



Presbyterian Church of Coventry

a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in America

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION: The leadership at the Presbyterian Church of Coventry (PCC) is honored and humbled by the prospect of nurturing our younger members through Christ's example (Mark 10:13-16) as they begin and continue in their knowledge of Jesus and His Kingdom. Our goal is to provide a safe and exciting environment for learning and play for our youth from birth through high school. In order to ensure that properly qualified adults and teen helpers are trained and available, and also to provide top quality care and instruction to our youth, we have enacted this formal policy to impart official guidance and protect all members and children while on PCC property.

AUTHORITY: This policy will be authorized by Session, and can be revised at any time. It shall remain on file in the Church office for review by any interested party, and is to be reviewed for updating/approval yearly in December of each calendar year.

POLICY STATEMENTS: The definition of child, per this policy, is anyone under the age of 18. A qualified teacher or child care worker (volunteer) is any adult (18 or over) that is a member in good standing that has been properly trained and screened as defined in this instruction.

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS: Volunteer qualifications for teaching or leading roles in the nursery/toddler time are as follows: Must be a member in good standing, must attend yearly staff/volunteer youth training, and must pass a criminal federal/state background check. Any person who has ever (1) been disciplined or convicted of a felony, violent crime, or any crime against children, (2) denied legal custody of a child due to abuse or neglect, (3) registered or required to register as a sex offender, or (4) currently a defendant in any case involving unlawful sexual contact, abuse, or neglect of a child will be prohibited to work with children. All volunteers will satisfactorily attend child worker orientation (yearly or as required for new volunteers), and are required to pass an online examination. The background screening (for volunteers 18 and over) is voluntary, but failing to submit to a background screening will render the applicant ineligible for volunteer duty. The application process is strictly confidential and anyone not meeting screening standards will have the opportunity to meet with the Pastor to discuss any findings that resulted in their

disqualification from serving with children. Any volunteer that is under 18 (nursery and toddler time assistants) must undergo training and pass the online examination, but are not required to conduct a background screening check.

TWO (2) PERSON RULE: No volunteer worker is ever permitted to be alone with a child. To ensure the adequate protection of the volunteer and child(ren), we implement and enforce high visibility policies such as: early arrivals with only one volunteer on duty will require the parent to stay until a 2nd volunteer arrives, all offices and classrooms (except for the central administrative office) are now equipped with glass panes to allow unobstructed lines of sight, no locks are permitted on any classroom door, the use of two unrelated volunteers is mandatory.

GUIDANCE ON PHYSICAL TOUCH: Physical touch and brief measures of affection shown toward a child are appropriate and important to their emotional development. However, we recognize that there is an obvious difference between a brief hug and an inappropriate touch. Physical touch is to be regarded by the volunteer as age dependent and developmentally appropriate. The volunteer will be trained on, and be aware of, certain differences in culture, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and any special needs that arise within our particular congregation. We train our

volunteers to adhere to positive displays of Godly love: any physical touch must be brief and in the presence of others, hugging from the side if the child is pre-teen or older, no sitting on laps if the child is older than kindergarten age, no kisses of any sort, etc. If approached by a child physically, the volunteer is encouraged not to reject, but to guide his/her touch to appropriate physical contact as mentioned above.

RESTROOM GUIDANCE: Restroom procedures are extensively covered and are available in the nursery/toddler time guides. These guides are presented to each volunteer upon arrival at training and are also available in the nursery and Church office for review.

REPORTING: Any person suspecting inappropriate behavior shall immediately inform the Senior Pastor, who is directed to alert the authorities. Any person(s) who are under investigation will be removed from all volunteer activities until adjudication. All volunteers are trained yearly on this requirement.