

Fourth Presbyterian Church Safe Sanctuary Protection Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

“Then children were brought to him that he may lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; but Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.’”

Matthew 19:13-14

Fourth Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina (the “church” or “church”), remains committed to providing and maintaining a safe, nurturing environment for all its members, especially children, youth under the age of eighteen, and vulnerable adults while in its care during events which are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Church. Implicit in the involvement of persons in ministries to children and youth are the Biblically based terms COVENANT and SHEPHERD. There is an implied covenant between God, the leader, the child, and the child’s parents to be a good shepherd of that child, leading him or her towards an understanding of the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

A commitment to this call includes the adoption and enforcement of this Policy on Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Protection and Prevention. This policy applies to all clergy, leaders, volunteers, and other persons who work with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults in any paid or voluntary capacity. All leaders and childcare providers who regularly interact with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults must read, be in agreement with, and sign this policy; affirm that they have not resigned or been terminated from a position or leadership role for reasons related to misconduct; and agree to submit information for a national background check which, in the interest of privacy, will be conducted by a third-party organization.

Selection and Screening of Employees and Volunteers

The Church believes that appropriate personal relationships between adult leaders, children, youth, and vulnerable adults of the Church foster the community of Christ. Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayer), or physical care taking (changing diapers, etc.) are appropriate in our community of caring Christians.

Employees

- All prospective childcare/youth employees shall provide at least two references. They will submit an application. Any person who is found to have made a material misrepresentation on this application shall immediately after such discovery be terminated.
- With respect to prospective employees who have been interviewed and who are considered to be viable candidates for employment with the church, and with respect to independent contractors having direct contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, the church will perform or cause to be performed a criminal background check of the prospective employee. The church will accomplish this

task by hiring an outside organization that regularly performs such background checks and retains the utmost in privacy.

- Employee files shall be retained by the church administrator for at least ten years after an employee's relationship with the church ends.
- Fourth Presbyterian Church follows the guidelines established by the NCYS, National Council for Youth Sports. An excerpt (the "Guidelines") is as follows: "Convictions for the five following crimes will prompt a determination that an applicant 'does not meet the criteria to serve a youth serving organization':
 - Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement greater than one year)
 - Defined on the basis of exposure for the offense for which the defendant was convicted, pled guilty or pled nolo contendere. If pled down, then the crime to which the defendant ultimately pled.
 - Defined as all crimes punishable by greater than one year in jail or prison, regardless of how characterized by jurisdiction. If range, alternate sentencing, or indeterminate sentencing, outer range > one year.
 - Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person.
 - Any lesser crime in which sexual relations is an element, including 'victimless' crimes of a sexual nature (including pornography)
 - Any lesser crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol)
 - Any lesser crime involving cruelty to animals"
 - Addendum to above to state within the last thirty years.
- All current and prospective employees shall read this policy and acknowledge in writing that they have read and understood this policy.
- All current and prospective employees shall attend a policy training session.

Volunteers

- Fourth Presbyterian Church follows the guidelines established by the NCYS, National Council for Youth Sports. An excerpt set forth as the "Guidelines" under "Employees" above.
- No volunteer will be allowed to work with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults unless that volunteer has been a member of the church for six months. An exception may be allowed if the volunteer has been actively involved in the church since joining and has completed and passed the background check. They may also provide information from their previous church of their participation in that congregation and successful completion/approval of a background check there.
- No person who has been terminated from employment because of allegations of child abuse shall be allowed to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- All volunteers shall read the policy located in Appendix B and acknowledge in writing that they have read and understood this policy.
- Each volunteer agrees to a criminal background check by an independent organization to insure the utmost in privacy. These background checks will be conducted every four years for actively participating volunteers with children, youth and vulnerable adults. If there is a year gap of not volunteering with

children, youth or vulnerable adults at Fourth, then that volunteer must have a recheck. If a volunteer is a new member of Fourth, under five years, they will be rechecked every two years if they volunteer with children, youth or vulnerable adults until they have been a member five years. At that time, they will have background screenings every four years.

- All volunteers must attend a Policy training session before volunteering with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults.
- Any current or prospective volunteer who chaperones or transports children or youth on overnight trips or who, by the nature of their activity, may spend unsupervised time with a child must:
 - Be interviewed by a member of the staff (the Associate Pastor or Senior Pastor) and complete an application form for overnight volunteers.
 - Complete a motor vehicle records (MVR) check, in addition to the criminal background check. An MVR will be done annually. In addition, Fourth Presbyterian Church has a “Hands-free devices only” policy. If you must use any kind of communication device that requires the use of your hands while transporting children, youth or vulnerable adults, you must pull over to a safe parking area to make that communication. All persons transporting children, youth or vulnerable adults must be at least 25 years of age, have a current driver’s license, and up to date automobile insurance coverage on their personal vehicle.

Appeals Process for Employees and Volunteers

In the event that an individual receives a Red-Light determination (see definitions) and still wishes to be considered as an employee or independent contractor, or volunteer, he or she must present a written appeal in person to the facilitator of the Child Protection Policy. The facilitator will then review the appeal with the Senior Pastor and the Christian Education Chairman in a private, confidential meeting. The request will then be reviewed and a recommendation would be made to the Christian Education Committee for consideration. Any recommendation made by the Christian Education Committee would then be presented to the Session for their approval. The individual would be contacted with the decision by the Senior Pastor and either the Clerk of Session or the Christian Education Chairman.

Training of Paid Staff and Volunteers

- All prospective workers and volunteers will attend a class that reviews and explains this policy, and the reasons for it.
- Training will include the viewing of a DVD by Church Mutual Insurance Company on *Safety Tips on A Sensitive Subject: Child Sexual Abuse*

Supervision of Volunteers and Employees

It is the goal of the Church that at least two adults serve the children’s and youth activities during all Church-sponsored events. The Church recognizes that there will be times when an unaccompanied adult may be present with a group of children or youth or

with a single child or youth. In those circumstances, if an adult must be alone with children or youth for a brief given time (such as Sunday school or Bible class), he/she can only do so when subject is being visually observed at all times, such as through an open door or door with a window. During all church school classes, WNF programs, and Vacation Church School, a member of staff shall be a monitor. Such monitoring shall be conducted by making periodic visits to the classes. If children or youth need to be transported, it should be in groups. An unaccompanied adult will not transport an individual child to or from a Church-sponsored activity without the written permission of the child's parent or guardian.

No person under the age of 18 will work with children alone. No child under the age of 12 shall assist with care of children. There must be a four-year age difference between children and a caretaker. In the case of youth, volunteers must be twenty years of age or older and in the case of vulnerable adults, volunteers must be 25 years old or older.

Prohibited conduct includes any form of physical, emotional, or mental abuse of a child, including, but not limited to, the exploitation of a child, which breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship. Sexual exploitation of a child includes, but is not limited to, any interaction between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of an adult. This may or may not include touching.

Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of sexual conduct towards a child, youth or vulnerable adult
 - Use of sexual language, telling jokes of a sexual nature, inquiring about the sexual activities of a child, youth or vulnerable adult, use of any type of erotic language or images
- Inappropriate touching of a sexual nature
 - Any type of touching, language, or activity of a sexual nature which results or is designed to result in sexual gratification of the supervising individual or the child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between an older child and a younger child
- No child/youth/vulnerable adult or volunteer shall engage in any form of sexting as defined under definitions.
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- Physical neglect of a child, youth or vulnerable adult, including failure to provide adequate supervision
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a child, youth or vulnerable adult
- Possessing obscene or pornographic (sexually explicit) materials at any function of the Church
- Possessing or being under the influence of any illegal substances at any function of the church.

- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol, or drugs, legal or illegal, juuling or vaping while leading or participating in a child and/or youth function of the Church
- Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- Carrying any type of explosive device, firearm, and/or dangerous weapon on Church property in accordance with South Carolina state law (16-23-420) unless authorized by the Session of Fourth Presbyterian Church.

Volunteers and employees are to uphold appropriate and faithful communications with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults in all contexts, including all electronic and social media.

Appendix A

Fourth Presbyterian Church Procedures for Reporting Misconduct to Law Enforcement

Procedures for reporting instances of alleged abuse to law enforcement officials shall be those set forth in South Carolina Code Ann Section 63-7-310, as may be amended. This code Section states as follows:

- a. Persons required or permitted to report; method; confidentiality.
[SC ST SEC 63-7-310]
 - A. A physician, nurse, dentist, optometrist, medical examiner, or coroner, or an employee of a county medical examiner's or coroner's office, or any other medical, emergency medical services, mental health, or allied health professional, member of the clergy including a Christian Science Practitioner or religious healer, school teacher, counselor, principal, assistant principal, school attendance officer, social or public assistance worker, substance abuse treatment staff, or childcare worker in a childcare center or foster care facility, police or law enforcement officer, juvenile justice worker, undertaker, funeral home director or employee of a funeral home, persons responsible for processing films, computer technician, judge, or a volunteer non-attorney guardian ad litem serving on behalf of the SC Guardian Ad Litem program, must report in accordance with this section when in the person's professional capacity the person has received information which gives the person reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected as defined in Section 63-7-20.
 - B. If a person required to report pursuant to subsection (A) has received information in the person's professional capacity which gives the person reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by acts or omissions that would be child abuse or neglect if committed by a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, but the reporter believes that the act or omission was committed by a person other than the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, the reporter must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
 - C. Except as provided in subsection (A), any person, including but not limited to, a volunteer non-attorney guardian ad litem serving on behalf of the SC Guardian Ad Litem program, who has reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse and neglect may report in accordance with this section.
 - D. Reports of child abuse or neglect may be made orally by telephone or otherwise to the county department of social services or to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or is found.
 - Greenville County Law Enforcement: (864) 467-5300
 - Department of Social Services: (864) 467-7700
 - Where reports are made pursuant to this section to a law enforcement agency, the law enforcement agency shall notify the

- county department of social services of the law enforcements response to the report at the earliest possible time.
- Where a county or contiguous counties have established multicounty child protective services, pursuant to Section 20-7-690, the county department of social services immediately shall transfer reports pursuant to this section to the service.
- E. The identity of the person making a report pursuant to this section must be kept confidential by the agency or department receiving the report and must not be disclosed except as provided for in this chapter. (63-7-330)
- b. Any person who is required, pursuant to South Carolina Code Ann Section 63-7-310, to report incidents of alleged abuse, must also report such incidents to the Senior Pastor or Assistant Pastor.
- c. Any person not included in (a) above, pursuant to South Carolina Code Ann Section 63-7-310, that learns of an incident or misconduct toward a child or youth during a Church sponsored activity (either a person witnessing or told about the incident, or the victim) should immediately ensure the safety of the child, youth or vulnerable adult and not abandon the child/children, youth or vulnerable adult in order to report the incident. Follow the steps in the above procedures to report. Then report this incident to the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor, Clerk of Session or Christian Education Chairman.

Response to Report of Alleged Abuse

- a. Upon any staff member becoming aware of any report of alleged abuse, said staff member shall notify the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor, of such report as soon as is practicable and fill out an Incident Report (*Appendix C*).
- b. Anyone accused of abuse will be immediately suspended from further responsibilities involving direct contact with children in any church activity. Such suspension of the accused shall continue until an investigation of the report by law enforcement of alleged abuse has concluded, and it is found that such allegations have no merit.
- c. Upon becoming aware of any report of alleged abuse, the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor, shall as soon as is practicable notify the clerk of Session and the Chairman of the Christian Education Committee of the report of alleged abuse.
- d. As soon as is practicable following the report to the Clerk of Session and the Chairman of the CE Committee as required in subsection (c) above, the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor, along with the Clerk of Session and/or the CE Chairman, shall visit the parents or guardians of the child who is the alleged victim of abuse. Provided, however, that nothing herein shall be deemed to require any member of staff or the church to take any action that would materially interfere with an investigation of any law enforcement agency.
- e. Subject to subsections (f) and (g) below, all reports of alleged abuse shall be treated confidentially and should be discussed with no one except those whom this policy provides are to receive notice.

- f. The Session, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor, shall determine when and in what manner the congregation shall be informed of an allegation of abuse.
- g. The Session, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor, shall determine when and in what manner the church shall inform its insurance carrier and/or legal counsel of an allegation of abuse.

Other Laws, Policies, and Procedures

- a. Whenever it may appear that this policy is in conflict with a federal, state or local law, such law shall be controlling.
- b. Whenever it may appear that this policy is in conflict with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. said Book of Order shall be controlling.

Fourth Presbyterian Church Definitions

ABUSE:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** – is that which results in physical injury, including but not limited to bruises, cuts, welts, fractures, and internal injuries and is caused by intentional or grossly negligent conduct.
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** – is intentional, non-physical conduct which results in impaired psychological growth and development, including, but not limited to, bullying, belittling, rejection, constant unequal treatment, verbal assaults, excessive and unreasonable demands on child's performance, and isolation from normal social activities.
- **SPIRITUAL ABUSE** – is that which occurs when a teacher, leader, or volunteer uses his or her position or religious influence to control, manipulate or dominate a child, youth or vulnerable adult, regardless of the ramification to other's life and well-being.
- **NEGLECT** – is that which occurs when persons responsible for the well-being of a child, youth or vulnerable adult fail to take responsible steps to adequately provide for the child, youth or vulnerable adult. This may include failure to keep them clean, lack of appropriate supervision, or withholding food, clothing, shelter, and/or medical care.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE** – is that which consists of sexual contact or interactions with a child, youth or vulnerable adult including physical contact (such as fondling, genital/oral stimulation, sexual intercourse) and non-physical contact (such as exhibitionism, child prostitution, pornography, sexting, and voyeurism). The perpetrator may be another juvenile.

ACCUSED – The person who is alleged to have violated this policy.

ACCUSER – The person who makes a report or provides information indicating that someone may have violated this policy.

ALLEGATION – A claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong.

ALLEGED VICTIM – The person who is the subject of alleged misconduct or abuse as defined by this policy.

BACKGROUND CHECK – Includes national criminal search, state criminal search, social security verification, sexual offender registry search, and in some instances, specific county searches. In the case of individuals who do not possess a social security card, an international search may be done.

BOOK OF ORDER – Part II of the PC (USA) constitution. It contains the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Form of Government (operating rules), Directory of Worship (sacerdotal matters), and Rules of Discipline (judiciary procedures) of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

CHILD/YOUTH – Any person under the age of eighteen years old.

CHURCH ACTIVITY – Any activity involving children, youth or vulnerable adults that is sponsored by the church. A church activity may be held on or off church grounds.

CERTIFIED AUTHORITY- The designated person, who submits, reviews, evaluates and maintains background checks and other paperwork associated with the Fourth Presbyterian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy.

CLERK OF SESSION –a clerk elected to record the transactions of the council, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, maintain any required registries, preserve its records, and furnish extracts from them when required by another council of the church... The clerk of the session shall be a ruling elder elected by the session for such term as it may determine.

DEACON – Persons elected by a congregation for the ministry of “compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress.”

ELDER/SESSION – Persons elected by a congregation who have wisdom, maturity of faith, demonstrated skills in leadership and a compassionate spirit. Elders, together with Ministers of Word and Sacraments, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation, as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships.

EMPLOYEE OR STAFF MEMBER- Any person who is employed and/or compensated by the church. Staff member does not include independent contractors. Nothing herein is intended to change the status of any employee or independent contractor as may be established by federal, state, local or common law.

MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT – An ordained minister in the PC (USA) is known as a Minister of Word and Sacrament, or a teaching elder. They may serve in a variety of ministries, as authorized by the Presbytery: preacher, teacher, worship leader, pastor, and presbyter.

RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT – A “Red Light” shall be the determination that a prospective child care employee or independent contractor or volunteer having direct contact with children does not meet the Guidelines (or any other internal guidelines or

requirements set forth by Fourth Presbyterian Church in the Policy), based on the results of a criminal background check of such person. A “Green Light” shall mean the determination of such a person does meet the Guidelines (or any other internal guidelines or requirements set forth by Fourth Presbyterian Church in the Policy), based on the results of a criminal background check of such person.

REQUIRED REPORTER- Any person who has a legal obligation to report information regarding harm, or risk of harm, involving abuse or misconduct involving children, youth or vulnerable adults under applicable state law (See Appendix A) or the PC (USA) Book of Order reference G-4.0302: ***Mandatory Reporting*** Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian Educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

SEXTING – Is defined as the act of transmitting explicit messages, primarily through the use of cell phone messaging. The messages usually contain illicit photographs or video links depicting the person sending them.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT – Unwelcomed and unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, obscene or suggestive language or behavior, gender discriminating behavior, and other unwelcomed verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Sexual abuse as defined above
2. Sexual harassment as defined above
3. Rape or sexual contact by force, threat or intimidation.

VOLUNTEER- Any person, usually members of the church, who spends at least five hours collectively in a calendar year participating in any ministry of the church involving children, youth or vulnerable adults without pay.

VULNERABLE ADULT –A person who may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm, or exploitation due to disability, age or illness.

Approved by Session on September 25, 2018

Appendix B

**Fourth Presbyterian Church
Release Authorization**

In connection with my service through Fourth Presbyterian Church, I understand that a thorough background check will be required.

I acknowledge that a telephonic facsimile (FAX), photographic, or scanned copy shall be as valid as the original. This release is valid for most federal, state and county agencies.

I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, institution, information service bureau, school, employer, reference or insurance company contacted during a background check, to furnish the information described in this policy. The following information is required by law enforcement agencies and other entities for positive identification purposes when checking public records. It is confidential and will not be used for any other purposes. I have read and agree to comply with these policies. I also state that I have not been arrested or convicted of a crime as defined in the Policy Statement or resigned from or been terminated from any position for reasons relating to sexual, physical, mental abuse or misconduct, as defined in the Policy Statement. I hereby agree to authorize any background check Fourth Presbyterian Church may choose to conduct, and to sign any documents necessary to do so. I hereby release Fourth Presbyterian Church and agents and all persons, agencies and entities providing information or reports about me from any and all liability arising out of the requests for release of any of the above- mentioned information or reports.

Print full name: _____

Sign full name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

**Fourth Presbyterian Church
Incident Report Form**

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Name of Reporter: _____

Primary Phone Number: _____

Secondary Phone Number: _____

Names of Persons Involved in Incident:

_____ Age: _____

_____ Age: _____

_____ Age: _____

_____ Age: _____

Location of Incident (City, State and County):

Quote the first words verbatim of the child, youth or vulnerable adult making the accusation:

Describe the behavior and appearance of the person making the accusation:

Describe the behavior and appearance of anyone else making the accusation or involved in the incident:

Describe what happened exactly as reported to you:

Were there any witnesses? Yes No

Name of Witness 1: _____ Age: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Witness 2: _____ Age: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Witness 3: _____ Age: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Witness 4: _____ Age: _____

Signature: _____

What actions did you take?

Has the incident been resolved? How so?

Person(s) this report was given to:

Name of Person 1: _____ Date: _____

Name of Person 2: _____ Date: _____

Name of Person 3: _____ Date: _____

Signature of person submitting report:

_____ Date: _____