

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

First Presbyterian Church
Mason, Michigan

Our children and youth should be ensured a safe and nurturing environment to develop and grow in this church family. All members of this congregation must be committed to this goal if it is to be achieved. Everyone should feel free to come to the staff and the Christian Education Committee members so that the program can continue to make improvements.

It is important to have clear procedures and policies to protect the young people that are involved in programs sponsored by our church. These policies and procedures are best broken down in two administrative areas; one area is the screening of personnel and volunteers, the other is operational.

Screening Procedures

- 1) The screening procedures will cover all paid childcare staff and the Christian Education Director. The screening procedures may also cover the following positions: volunteer childcare providers, Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, Vacation Bible school leaders, Mission trip leaders, leaders for Wednesday Mid-week Activities, and any others involved with youth ministry in the church.
- 2) Everyone filling any of the above mentioned positions will be asked to fill out a form allowing the church to ask the State Police for a criminal records review. The results of the review will be directed to the Head of Staff alone.
- 3) Additionally, paid staff will be asked to complete an application and submit references, which will be checked by the head of the Personnel Committee or a designee.
- 4) Criminal record checks will be kept separate from other records and will be accessible only by the Head of Staff.

Operational Procedures

A few rules concerning interactions between the youth of the church and people selected by the church to participate as leaders, teachers, caregivers are necessary, but in all things, common sense should be used. The following rules will be followed where applicable.

- 1) The membership of the Church will be reminded, at least annually, of their vows to nurture and uphold children that have been brought into this church family through baptism. All members should be encouraged to be observant and helpful in the development of the youth of our church.
- 2) Parents should be informed of the membership of the Christian Education Committee. Parents should be encouraged to contact members of the CE Committee on anything that may be of concern to them in programs involving the youth of the church.
- 3) In general individuals from the congregation can begin volunteering for the youth programs only after six months of active involvement at Mason First Presbyterian Church.
- 4) Exceptions to these volunteer procedures may be made at the discretion of the Christian Education Committee to cover short-term involvement in children's activities such as VBS, Sunday Morning Activity Time, Advent workshops, Christmas Pageants, etc.

- 5) All corporal punishment is strictly prohibited.
- 6) Youth in 2nd grade and younger will have two people age 16 years or older present when child care or church programs are being provided. The exception to this is the nursery which is covered by a paid nursery staff person.
- 7) The classrooms will be easily viewable from the outside. The Director of Christian Education and/or a member of the Christian Education Committee will randomly check classrooms on a regular basis.
- 8) The classrooms will be open to visitation at anytime.
- 9) On overnight functions, there should be two adults, and if the youth group has both males and females, then there should be at least one female and one male adult leader.
- 10) All complaints should be reported to the Head of Staff.
- 11) All complaints of misconduct will be investigated promptly by the Head of Staff. The Head of Staff will report to the authorities as deemed appropriate according to the current law.
- 12) All reports that require no church action will be held in strict confidence.

These policies attempt to assure child protection without interfering with the mission of Christian Education of the youth of Mason First Presbyterian Church. With openness and care on the part of the congregation and God's presence, we will achieve our goal of a safe Christian environment for our children.

Session Approved July 19, 2007