

## Faith Community Presbyterian Church

### Child Safety Policy

#### A. Purpose Statement

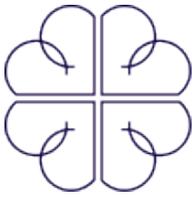
Faith Community Presbyterian Church of Novi, Michigan, seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the following practices, our goal is to protect the children of Faith Community Presbyterian Church from injury, and/or incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

#### B. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include minors under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “vulnerable adult” includes adults who cannot reasonably protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment.

#### C. Sexual Abuse Prevention

- a. No adult should be alone with one child on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.
  1. This policy applies on church property and to church functions offsite.
  2. A qualified teenager may replace a second adult in a youth group or child care.
  3. Classrooms with a single teacher and more than one student are acceptable as long as classroom doors are kept open and a second adult is nearby. If only one student attends, the teacher and student may join another class, move to a public area, or stay in the worship service.
  4. In the nursery, when leaving the classroom door open is not practical for child safety, a single teacher is acceptable as long as the classroom door windows are not obstructed and a second adult is nearby (such as teachers in another classroom, deacons performing duties during service, etc.).
  5. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open or the class should be moved to a public area (such as the fellowship hall).
- b. Faith Community Presbyterian Church Sexual Misconduct Policy includes additional information and procedures.
- c. All employees, regardless of position, and all volunteers whose duties include supervision of/regular direct contact with children will be screened prior to unmonitored contact with children.
  1. **Employment/Volunteer forms**
    - i. All employees and all volunteers whose duties may include supervision of/regular direct contact with children must complete and sign a background check authorization form, giving consent for Faith Community Presbyterian Church to order criminal history background checks.
    - ii. Prospective employees and volunteers must answer specific questions about previous criminal history.
    - iii. Forms and criminal history results will be maintained on file at the Faith Community Presbyterian Church.
    - iv. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.



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- v. All employees and any volunteers who may supervise/have regular direct contact with children (for example, Sunday School teachers) must read, sign and abide by the sexual misconduct summary policy.
- vi. All employees and volunteers who may supervise/ have regular direct contact with children must read and follow the child protection policy and procedures.

#### 2. Personal Interview

Upon receipt of a resumé or application for a potential employee, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

#### 3. Reference Checks

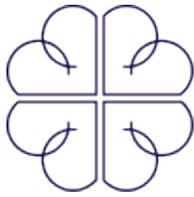
- i. Members of the personnel committee will check references for potential employees (which references and the number of references checked will be determined on a case-by-case basis by members of the personnel committee.)
- ii. Presbytery guidelines suggest a minimum of two references that are of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past.
- iii. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained on file at Faith Community Presbyterian Church.

#### 4. Criminal History Check

- i. A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for volunteers who will be involved in overnight activities with children; and those counseling children.
- ii. An Internet Criminal History Tool Assessment (ICHAT) is required for all volunteers whose duties include potentially unmonitored contact with children (such as Sunday School teachers, nursery caregivers, Youth Club leaders, etc.).
- iii. Evaluation determining disqualifying criminal history offenses will be conducted on a case-by-case basis by members of the Personnel Committee and/or Education Committees of Faith Community Presbyterian Church.
- iv. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence will be considered disqualifying offenses, and will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children.
- v. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the background authorization form may also be a disqualifying event.

#### 5. Additional Volunteer Requirements

- i. Volunteers must be active in the life of Faith Community Presbyterian Church for at least 6 months prior to working in positions requiring supervision of and/or direct contact with children. (Such as Sunday School teachers, Faith Club volunteers, youth club chaperones/drivers, etc.)
- ii. The background check authorization form includes a question related to this requirement.



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#### D. Responding to Suspected Child Abuse or Allegations of Child Abuse

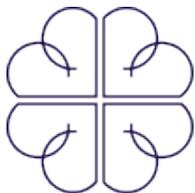
- a. For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:
  - Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and/or biting.
  - Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and/or persistent teasing.
  - Sexual abuse** – any contact or interaction with a minor under the age of 18 for sexual stimulation. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between an adult and a minor is always considered forced whether or not there is consent.
  - Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.
- b. If an individual involved becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult while engaging in the ministries, activities, and/or sponsored programs of Faith Community Presbyterian Church (on or offsite), his/her knowledge of this suspected abuse should be reported immediately to a minister or elder of the church. Further action, including reporting to appropriate civil authorities may also be required.
- c. The number to report suspected abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults is: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) 855-444-3911.
- d. In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Faith Community Presbyterian Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the procedures outlined in the sexual misconduct policy will be followed.

#### E. Parental Permission

- a. All minors participating in any church sponsored off site or overnight activity, or an onsite activity without a parent or guardian in the building must submit a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian.
- b. A parent or guardian should indicate in writing whether photos taken of their children may be used on the website or for other external publication (newsletters, brochures, etc.).

#### F. Teenage Volunteers

- a. Teenage volunteers are valued and at times, may assist with supervising/caring for children during programs or activities.
  - i. Teenage volunteers must be at least age 14 years of age.
  - ii. Teenage volunteers must be approved by the Director of Family Ministries; a teacher (of Sunday school, VBS, nursery or Faith Club), or a member of the Education Committee.



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#### G. Sick Child Policy

- a. It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Faith Community Presbyterian Church. Parents are encouraged to consider the health of others (children and adults) when deciding whether a child who has been recently ill attends programs or activities. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT participate in programs or activities:
  - Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
  - Green or yellow runny nose
  - Eye or skin infections
  - Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease
- b. Children who are observed by employees or volunteers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up.

#### H. Medication Policy

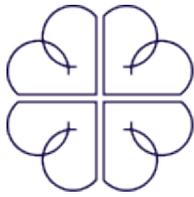
Employees and staff should NOT administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. No medication will be dispensed by teachers/caregivers during time in the nursery, Sunday School, VBS, etc. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of children with such conditions should address their situations with the adult supervisor/teacher. The teacher should inform the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Education Committee. Parents and church representatives should develop a plan of action for that child.

#### I. Discipline Policy

Corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it, is not acceptable. Spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children is not permitted. Employees and/or volunteers should consult with the Director of Family Ministries or the Education Committee if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

#### J. Restroom Guidelines

- a. When taking a group of children to the bathroom the worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. Children 5 and older will typically be able to independently visit the bathroom, individually or in pairs.
- b. There may be times when a single child needs to be taken to the bathroom. At those times, the bathroom door should be left open and the adult should remain outside unless there is an emergency or the child asks for assistance. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should call the child's name to check on the child. If a child requires assistance, the worker should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as he/she assists child, and have another adult present in the doorway of the bathroom.
- c. For the protection of all, employees and/or volunteers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and should never be in a closed



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bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

- d. Children under 5 may require assistance with clothing or diapering. The nursery caregiver should attempt to contact the parents first (via cell phone, or having a deacon try to locate the family members in service). If it is an emergency, and the parents have not been located yet, and if there is only one nursery caregiver, s/he should request another adult, (another Sunday school teacher, deacon, etc) to be present in room or the doorway during diapering or toileting assistance.

### K. Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while participating in programs and activities, the following steps should be followed.

- a. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care. First Aid supplies are located in the church office on the shelf across from the copier. An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machine is located on the wall between the office and the coat room.
- b. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. The director of Family Ministry, and/or a minister, deacon or elder should also be informed. Emergency medical services may be called, if warranted.
- c. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional. The insurance company holding the policy for Faith Community Presbyterian Church may request copies of incident reports.

### L. Facilities

Faith Community Presbyterian Church strives to provide a safe environment that minimizes the risk of accidental injury to children. Volunteer members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee work to maintain the facilities. Problems and/or potentially unsafe areas, conditions, or hazards should be reported to a minister, and/or an elder.

### M. Training

All employees and volunteers whose duties include contact with children must be aware of this policy and follow all child safety procedures. Any questions regarding child safety procedures and/or this policy should be directed to the Directory of Family Ministry, a member of the Education Committee, a minister, or an elder.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date