

**Policies and Procedures for Safeguarding Children and Youth
and the Adults to Whom They are Entrusted
at First Presbyterian Church, Fulton, Missouri**

Adopted by Session on November 19, 2013

Purpose

Our congregation believes that children and Youth are a gift of God to the whole of the human community. They are an integral part of the community contributing to its worship and ministry. It is in the church that children and Youth receive nurture and hear the good news of God's love and protection. Therefore, the church must strive to provide safety and security for children and Youth as well as for the adults to whom they are entrusted.

Application

These guidelines apply to all congregational activities for children and Youth regardless of location.

Safeguards

Approval of Activities. All activities for children and Youth must be approved by the Session.

Supervision. The Session must approve all volunteers and employees who work with children and Youth. Children are defined as birth through fifth grade. Youth are defined as sixth through twelfth grades. At least two approved leaders must be assigned to lead any activity involving Youth Groups. For overnight activities, there must be a man assigned to provide leadership if boys are present and a woman if girls are present. An adult assigned to lead activities involving children and Youth must be at least five years older than the oldest participant. A volunteer who has been active in the life of our congregation for less than six months must be paired with someone who has been an active member for longer than six months when working with children and Youth.

Background Checks: Session voted on September 30, 2014 to have all volunteers who work with children and youth to have a Highway Patrol Name Search Criminal Record Check completed. It is the responsibility of the Christian Education Committee to see that Background checks are completed.

Transportation. Volunteers and employees who drive children and Youth on the congregation's behalf must be at least twenty-one years old and approved by the Session. The Youth Group leaders will notify parents, in writing, if Youth are going to be transported in private vehicles. When possible, there must be at least three individuals present in each vehicle, either an adult and two Youth or two adults and a Youth. There cannot be more individuals in a vehicle than there are seat belts.

Communication. Prior to any church activity for children and Youth, leaders will make information about the activity available to children and Youth and their parents. This information will include, in writing: who is driving, the destination of the trip, when the Youth will leave the church, and when they will arrive back at church. Parents must sign a consent form for the Youth to participate in the trip.

Sign-In. Parents are asked to sign their children, birth through kindergarten, in to the Sunday morning Christian Education program and the Nursery during worship service, and indicate where they may be reached during the time of the activity (Appendix A).

Parent's Permission. The following documents must be obtained at least once each year and before a child or Youth participates in an overnight activity or in an activity occurring away from the church's campus: a

Children and Youth Activity Participation Release (Appendix B), a Medical Release (Appendix C), and, if acceptable to the parent, a Publicity Release (Appendix D).

Youth Covenant. A Youth Covenant must be signed by all youth who regularly participate in any congregational activity for youth (Appendix E). A parent or guardian must also sign each Covenant. Covenants must be renewed at least once each year.

Activity Plan. A Children and Youth Activity Plan must be prepared by staff or activity leaders prior to any overnight activity or any activity occurring outside of the Fulton area (Appendix F). A copy of the Activity Plan must be signed by a parent or guardian on behalf of each participant.

Visibility. Interaction between children and Youth and volunteers and employees should be conducted in ways that promote visibility by others and remove the opportunity for secrecy and isolation. Where possible, windows should be in all rooms where these interactions occur, and blinds should remain open. Doors should remain open when this is not possible.

First Aid and CPR. Volunteers and employees who work with children and Youth are encouraged to obtain training in first aid and CPR.

Prohibited Acts. The following acts are prohibited during any church activity for children and Youth:

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct toward a child or Youth.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a child or Youth.
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child or Youth.
- Physical neglect of a child or Youth, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to church activities. Adequate supervision means the type of supervision a reasonable person would provide in the same or similar situation.
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a child or Youth.
- Possessing or accessing obscene or pornographic materials at any church activity.
- Possessing illegal drugs or being under the influence of any illegal drugs.
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol while participating in any church activity designed for children and Youth.
- Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a child or Youth.
- Carrying any type of weapon.

Compliance and Training. It is the responsibility of each volunteer and employee to comply with these policies and procedures.

Screening

Application. All volunteer Youth Group leaders, all volunteers who drive youth or children for more than a day trip, and all employees must complete a Confidential Information Form (Appendix H) and be screened and approved by the Administration Committee.

Criminal History Checks. Criminal history checks must be conducted by the Administration Committee for volunteer Youth Group leaders and all employees. The Administration Committee will review the criminal history report. If the report shows a "Not Clear" status, the Administration Committee will determine the status of the individual in regard to working with the Youth Group and make a recommendation for Session approval. Criminal history checks should be updated periodically.

Disqualifying Offenses. Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of a criminal history check or motor vehicle report, the following will disqualify a person from participating in the leadership of any activity involving children and Youth: any indictment alleging the offense of, or any conviction for: murder; aggravated assault; sexual abuse; sexual assault (rape); aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child; incest; indecency with a child; inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance with a child; possession or promotion of child pornography; sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor; employment harmful to children; or any other offense, particularly those involving moral turpitude or the use of alcohol or drugs, designated by the Session in its discretion. If an individual disputes information that appears in his or her criminal history check or motor vehicle report, he or she may appeal through the appropriate governmental agency.

Disqualification from Driving. Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of a criminal history check or motor vehicle report indicating a conviction for any drug or alcohol related offense will disqualify a person from driving children and Youth.

Approved Employees and Volunteers. The Administration Committee will review Confidential Information Forms and related information for each applicable volunteer and employee and, approve or disapprove each application. In making its decision, the committee should consider the nature of any identified offense, how that offense relates to the position under consideration, any explanation provided by the applicant, and any other information deemed appropriate. The committee will report its decision to the applicant and the Session. The Pastor will determine any appropriate pastoral response throughout this screening process. The Clerk of Session will maintain lists of those persons who have been approved to serve as a Youth leader or to drive children and Youth.

Confidentiality. While this screening process understandably intrudes into the privacy of our own lives, our congregation believes that the safety of our children and Youth outweighs the personal invasion inherent in this process. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all criminal history checks and motor vehicle reports, and the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of making such disclosures will be considered confidential. This information will be handled only by the Pastor, the Administration Committee, and Session. A neutral third party outside the church may be retained to conduct criminal history checks or motor vehicle reports, the results of which will be presented to the Administration committee and Session. The Pastor or his or her designee will maintain a secured storage facility in the church's business office for all confidential information.

Violations

Reporting Prohibited Acts. Anyone witnessing the occurrence of a prohibited act is asked to follow the steps outlined below. If a child or Youth reports that a prohibited act occurred while participating in a church activity or involved church volunteers or employees at any time or place, the person initially contacted by the child or Youth is asked to follow these same steps. A prohibited act must be reported immediately, and any failure to do so will be considered a procedural violation of these guidelines. The Session may treat such violation as grounds for termination of an employee or as grounds for the suspension or prohibition of any person participating in church activities involving children and Youth. All questions or concerns regarding any suspected violation should be directed to the Pastor or the Clerk of Session, who will report it to the Administration Committee.

1. Personally secure the safety of the child or Youth.
2. Do not leave the child or Youth alone to report the incident.
3. Report the incident immediately to the Pastor or the Clerk of Session.
4. Do not personally confront the alleged or accused violator of the policy.
5. Complete a Confidential Incident Report and deliver it to the Pastor or the Clerk of Session
6. Report abuse and neglect to local authorities as required by law.

7. The Administration Committee (see next paragraph) is solely responsible for all communications on behalf of the church.

Response to Reported Prohibited Acts. When the Pastor or Session receives a report involving a prohibited act, they may consult with others as needed and take such immediate steps as are deemed appropriate. The report will be referred as soon as possible to the Administration Committee. The Administration Committee shall take such actions as it deems appropriate in the investigation and handling of the report. The Clerk of Session will be responsible for timely contacting of law enforcement authorities as required by law. The Administration committee moderator or Pastor will be responsible for all communications on behalf of the church, including those with parents, civil authorities, presbytery, the church's insurance company, and the media. The Pastor will ensure that pastoral care needs are addressed. If needed, the church's legal counsel will represent the church but not individual interests.

Consequences of Committing a Prohibited Act. Any person who is accused of committing a prohibited act, whether a volunteer or employee, will be suspended automatically from any further participation in any church activity for children and Youth. The suspension will continue until a disposition of the report has been made by the Administration Committee. The disposition shall be based upon such evidence as the Administration committee deems appropriate. The evidence may include the results of any investigation by the church or law enforcement or child protection proceeding, or the filing, prosecution or outcome of any criminal charges or other legal proceedings. The Administration committee may, at its discretion, delay disposition pending the outcome of any investigation or proceeding involving the alleged violation. Upon disposition, if a majority of the Administration committee believes from the evidence that any person has committed a prohibited act, such person shall be prohibited from future participation in all church activities for children and Youth, either permanently or for such length of time and in such manner as the committee shall determine in its discretion. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment. If the Administration committee determines that the allegations are false, the Pastor will determine any appropriate pastoral response.

Oversight

Christian Education Committee. On behalf of the Session, the Christian Education Committee oversees the implementation of these guidelines. This committee maintains lists of those persons who have been approved by the Administration Committee and Session to serve as a leader at any Youth activity or to drive children and Youth.

Volunteers and Employees. The Pastor and his or her designee(s) are responsible for implementation of these guidelines in conjunction with the Administration and Christian Education committees and the Session. It is the responsibility of each volunteer and employee to comply with these guidelines.

Special thanks to Synod of the Sun in Austin, Texas, as most of these guidelines are based on their policy.

Appendix B

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Children and Youth Activity Participation Release

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Other Phone(s): _____

Age of Youth: _____ Birth date: _____ Grade: _____

Functions and Activities:

It is my understanding that participating in the programs, recreational activities, and other activities of First Presbyterian Church is a privilege. Prior to my child's participation in such activities, I acknowledge that there are certain risks associated with the activities, including, by way of example, physical injury due to activity-related accidents, physical injury due to transportation-related accidents, illness, or even death. In addition, I acknowledge that there may be other risks inherent in these activities of which I may not be presently aware.

Release of Liability:

By signing this Participation Release, I expressly warrant that the child named above or I, if I am a participant, am capable of withstanding both the physical and mental demands of the activities discussed above. I also expressly assume all risks of the child or me participating in the activities, whether such risks are known or unknown to me at this time. I further release First Presbyterian Church and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, and agents from any claim that my child may have or that I may have against them as a result of injury or illness incurred during the course of participation in these activities. This release of liability shall include (without limitation) any claims of negligence or breach of warranty. This release of liability is also intended to cover all claims that members of the child's or my family or estate, heirs, representatives, or assigns may have against First Presbyterian Church or its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents.

Indemnification:

I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless First Presbyterian Church and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents from any and all claims arising from my participation in its activities and programs, or as a result of injury or illness of my child or me during such activities.

I represent that I am the parent/guardian of the child named above, who is under 18 years of age or a participant in activities for children and Youth at First Presbyterian Church. I have fully read the above Participation Release and am fully familiar with the contents thereof.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Medical Release

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Other Phone(s): _____

Age of Youth: _____ Birth Date: _____ Grade: _____

Family Physician: _____ Phone: _____

Medications Taken: _____

Allergies: _____

Other Pertinent Health Information: _____

Medical Insurance Company: _____ Group No.: _____

Medical Insurance ID No.: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contacts:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

First Aid and Emergency Medical Treatment:

I recognize that there may be occasions where the child named above or I, if I am a participant, may be in need of first aid or emergency medical treatment as a result of an accident, illness, or other health condition or injury. I hereby give permission for agents of First Presbyterian Church to seek and secure any needed medical attention or treatment for the child named above, or me if I am a participant, including hospitalization, if in the agent's opinion such need arises. In doing so, I agree to pay all fees and costs arising from this action to obtain medical treatment. I give permission for attending physician(s) and other medical personnel to administer any needed medical treatment, including surgery and, again, I agree to pay for the medical treatment.

I also agree to notify agents of First Presbyterian Church if there are any changes in the above information that I have submitted.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Publicity Release**

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

On occasion, First Presbyterian Church takes photographs or makes audio or video recordings of children and/or adults involved in church activities. Such photographs or recordings may be used by staff and participants to remember the activities and participants, and may be used in the church's publications or advertising materials to let others know about its ministry. Any public use of such recordings must be approved by the church. The church may also invite local news organizations to photograph or record our events for news reporting or special interest features.

I consent to the use of any such photograph or audio or video recording of the child named above or me, if I am participating, to be used, distributed, or displayed as agents of the church deem appropriate.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Youth Covenant

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

During each and every Youth activity sponsored by First Presbyterian Church, participants are required to adhere to these simple steps to enhance the quality of the activity and to build a community characterized by respect, trust, concern, and dignity:

- (1) I understand the importance of always representing myself and my Youth group as ambassadors of the high standards of our faith. I will conduct myself as a representative of my family, First Presbyterian Church, and Christians everywhere. I will lead our group in stellar behavior.
- (2) I promise to respect God, respect myself, respect other people, and respect property. I understand that my continued participation in church activities depends on my support of this agreement.
- (3) I understand that no Youth are allowed to go anywhere alone, and that all groups must have an adult with them at all times when they are off church property.
- (4) I covenant to accept responsibility for my part in all damage and necessary repairs to any host property, including any damage to vehicles in which I am traveling.
- (5) I understand that bringing or using illegal drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated, and may result in my being sent home immediately. I also will not bring or use tobacco products.
- (6) I promise to abstain from inappropriate sexual behavior or other acts of disrespect while at Youth activities.

I accept the responsibility of keeping this covenant.

Youth Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read and discussed this covenant with my Youth and understand that noncompliance with any part of this covenant will result in my child being sent home, at my expense if there is any, from any church activity.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Children and Youth Activity Plan**

Dear Children/Youth and Parents:

We are going to: _____

We're leaving on: _____

We will meet at: _____

We are coming back on: _____

Pick us up at: _____

Your leaders/sponsors are _____ and _____.

Your drivers are _____ and _____.

Their phone numbers are _____ and _____.

We'll be staying at _____ and their phone number is _____.

We'll be participating in the following activities: _____

Emergency contact numbers for Youth:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Cost per child/Youth: _____

Please pay by _____ and make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church.

Attached, if needed, are a list of things you need to bring and any additional forms you need to submit.

Parents, please update medical and insurance information if it's changed. Please return a copy of this form if your child/Youth will be participating.

We're looking forward to the trip!

My child/Youth plans to participate.

Name of Participant: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

APPENDIX G

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Confidential Information Form**

*Must be completed by all volunteer Youth leaders,
all volunteers who drive children and Youth, and all employees.*

As covenant members of First Presbyterian Church, we are each called to teach, nurture, and protect our children through the myriad of opportunities we are given. As a volunteer "shepherd" please know that information gathered below is only asked in the spirit of utmost interest of our littlest and most vulnerable members, our lambs.

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Other Names You Have Used: _____

Name as It Appears on Driver's License: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State: _____

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Application to Serve as a Youth Leader:

Yes ___ No ___ I wish to serve as a Youth leader at First Presbyterian Church.

If you checked "yes," please answer the following:

Yes ___ No ___ Have you been active in the life of First Presbyterian Church for more than six months?

Yes ___ No ___ Have you been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor, except minor traffic violations)? If "yes," please describe:

Yes ___ No ___ Have you ever been charged with a sexual offense, offense relating to children, or crime of violence? If "yes," please describe:

Yes ___ No ___ Have you ever been reported to a social service agency, law enforcement agency, child abuse registry, or similar organization regarding child abuse or neglect? If "yes," please describe:

Appendix G (continued)

Application to Drive Children and Youth:

Yes ___ No ___ I wish to drive children or Youth on behalf of First Presbyterian Church.

If you checked "yes," please answer the following:

Yes ___ No ___ Do you have a valid Missouri driver's license?

Yes ___ No ___ Are you twenty-one years old or older?

Yes ___ No ___ Have you been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to any moving violations within the past five years? If "yes," please describe:

Yes ___ No ___ Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?

Yes ___ No ___ Do you carry at least the minimum required level of personal automobile insurance?

Insurance Company: _____ Policy No.: _____

Yes ___ No ___ Do you agree to require seat belt usage at all times and child safety seat usage?

Yes ___ No ___ Do you agree to transport persons only in vehicles that are in safe operating condition?

Authorization and Release:

I confirm that the above information is accurate and complete. The church is required by law to obtain the following authorization before requesting criminal background and driving record information: By my signature below, I authorize First Presbyterian Church or its agent to obtain information – written, oral, or other – from the Highway Patrol criminal background checks and driving history. I release and agree to indemnify First Presbyterian Church and its Pastor, leaders, employees, volunteers, and agents from any claim resulting from the investigation of my background.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

~~ All information requested or obtained is confidential ~~

Appendix H

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Confidential Incident Report**

Deliver to the Pastor, the Clerk, or the Moderator of the Administration Committee

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____ Place: _____

Name(s) of Child(ren): _____ Age(s): _____

Child's parent or other person responsible for the child's care: _____

Name(s) of those suspected of violating the church's guidelines: _____

Relationship of the accused to the child: _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

What was the child's demeanor and appearance? What, if anything, did the child say about the incident?_

What immediate action was taken? _____

Were there any witnesses? Does anyone else have relevant information? (names and phone numbers) ____

Printed Name of Person Reporting: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____