



CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY (UPDATED 2018)

This document is meant to specify the policies for staff and volunteers of Knox Presbyterian Church working with our children and youth.

For specifics on Policy Rationale or Definitions, please refer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures Appendix D.

Within the following document a child is defined as anyone within the Knox community birth through 5th grade.

Youth are defined as anyone within the Knox community in 6th grade through their senior year of high school. Individuals under the age of 18 not currently in middle or secondary school, but over the age of 12 also fall under the youth guidelines. Anyone under the age of 18 can also be referred to as a minor.

1. All adults who serve with minors must be screened and undergo a criminal background check prior to beginning service. All persons who serve with minors must undergo a Screening Process. The steps and checklist to be used in the Screening Process are labeled "Appendix A". All children and youth volunteers will keep updated contact information. Volunteers will contact the Associate Pastor or the Youth Director with updated information should a change occur.
2. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children will not be employed and shall not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
3. Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the "two-person rule" or the "open door policy" at ALL times. **The "two-person rule" requires that employees, volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth without a partner.** The "open door policy" requires the door be open at all times so that if a situation is in question, others in the vicinity can see and hear you. No married couples should work alone in a building with minors.
4. All Volunteers working with children and youth are required to be members or active constituents of Knox Presbyterian Church for a minimum of six weeks before they begin their work. Volunteers will begin as observers and must work with a training teacher for at least two months before being a lead teacher or lead volunteer.
5. Transportation: All adult drivers at child/youth events must have proper licensure and insurance. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. Current, California laws concerning child safety seats and restraints including weight and height requirements must be followed. All drivers transporting minors and vulnerable adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs. If a

charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks on their drivers. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 3 in this section unless parents have given signed consent for a particular event or activity for their child(ren) to be driven by only one adult. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).

6. All children 5 and under need to be picked up from Sunday School by their parent or guardian. All children 3 and under will be signed in and out by a parent or guardian from their classroom or nursery.
7. When taking children to the restroom, a non-family adult should only enter the restroom to assist a child when necessary. Take an additional child with you so that you are not alone with a single child.
8. If a teacher, volunteer, or staff person desires to meet with a minor individually, they should meet in a public place. (Like a coffee shop, sporting event, gallery, library, etc.)
9. Dating or engaging in sexual activity or contact with minors is strictly prohibited. This includes youth who are still in high school, but over the age of 18.
10. If a volunteer, staff member, or elder, believes a youth is in an unsafe environment, situation, or suspects abuse, contact the Pastor, Associate Pastor or the youth director immediately (note: the Pastor, Associate Pastor and Youth Director are all Mandated Reporters). This is our "Safe Child Response Team;" please refer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures, pages 6 - 8. Our guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse, or any behavior, which seems abusive or inappropriate are labeled "Appendix B". Our guidelines and procedures for responding to reported incidents of abuse are labeled "Appendix C".
11. Ratios: The adult to child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10. The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17. The best practice is to have one adult of each gender when there is one or more minors of each gender in a group. For details on overnight behavior with a minor, please refer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures, pages 9 – 10. Off site events will follow the procedures and protocols of that specific site.
12. Social Networking Code of Conduct: Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:
 - Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
 - Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
 - Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children or youth. Include other youth or another adult in messages to students. Keep a record of messages.
 - Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
 - Provide children, youth, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.

- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's and youth interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children and youth how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children or youth and parents/guardians.

IMPLEMENTATION:

We recommend that these guidelines and procedures be implemented within thirty (30) days of their adoption, with the completion of the initial screening process and background checks within ninety (90) days of adoption.

The Children's and Youth Education Committees will have the responsibility to implement and enforce these guidelines and procedures, including the training of employees and volunteers, maintaining confidential records, and implementing the screening process.

Appendix A

CHECKLIST FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

- Been an active member or active constituent of our church for at least six weeks.
- Stressed importance of having a witness present when dealing with children one-on-one (alternative: use open areas, leave door open, install windows in doors).
- Given copy of instructions for handling child abuse cases.
- Completed application for ministry.
- Checked references and conducted a personal interview (keep written documentation).
- Completed a criminal background check.

(Checked by)

(Date)

Note: This form to be posted in each volunteer's file. No volunteer is to be assigned until completion of the checklist.

Appendix B

REPORTING PROCEDURES

The law requires a mandated reporter, at Knox paid staff who work with children and youth, to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as Knox Presbyterian Church, we ask volunteers to report any suspected abuse to the appropriate individual in charge, or they may choose to report to the authorities as well. A mandated reporter who fails to do so can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor or, in extreme circumstances, may be subject to civil liability for money damages. Therefore, all employees at Knox Presbyterian Church must adhere to the following procedures and volunteers should alert the pastor, associate pastor or youth director as described below:

1. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or violation of the child Protection Guidelines of Knox Presbyterian Church, the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the pastor or, in the absence of the pastor, the associate pastor, or Youth Director. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, an employee will also immediately make a report to the local child protection service or law enforcement agency. The Pasadena office of the California Department of Children and Family Services can be reached by calling (626) 229-3508 and is located at 532 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA, 91101.

* Physical signs of molestation may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal disease

* Behavioral signs of molestation may include:

- nightmares
- anxiety when approaching the church building or nursery or preschool area (beyond normal separation anxiety)
- nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior
- withdrawal from church activities and friends

* Verbal signs of molestation may include statements such as:

- “I don’t like _____.”
- “_____ does things to me when we’re alone.”
- “I don’t like to be alone with _____.”
- “_____ fooled around with me.”

For additional information, see page 4 of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures. *Adapted from Child Abuse: Governing Law and Legislation by I. Sloan (1983)

2. Reports shall be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, and a brief synopsis of the report. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness.

3. All church employees and volunteers working with minor children will receive training at the beginning of their service and at regular intervals regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.

APPENDIX C

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. The official spokesperson for Knox Presbyterian Church Child Protection Policy shall be the Pastor, or in the absence of the Pastor, the Associate Pastor or the Youth Director. All inquiries or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other parties shall be referred to the Pastor. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson.
2. The official spokesperson shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse to the appropriate local Child Protection Services agency of the county, our insurance carrier, the Conference or District Superintendent.
3. The care and safety of the victim is our first priority. We will not confront the accused without the approval of the Child Protection Service or law enforcement authorities.
4. We will not prejudge any person accused, but we will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of child abuse.
5. We will treat the accused with dignity and respect. If the accused is a church worker, that person shall be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished and the person cleared by the authorities. If the accused is a paid employee of our church, his or her income will be maintained, until allegations are cleared by authorities or until criminal charges are filed.
6. All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
7. All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Pastor or, in the absence of the Pastor, by the previously designated spokesperson, and maintained in a secure and confidential file.

I have read and understand the policies and procedures of this child and youth protection policy.

Signed

Dated

APPENDIX D

PC (U.S.A.) CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

ON FILE IN CHURCH OFFICE

OR

AVAILABLE AT:

[HTTPS://WWW.PRESBYTERIANMISSION.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/CHILD-YOUTH-VULNERABLE-ADULT-PROTECTION-POLICY-APPROVED-BY-GA-2016.PDF](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/CHILD-YOUTH-VULNERABLE-ADULT-PROTECTION-POLICY-APPROVED-BY-GA-2016.pdf)