Sunday school teachers must complete and sign an Application Form (see Appendix).
3. **References** – After gaining the applicant's permission, Church leaders will contact references if they do not have adequate knowledge of the applicant already in their judgment. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by Church leaders. The Church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have previously supervised applicants in Church work.
4. **Background Check and Social Services Registry** – After gaining the applicant's permission, Church officers may conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants if the Church leaders do not have what they consider adequate background information on the applicant.
5. **Auto Safety Form** – All Sunday school teachers who will be driving children or conducting other Church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety Form (see Appendix).
6. **Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines** – All Sunday school teachers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

1. **Two-Person Rule** – **Two workers must be present** in each Sunday school room at all times. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of injury or child abuse. Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. The Two-Person Rule can be satisfied by having a roamer who is assigned to move from room to room when two adults cannot be present in the classroom at all times.
2. **Team Teaching and Chaperoning** – Our goal is to assign teachers in teams of two per Sunday school hour to every class of children or youth. Concerted effort will be made to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteer teachers to permit such team teaching. For

classrooms where it proves impractical to assign two teachers, the teacher is required to leave the door open unless the children are too young and are impossible to keep in the classroom without closing the door. In any event, the teacher must leave the door window unblocked unless two adults are in the classroom. Further, the program director or his/her appointee will make rounds involving random visits to classrooms throughout the hour, with a special focus on single teacher classrooms.

Other Church-sponsored or community groups of children or youth who meet at the Church should have two or more leaders present whenever possible. When the group includes both boys and girls, both male and female leaders should be present. If the group stays overnight at the Church, or if a Church-sponsored group leaves the premises, two or more leaders must be present, and no fewer than two adults must be present in any room where adults and children are sleeping.

3. **Corporal punishment** (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in First Presbyterian Church of South Bend activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Teachers must consult their supervisors or a pastor if they need help with misbehaving youth or discipline techniques.
4. **Classroom Discipline** – All teachers and workers will utilize the following discipline measures. If a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child specifically what he or she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is, e.g., “We do not throw the blocks. We use blocks for building.” If this measure is effective, the child will be guided to another activity. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be placed at a table to work alone away from the other students. If the child’s disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the child’s parents may be called to pick up the child, or the child may be taken to an empty classroom or office and left under the supervision of the program director or her appointee. No physical punishment or verbal abuse, such as ridicule, are to be used at any time. If isolating the child within the classroom or removal of the child from the room becomes necessary, the situation will be discussed with the child’s parents or guardian as soon as possible.
5. **Workers must report suspected or observed child abuse to the South Bend Police, Child Abuse Protection Services of St. Joseph County, or the St. Joseph County Prosecutor’s Office.** Indiana Code §31-33-5. In addition to contacting the appropriate authorities, workers must report suspected or observed child abuse to the Director of Christian Nurture or a pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.
6. **Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.** This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.
7. **Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved** from duty by the Pastor/Head of Staff, or the Associate Pastor(s) or Director of Christian Nurture in consultation with the Pastor/Head of Staff.

8. **Open Classrooms** – Classrooms or child care rooms may be visited without prior notice by Church staff, parents, or other volunteer Church workers, such as members of the Christian Education Committee. Brief observations of child care rooms and classrooms of children or youth are conducted by the Director of Christian Nurture during the Sunday school hours.

I have read the (Children’s and Youth Teachers) guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:

Signature _____

Date _____

Guidelines for Youth Group Leaders, Interns, Chaperones and Youth Leader Assistants

Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The Church has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working with youth at First Presbyterian Church of South Bend.

Before You Begin

1. **Six-Month Rule** – All volunteer workers should be members or regular attendees of the Church for at least six months before becoming youth workers. Individuals who are not members or have not participated for six months, may, at the discretion of the Director of Christian Nurture and one member of the pastoral staff, serve as a volunteer under the direction of a screened Church member.
2. **Completion of Application** – All youth program leaders must complete and sign an Application Form (see Appendix).
3. **References** – After gaining the applicant's permission, Church leaders will contact references as they see fit. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by Church leaders. The Church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in Church work previously.
4. **Background Check** – After gaining the applicant's permission, Church leaders may conduct a criminal background check. This is mandatory for primary positions and strongly suggested for secondary positions.
5. **Auto Safety Form** – All youth workers who will be driving children or conducting other Church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety Form (see Appendix).
6. **Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines** – All youth leaders must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

1. **Team Leadership-Two Person Rule** – Whenever feasible a youth will not be in the primary care of only one adult. Teams of at least two adults will supervise activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperones must be present. If these conditions cannot be met, then the event should be postponed. This policy has three purposes: it provides for more than one adult to help ensure appropriate levels of supervision, it protects adults from unfounded allegations, and it reduces the possibility of an adult becoming a person who thrives on the dependency of youth and by doing so having undue influence over an individual young person.
2. **Overnight Activities** – At least two adults will supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperones must be present. If these conditions cannot be met, then the event should be postponed. It is never

appropriate for an adult chaperone who is not a family member to share a bed with a youth. Males and females attending events should not share the same sleeping quarters and should have separate access to bathroom facilities. Experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to youth ministry.

3. **Individual Counseling** – Team counseling is preferable whenever possible. When team counseling sessions are not feasible, notify another adult of the location and with whom you are meeting. Counseling should be done in a place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. If possible, have female adults counsel female youths and males counsel males. A male/female team is generally appropriate for counseling either gender.
4. **Long-Term Counseling** – Youth workers should not meet with youth more than three times to discuss the same issue. Youth workers are not prepared or supported for long-term counseling or formal therapy. Adult leaders are encouraged to refer youth who they suspect have a serious need for counseling to professionals in the community. Questions about referral must be discussed promptly with a member of the pastoral staff.
5. **Informal Contact (Independent of Church Activities)** – Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact between an adult worker and a youth that is not connected to official Church activities. The Church recognizes that informal contact between worker and youth frequently occurs. For example, workers may hire teens as baby sitters for their own children, or workers may see kids during social events with the child's family. This interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, workers should seek permission of parents before having informal contact with their child. The worker should clearly let the parent know the nature of the contact and that it is not part of Church activity. Parents are responsible for monitoring this informal contact.
6. **Transportation To and From Meetings** – Transportation to and from meetings is not part of Church or youth group activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. Parents are discouraged from asking leaders to transport children. However, if a leader does transport a youth at the parent's request, this should be recognized as informal contact (not a part of Church activities), and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed (see paragraph above).
7. **Transportation As a Part of Church Programs** – The Church may from time to time provide transportation as an official part of Church activities. For example, the Church may provide transportation to out-of-town events or field trips. When youth are transported as a part of club activities, all guidelines will apply. Following the two-adult rule and having all drivers complete an Auto Safety Form (see Appendix) are especially important.
8. **Confidentiality** – **Youth workers must report to a pastor if a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime, or being abused.** There are limits to confidentiality when working with youth. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality must be discussed promptly with the one of pastors. Any serious issues discussed in confidence should be reviewed with one of the ministers, who will also protect the confidential nature of the discussion. Conferring with a pastor on sensitive issues is not considered breaking a confidence.

9. **Youth Supervising Youth** – Minors may help adults lead youth activities only under the direct leadership of adults. A minor may not be used to meet the team leadership or team counseling guidelines discussed above.
10. **Gifts** – Youth workers are generally discouraged from giving personal gifts or money to youth. When the giving of personal gifts is desired, the youth worker must first notify parents and the youth minister. Gifts can be easily misinterpreted. Gifts given to groups of young people are appropriate, such as graduation presents or awards for participation.
11. **Corporal Punishment** – Corporal punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are not appropriate in First Presbyterian Church activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Youth workers must consult their supervisors or a minister if they need help with misbehaving youth or discipline techniques.
12. **Open Door Policy** – All youth events should be open door. This means that workers, parents, and Church members have a right to observe any youth activity.
13. **Dating or Sexual Involvement** – No adult youth worker is to date a youth or be romantically or sexually involved with a youth. Any adult with prior incidents of sexual misconduct may not be a youth worker or serve in any capacity of youth ministry at First Presbyterian Church. There are no exceptions to this guideline.
14. **Workers must report suspected or observed child abuse to the South Bend Police, Child Abuse Protection Services of St. Joseph County, or the St. Joseph County Prosecutor’s Office.** Indiana Code §31-33-5. In addition to contacting the appropriate authorities, workers must report suspected or observed child abuse to the Director of Christian Nurture or a pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.
15. **Supervision and Communication** – Youth workers must meet on a regular basis with the youth program leader, and the youth program leader must meet with the Associate Pastor(s) or Pastor/Head of Staff periodically to discuss any issues regarding these guidelines. Appropriate topics that must be discussed include problems, accountability, policy clarification, personal feelings, or other issues that may interfere with youth ministry efforts.
16. **Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.** This is necessary in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.
17. **Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved** from youth program duty by the Associate Pastor(s) in consultation with the Pastor/Head of Staff.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:

Signature _____ Date _____

State Regulations, Policies and Procedures for Teachers and Workers in The Children's Center

Note: We live in an age where sexual misconduct and child abuse is a reality in our society. The Church has implemented policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them.

The Children's Center is held to a higher standard because of federal and state regulations.

The Children's Center Board of Directors and all staff associated with the Children's Center of First Presbyterian Church of South Bend operate under Indiana Rule 4.7 Child Care Centers; Licensing (8-11-03), 470 IAC 3-4.7-1, under the authority of IC 12-13-5-3.

Child Care Interpretative Guidelines for Licensed Centers, Licensed Homes, and Unlicensed Registered Ministries, issued by the Indiana Bureau of Child Care, provide clarification of the Licensing Regulations.

Copies of these documents are available on line at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/files>.

Policies and Procedures for compliance with State of Indiana Child Care Regulations are approved by the Board of Directors of the Children's Center. Copies of these documents are available upon request from the Director of Children's Center.

Guidelines for Interviewing Applicants

What to Look For in a Candidate

1. Applicants with a clear explanation of why they want to work with youth.
2. Applicants with a sense of openness; a genuine interest in and concern for young people.
3. Applicants with well-balanced lifestyles involving work, family, friends, recreation, and spiritual growth.
4. Applicants who demonstrate dependability.
5. Applicants who have demonstrated maturity and people skills over the long term in their life experiences.
6. Applicants who show self-confidence and assertiveness.
7. Applicants who are open to differences in people, flexible in dealing with people, and have a sense of humor.
8. Applicants who demonstrate appropriate reactions to stress.
9. Applicants who demonstrate an ability to tolerate conflict and discord.
10. Applicants who understand the need for screening and supervision and who react to it positively rather than defensively.
11. Applicants with a cooperative team spirit; the ability to express viewpoints honestly and to accept compromise.
12. Applicants with emotional stability and good impulse control.
13. Applicants with the ability to make quick, sound decisions, often independently.

Suggested Interview Questions

Start the interview with a reminder that "information will not be disclosed to unauthorized people." Begin with light questions and ask the more personal ones as the applicant relaxes.

1. Tell me about your family when you were growing up.
2. What were your family's religious beliefs when you were a child?
3. Tell me about your hobbies and interests outside of Church.
4. What is the biggest problem in children's lives right now? (Look for a coherent, well-reasoned answer that demonstrates the applicant has thought about kids' problems.)

5. Give me a brief rundown of your life. (Follow up with questions to address where they grew up, their childhood, education, work experience, churches they have been a member of, job and residence changes, etc.)
6. Tell me about other work you have done with children.
7. Is there anything else I should know about you that might affect how you would work with children at First Presbyterian Church?

Red Flags

Red flags alone do not mean that an individual is a potential danger to youth. But they are possible indicators that an individual may participate in unhealthy relationships with children or even be a child molester. Red flags are signals for program leaders to consider the applicant more carefully, to look a bit deeper into his or her background, and to be especially careful in making decisions to approve or disapprove the applicant. Examples of Red Flags include:

A specific interest in a certain age group or gender. Child molesters sometimes fixate on children of the same age they were when first molested.

Over-involvement with children and youth. Excessive activity with youth may indicate a person is fixated on youth, lacks adult outlets for recreation, or is seeking access to youth in a variety of programs.

Lack of adult relationships. Healthy workers have adult relationships for friendships and, when appropriate, for romantic reasons. They do not need to turn to youth to meet their basic need for relationships.

Lack of adult interests. Interest in adult hobbies and in adult groups shows that youth workers have balanced lives that are not overly concentrated on children.

Unrealistic expectations of young people.

Instability in work and life. Look out for people who move or change jobs frequently and do not have a plausible explanation for it. Child molesters often move from place to place as people become suspicious or to seek out new opportunities to molest children. Instability in work may mean that an applicant has a drug or an alcohol problem.

Gaps in a person's life history. An unexplained gap in a resume or history may mean that the applicant served a prison term or is covering up a difficult time in his or her life.

Unresolved, negative childhood experiences.

A history of abuse or family instability. A person who experienced abuse or family problems while growing up may have unresolved emotional issues. These issues can interfere in their ability to work with children. Also, child abuse often occurs in unstable families facing problems with alcohol/drugs, mental illness, extreme poverty, etc.

Lack of personal support system.

Stressful events in the applicant's recent past. Events such as the death of a close family member, divorce, marital problems, unemployment, etc., often cause stress. This stress can lead applicants to react in unhealthy ways.

Evasive or misleading answers. Dishonesty is an indicator that a person is not trustworthy enough for working with kids and may be hiding vital information.

Poor ability to plan ahead or to anticipate the need to intervene.

Low self-esteem, isolation, or a tendency to internalize problems.

Punitive tendencies.

Difficulty in expressing emotions appropriately.

Rigidity in belief or doctrines. Applicants may have strong beliefs, but they should demonstrate flexibility in dealing with different points of view and accepting people as they are. A larger-than-expected proportion of child abusers come from rigid, orthodox backgrounds that encourage a one-dimensional perspective on important issues. Be cautious with applicants who have an overly-strong, personal agenda for youth. Look out for statements such as "I want to train children to believe in God just like I do," or "Children today are spoiled, so I want to teach them the strong discipline I grew up with."

Types and Signs of Child Abuse

Signs of abuse may be observed in the child's appearance, or in the behavior of the child or a parent. Behavior that is normal in some situations may indicate abuse if the questionable behavior is extreme, starts or stops suddenly, or lasts a long time.

1. **Physical abuse** is any non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Signs in the child's appearance include unusual bruises, welts, burns, cuts and frequent injuries explained as accidental. The child may exhibit extreme behavior, e.g., very aggressive or self controlled or withdrawn, may have a poor self-concept, hurt others, or avoid physical contact with them. An abusing parent may participate minimally in the child's activities and show little concern for the child, have unrealistic expectations or negative perceptions of the child, or use harsh punishment. The child's injuries may be concealed by clothing or explained unconvincingly by the parent or the child.
2. **Sexual abuse** includes exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual exploitation, inappropriate touching, and genital contact. Most cases involve parents or family members. Signs in the child's appearance include stained or bloody underclothes, injuries in the genital or anal areas, evidence of sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy. Behavioral signs that may be noted in the child include difficulty in walking or sitting, excessive masturbation, seductive behavior, or an unusual degree or knowledge about sex. The child may also appear withdrawn or anxious and relate poorly to peers. An abusing parent or other adult may be socially or geographically isolated. He/she may appear jealous or overprotective and may spend extended time alone with the child, refusing to permit social contact.

3. **Emotional abuse** involves verbal assaults and excessive demands on a child resulting in a negative self-image and often disturbed behavior. Physical signs of emotional abuse are not always present, but may include eating or speech disorders, or developmental delays. The child may act older or younger than his/her age. He/she may be withdrawn, hyperactive, aggressive, or submissive. The adult may seem immature and uninterested in the child's problems or needs, rejecting and belittling the child and withholding love.
4. **Neglect** is the result of a parent's failure to provide basic physical care and protection for a child. Signs of neglect in a child's appearance include unusually small size or low weight, poor grooming, and inappropriate clothing. The child may always be hungry, listless or sleepy, and may need medical or dental care. He/she may spend long periods of time alone and unsupervised, may have poor school attendance, or may assume adult roles and responsibilities. The parent may be apathetic, socially isolated, have poor parenting skills, or lack interest in the child. He/she may also be disorganized, unstable, or unkempt.
5. **Child Molesting** involves any contact or interactions between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. The perpetrator may be under the age of eighteen if that person is either significantly older than the victim or is in a position of control over the victim.

Reporting Child Abuse

Indiana Child Abuse Law

Indiana law requires that any individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report as required by Indiana Code § 31-33-5.

If an individual is required to make a report under this article in the individual's capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency (church), the individual shall immediately notify the individual in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency or the designated agent of the individual in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency. An individual notified in such circumstances shall report or cause a report to be made.

This does not relieve individuals who make a report to a staff person of their own obligation to report directly to child protection services or law enforcement unless a report has been made by the staff member charged with such a duty.

All reports made to Child Abuse Protective Services of St. Joseph County are confidential and will only be released to Child Protection Services workers, police, prosecutors, doctors, or other authorized personnel.

Any person, other than the accused, who reports child abuse or neglect or is involved in the investigation or disposition of child abuse or neglect reports, is immune from criminal or civil liability unless the person acted maliciously or in bad faith.

Who Should Report

First Presbyterian Church believes that any person (paid or unpaid staff, volunteer, member, friend, or visitor) who suspects abuse has a moral obligation to report. Those people described as child care custodians are required by law (see above) to report suspected abuse.

Reporting Procedures

Known or reasonably suspected child abuse will be reported immediately to the Director of Christian Nurture or the Associate Pastors(s), and the Pastor/Head of Staff. The staff person who is informed of suspected abuse or neglect and/or the reporting person will document in writing specific details of the situation (see Incident Report in Appendix). Any step in this procedure may be bypassed when the accusation involves the minister or staff person to whom the report should be made. In addition, any person subject to the mandatory reporting requirements who knows or reasonably suspects a case of child abuse or neglect **must** report in person or by writing to:

Child Abuse Protection Services of St. Joseph County
1000 S. Michigan Street
South Bend, IN 46601
574-236-5322

or by calling the South Bend Police Department, St. Joseph County Prosecutor, or the Indiana State 24-Hour Hotline at 800-800-5556.

The following basic information should be given to the governmental agency or officer:

- Name and address of the child;
- Age of the child;
- Name and address of the parent or caretaker;
- Why you suspect the child is being abuse or neglected;
- Any other helpful information.

Our Response Procedures for Abuse

General Principles

When responding to allegations of abuse, the Church and its representatives will keep several key principles in mind:

1. Reports should be taken seriously.
2. Allegations should be handled with sensitivity for people's privacy and confidentiality, but all allegations should be reported to the appropriate agency (law enforcement, etc.).
3. The Church should cooperate with law enforcement and social services.
4. The victim should not be blamed.

5. The Church should seek to provide support as appropriate for alleged victims, alleged offenders, and their families during this period of great stress.
6. The insurance carrier should be contacted as soon as possible.

Reports of Questionable Behavior Must Be Taken Seriously

They should not be ignored or allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the accused, and the Church.

Allegations May Occur In a Variety of Ways.

Since the Church cannot control how a report will surface, it is important that officers, employees, and volunteers follow the steps described below. These steps will ensure that the allegation is channeled to the appropriate person and that the problem is not compounded by an improper response.

Non-Church Related Allegations Must Be Taken Seriously.

Young people frequently choose to confide in Church youth workers about abuse happening outside of the Church. It is important that reports of this type are also handled sensitively and appropriately. The Church's policies also apply to reported allegations not related to Church activities or workers. These policies are appropriate for allegations involving Church activities **and** non-church related reports of abuse.

When a Victim Reports Abuse

The person hearing the initial report should follow these steps:

1. Listen supportively.
2. Hear the victim out – do not minimize or discount the allegation.
3. Do not judge the allegation negatively or positively.
4. Ask basic questions to clarify facts if needed, but do not try to investigate or verify the allegations of the report.
5. Note the pertinent details in writing as soon as possible after hearing the report, but don't take notes when the victim is speaking. Give him or her your full attention.
6. Contact the Director of Christian Nurture, Associate Pastor(s) or Pastor/Head of Staff immediately. The leader or pastor will help the volunteer or worker make the report to the appropriate law enforcement division.
7. If the Pastor/Head of Staff is being accused, the person receiving the initial report should contact the Wabash Valley Presbytery Committee on Ministry by calling the Wabash Valley Presbytery Office at 574-223-5678.

8. Do not discuss the allegation with anyone except those who have a need to know and are helping to respond.
9. If the safety of the child is at issue, the worker must use his or her own judgment to decide the best way to proceed. Youth workers must contact law enforcement directly if timing is critical and Church leaders are unavailable for consultation.

Church Workers Who Observe Questionable Activities or Suspicious Behavior

Any person who observes violations of Church guidelines or has reasonable suspicions of inappropriate activity is required to report these concerns to an appropriate leader.

1. **Write brief notes** to document specifically what you have observed.
2. **Contact the Director of Christian Nurture, Associate Pastor(s) or Pastor/Head of Staff as soon as possible.** In a private conversation, the program leader or pastor can help evaluate any suspicions.
3. **The program leader or pastor is responsible for any further response to the situation.** He or she must document the report in the confidential files. Possible responses can range from reminding the worker about following guidelines to reporting the incident to law enforcement.

Church Workers Responding to Serious Accidents

1. **Render appropriate first aid** and call for appropriate emergency help.
2. **Provide emotional support** to the victim(s) and other young people who may be upset by the accident. (Prayer is usually appropriate!)
3. **Contact the Director of Christian Nurture, Associate Pastor(s) or Pastor/Head of Staff as soon as possible** after ensuring the safety of victims. One of these leaders should then take charge of responding to the accident using the procedures listed below in this policy.
4. **Write brief notes** about what happened while the event is still fresh in your memory.

Approved by Session March 26, 2009.