



CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

9/2002

**CHILDREN,
YOUTH,
VOLUNTEERS
AND STAFF
PROTECTION POLICY**



**CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
12419 CHILLICOTHE ROAD
CHESTERLAND, OHIO 44026**

Approved by Christ Presbyterian Church Session May 2002.

Overview

Various kinds of abuse¹ of children and youth are unfortunately a significant issue in society today. Those who work with children and youth are more vulnerable to claims arising from perceived misconduct.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has implemented responsive procedures and affirmations for ordained and professional staff. Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) hereby adopts a policy for its volunteers in children and youth ministries and part-time child care workers.

¹ For purposes of this policy, **abuse** is defined as any of the following:

- (a) any sexual activity, whether verbal, physical, or visual, involving a child or youth and an adult for purposes of sexual stimulation. Such activity includes but is not limited to sexual conduct that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another (such as offensive, obscene or suggestive language; unacceptable visual contact; seductive behavior; and unwelcome touching or fondling). Sexual behavior involving a child or youth and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the younger party. (Adapted from Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures, adopted by 1991 General Assembly and revised by 1993 General Assembly.);
- (b) endangering a child by engaging in abusive conduct, including but not limited to cruel conduct; corporal punishment or other physical discipline; physical restraint that is excessive under the circumstances and which could likely physically injure the child or cause pain; or repeated uncalled-for discipline which, if continued, would seriously impair the child's mental health or development;
- (c) administering prescription drugs to a child without the written approval and ongoing supervision of an attending physician or parent;
- (d) being under the influence of or providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances to a child;
- (e) committing any intentional act that results in injury or death to a child; or
- (f) inflicting physical or mental injury that threatens to harm a child's health, welfare, or safety.

Addendum

In lieu of the affirmation on the preceding page, I offer the following explanation:

1. I have been the subject of an investigation or instance of alleged abuse of children or youth as follows (provide a summary of the factual circumstances):

2. The outcome of the matter was as follows:

3. The names and addresses of other persons knowledgeable of these circumstances are:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Affirmation

The signed copy of this document will be treated with confidentiality and filed in a location accessible to only the Pastor and Personnel elder.

As a volunteer in children and youth ministries or as a staff person who works with children and youth, I affirm my commitment to support Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) as a safe place for children and youth. I recognize that CPC has adopted policies that seek to minimize actual or perceived instances of abuse (as defined on page 1) of children and youth, to respond to suspected instances of such abuse, and to guard against misinterpretations of actions of its volunteers who strive to serve in Christian love. I understand these policies, support them, and agree to abide by them. I affirm that I will do my part in providing a nurturing Christian environment in which our children and youth can develop in faith and in trust.

(Check all the following statements that apply.)

_____ I certify by my signature that I have not to my knowledge been the subject of any investigation, complaint, or legal or church-related action involving a reported instance of abuse of children or youth, and I have never been refused, resigned from, or been asked to resign from a position for reasons related to such abuse.

_____ I am unable to make the certification above. I offer, instead, on the reverse side, the description of an investigation, complaint, or legal or church-related action involving me for reasons related to abuse of children or youth.

_____ I understand that I may be required to provide a set of fingerprints and that a criminal background check may be made using those fingerprints.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Policy adapted from affirmation required of professional church staff in conformity with the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures (referred to on page 1).

The policy affirms our commitment to provide a safe place for our youth and children and clearly condemns any instance of abuse of children or youth. The policy also recognizes that volunteer workers are an integral part of Christian ministry to children and youth. They must be encouraged to teach by their presence and example and be supported as they do so.

Christ Presbyterian Church cannot, through any policy, guarantee against abuse of its children or youth; the existence of rules alone cannot insulate the church with its volunteers from assertions of liability. However, the church wishes to make its condemnation of abuse of children and youth clear.

Our congregation, including volunteers and part-time child care workers, lend their voices in the denouncement of such conduct. In so doing, they lend their support to each other, and they help prevent unfounded or mistaken claims. Each regular attender working with youth or children will then individually, in writing, acknowledge and affirm the church's policy against abuse of its children and youth.

Christ Presbyterian Church will implement other institutional guidelines to minimize opportunities for abuse and false accusations against its professional and volunteer staff. It will provide increased education regarding abuse. It will implement a comprehensive policy for investigating and responding to reported instances of suggested or suspected abuse.

Through this combination of efforts, Christ Presbyterian Church hopes to minimize actual or perceived instances of abuse of its children and youth, to respond appropriately to those that might occur, and to guard against misinterpretations of actions as its volunteers continue to serve in Christian love.

Rules to Prevent Abuse of Children and Youth

To give guidance and protection to our workers and to give protection to children and youth, these practices shall be followed:

1. At least one adult age 18 or over shall be on duty every time child care is offered at Christ Presbyterian Church. At least one other person age 12 or over shall also be present to assist the adult.
2. At least one adult age 21 or over, accompanied by at least one other person age 12 or over, will be on duty anytime infants (children under age 2) or ten or more children over age 2 are involved in child care offered at Christ Presbyterian Church.
3. The rules under “Guidelines for Parents and Children,” established by Children and Youth Ministries, shall be followed in every event when child care is provided on the property of Christ Presbyterian Church, even in cases where the event is not directly sponsored by Christ Presbyterian (see “Guidelines...” in your information packet).
4. All Sunday School teachers, nursery volunteers, and youth advisers shall sign an affirmation representing that they have not been the subject of a complaint, investigation, or action involving a reported instance of abuse. In the event of inability to do so, they shall be qualified only after staff has performed adequate investigation.
5. No person shall be allowed as a Sunday School teacher of children or youth, nursery volunteer, or youth adviser until that person has been a regular attender (a person attending worship services or teaching 50 percent of Sundays or more) of Christ Presbyterian Church for six months unless references are presented from the person’s previous church affirming that person has no record of child abuse.
6. During Sunday School classes, an adult will be assigned to monitor activities in the classrooms, as well as all other areas on the lower level, and provide assistance to teachers, visitors and others (see “Monitor Task Description”).
7. No youth leader shall provide transportation for one youth alone without permission from a parent. At least two advisers or chaperones shall be present for any youth event. Leaders should avoid one-on-one situations with underage persons apart from visible and public settings.
8. All reports of abuse at Christ Presbyterian Church shall promptly be made directly to the Pastor. (In the event that the report should involve the Pastor, the report shall be made directly to the Clerk of Session.) To determine the proper response, the Pastor shall confer with at least one of the following: the Clerk of Session or an active elder (ordinarily the Chair of Children and Youth Ministries or Chair of the Personnel Committee). Any person making a complaint of abuse shall be notified as to the elder consulted.
- 9.

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Note: Complete other side also, if applicable.

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