

Our policy is clear and concise and may even be uncomfortable for some to read. We understand that but we believe it is important to be clear and concise in expressing our written goals, our understanding of relevant definitions, supervision of volunteers and employees, reporting according to South Carolina laws and the PCUSA Book of Order, and the matters dealing with responding to allegations.

To highlight a few of the actions we have taken:

- Glass has been installed in all classrooms, meeting rooms, and office doors.*
- We strive to have two background-checked approved members with children and youth during all church activities and programs. Non background-checked volunteers may assist the approved ones as needed.*
- In order to work with children and youth, workers must be a member for at least six months.*
- One way members are encouraged to serve are as a "Hall Monitor." This is a two-fold position during worship services, Sunday school, Wonderful Wednesday and VBS where they serve as an official greeter as people come into the facility and to monitor all areas of the church building and parking lot.*
- Baby to K5 classrooms each have the same one paid worker per room during worship services in order to provide constant nurturing and advocacy for the children. Approved background checked volunteers assist these paid caregivers.*
- Maps of the facility are posted around the church with location indicators for first aid kits and Automated External Defibrillators (AED)*
- It's our goal to have Baby to K5 classrooms free of food and drinks. Veggie Snacks are provided.*
- For the 8:55am worship service, allergy-friendly bread is baked when communion is served by way of Intinction. Note: It contains wheat. Gluten-free wafers are available.*

Safe Place Policy of First Presbyterian Church Greer

SESSION APPROVED 8/5/12

General Statement of Purpose:

To provide and ensure a welcoming, loving, and safe Christian environment for all who attend or visit First Presbyterian Church of Greer, SC.

In Matthew 19:13-14 we read: *"Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; but Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.'"*

This policy is intended to ensure:

- A safe and secure environment for all persons, especially children, youth and elderly.*

- Protection from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse while participating in First Presbyterian Church of Greer, SC activities.
- Adult volunteers and employees are protected from unwarranted allegations of child abuse.
- A mechanism exists to deal with reported concerns and subsequent actions.

This policy includes the following components for protection;

- Screening applicants for employment and volunteer services for a history of behavior potentially detrimental to particularly children, youth, and elderly.
- Training employees and volunteers regarding the policy and appropriate supervision and chaperoning of activities involving children.
- Teaching youth and children appropriate behavior toward their peers and adult supervisors.
- Procedures for reporting allegations and/or concerns
- Responding to allegations and/or concerns

DEFINITIONS:

1. Abuse:

- a. Physical abuse is that which results in physical injury, including but not limited to bruises, burns, cuts, welts, fractures, and internal injuries.
- b. Emotional abuse is that which results in impaired psychological growth and development, including bullying, belittling, rejection, constant unequal treatment, verbal assaults, excessive demands on child's performance, and isolation from normal social activities.
- c. Sexual abuse is that which consists of sexual contact or interactions with a child, including physical contact (fondling, genital/oral stimulation, sexual intercourse) and nonphysical contact (exhibitionism, child prostitution, pornography, and voyeurism).
- d. In all cases, abuse may result from the actions of a child or youth toward a peer.

2. **Child:** Any person under the age of eighteen years old.
3. **Youth:** A Child who is over the age of twelve and/or at least in the sixth grade.
4. **Employee or Staff:** Any person who is employed and/or compensated by the Church. Staff member does not include independent contractors. Nothing herein is intended to change the status of any employee or independent contractor as may be established by federal, state, local or common law.
5. **Ordained Officer:** Current elders and deacons of Greer First Presbyterian Church. Each year, the ONC representative will advise potential officers, when first approached to consider serving, that they will be asked to register and submit for a criminal background check performed by a third party vendor as a indication of leading by example and support.
6. **Volunteer:** Any person participating in FPCG church activities or ministries involving children or youth without pay. This includes but is not limited to teachers, assistants, advisors or chaperones that spend at least five hours collectively in a calendar year working with children or youth.
7. **Church Activity:** Any activity involving children that is sponsored by the Church. A church activity may be held on or off Church grounds.
8. **Work or Working with Children:** Having responsibility as a teacher, teacher's assistant or chaperone in a Church Activity.
9. **Safe Place Ministry/Committee:** A committee of the session to oversee the policy's implementation, monitor compliance and recommend policy changes and clarifications.
10. **Safe Place Administrator:** Assigned employee who oversees and initiates employee and volunteer compliance, maintains files and record keeping, and is a member of the Safe Place Committee.

SAFE PLACE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

1) SELECTION AND SCREENING PROCEDURE

1. Employees

- a. Employees, staff and independent contractors having direct contact with children shall complete an information application form. Any misrepresentation on this form will, upon discovery, be prohibited from working with children. The completed forms are retained in the Safe Place Administrators office files.
- b. Employees, staff and independent contractors having direct contact with children shall obtain a criminal back-ground check at a minimum of every five years performed by a

third-party vendor: National Center of Safety Initiatives will provide the approval/disapproval directive using the red or green flag distinction.

- c. Employees having direct contact with children will be required to acknowledge in writing, on an annual basis, that they have read and understand the policy and are committed to adhering to the requirements of the policy.
- d. No person who has been convicted of any of the following crimes shall be allowed to work with children: murder; rape; aggravated assault; felony drug charges; sexual abuse; sexual assault; inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child; injury of a child; incest; indecency with a child; possession or promotion of child pornography; sale, distribution or display of harmful material to a minor; employment harmful to children; or abandonment or endangering of a child.

2. Volunteers

- a. Volunteers having direct contact with children shall complete an information application form. Any misrepresentation on this form will, upon discovery, be prohibited from working with children. The completed forms are retained in the Safe Place Administrators office files.
- b. All volunteers having contact with children shall obtain a criminal background check at a minimum of every five years performed by a third-party vendor: National Center of Safety Initiatives will provide the approval/disapproval directive using the red or green flag distinction.
- c. Volunteers having direct contact with children will be required to acknowledge in writing, on an annual basis, that they have read and understand the policy and are committed to adhering to the requirements of the policy.
- d. A volunteer must have been a member of FPCG for six months to be eligible to work with children. An exception to the six-month requirement may be made on a case by case basis, pending Safe Place Committee and Session approval. An information application form and background check shall still be required.
- e. All FPCG installed officers are asked to complete an information application form. Any misrepresentation on this form will, upon discovery, be prohibited from working with children.
- f. All FPCG installed officers are asked to obtain a criminal background check performed by a third-party vendor: National Center of Safety Initiatives will provide the approval/disapproval directive using the red or green flag distinction.
- g. No person who has been convicted of any of the following crimes shall be allowed to work with children: murder; rape; aggravated assault; felony drug charges; sexual abuse; sexual assault; inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child; injury of a child; incest; indecency with a child; possession or promotion of child pornography; sale, distribution or display of harmful material to a minor; employment harmful to children; or abandonment or endangering of a child.

- h. No person who has been terminated from their employment or relieved of their duties in a church because of allegations of child abuse shall be allowed to work with children.
- i. In the event FPCG partners with other churches on trips or activities that require shared chaperoning/leadership, volunteers will be asked provide written confirmation they have passed a criminal background check. If deemed necessary, FPCG will pay for the partnering church's volunteers to go through National Center for Safety Initiatives. If a criminal background check is refused, other arrangements for the trip/activity will be attempted or affected parents and children will be notified that our Church will not participate in the respective trip/activity.

2) SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

- a. It is the goal of FPCG to have at least two adult lead workers to serve with children and youth activities. Recognizing that is not always feasible, the following alternatives may be implemented:
 - i. One adult and two youth are present;
 - ii. One adult and one youth over the age of fifteen are present
- b. Rooms that do not have at least one window or other opening allowing adult direct lines of sight should remain open at all times.
- c. It is the goal of the church to have two adult church members scheduled to monitor all areas of the church during such activities as worship services, Sunday school, Wonderful Wednesday and Vacation Bible School.

3) REPORTING OF ALLEGED ABUSE

- a. "Procedures for reporting instances of alleged abuse to law enforcement officials shall be those set forth in South Carolina Code Ann Section 20-7-510, as may be amended.
 - i. This Code Section states as follows: Persons required or permitted to report; method; confidentiality. [SC ST SEC 20-7-510]
 - ii. A physician, nurse, dentist, optometrist, medical examiner, or coroner, or an employee of a county medical examiner's or coroner's office, or any other medical, emergency medical services, mental health, or allied health professional, member of the clergy including a Christian Science Practitioner or religious healer, school teacher, counselor, principal, assistant principal, social or public assistance worker, substance abuse treatment staff, or childcare worker in a childcare center or foster care facility, police or law enforcement officer,

undertaker, funeral home director or employee of a funeral home, persons responsible for processing films, computer technician, or a judge must report in accordance with this section when in the person's professional capacity the person has received information which gives the person reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected as defined in Section 20-7-490.

- iii. If a person required to report pursuant to subsection (i) has received information in the person's professional capacity which gives the person reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by acts or omissions that would be child abuse or neglect if committed by a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, but the reporter believes that the act or omission was committed by a person other than the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, the reporter must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
 - iv. Except as provided in subsection (i), any person who has reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse and neglect may report in accordance with this section.
 - v. Reports of child abuse or neglect may be made orally by telephone or otherwise to the county department of social services or to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or is found. Where reports are made pursuant to this section to a law enforcement agency, the law enforcement agency shall notify the county department of social services of the law enforcement's response to the report at the earliest possible time. Where a county or contiguous counties have established multicounty child protective services, pursuant to Section 20-7-650, the county department of social services immediately shall transfer reports pursuant to this section to the service. The identity of the person making a report pursuant to this section must be kept confidential by the agency or department receiving the report and must not be disclosed except as provided for in this chapter.
- b. Any person who is required, pursuant to South Carolina Code Ann Section 20-7-510, to report incidents of alleged abuse must also report such incidents to the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor.
 - c. Any person who may, pursuant to South Carolina Code Ann Section 20-7-510, report incidents of alleged abuse may also report such incidents to the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor.”
 - d. The 2011-2013 PCUSA Book of Order states:
G-4.0302 Mandatory Reporting
“Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when 1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0201, 2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of

privileged communication under law, or 3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of physical harm or abuse.”

4) RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ALLEGED ABUSE

- a. When an employee becomes aware of any report of alleged abuse, he or she shall notify the Senior Pastor, or the Associate Pastor, of such report as soon as is practicable.
- b. Anyone accused of abuse will be immediately suspended from further responsibilities involving direct contact with children in any FPCG activity. The accused will remain suspended until an investigation of the alleged abuse has concluded no merit.
- c. Upon becoming aware of any report of alleged abuse, the Senior Pastor or the Associate Pastor shall as soon as is practicable notify the Clerk of Session and Chair of the Safe Place Committee of the reported alleged abuse.
- d. As soon as is practicable following the report to the Clerk of Session and the Chair of the Safe Place Ministry, the Senior Pastor or the Associate Pastor, will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- e. As soon as is practicable following the notification of law enforcement, the Senior Pastor or the Associate Pastor, along with the Clerk of Session and/or the Chairman of the CE Ministry, shall visit the parents or guardians of the child who is the alleged victim of abuse. Provided, however, that nothing herein shall be deemed to require any employee or church member to take any action that would materially interfere with an investigation of any law enforcement agency.
- f. All reports of alleged abuse shall be treated confidentially and discussed with no one except those whom this Policy provides are to receive notice:
 - i. The Session, in consultation with the Minister, shall determine whether, when, and in what manner the Congregation shall be informed of an allegation of abuse.
 - ii. The Session, in consultation with the Minister, shall determine whether, when, and in what manner the Church shall inform its insurance carrier and/or legal counsel of an allegation of abuse.

5) OTHER LAWS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- a. Whenever it may appear that this Policy is in conflict with a federal, state or local law, such law shall be controlling.
- b. Whenever it may appear that this Policy is in conflict with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. said Book of Order shall be controlling.