

## **Child Safety Policy Presbytery of Scioto Valley**

*Revised and approved by the Presbytery of Scioto Valley 11/28/2017*

The members of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley believe that we are called by God to create a safe place for all the children and youth in our care, nurturing, protecting, and empowering them through faith and trust. This commitment includes taking appropriate steps to reduce the risk to the young people in our care. The following policy, to be implemented for Presbytery sponsored event, is intended to minimize the risk of any of our children being subjected to sexual, physical, or mental abuse. These policies and procedures are also intended to respect the rights afforded due process to person accused of improper conduct. This policy is intended for Presbytery-sponsored events only, and shall not replace the Book of Order mandate that particular churches shall adopt their own child=protection policies and procedures according to G-3:0106.

### **Definitions**

1. *Child* means anyone under the age of 18 and/or any adult who is developmentally disabled.
2. *Child safety and protection* means “preventing physical, mental and/or emotional injury to a child, including the prevention of sexual abuse.”
3. *Leader/Leadership* means any person providing his or her time or services to the presbytery with or without compensation, including keynote speaker, music leadership, small group leader, and all other volunteer leadership or paid leadership, at events in which children or youth are in attendance or in circumstances in which he or she will come into contact with children or youth as part of the service offered.
4. *Chaperone and Advisor* means any person providing his or her time or services to their congregation or the presbytery, both paid and unpaid, to oversee and lead their congregation’s children and youth at a presbytery sponsored activity.
5. *Child Care Workers* means any person providing his or her time or services to provide child care, nursery care, or babysitting for children both paid or unpaid for a Presbytery sponsored activity.
4. *Work with children* means teaching, supervising, chaperoning, or otherwise serving in a class, program, or event involving one or more children.
6. *Activities* mean classes, programs or events presented or sponsored by the presbytery.

### **Screening and Selection of Leadership:**

1. All leadership must complete a consent for a criminal background check unless they can provide documentation that a background check has already been completed by their congregation or governing body. These forms will provide provided personal and confidential information necessary to preform criminal background and reference checks.
2. The background screening will be completed by the designated Presbytery staff person. The forms will kept on file at the Presbytery of Scioto Valley. The results will be reviewed by a Presbytery of Scioto Valley staff person, on behalf of the appropriate presbytery commission, and may be reviewed by the moderator of that committee or task group concerning the result of any background check.

3. Whether disclosed voluntarily or by the result of the background check, the following items will automatically disqualify a person from participating in leadership of activities involving children with the Presbytery of Scioto Valley:

Any conviction for: murder; aggravated assault; sexual abuse; sexual assault (rape); aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child; incest; indecency with a child; inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance with a child; possession or promotion of child pornography; the sale, distribution, or display of harmful materials or prohibited substances to a minor; employment harmful to children; or abandonment or endangerment of a child. All other convictions or charges for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the appropriate committee seeking to secure the particular employee or volunteer.

#### **Screening and Selection Chaperones and Advisors:**

1. The Presbytery strongly urges each local church to adopt its own screening procedure to ensure the safety and protection of its own children and youth, and requires a security background check for all chaperones and advisors of Presbytery sponsored events. The Presbytery relies on the local church session to fulfill its own responsibility to its children and youth.

2. All chaperones and advisors for the Presbytery of Scioto Valley activities involving children or youth are required to sign and follow a Covenant of Conduct Form. The Covenant of Conduct Form will include the safety and protection rules included in this policy and the recommendations for reporting. The Covenant of Conduct Form will also include a question about previous infractions regarding sexual misconduct.

#### **Screening and Selection of Child Care Workers:**

**1.** The Presbytery will not allow a Presbytery event involving childcare unless the host church has a child safety policy in place and meets the Presbytery set minimum guidelines below:

- a. Minimum of 2 adult (at least 18 years of age), background checked workers, CPR/First Aid Training is preferable.
- b. A sign in/out process which includes information about child allergies/special needs; includes a contact location/cell# for parent/guardian; includes a photo ID required pick up procedure.
- c. Diaper changing/bathroom procedure that follows “best practices”  
When adopted, a resource packet including the above is located under “CNO” resources on the PSV webpage.

2. The screening, selection and supervision process of the child care workers will be handled by the host church, under the conditions of their child safety policy.

#### **Safety and Protection Rules**

1. At all times, leadership, chaperones, and advisors, to the best of their abilities, shall ensure the safety of the children and youth.

2. Leadership, chaperones, and advisors shall model positive and appropriate behavior.

3. Leadership, chaperones, and advisors shall behave respectfully toward others and the property of others.

4. At least two adults shall be present at activities involving children or youth.

5. As often as possible, make sure that an adult is not left alone in a space at these activities with a child or youth in a one on one situation. *If an adult needs to be alone with a child or youth, that contact should take place in public setting, and with the knowledge of the leadership or a leader (for example: at the far end of the dining hall, or one end of the basketball court away from activities).*

6. Leadership, chaperones, and advisors engage only in positive and appropriate forms of showing affection. The following examples are not intended to be all inclusive. Some examples of positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- “High-fives” and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Sitting beside small children.

Some examples of inappropriate behavior with children and youth are:

- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic, social media) that relate to physique or body development.
- Giving personal gifts or money to individual children or youth.

7. One adult transporting one child or youth in a vehicle shall be prohibited. One adult driver may transport two or more children or youth, or two adults may transport one child or youth.

8. Leadership, chaperones, advisors, and children or youth shall remain at the site of an event for the duration of the event. No child or youth shall leave an event without permission. Permission will be granted only with the express written consent of a parent or guardian.

9. Current emergency contact phone numbers for parents/guardians shall be available to leadership, chaperones, and advisors.

11. Safety concerns may infrequently require staff and volunteers to employ physical measures. Leadership, chaperones, and advisors may only employ the minimum amount of physical measures required to ensure the safety of all those involved.

12. Corporal punishment (e.g., spanking, hitting, kicking) and verbal and/or emotional abuse are prohibited.

### **Enforcing and Following the Policy**

All leaders and leadership of activities with children and youth shall be aware of this policy and sign an acknowledgement of this policy and that he or she agrees to follow and enforce this policy. The acknowledgement and agreement must be submitted to the designated Presbytery staff, on behalf of the appropriate commission, and kept on file. All chaperones and advisors in their Covenant of Conduct Form must acknowledge and agree to the safety and protection rules.

### **Reporting Safety Concerns**

If a leader or leadership is aware of any safety or protection concern involving children or youth, he or she shall report such concern as soon as possible to any of the following: Presbytery of Scioto Valley staff, Moderator of the Presbytery, or any member of the appropriate commission. If a leader or leadership has knowledge of any incident in which the above safety rules have been violated, he or she shall report such incident to any of those identified above at the earliest possible opportunity. Forms for reporting such incidents shall be available to the person reporting, who shall use them to record pertinent information, including when accidents occur, or when physical measures are required. Allegations of incidents involving violation of these safety rules shall be addressed with respect to all parties involved, and timely notification of all parental, legal, social welfare, insurance or other authorities shall be made. Opportunities for spiritual and emotional support shall be offered. All reporting shall be dealt with discreetly and tactfully, and any allegations of misconduct shall remain confidential, except for legally required reporting.

### **Record Keeping**

A. Presbytery Staff member designated shall be responsible for maintaining the following records.

1. Consents to perform a background check and background checks performed as to a volunteer or staff member. Background checks shall be performed every five years and their date shall be recorded. An electronic log confirming that the check was done and that no issue was found, as well as hard copies of past authorization forms shall be kept in perpetuity.
2. Any report received of a safety concern regarding a child or youth, materials collected in the investigation of such a report, and any document constituting or describing the resolution of the report, held by the stated clerk in accessible form for at least twenty-five years.
3. Any report made of a safety concern regarding a child or youth made to any governmental entity, held in perpetuity.

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

The Commission on Nurture and Outreach shall review these guidelines and recommend changes, as necessary, to the Presbytery. Our goal is to ensure that all leaders adhere to these guidelines and to ensure that our children are well cared for.