

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Purpose**

The Warfordsburg Presbyterian Church adopts this policy on abuse prevention for church use. The intent is:

- to establish ethical standards of behavior which are consistent with scripture, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and civil law;
- to provide training for our members and staff about child abuse;
- to establish a procedure for prevention of child abuse;
- to establish a process for reporting and responding to allegations of child abuse;
- and to do everything reasonable to assure a caring, loving, open environment where everyone can worship, study, and continue his/her spiritual journey.

### **Statement of Faith and Practice**

God's people are called to be faithful. Christ's mission and ministry is one of compassion and love. Abuse is not something unique to our time. However, in our generation we have learned more than our predecessors about how these actions affect victims and predators. As a Christian family, we exist to glorify God and we must address acts that violate the individual and our church family.

Sexuality is a God-given gift and, when used as intended, leads to wholeness and fulfillment. Those who serve through offices of the church bear particular responsibility for upholding its goodness. The conduct of our pastors and lay church staff should be living examples of this ethical standard.

### **Recruiting and Screening**

All policies and procedures on the recruiting and screening of church workers who work specifically with children and youth should be in compliance with the state regulations on child abuse (Child Protective Services Law, 23 PA C.S.A. paragraphs 6301 et seq.).

To protect the church, its members, and persons participating in activities under the control and supervision of the church, the procedure for recruiting and screening all volunteers who work with children and youth will consist of a [federal](#) background check.

We are aware that from time to time we will encounter situations where individuals will be assisting us on a temporary basis. This individual will be under the direct supervision of trained and approved volunteer in charge.

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Any unfavorable response including, but not limited to criminal child abuse, on these reports will automatically disqualify the adult in unsupervised youth/children activities.

The responsibility of initiating the process of becoming a volunteer shall rest with the Christian Education Committee, appointed by Session, and will consist of the committee chair (provided s/he is also a current ruling elder) and two others from the CE Committee. The Session shall provide funds as needed for these background checks.

### **Training and Education**

Training and education to prevent child abuse, including sexual abuse, at the Warfordsburg Presbyterian Church will consist of three parts: training and education of volunteers and staff; training and education of parents and children; and creating awareness in the congregation. Persons with inclinations toward sexual impropriety are inhibited by the clarity and diligence of the church's training and education about the nature and consequences of sexual abuse as a violation of God's will and purpose for the church.

*A. Training and Education of Volunteers and Staff.* At the initial implementation of this policy, the training and education of volunteers will include an educational session for all volunteers and staff who work with children and youth. This program will be planned by the Christian Education Committee and will include nursery volunteers, Sunday school teachers, Bible Basics teachers/volunteers, youth group workers, after-school program volunteers, VBS, and any other volunteers and staff who work with children and youth in any capacity. Any other interested adults will also be welcome to attend the session. This educational session will include the showing of a videotape such as "Reducing the Risk," or a presentation by a representative of the Presbytery of Carlisle, or another individual with the appropriate background and training to deal with the issue. (*Definition of Trained Volunteer – Anyone who has successfully completed all requirements of the Child Protective Policy and agreed to it.*)

All volunteers will also be given a copy of the Child Protective Policy and procedures adopted by the Session of the Warfordsburg Presbyterian Church and asked to sign a statement saying that they have read this document and agree to abide by the requirements set forth within it. See Attachment A

*B. Training and Education of Parents and Children.* Classes will also be provided for the education of parents and children in ways of preventing child abuse. For parents of preschool and elementary children, these classes will be held for the parents only. For junior and senior highs, classes will include both students and parents. The classes will be taught by someone trained in prevention of abuse for both children and youth and will emphasize ways in which a potential victim can increase his or her resistance to being abused. This training shall be offered at least once each year. Children

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and youth are thus assured of the church's support of their right to a life free of abuse and are enabled to report such to staff or volunteers of the church.

*C. Creating Awareness in the Congregation.* A flyer outlining the signs and symptoms of abuse in children, especially sexual abuse, shall be *an annual communication*.

### **External Barriers to Prevent Child Abuse**

Persons with inclinations toward sexual abuse or impropriety are less likely to obtain access to potential victims when barriers to the privacy needed for sexual impropriety are in place. Therefore, the Christian Education Committee shall be responsible for implementing the following policies:

A volunteer will not be recruited to work with children or youth until s/he has been an active church attendee of the Warfordsburg Presbyterian Church for at least three months, or unless the new member is paired with a person who is a church attendee with Child Protective Clearances.

Trained Volunteers should avoid placing themselves in situations where they are alone with a young person. In all cases, with the exception of professional counseling, an open-door policy will be maintained.

To every extent possible, all areas of the church shall be lighted, open, and accessible to all during hours when children are present in the church.

### **Reporting**

Allegations of child abuse of any kind shall be reported to any of the following: the pastor, the Chair of the Christian Education Committee, or the Clerk of Session. This group shall be known as the Incident Report Team (IRT). Any member of the church staff, performing ministry to children or youth under the age of eighteen, **MUST** report any sign of child abuse or impropriety to those persons designated to receive such reports. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Title 23 requirements will be followed regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse.

The individual on the IRT making a report of alleged abuse shall not reveal the existence or content of the report to any person other than those to whom reporting is required under this policy.

The Incident Report Team member to whom the allegation is made shall take the following steps:

1. Thank the person for reporting the accusation. Record pertinent information concerning date, time, and location of the incident on the Incident Report Form (see Appendix).

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2. Advise the person that s/he may have legal counsel and a personal advocate with him or her during this initial meeting into the alleged abuse.

The Incident Report Team shall have the discretion to meet with and discuss the allegations contained in the report with the accused. The Incident Report Team will take into consideration the status of the accused, whether an employee or a volunteer. The IRT will not require a statement from the accused, but will advise the accused that s/he may bring legal counsel or a personal advocate. The accused shall be made aware of the availability of pastoral care and will be given a copy of the church's Child Protection Policy.

The IRT shall:

1. Take every precaution to secure the safety of the alleged victim.
2. Finalize an incident report form after an initial contact with the alleged victim.
3. Notify the proper civil or law enforcement authorities. The appropriate ecclesiastical authorities shall be notified as needed.
4. Provide a report to the church's liability carrier; the IRT shall be the liaison to the insurance provider.
5. At the discretion of the Incident Report Team, if the accused is a church volunteer, relieve that person temporarily of his/her duties until the investigation is completed. If the accused is a church employee, that person will be suspended from duty with or without pay until such time as the investigation is completed. Any investigation shall be limited to that conducted by the appropriate civil authorities under Title 23 or criminal law enforcement authorities.
6. Pursue any disciplinary actions consistent with recommendations and guidelines set forth in the Book of Order, Rules of Discipline.

The Christian Education Committee is under the direction of the Session. The responsibilities of this committee with respect to the WPC Child Protection Policy, to be updated by January 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, are as follows:

- Oversight of the training program on abuse prevention for members and staff;
- Oversight of background and reference checks, obtaining and filing, determining response if a positive check is received;
- With the Deacons, periodic inspections of the building looking for ways to make the property safe;
- Yearly, the update and distribution to the congregation of a flyer outlining the signs and symptoms of child abuse;
- Providing information about child abuse and the church's policy on child abuse in the church newsletter at least once a year;
  
- The Pastor will provide a place of security of all reference and background check information as appropriate
- The Pastor will maintain a current file of area counselors

## Child Protection Policy

**Print**

# SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT

**Reset Form**

To Be Completed by **Mandated Child Abuse Reporters**  
Pursuant to Penal Code Section 11166

CASE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

CASE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>A.</b>	<b>REPORTING PARTY</b>	NAME OF MANDATED REPORTER		TITLE		MANDATED REPORTER CATEGORY					
		REPORTER'S BUSINESS/AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS			Street	City	Zip	DID MANDATED REPORTER WITNESS THE INCIDENT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
		REPORTER'S TELEPHONE (DAYTIME) ( )		SIGNATURE		TODAY'S DATE					
<b>B.</b>	<b>REPORT NOTIFICATION</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW ENFORCEMENT <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY PROBATION		AGENCY							
		<input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY WELFARE / CPS (Child Protective Services)									
		ADDRESS			Street	City	Zip	DATE/TIME OF PHONE CALL			
		OFFICIAL CONTACTED - TITLE				TELEPHONE ( )					
<b>C.</b>	<b>VICTIM</b>	NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)				BIRTHDATE OR APPROX. AGE	SEX	ETHNICITY			
		ADDRESS			Street	City	Zip	TELEPHONE ( )			
		PRESENT LOCATION OF VICTIM				SCHOOL	CLASS	GRADE			
		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	OTHER DISABILITY (SPECIFY)		PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN HOME					
		<input type="checkbox"/> YES	IF VICTIM WAS IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE AT TIME OF INCIDENT, CHECK TYPE OF CARE:			TYPE OF ABUSE (CHECK ONE OR MORE)					
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY CARE	<input type="checkbox"/> CHILD CARE CENTER	<input type="checkbox"/> FOSTER FAMILY HOME	<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY FRIEND	<input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL <input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL <input type="checkbox"/> SEXUAL <input type="checkbox"/> NEGLECT				
		<input type="checkbox"/> GROUP HOME OR INSTITUTION	<input type="checkbox"/> RELATIVE'S HOME		<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)						
RELATIONSHIP TO SUSPECT				PHOTOS TAKEN? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		DID THE INCIDENT RESULT IN THIS VICTIM'S DEATH? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNK					
<b>D.</b>	<b>INVOLVED PARTIES</b>	VICTIMS SIBLINGS									
		1. NAME		BIRTHDATE	SEX	ETHNICITY	3. NAME		BIRTHDATE	SEX	ETHNICITY
		2. _____		_____		4. _____		_____		_____	
		NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)				BIRTHDATE OR APPROX. AGE	SEX	ETHNICITY			
		ADDRESS			Street	City	Zip	HOME PHONE ( )	BUSINESS PHONE ( )		
		NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)				BIRTHDATE OR APPROX. AGE	SEX	ETHNICITY			
		ADDRESS			Street	City	Zip	HOME PHONE ( )	BUSINESS PHONE ( )		
		SUSPECT'S NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)				BIRTHDATE OR APPROX. AGE	SEX	ETHNICITY			
		ADDRESS			Street	City	Zip	TELEPHONE ( )			
		OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION									
<b>E.</b>	<b>INCIDENT INFORMATION</b>	IF NECESSARY, ATTACH EXTRA SHEET(S) OR OTHER FORM(S) AND CHECK THIS BOX <input type="checkbox"/> IF MULTIPLE VICTIMS, INDICATE NUMBER: _____									
		DATE / TIME OF INCIDENT				PLACE OF INCIDENT					
		NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (What victim(s) said/what the mandated reporter observed/what person accompanying the victim(s) said/similar or past incidents involving the victim(s) or suspect)									

SS 8572 (Rev. 12/02)

### DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE

**DO NOT** submit a copy of this form to the Department of Justice (DOJ). The investigating agency is required under Penal Code Section 11169 to submit to DOJ a Child Abuse Investigation Report Form SS 8583 if (1) an active investigation was conducted and (2) the incident was determined not to be unfounded.

WHITE COPY-Police or Sheriff's Department: BLUE COPY-County Welfare or Probation Department: GREEN COPY- District Attorney's Office: YELLOW COPY-Reporting Party