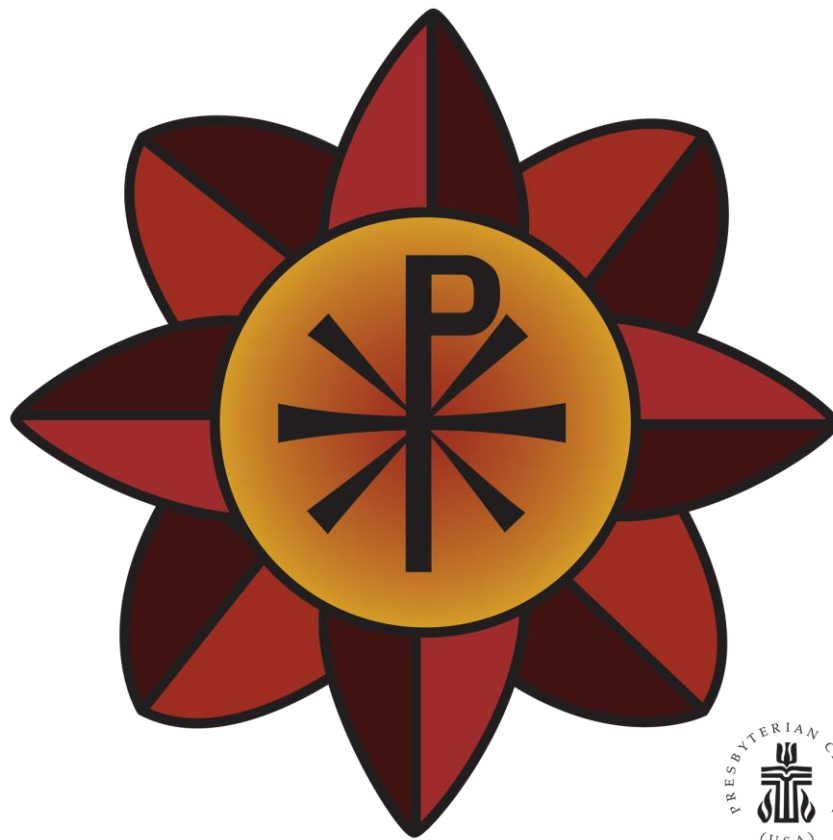


WILLIAMSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES



ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY

Approved August 27, 2009

Revised March 15, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Subject | Page |
|---|------|
| Policy Application Statement | 2 |
| Theological Basis for this Policy..... | 2 |
| Protection Guidelines..... | 3 |
| Screening, Training, and Background Checks..... | 6 |
| Reporting..... | 7 |
| Definitions..... | 9 |
| Appendices | |
| Appendix A Volunteer Application/Screening Form | |
| Appendix B Annual Volunteer Update Form | |
| Appendix C Incident Report Form | |

POLICY APPLICATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of Williamsburg Presbyterian Church (WPC), its staff, church members, church officers, paid contractors, and volunteers of WPC to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy applies to all WPC sponsored activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults. WPC has an absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THIS POLICY

The implementation and documentation of a Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy strives to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect.

Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.

Any type of abuse involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ’s healing and hope for community and individuals.

PROTECTION GUIDELINES

- A. General guidelines and procedures for all activities involving children, youth and vulnerable adults (CYVA)
 1. Activities at or sponsored by WPC
 - a. Two adults must be present.
 - b. If an emergency situation occurs and the two adult rule cannot be complied with, the Supervising Adult will immediately assess the situation and reestablish the two adult rule as soon as possible.
 2. Church School /Church School Classrooms (grades K through 12) / Nursery:
 - a. A Church School Superintendent shall be on duty during the Church School hour to monitor the overall school environment and to provide supervision and classroom support. The Director of Education Ministries (DEM) may act as Superintendent.
 - b. In all situations when there is only one adult in a Church School classroom or all adults in a room are related, the Church School Superintendent shall visit such room(s) at a minimum of one time during the Church School hour.
 - c. When teaching Church School, two unrelated attending adults is encouraged, but not required, provided a Church School Superintendent is immediately available to provide supervision and support as needed.
 - d. In the Nursery area, which includes the 3 and 4 year olds classroom, two or more unrelated adults must be present.
 3. Visual Access to Classrooms and Meeting Rooms

- a. All classrooms, nurseries, and other rooms in which any activity involving children or youth is being held must have unobstructed visual access from within the building, whether by open door or through a door-window.
4. Ratio
 - a. The adult to child/youth ratio for all child/youth related events and activities will be assessed by the DEM and approved by Christian Education Ministry.
5. Church Ministry
 - a. Where there is one-on-one interaction between one adult and one youth present, such interaction should occur in a public setting.
6. Onsite, Offsite and Overnight Activities
 - a. At least two unrelated adults must be in attendance at all times for other church related activities, whether on or off church property.
 - b. At least one female and one male must be in attendance during all overnight activities where both male and female CYVA are in attendance.
 - c. When overnight activities are involved, adult chaperones and supervisors must be screened and approved before participation.
 - d. All volunteers and staff personnel who drive and/or chaperone offsite trips involving the youth are expected to conform to all aspects of this policy.
7. Adult workers, volunteers and caregivers should respect the privacy of the children to whom they provide care. Responsible use of digital devices and cell phones is required in all situations.
8. All participants are required at all times to wear appropriate attire.
9. Outside groups, who use WPC facilities will be required to follow the WPC Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. This compliance is required by the Facilities Policy and Agreement.
10. In accordance with the Reporting section (page 7), employees and volunteers should immediately report suspicious or inappropriate behavior that suggests
 - a. Sexual abuse or exploitation,
 - b. Neglect,

- c. Physical abuse, or
- d. Emotional abuse.

The report is to be made to the Head of Staff or appropriate program staff.

B. Acts Prohibited by this Policy

1. Any display or demonstration of sexual activity; physical, emotional or mental abuse; insinuation of abuse; or other forms of abusive conduct toward a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
2. Physical neglect of a CYVA, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of the church;
3. Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a child or youth; or discussions of any sexual encounters with or around children in any way.
4. Possession of pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit materials of any form at any church related or sponsored activity. This shall not preclude WPC from conducting sex education classes for the youth, as long as the course materials and leaders are appropriate for the age of the youth and agreed upon by the DEM and CE Ministry.
5. Possession of or being under the influence of illegal drugs;
6. Consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in any church related or sponsored activity for CYVA.
7. Inappropriate language or actions that would create an unsafe environment for all participants.
8. Carrying or concealing of weapons or firearms.

The above list is intended to be exemplary, not all inclusive; rules of common sense apply.

SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

- A. All workers, whether paid staff, contractor, or volunteer, shall comply with the following requirements
 1. Submit a completed and signed application and background check authorization form (Appendix A).

2. Submit a signed acknowledgement verifying that the Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy has been read and applicant agrees to comply with the terms.
3. A background check will be required no less frequently than every 3 years while working as a church staff member or volunteer and working with the children, youth, or vulnerable adults participating in WPC activities. Signed Acknowledgement of the Policy shall be updated each year (Appendix B).
4. All CYVA workers must be at least eighteen-years old.
5. Any person recommended to the Session of WPC as a Church School teacher, Church School Superintendent or volunteer leader of children will be:
 - a. A church member or
 - b. WPC staff member or
 - c. A student at The College of William and Mary or other student who is actively involved in WPC activities and / or programs, or
 - d. Approved by the Director of Education.
6. Training will be provided annually to educate church staff members and volunteers who work with CYVA. All CYVA workers, whether paid, contracted, or volunteer, must participate in training prior to the start of their work with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
 - a. The training shall be provided by the Christian Education Ministry, the DEM or approved CE program.
 - b. The training shall include:
 - i. the Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy,
 - ii. methods of abuse prevention, and
 - iii. a detailed plan of reporting.

This training is for the benefit and protection of the staff and volunteers, as well as the children, youth and vulnerable adults.

7. WPC shall maintain all CYVA worker applications, background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

B. Disqualification as a Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Worker:

1. No person shall serve as a CYVA worker who has been convicted of certain felonies or misdemeanors.

2. Any negative background check reports will be reviewed by the DEM and Director of Administration. The Head of Staff will be consulted as needed.
3. Individuals who repeatedly violate this policy will not be allowed to continue service as a CYVA worker.

REPORTING

A. General Information

1. To maintain a safe environment for our children and youth, the church staff, members, parents, and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable conduct or situation thought to endanger our children, youth or vulnerable adults or thought to be in violation of the Policy.
2. All questions or concerns of any suspected violation or abusive behavior shall be directed to the Head of Staff, appropriate program staff, or – if circumstances require – to the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.

B. Mandatory Reporting

1. Anyone can report suspected child abuse or neglect, but if you are identified in the Code of Virginia as a mandated reporter or you have received training in recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, you are required by law to immediately report your concerns to the local department of social services or to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline.
2. Under Virginia law, certain individuals are required to report when acting in a professional capacity. Individuals acting in a professional capacity, by this policy, will include persons 18 years or older associated with or employed by WPC and who are responsible for the care, custody, or control of children/youth/vulnerable adults.
3. For more information and important reference, please refer to the Virginia Department of Social Services.

C. Witnessing a Possible Violation

1. Take all reasonable steps to protect the child from further injury or harm; do not leave the child, youth or vulnerable adult in order to report the incident.
2. As soon as possible, make notes of what you observed about the incident and report it to the appropriate person, noted in A above. Quick reporting is important and required.

3. Do not personally confront the person accused of or thought to have violated this policy; immediately contact the Head of Staff or appropriate program staff member to report.

D. Persons to Whom Violations are Disclosed

1. Upon notification of a potential violation, record all available information on the Incident Report Form (Appendix C).
2. Ensure appropriate, local, State and Presbytery authorities are notified (see Appendix C).
3. Notify family members of the victim immediately of the suspected abuse or neglect.

E. Investigation & Follow Up

- a. WPC takes allegations of prohibited conduct seriously.
 - i. Once the allegation is reported a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation will be initiated to determine whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that prohibited conduct occurred and that the conduct was committed by the target(s) of the investigation.
 - ii. The investigation may be undertaken by an internal team comprised of the Administration Ministry, WPC employees, or an independent third party.
 - iii. WPC will cooperate fully with investigations conducted by law enforcement or regulatory agencies and may refer the complaint and the result of our investigation to those agencies.
 - iv. WPC reserves the right to place the target(s) of the investigation on an involuntary leave of absence or reassign that person to responsibilities that do not involve personal contact with CYVA.
 - v. To the fullest extent possible, but consistent with our legal obligation to report to appropriate authorities, we will endeavor to keep the identities of the target(s) and the alleged victim(s) confidential.
- b. If the investigation substantiates the allegation, this Policy provides for disciplinary penalties, including but not limited to termination of the target's relationship with WPC.

- c. WPC will prohibit retaliation against anyone, who in good faith reports prohibited conduct.
 - i. Retaliation against a participant in the investigation is prohibited.
 - ii. Anyone who retaliates against someone who has made a good faith allegation of prohibited conduct or intentionally provides false information to that effect will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

DEFINITIONS

The following is a list of definitions of terms and their intended use in this policy.

Adult: Any person who is 18 years of age or older.

Child: A child will be defined as a person between the ages of 0–11. **Youth:** A youth will be defined as a person between the ages of 12–17. **Minor:** A minor is any child or youth 0–17 years-old.

Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Worker: Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at General Assembly entity sponsored events or activities involving children and/or youth.

Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a child or youth.

Staff: Individuals who are Pastoral staff, Director of Education Ministries, or other employees of WPC.

Volunteers: Individual(s) who have been enlisted by the Church to work with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults and who receive no remuneration or monetary benefit for such work.

Vulnerable Adult: Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

Sexual Abuse: In the Book of Order, sexual abuse is defined as, “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (Book of Order, D-10.0401c)

**WILLIAMSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
VOLUNTEER APPLICATION/SCREENING FORM
FOR CHILD/YOUTH VULNERABLE (CYVA) ADULT WORKERS**

This application must be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of CYVA. This form is required by Williamsburg Presbyterian Church (“WPC”) to provide a safe and secure environment for those who participate in our programs and use our facilities and must be completed every three years of service with WPC and must be updated annually during each year of service (Appendix B).

Date: _____

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Current address: _____

Email address: _____

Contact Phone: (____) _____ Alternate Phone(____) _____

Name and address of church(es) where you have been a member and/or have served as a child/youth worker:

In what area of ministry with children and youth do you wish to serve and why?

What gifts, experience and/or aspirations do you bring to this ministry?

Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary action, complaint, or allegations that you violated any employer’s or any organization’s policy concerning sexual misconduct? (If yes, please explain):

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of young people? (If yes, please explain):

Required for Background Check: WPC has contracted with PRAESIDIUM, to perform the background checks for our church. You will receive an email from PRAESIDIUM, to submit background information and consent for the required background screening. Information that will be requested will be Name, Social Security Number, Date of Birth, Gender, and Address. By using Praesidium, WPC will no longer keep this confidential information on file. PRAESIDIUM is a highly secure website, recommended by PCUSA. Please see PRAESIDIUM website for further information regarding their Privacy Policy. <https://website.praesidiuminc.com/praesidium-privacy-policy/>

Required Personal References (Not former employers or relatives):

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Name: _____ | Name: _____ |
| Relationship to you: _____ | Relationship to you: _____ |
| Address: _____ _____ | Address: _____ _____ |
| Telephone: _____ | Telephone: _____ |

I swear or affirm:

- that the information given above is true, complete and accurate.
- that I understand and agree to having a background investigation conducted with respect to me, and that this information may be verified by contacting persons and organizations with whom I have had contact or which may have information concerning me.
- that I give my permission for WPC to obtain information relating to (a) my criminal history record using available data bases and (b) my driving record through the Department of Motor Vehicles, and to update such information periodically in accordance with WPC’s “Child / Youth / Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures .
- that I release and agree to hold harmless WPC, its officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from any and all liability as it relates to any investigation taken by them regarding the information contained in this application, or any action by them as a result of such investigation.
- that I have read and understand the Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, will comply with the Policy, and will report suspected violations of the Policy.

Applicant’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

**WILLIAMSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY
INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

THIS DOCUMENT IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Note: Timeliness of reporting is essential. Therefore, do not delay in making an initial report even if all of the information required by this form is not immediately available. Use additional pages if more space is required to provide full responses.

Incident Date: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Name of Alleged Victim: _____ Age: _____

Address of Alleged Victim: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Description of incident: _____

Name of person accused of alleged abuse: _____

Injuries Noted: _____

Witnesses: _____

Description of any action taken: _____

Reporting Individual Name / Signature: _____
_____ / _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Reported to: (Head of Staff or Other Appropriate Staff): _____

Date and Time: _____

Direct Quotes/Statements of Victim (NOTE: Do not interview the victim; report only statements or comments shared with you by the victim): _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Notified: Yes _____ No: _____ Time/Date of Notification: _____

Summary of Conversation: _____

Call to Local Authorities - City of Williamsburg Police Department: 757-221-2331 or 911 (If Emergency):

Date / Time: _____

Spoke With: _____ Position: _____

Contact Number: _____

Details of Conversation: _____

Other Actions Taken: _____
