

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF DAVENPORT**

**CHILD, YOUTH,
AND VULNERABLE ADULT
PROTECTION POLICY
FOR OUTSIDE GROUPS**

I. INTRODUCTION

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport, referred to as FPC subsequently in this Policy, is committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Accordingly, we will not tolerate any form of abuse to children, youth, or vulnerable adults in any of our interactions with them. FPC has established this Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy for Outside Groups (Policy) to ensure, to the extent that it is reasonably possible, that children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be free to participate in programs, services, and activities without intimidation, coercion, or abuse of any type.

II. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy, the following terms have the listed definitions:

Abuse--A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child or youth. Abuse may include any of the following:

Neglect--Occurs when an adult responsible for the well-being of a child fails to provide for the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, shelter; failure to keep children clean; lack of supervision and withholding medical care.

Physical abuse--A non-accidental injury that happens to a child. Such an injury could include a beating, burn, bruise, bite, welt, strangulation, broken bones or death.

Sexual abuse--The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual abuse may include: *engaging in sexually explicit conversation; verbal sexual suggestions, innuendoes or jokes; leering or ogling; intrusive touching; the use of pornography; looking at the intimate parts of a child for the purpose of sexual gratification or arousal; sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.* Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period of time or a single incident. Children can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Typically, a perpetrator keeps a child from disclosing abuse through intimidation, threats, and rewards.

Emotional abuse-- One or more acts by an adult or other authority figure that endanger the mental health or emotional development of a child including rejection, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constant criticism, mean remarks, insults and giving little or no love, guidance and support.

Spiritual abuse--Using religious references to shame or by guilt to motivate a child into a particular action or behavior.

Failure to act--Any failure to act that causes bodily or mental injury to a child or that causes or permits any of the above described types of abuse to occur may also constitute abuse.

This list is not exhaustive. Any act or failure to act that causes bodily injury or serious mental injury to a child may constitute child abuse under law.

Certified adult--A person who is at least 18 years of age who has successfully passed the required background checks to qualify under this Policy to supervise children, youth, and vulnerable adults while using FPC buildings and grounds.

Child / Youth--Under Iowa law, a child is a person under 18 years of age. This term includes both a "child" and a "youth" as these terms are used in this Policy.

Employee--A person who works for a salary or wages at FPC.

Independent contractor--A person not employed by FPC who provides services to FPC pursuant to an express or implied contract.

Mandated reporter--A person required to make a report of suspected child abuse where such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse and/or in danger of abuse in the future.

Mandated reporters include:

- Pastors
- Certain professionals licensed by the state of Iowa
- FPC employees who have direct contact with children in the course of their employment
- Volunteers who accept responsibility for a child

Reporting checklist--The document attached to this Policy as Attachment A that sets forth how and to whom reports of suspected child abuse shall be made in accordance with this Policy.

Volunteer--A person not employed by FPC who donates time providing services in connection with outside groups and events utilizing FPC buildings and grounds.

Vulnerable adult--A vulnerable adult is any person 18 years of age or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

III. POLICY OVERVIEW

Purpose

This Policy is intended to:

- Provide a safe and sacred space for children and youth at FPC.
- Protect children and youth from sexual, physical, spiritual and emotional abuse while participating in activities at FPC.

- Prevent allegations and incidents of abuse to children or youth.
- Provide a mechanism to deal with reported concerns and subsequent actions.
- Protect the ministry of FPC from the possibility of false accusations and litigation.

This Policy addresses four principal components of child and youth protection:

Screening of people applying to use the building for activities or events with children and youth to ensure two certified adults will be present.

Expectations of volunteers regarding appropriate supervision and chaperoning of children and youth.

Reporting of allegations and/or concerns regarding child and youth protection issues.

Responding to allegations and/or concerns regarding child and youth protection issues.

General Requirements

All persons working with children/youth at FPC shall abide by the following rules:

- They shall not verbally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, or sexually abuse children or youth.
- They shall not discipline children or youth by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
- They shall provide proper supervision and exercise sound judgment in providing a safe environment at all times.
- They shall avoid situations where they would be alone with a child or youth and cannot be observed or monitored by others.

Restroom supervision:

- They shall, as provided in Section V of this Policy, always appropriately supervise when children are using bathrooms to ensure their safety.
- They shall use caution and common sense when touching children or youth; accordingly, such persons must:
 - o Respect a child or youth's boundaries and never make a child or youth feel uncomfortable or act in ways that impede the child or youth's right to say no.
 - o Maintain appropriate hand placement.

- Avoid physical contact that is inappropriate, including body-to-body embrace, a touch of private areas (those areas covered by a bathing suit) or any type of kiss.
- They shall discourage children from touching others in an inappropriate manner.
- They shall be alert to the physical and emotional state of children entering an activity or program, and any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported promptly in the manner specified in this Policy to the authorities and to the Pastor/Head-of-Staff.
- They shall only release children and youth to a parent, a guardian, or another individual authorized in writing by a parent or guardian.
- They shall not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or be impaired by legally prescribed drugs in the presence of children or youth while using FPC buildings and grounds.
- They shall not use tobacco products around children and youth.
- They shall not possess firearms or other weapons around children and youth.
- They shall not engage in profanity, inappropriate language or jokes, or any kind of harassment in the presence of children or youth.
- They shall not share inappropriate details of their personal lives or ask children or youth to share inappropriate details.
- They shall not give gifts to an individual child or youth for the purpose of “buying” silence or loyalty. Gift giving must be done on a group basis and/or for specific occasions (ex. birthday parties).

In addition, those to whom this Policy applies shall comply with all other church and/or legal requirements described below and sign an agreement to comply in all respects with this Policy.

An individual may be barred from future use of FPC buildings and grounds for failure to observe and abide by this Policy.

Policy Implementation

The Building Use Commission’s role in the implementation of this Policy includes ensuring appropriate screening and ensuring in writing the event sponsors receipt and understanding of, and agreement to comply with, the Policy.

IV. SCREENING

Screening Process

Background checks. The Building Use Commission will arrange child abuse and criminal background checks for event sponsors and/or volunteers. Those who successfully pass child abuse and criminal background checks will be deemed a Certified Adult.

Information of concern

If information of a cautionary nature is revealed through a child abuse or criminal background check, the person conducting the check shall notify the Building Use Commission, respecting confidentiality. The Pastor/Head-of-Staff and the Building Use Commission shall consider this information and decide on a course of action. The decision, which will be promptly communicated to the event sponsor, must be documented in writing, dated, and placed in the event sponsor's file.

Confidentiality

All background checks performed will be kept by the Pastor/Head-of-Staff (or their designee) in a secure confidential location. Disclosure of the results of background checks will be limited to those with a "need to know" and otherwise will be kept strictly confidential.

V. SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

Those to whom this Policy applies shall comply with the following requirements when supervising children and youth and vulnerable adults:

Two-Adult/Age Policy

At least two certified adults (one of whom will be no less than 25 years old) will supervise all programs, services, and activities at FPC involving children and youth and vulnerable adults. Adults must always remain in sight of one another except in an emergency situation. For purposes of the two-adult requirement, spouses count as one certified adult as do a parent and their children.

Adult/Child or Youth Ratios

For any programs, services, or activities with children or youth that are within a contained classroom there shall be at least one certified, appropriately aged adult for every ten children/youth; gender balance is recommended.

For any ministry program with children or youth that is held in a gym or is outside there shall be at least one certified, appropriately aged adult for every eight children/youth; gender balance is recommended.

For overnight events there shall be at least one certified, appropriately aged adult for every six children/youth; gender balance is required.

One-on-One Situations

In those limited situations where it is necessary for an adult to be alone with a child or youth, the adult should notify another non-related adult before and after the period in which they are alone with the child or youth. Additionally, any such one-on-one contact should be carried out in a public setting or otherwise in plain view of others.

Open Door Policy

It is recommended that doors remain open to rooms in which children and youth involved in activities are present. If noise or fire code restrictions apply, or air conditioning is running, doors may be shut as long as there is clear glass in at least one door into each room and nothing impedes vision through the glass.

Nurseries

A sign-in/out system will be used for all nursery children. This system will enable the caregivers in the nursery to correctly identify a parent or guardian when a child is picked up. Only assigned caregivers and staff are allowed to stay in the nursery. Parents/guardians may enter the room to sign-in/out their child, but must exit the room promptly. All others should remain outside the room.

VI. REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE

This Policy and the law make the responsibility for reporting abuse of a child or youth, or suspected abuse of a child or youth clear.

All FPC employees and certified adults who, in the course of employment or supervision, come to learn of any occurrence of abuse or a situation that presents reasonable cause to suspect that abuse may have occurred are required to make a report as set forth in this Policy. Such report shall be made promptly after the occurrence in question becomes known, as required by law, first to the authorities and immediately thereafter to the Pastor/Head-of-Staff (see Reporting Checklist included in the Appendix to this Policy). All such reports, including the identities of all persons making such reports, shall be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Similarly, any report of child/youth abuse made by an individual about their care by a parent, guardian, youth, adult, or FPC employee or certified adult, must be reported promptly, as required by law, first to the authorities and immediately thereafter to the Pastor/Head-of-Staff. All such reports shall be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. The FPC Incident Report found in Attachment B will be used for such reports.

Iowa law provides that individuals who make a good faith report of actual or suspected child abuse are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise result from making the report. In addition, Iowa law imposes criminal liability for willful failure to report actual or suspected child abuse by mandated reporters.

For any injury to a child under age 18 requiring medical assistance, an incident report should be completed with one copy given to the parent/guardian and one copy to either the Pastor/Head-of-Staff. If the Pastor/Head-of-Staff is not present on church premises, the accident report should be given to the church representative assigned to your event. See Attachment B for a copy of the Incident Report Form.

VII. VULNERABLE ADULTS

Vulnerable adults will be accorded the same protections as children and youth under this policy in regards to programming at First Presbyterian Church.

VIII. POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION

The Committee will review this Policy at least annually and recommend revisions to Session as appropriate.

Revision History

Date	Author	Changes
11-18-2024	Rev. Dr. Kris Schondelmeyer Marty Bowles Edwards Abby Schondelmeyer	Initial version

Attachment A

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport Reporting Checklist

Following the procedures explained in FPC's Child and Youth Protection Policy for Outside Groups, any suspected or actual case of child abuse or neglect must immediately be reported, first to the authorities, in the manner set forth below, and then to the Pastor/Head-of-Staff.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect to the Authorities

An initial report of suspected or actual child abuse or neglect must be made either to the local police department or via the **Toll-free Iowa Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline at 800-362-2178.**

When to Also Call 9-1-1

If you are in immediate danger of injury

If you suspect a child is in immediate danger of injury or if the abuse or injury is happening right now

If there is a need to collect evidence or maintain a chain of custody of evidence

Please note that calling 9-1-1 does not eliminate the requirement to report the matter to the Department of Human Services and to the Pastor/Head-of-Staff.

Reporting Child Abuse to FPC

Immediately after an initial report of suspected or actual child abuse or neglect is submitted to the authorities, the person making the report shall make a report to the Pastor/Head-of-Staff. If the Pastor/Head-of-Staff is the alleged abuser, this report shall be made the Clerk of Session.

**First Presbyterian Church of Davenport
Example Incident Form**

**Accident / Injury / Incident Report Form for Children / Youth
First Presbyterian Church of Davenport**

You are being asked to fill out this form because we are committed to the safety and well-being of our children/youth and the adults who work with them. Please give all known information.

Date and time of accident / injury / incident:

Name of child / youth:

Age of child / youth:

Address/phone of child / youth:

Location of accident / injury / incident:

Parent / Guardian:

Parent / Guardian notified ~ date, time, by whom:

Names of persons who witnessed accident / injury / incident:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Describe accident / injury / incident:

If medical care was received, briefly describe what and by whom administered:

Signature of Person Making Report: _____ Date: _____

(Please give this report to the Pastor/Head-of-Staff or a Co-Director of Christian Education)