



**THE PRESBYTERY OF PHILADELPHIA
CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**



**915 East Gowen Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19150**

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- **FOREWORD**

Leadership in the church demands the highest standards of moral integrity and personal responsibility. It is a gift of the Spirit that can only be effectively exercised in an environment of trust. As the Gospel witness makes abundantly clear, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded” (Luke 12:48).

Since trust is so fundamental to the well-being of the Christian community, Christian people have the right to expect that those they choose as leaders (both lay and ordained) understand and are committed to standards of behavior that are trustworthy. In receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, we enter into a sacred covenant with God and are adopted into the covenant family of the church (Book of Order, W-2.300; Genesis 17:7; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22). Trust is a key component that exists in this covenant. As the church and the body of Christ we are united with all the people of God in every place and every time (Book of Order, W-2.3005; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-6). We are bound to serve and to respect the dignity of every human being (Micah 6:8). When, therefore, this solemn trust is broken through some form of misconduct, particularly sexual, not only is someone’s dignity diminished and her or his wellbeing seriously harmed, but also harm is done to the community of faith. Where there is no trust, there can be no community.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia is committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children and youth are nurtured and instructed in the faith and are protected from all types of abuse and neglect. Our goals are to protect children and youth in church programs, to educate workers and care givers concerning abuse issues and to protect staff and volunteers, as well as the church as a whole, from potential wrongful accusations of abuse or neglect. Accordingly, we will not tolerate any form of abuse to children or youth in any of our interactions with them.

We recognize that children and youth are entrusted to the care of adults in many church programs, services and activities, both on and off the campus, as well as in programs operated by others on church property. The Presbytery of Philadelphia has established this Child and Youth Protection Policy (Policy) to ensure, to the extent reasonably possible, that our children and youth will be free to participate in these programs, services and activities without intimidation, coercion, or abuse of any type. The Policy applies to all those who work with children and youth through the Presbytery of Philadelphia programs both on and off Presbytery-owned property, including full-time and part-time employees as well as volunteers, whether they be church members, visitors or guests.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia designates the Commission on Ministry (COM) to be responsible for oversight and implementation of this Policy.

- **INTRODUCTION**

The Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) was enacted by the Pennsylvania legislature to protect children from abuse. This policy also includes references to PA Act 153 of 2014 and PA Act 15 of 2015 and the need for Volunteer Background Clearances. To achieve this purpose, the CPSL imposes specific responsibilities on those who have direct contact with children to report suspected or actual child abuse and mandates that certain individuals receive regular training regarding child abuse. Employees and volunteers who fail to report actual or suspected child abuse may be subject to individual, criminal liability. Because the CPSL is designed to encourage reporting of suspected or actual child abuse, it also contains important protections for those who make such reports in good faith.

As a volunteer or employee who has direct contact with children participating in Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities, it is important for you to understand what your responsibilities are as it concerns reporting of actual or suspected child abuse and the need to attend child abuse identification and prevention training.

This Policy incorporates these legal requirements and explains in detail your responsibilities in this regard. As such, you should carefully review the Policy and keep it as a reference. This Policy is intended to apply broadly; when in doubt, you should err on the side of reporting suspected child abuse. Should you have any questions about your responsibilities or this Policy, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk.

- **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 or youth. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, shelter; failure to keep children or youth clean; lack of supervision and withholding medical care.

Physical abuse—A non-accidental injury that happens to a child or youth. 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 or youth 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 the following: 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 or youth can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Typically, the perpetrator keeps the child or youth from disclosing the 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 or youth 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 and youth into a particular action or behavior.

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

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Any act or failure to act causing bodily injury or serious mental injury to a child and youth may constitute child abuse under Pennsylvania law.

Certified adult—A Presbytery of Philadelphia employee or volunteer, at least 18 years of age, who has successfully passed the required background checks and completed the required training (or retraining) to qualify under this Policy to work with children and youth.

Certified youth volunteer—A person at least 13 years old but under the age of 18 who has successfully passed the required background checks and completed the required training (or retraining) to qualify under this Policy to work with children and youth, and who gives time and participates in a Presbytery of Philadelphia-sponsored activity.

Child Protective Services Law or CPSL—the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, 23 Pa. C.S. Chapter 63.

Child / Youth—Under Pennsylvania 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 regarding Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services, and activities. When such terms are used elsewhere in this Policy regarding Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities, “child” means a person 12 years old or younger and “youth” means a person at least 13 years old but under age 18.

Church-sponsored activity—Includes all gatherings that arise from Presbytery of Philadelphia-generated worship, educational, fellowship, administrative, pastoral, mission, or recreational events. These events include on-campus and off-campus gatherings.

Employee—A person working for a salary/wages at the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

Endangered adult—An individual at least 18 years old who (by reason of mental illness, mental retardation, dementia or other physical or mental incapacity) is incapable of managing or directing the management of the individual’s property or providing or directing the provision of self-care.

Independent contractor—A person not employed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia who provides services to the Presbytery of Philadelphia pursuant to an express or implied contract.

Lead volunteer—A certified adult who has been designated by the responsible staff person to coordinate/supervise other volunteers involved in a program, activity or event.

Mandated reporter—A person legally required to make a report of suspected child abuse where such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child or youth is a victim of child abuse.

Mandated reporters include:

Pastors

Certain professionals licensed by the state of Pennsylvania

Presbytery of Philadelphia employees who have direct contact with children and/or youth in the course of their employment

Volunteers who, as part of a Presbytery of Philadelphia-sponsored activity, event, or program, accept responsibility for a child or youth

Independent contractors of the Presbytery of Philadelphia

Reporting checklist—Attachment A, Reporting Checklist, sets forth how and to whom reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be made in accordance with this Policy.

Volunteer—A person not employed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia who donates time providing services in connection with a church-sponsored activity, event, or program.

REFERENCES

Approved Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, retrieved from: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000164>.

- **POLICY OVERVIEW**

Purpose

This Policy is intended to:

- Be faithful to our baptismal vows as we seek to welcome and nurture children and youth.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth in the Presbytery of Philadelphia.
- Protect children and youth from sexual, physical, spiritual and emotional abuse while participating in Presbytery of Philadelphia activities.
- Educate the staff, volunteers, and the congregation about the subject of sexual abuse and exploitation of children and youth, the need for policies and procedures to prevent such abuse and exploitation and the legal responsibilities imposed on volunteers and staff who have direct contact with children and youth participating in Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities.
- Guide the Presbytery of Philadelphia as an institution in the conduct of its employees and volunteers.
- Prevent allegations and incidents of abuse to children and youth.
- Provide a mechanism to deal with reported concerns and subsequent actions.
- Protect the ministry of the Presbytery of Philadelphia as carried out through its volunteers, pastors and staff from the possibility of false accusations and litigation.

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

- Screening of applicants for employment and volunteer service to identify those who are unsuitable for such employment or service due to a history of behavior potentially detrimental to children and youth.
- Training of employees and 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/youth protection.

Scope and Applicability

All persons, including Presbytery of Philadelphia employees and volunteers, interested in participating in children's and youth ministries and other programs,

services and activities of the Presbytery of Philadelphia must adhere to this Policy. In addition, the abuse reporting procedures set forth in this Policy apply to all mandated reporters, including all employees and volunteers who interact or work with children or youth in Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities presently existing, as well as others that may be developed in the future, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Sunday School
- Children's and Youth fellowship programs
- Children's and Youth choirs
- Camps, mission trips, lock-ins, retreats, etc.
- Triennium (and other conferences)
- Confirmation Class
- Vacation Bible School
- Child Care
- Nursery School
- Other Children's and Youth Events

General Requirements

All persons working with children and/or youth in the Presbytery of Philadelphia shall abide by the following rules:

They shall not verbally, emotionally, physically, spiritually or sexually abuse children and youth.

They shall not discipline children and 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 and youth and cannot be observed or monitored by others.

Restroom supervision:

They shall, as provided in Section IV 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 and youth; accordingly, such persons must:

Respect a child or youth's boundaries and never make a child and youth feel uncomfortable or act in ways that impede the child and youth's right to say no.

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 and youth 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 Executive Presbyter or, if the Executive Presbyter is unavailable or is the alleged abuser, to the Stated Clerk. Follow steps to report abuse or neglect as outlined in Attachment A, Reporting Checklist.

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 and youth during church working hours or during church-sponsored activities and trips.

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 and youth.

They shall not share inappropriate details of their personal lives or ask children and youth to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal or electronic.

They shall not give gifts to an individual child and youth. Because gift giving can be a form of “buying” silence or loyalty, gift giving must be done on a group basis and then only for specific occasions.

They shall immediately report to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk any circumstance that adversely affects their ability to work with children and youth in full compliance with this Policy.

In addition, those to whom this Policy applies shall comply with all other Policy and/or legal requirements described below and/or required by law, including, without limitation, maintaining updated clearances, attending training sessions offered/approved by the Presbytery of Philadelphia on child and youth protection, and signing agreements to comply in all respects with this Policy.

An individual may be terminated from employment and/or volunteer service for failure to observe and abide by this Policy. These actions may be taken regardless of the outcome of any investigation if the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk shall determine that the Policy has not been followed.

Electronic and Social Media Communications

The Presbytery of Philadelphia has a robust website that helps it disseminate its message to members and the general public. Day-to-day communications often involve use of personal communication tools such as emails, text messages, social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.), among others. These communications include public, private, personal, and professional messages. The following requirements apply to all such communications among the Presbytery of Philadelphia pastors, staff, volunteers, children and youth when those communications relate to Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities:

No person shall post or permit to be posted any confidential information about the Presbytery of Philadelphia, its programs, services and activities, members or those who participate in its programs, services or activities.

All communications related to Presbytery of Philadelphia activities/events must maintain a professional and appropriate style and adhere to these the Presbytery of Philadelphia Communications Procedures.

No person shall engage in electronic communications that violate any the Presbytery of Philadelphia policies or any local, state or federal law.

In all communications related to Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities, or made during Presbytery of Philadelphia activities/events, employees and volunteers should avoid the use of statements that reasonably could be viewed as:

- Derogatory
- Sexual, lewd, pornographic or obscene
- Offensive due to the use of profanity
- Threatening, harassing or bullying
- Discriminatory
- Facilitating illegal activities
- Having the purpose to assist personal, commercial or for-profit ends
- Unauthorized or illegal distribution, reproduction or use of copyrighted materials
- Fraternalization or otherwise crossing the line between professional and personal boundaries
- Suggestive in nature.

Use/posting by the Presbytery of Philadelphia of photographic images of children and youth and of their Presbytery of Philadelphia-sponsored activities will conform with the following guidelines:

The Presbytery of Philadelphia will honor the request of any parent or legal guardian who asks that her/his child and/or youth not appear in any church publications or website.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia will obtain written permission from parents and/or guardians before a photo of a child and/or youth is used electronically or in print. See Attachment F for Photo Release Form.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia will never identify a child and youth by name or address with any photo.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia will not “tag” children and youth in images used on social media.

No adult volunteer or Presbytery of Philadelphia employee may initiate a connection with a child and youth on a social media site except a child and/or youth of which he/she is a parent or guardian. If the child and/or youth initiates a social media connection, it may be accepted, but the rules and guidelines in this policy must be adhered.

Text messages between the Presbytery of Philadelphia employees/volunteers and children and youth will be appropriate and

strictly related to Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services, and activities. Such text messages must maintain an appropriate and professional style and otherwise be in compliance with the requirements of this Policy.

No individual shall identify or represent her/himself as speaking on behalf of the Presbytery of Philadelphia without prior approval from the Executive Presbyter and/or the Stated Clerk.

Policy Oversight and Implementation

The Presbytery of Philadelphia COM role in the oversight and implementation of this Policy includes (a) ensuring appropriate screening, training, authorization, and reauthorization of all the Presbytery of Philadelphia employees, volunteers and others covered by this Policy and (b) ensuring that all who are covered by this Policy receive a copy of the Policy, and acknowledge in writing their receipt and understanding of, and agreement to comply.

The COM will, among other things, establish and evaluate procedures, review concerns, provide appropriate feedback, monitor compliance, oversee implementation of the Policy, and provide interpretation and training for the Presbytery of Philadelphia, which includes existing online mandatory reporter training or Boundary Training that includes a child protection component.

The COM may form a Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team (SMART) to assist with oversight and implementation of this policy, including responding to allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse if they occur.

- **SCREENING**

Screening Process

Employees: All employees working directly with children and/or youth must consent to and pass the background/clearance checks, including criminal, child abuse and reference checks. Background checks made through the employee's congregation may be utilized.

Volunteers: All persons (adults and youth) who wish to volunteer to work with children and/or youth in Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities must consent to and pass background/clearance checks, including criminal, child abuse and reference checks. Background checks made through the volunteer's congregation may be utilized.

See Attachment E, Employee/Volunteer Acknowledgment and Agreement for PA required employee/volunteer clearances.

All volunteers must be a member of a congregation in the Presbytery of Philadelphia and affiliated with that congregation or the Presbytery of Philadelphia for a period of at least six months to be eligible to volunteer with children and/or youth.

Screening Review

The executive staff of the Presbytery of Philadelphia will be responsible for receipt, review and verification of reference checks, and child abuse and criminal background checks for volunteers, or accept copies of clearances provided by the volunteer. Volunteers who successfully complete references, and/or child abuse and criminal background checks will be deemed eligible for ministry with children and youth upon completion of the initial training/certification (or, in subsequent years, retraining/recertification) process as provided for in Section III below.

Information of Concern

If information of a cautionary nature is revealed through a reference, and/or child abuse or criminal background check, the person conducting the check shall note this information in writing for the volunteers file and communicate it to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk or their designee. The Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk or their designee shall consider this information and decide on a course of action. The decision, which will be promptly communicated to the volunteer, must be documented in writing, dated, and placed in the volunteer's file. In such case, the person's volunteer service may be handled in one of the following ways:

- Accepted unconditionally
- Accepted with clearly defined restrictions
- Denied

Prohibition on Hiring

Notwithstanding the above, the Presbytery of Philadelphia will not hire, employ or permit to volunteer in any capacity that involves direct contact with children and/or youth any individual:

Who has been verified by the Department of Human Services as named in the statewide database as a perpetrator with respect to a founded report of child abuse

Who has been convicted of any of the disqualifying crimes specified in the CPSL (a list of which is set forth in Attachment B, Disqualifying Crimes).

Materials Subject to Review

The Presbytery of Philadelphia reserves the right to review all volunteer materials (including, without limitation, notes on reference checks and interviews and the results of background and clearance checks performed) at any time. Renewed child abuse and criminal history clearances will be required every five years. Additional background, child abuse clearance or reference checks may be requested either randomly or because of some new concern.

Applicability to Occasional and/or Sporadic Volunteers

The policy set forth herein applies to non-employees who volunteer to work with children and/or youth at Presbytery of Philadelphia-sponsored programs or events even on an occasional and/or sporadic basis.

By way of example only, non-employee volunteers who volunteer to chaperone youth/choir practice a few times a year should be required to undergo the clearance process; however, a non-employee who commits to chaperone and participate in children's and/or youth choir practice on a regular, routine basis, will be asked to undergo the clearance process.

The occasional and/or sporadic volunteer must be accompanied by a second certified adult. Whenever a question arises about whether a non-employee volunteer's interaction with the Presbytery of

Philadelphia-sponsored child and/or youth programs is occasional and sporadic, or regular, routine and consistent, the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk shall make the determination.

Anyone providing childcare, or overnight supervision, for Presbytery-sponsored events, even on a limited basis, must have clearances and comply with the Policy.

Confidentiality

All employee and volunteer materials (including without limitation notes on reference checks and interviews and the results of background and clearance checks performed) will be kept by the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk or her/his designee in a secure confidential location. Disclosure of the results of reference and background/clearance checks will be limited to those with a “need to know” and otherwise kept strictly confidential.

- **TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

As set forth below, all employees and volunteers who successfully complete the screening process as required above must then be authorized by the Presbytery of Philadelphia COM or a body approved by COM before they may begin working with children or youth.

Employees and volunteers shall be required to undergo both initial and periodic reauthorization as set forth below:

Please note that the Presbytery of Philadelphia's volunteer and employee authorization process is distinct from, and in addition to, any required authorization, licensure or registration that may be mandated by the state of Pennsylvania as a condition of employment in any profession (i.e., teacher, social worker, or therapist). In addition, certain employees, including those licensed by the state of Pennsylvania, are required under the CPSL to receive periodic state-approved child abuse training. Although the Presbytery of Philadelphia will endeavor to advise employees subject to state-mandated training requirements about upcoming training opportunities, registration for and attendance at such state-mandated training sessions shall be the responsibility of the individual.

Initial Presbytery of Philadelphia Authorization

All Presbytery of Philadelphia employees and volunteers who have direct contact with children or youth, including, but not limited to, those employees and volunteers who are mandated reporters, must be authorized by the Presbytery of Philadelphia before they may begin working with children or youth. This process shall include the following:

- Required attendance at and completion of a Presbytery of Philadelphia-approved training session regarding child and youth protection.
- Receipt and review of a copy of this Policy.
- The signing of relevant documents including an Employee / Volunteer Acknowledgment and Agreement (form included in the Appendix to this Policy), confirming that they have received, read and understood this Policy and agree to comply with it.

Periodic Reauthorization

In accordance with Pennsylvania law, at least every five years after the initial authorization, the Presbytery of Philadelphia employees and volunteers who have been authorized in accordance with this Policy must successfully complete a reauthorization process to continue their work

with children and/or youth. The reauthorization process shall include the following:

- Updated child abuse and criminal background checks.
- Required attendance and completion of a Presbytery of Philadelphia-approved boundary training which must include child and youth protection.
- Signing an Employee/Volunteer Recommitment Form, reconfirming the employee/volunteer has read and understood this Policy and agrees to comply with it (See Attachment E, Employee/Volunteer Acknowledge and Agreement).

Authorization/Reauthorization Training

The Presbytery of Philadelphia will offer regular training opportunities so that Presbytery of Philadelphia-required initial authorizations and re-authorizations can be accomplished in timely fashion. This may be satisfied through online mandatory reporter training or through Boundary Training that includes a child protection component.

As noted above, certain employees are required periodically to attend state-approved child abuse training sessions in addition to those mandated by the Presbytery of Philadelphia under this Policy. For such employees, the following additional requirements shall apply:

Individual employees who are subject to additional training by virtue of state certification, licensure or registration shall, as a condition of continued employment, furnish the Presbytery of Philadelphia with:

- 1) proof of attendance at a state-mandated child abuse training session within thirty days of completion of such training;
- 2) a copy of any state-issued renewal certification, license or registration within thirty days of receipt.

Individual employees who are subject to additional training by virtue of employment at the Presbytery of Philadelphia and who are not state-certified, licensed or registered shall furnish the Presbytery of Philadelphia with proof of attendance at state-mandated child abuse training sessions within thirty days of completion of such training as a condition of continued employment with the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia will provide employee/volunteer training pertaining to this policy and the Mandated Reporting laws for Pennsylvania at regular intervals.

Additionally, employees or volunteers may be asked to complete the online training, “Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania” provided by Pennsylvania’s Child Welfare Resource center.

Training can be found at the following links:

<http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/>

<http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Resources/CPSL%20Resources/Reporting%20Flyer.pdf>

Upon completion, the employee or volunteer will provide a copy of their certification of completion to the Committee.

Any employee or volunteer having questions about the applicability of these additional training requirements should contact his or her supervisor or the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk for clarification. As noted above, compliance with these additional, state-mandated training requirements shall be the sole responsibility of the individual.

- **SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS**

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

Two-Adult/Age Policy

At least two certified non-related adults (one of whom will be no less than 25 years old) will supervise all Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities involving children and youth, whether on or off campus. Adults must remain in sight of one another at all times except in a temporary or emergency situation. For purposes of the two-adult requirement, spouses count as one certified adult as do a parent and his/her children and/or youth.

The two-adult requirement can be eased in a situation involving vehicular transportation as it is permissible for one certified adult driver to transport several children and/or youth in a single vehicle in a convoy of vehicles traveling to and from an event. The Presbytery of Philadelphia will, if possible, avoid situations where a volunteer is alone in a vehicle with a child and/or youth.

Adult-to-Child/Youth Ratios (the two-adult requirement applies to the following)

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

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

For overnight trips there shall be at least one certified, appropriately aged adult for every six children and/or youth; gender balance is required. If there are male and female children and/or youth, there must also be male and female adults.

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 which he/she is 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

Doors to rooms in which children and/or youth involved in church activities are present are to remain open. If noise or fire code restrictions apply, 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, even when no one is occupying the room.

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 must remain outside the room.

Use of Church Manses and of Pastors' and Volunteers' Homes

Children and youth are not allowed into any church manse without at least two certified, appropriately aged adults being present. Similarly, children and youth are not allowed into the homes of a pastor or of a volunteer without at least two certified, appropriately aged adults being present. The adult/child and adult/youth ratios set forth above shall apply.

Use of Private Vehicles

The following policies, which shall apply when private vehicles are used to transport children and/or youth in connection with church-related activities, are intended to ensure and protect the safety of our children and youth.

All vehicle drivers must abide by the following protocols:

- Be at least 25 years of age and certified according to this Policy
- Have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance and provide photocopies of the license and proof of such insurance to Presbytery staff in advance of transporting any children or youth in connection with church-related activities.
- Have a clear driving record, i.e., shall have had no major moving violations within 12 months prior to the proposed transport of children and/or youth (determination of what constitutes "major" shall be made by COM), and no convictions or deferred adjudications for driving under the influence of a controlled substance within ten years prior to the transport of children/youth.
- Authorize the Presbytery of Philadelphia to check driving records.

- No tobacco products shall be used in the vehicles.
- No alcoholic beverages shall be allowed in the vehicles.
- No firearms or other weapons shall be allowed in the vehicles.
- All persons, including the driver, shall wear seat and shoulder belts or be seated in such other age/weight appropriate safety seats (car seats, booster seats, etc.) as required by law.
- The maximum number of people in the vehicle shall be the same as the number of adult seats in the vehicle with seat belts.
- The driver shall have complete authority and full responsibility for the safety of the passengers at all times.

No one driver shall drive a total of more than eight hours in any one day. On trips of eight hours or more, the driver shall have available an alternate approved driver to relieve the primary driver if necessary.

- For at least 12 hours prior to driving the vehicle, no driver shall have consumed any alcoholic beverages.
- Drivers shall operate vehicles in compliance with speed limits and traffic laws and consistent with safe driving given the prevailing road conditions.
- In the event of an accident, with or without injury, the driver (or another person if the driver is unable to do so) shall report the incident to the proper police authority, to the individual's insurance company, and to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk within 24 hours of its occurrence. If anyone requires medical treatment or hospitalization, the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk and if a child/youth is injured, the parents/guardians, shall be notified by telephone as soon as possible.
- In the event of an accident, a Private Vehicle Accident Report Form (see Attachment D, Incident Form) must be promptly completed and submitted to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk or her/his designee.

- **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 Presbytery of Philadelphia employees and volunteers who, during employment or volunteer work, 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 Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk. (see Appendix A, Reporting Checklist). 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 his or her care by a parent, guardian, youth, adult, or Presbytery of Philadelphia staff employee or volunteer, must be reported promptly, as required by law, first to the authorities and immediately thereafter to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk. All such reports shall be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.

In the event that the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk is unavailable or is the alleged abuser, the reporting guidelines referred to above by a Presbytery of Philadelphia employee or volunteer of alleged or suspected abuse shall be made to the Stated Clerk.

The CPSL 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, the CPSL imposes criminal liability for willful failure to report actual or suspected child abuse.

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 and one copy to either the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk or her/his designee. If the designee nor the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk is present, the accident report should be scanned and e-mailed as soon as possible. (See Attachment D for Accident/Injury/Incident Report Form for Children/Youth.)

- **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE**

In the event of an allegation of abuse to a child or youth or suspected abuse to a child or youth and after completion of the above-mandated reporting, the procedures set forth below must be followed at the Presbytery of Philadelphia:

Every allegation shall be taken seriously. Adequate care, respect and confidentiality shall be offered to alleged victims and perpetrators until the allegation is substantiated or cleared. The identity of any individual who makes a report of alleged or suspected abuse and/or cooperates in a subsequent investigation of such a report in accordance with this Policy shall be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.

The Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk will immediately notify the parent(s) or legal guardian of the alleged victim.

The Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk will then contact The Presbytery of Philadelphia legal counsel and, where appropriate, the Presbytery of Philadelphia's liability insurance carrier.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia will follow the requirements set forth in section D-10.0000 of the Rules of Discipline in the Book of Order. In the event the accused is, at any point in the investigation, deemed not under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA), the Presbytery will be asked to approve an Administrative Commission pursuant to G-3.0109b(6).

The Presbytery of Philadelphia employees and volunteers are required to cooperate fully with the investigative authorities, such as the Department of Human Services, Bucks County Office of Children & Youth, and law enforcement officials. Refusing to fully cooperate with a criminal investigation will be seen as a violation of this policy.

With respect to inquiries other than those from investigative authorities (for example, from uninvolved church members or members of the media), the Presbytery of Philadelphia employees and volunteers will refer any inquiries regarding the situation to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk, except that in the event the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk is unavailable or is the alleged abuser. The Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk, shall be the only person(s) authorized to release any information on behalf of the Presbytery of Philadelphia regarding an abuse allegation, except where the law requires others to provide information.

Subject to applicable confidentiality laws, the Stated Clerk will provide the Presbytery with a report of the incident and of all steps taken afterwards.

When appropriate, the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk will be responsible for arranging a meeting with parents/guardians of other children and youth to explain the situation and answer questions. The Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk shall act in accordance with all applicable confidentiality laws at all times, including in any discussion that occurs at such a meeting.

When appropriate, a brief statement may be prepared and sent to the congregations explaining the situation. That statement should not assign blame, interfere with the victim's privacy, violate confidentiality concerns, or violate the procedures laid out in the Rules of Discipline in the Book of Order.

The Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk, will maintain a log of all actions taken regarding the allegation including telephone calls, personal interactions, and any correspondence. This log and all documentation relating to the matter shall be kept in a secure confidential file.

The following additional steps may be taken when deemed appropriate:

The Executive Presbyter shall immediately place an accused employee on leave. Such leave may be with or without pay. The Executive Presbyter shall immediately remove an accused volunteer from service.

Additionally, to protect the child or youth from further possible abuse or harassment, the Presbytery of Philadelphia will prohibit the accused individual access to the alleged victim and other children and youth in the Presbytery of Philadelphia programs, services and activities.

If an employee or volunteer is determined to be a perpetrator with respect to a founded report of child abuse, such individual's employment or volunteer relationship with the Presbytery of Philadelphia will be immediately terminated.

In all cases, except those where an allegation of abuse is ultimately determined to be founded (as that term is defined by the CPSL), the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk, in consultation with the COM, will make a determination as to whether the formerly accused individual will be allowed to resume working with/supervising children and youth as an employee or volunteer at the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

- **ENDANGERED ADULTS**

Endangered adults will be accorded the same protections as children and youth under this policy.

- **HEALING THE CONGREGATION**

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which in deed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing songs to God. And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Col. 3:12-17)

At the Presbytery of Philadelphia, we take every precaution we possibly can to protect our children and youth; however, we have to recognize that incidents may occur. These situations can have a tremendous impact on the individuals, as well as the entire Presbytery. To help the community of faith deal with this betrayal of trust, these are five main components necessary for the healing process:

Truth telling: We have to acknowledge what has happened. Ignoring the issue could only make things worse.

Sharing and validation of feelings: Many emotions surround the betrayal of trust: i.e. shock, anger, disbelief, and fear. In order to help the community of faith acknowledge and validate these feelings, as well as find some resolution, we encourage group mediation with a trained pastoral counselor.

Education: Commitment to the safety and well-being of children and youth is our number one priority. We have to communicate that commitment to the congregation in order for trust to be reestablished. We also must reeducate members on how we can collectively protect our children.

Spiritual reflection: In a community of faith we turn to God for guidance and direction, especially during difficult times. We turn to scripture, like the words Paul gave the Colossians (Col. 3:12-17), or the comforting words of Psalm 23, and we pray that the "peace of Christ will rule in our hearts." We turn to God in prayer emphasizing the grace of Christ that will lift us up and love us forever.

Where do we go from here? Answering the question, "What else do we have to do in order to be able to heal?" As a Presbytery and as the body of Christ, where do we go from here? What do we need to do to mend ourselves so that we can go about the mission of the church – which is to glorify and serve God?

- **POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION**

The COM will review this Policy at least annually and recommend revisions to Presbytery as appropriate.

Revision History:

Date	Changes
1-21-2020	Initial version

- **APPENDIX**

The following attachments will be used in connection with the Policy:

ATTACHMENT A
Reporting Checklist

ATTACHMENT B
Disqualifying Crimes

ATTACHMENT C
Information on PA Volunteer Background Clearances

ATTACHMENT D
Accident/Injury/Incident Report Form for Children/Youth

ATTACHMENT E
Employee/Volunteer Acknowledgement and Agreement Form

ATTACHMENT F
Photo Release Form

ATTACHMENT A**The Presbytery of Philadelphia
Reporting Checklist**

How to report suspected child abuse as mandated by Pennsylvania law as of December 2014 (source: 23 Pa. C.S. § 6301, et seq. and keepkidssafe.pa.gov).

Following the procedures explained in The Presbytery of Philadelphia's Child and Youth Protection Policy, 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 Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect to the Authorities

An initial report of suspected or actual child abuse or neglect must be made via the Toll- free PA Child Abuse Hotline (Childline) at 800-932-0313.

A written report must be made within 48 hours of the initial report to Child Protective Services.

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 Child Protective Services and to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk.

Reporting Child Abuse to the Presbytery of Philadelphia

Immediately after an initial report of suspected or actual child abuse or neglect is submitted to the authorities, the person making the report must make a report to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk.

ATTACHMENT B

Disqualifying Crimes

Any potential employee or volunteer who has been convicted of one or more of the following crimes under Pennsylvania law or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state shall be disqualified from employment and/or volunteer service that involves direct contact with children:

Title 18, Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide).

Title 18, Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault).

Title 18, Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking).

Title 18, Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping).

Title 18, Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint).

Title 18, Section 3121 (relating to rape).

Title 18, Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault).

Title 18, Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse).

Title 18, Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault).

Title 18, Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).

Title 18, Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault).

Title 18, Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).

Title 18, Section 4302 (relating to incest).

Title 18, Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child).

Title 18, Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children).

Title 18, Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children).

A felony offense under Title 18, Section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses).

Title 18, Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances).

Title 18, Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors).

Title 18, Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children).

The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the above listed offenses.

A felony offense under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act of April 14, 1972 (Public Law 233, No. 64) committed within the previous five-year period.

ATTACHMENT C

Information on PA Volunteer Background Clearances

Two laws impacting how volunteers obtain clearances were implemented. PA Act 153, signed by Governor Tom Corbett in 2014, was in force on December 31, 2014. The second law, PA Act 15 of 2015, signed by Governor Tom Wolf, was in force on August 25, 2015 (superseding portions of PA Act 153).

As with any youth organization in Pennsylvania, the law has a direct impact on employees and volunteers as it requires them to obtain background clearances to work with our youth. Depending on the individual, employees/volunteers may be required to obtain between two and three clearances. The three clearances are as follows:

- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Background Check
 - All employees/volunteers needing clearances under the law shall be required to obtain a criminal background check run by the Pennsylvania State Police by using the following URL and instructions: <https://epatch.state.pa.us/>. This background check is free to all volunteers as of July 25, 2015.
- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Child Abuse Clearance
 - All employees/volunteers needing clearances under the law shall be required to obtain a child abuse clearance from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services by using the following URL and instructions: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>. This background check is free to all volunteers as of July 25, 2015. You will need to register for an account on the site.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation Fingerprint-Based Background Check
 - Volunteers needing clearances under the law that have lived in the state of Pennsylvania for less than ten consecutive years (including the current year) must obtain a fingerprint-based FBI Background Check by using the following URL and instructions: https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpw.htm. This background check carries a fee, but is generally only obtained once provided you continue to live in the state of Pennsylvania. At any time, even after service has begun, the Presbytery of Philadelphia reserves the right to require this check either randomly or because of some concern.
 - Employees/volunteers that have lived in the state of Pennsylvania for the last ten consecutive years may be exempt from this check, but must complete an affidavit affirming such. A copy of this affidavit can be printed and then filled out at the following location: <http://pcdeeprun.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Waiver-Fingerprints.pdf>

ATTACHMENT D

The Presbytery of Philadelphia
Accident / Injury / Incident Report Form for Children / Youth

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:

ATTACHMENT D – CONTINUED

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

Signature of Person Making Report: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

(Please give this report to the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk)

ATTACHMENT E

**The Presbytery of Philadelphia
Child and Youth Protection Policy
Employee/Volunteer Acknowledgment and Agreement**

To be certified to work with children and youth at the Presbytery of Philadelphia I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Presbytery of Philadelphia Child and Youth Protection Policy (Policy), and that I have had an opportunity to read the Policy, that I understand my obligations under the Policy, and that I have completed training regarding child and youth protection. I understand that any violation of the Policy or misrepresentation of information that I have provided in connection with my appointment to work with children/youth at the Presbytery of Philadelphia may result in termination of my employment or volunteer service with children/youth, and may prompt Disciplinary Charges under the Rules of Discipline in the Book of Order.

Intending to be legally bound, I hereby agree to comply in all respects with the Policy.

Employees/Volunteers Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date Signed: _____

Date Child and Youth Protection Policy Was Reviewed: _____

Date Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Training was Completed: _____

ATTACHMENT F**The Presbytery of Philadelphia
Child and Youth Protection Policy****- PHOTO & VIDEO RELEASE FORM -**

Please fill out and sign to give this permission to use pictures and videos of your minor child for promos, events, online, etc. Please note that these photos and videos may be used now and in the future.

Child's Name: _____

Date of Child's Birth: _____

I, _____ (Parent's/Guardian's Name) GRANT permission to the Presbytery of Philadelphia to publish pictures and videos of my child in promotional videos, press releases, or any other form of public publicity. I further state that I have the right to give this permission on behalf of the minor named above as I am the minor's parent or legal guardian. I understand that if I give notice to the Presbytery of Philadelphia that I object to any particular picture or video being used publicly, that it will be removed as soon as possible.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date