

“REDUCING THE RISK”
A Safe Child Policy of The Presbyterian Church of Danville
A Program to Protect Children and Workers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Policy Statement	2
Section One Supporting the Role of Parents and Guardians	3
Section Two Employee Hiring, Volunteer Selection and Screening	4
Section Three Supervision	7
Section Four Reporting	9
Section Five Communication	11
Section Six Administration	13

Exhibit Section:

Exhibit A - Employee Screening Form

Exhibit B - Volunteer Registration Form

Exhibit C - Youth Leader Request (Criminal Background Check Form)

Exhibit D - Training Confirmation Form

Policy Statement

Our Purpose is to glorify God as:

A joyful, worshiping community of Christ's disciples,
A servant people who express God's love in our community and world,
A nurturing fellowship which fosters forgiveness, hope, and spiritual growth through education, caring support, and sharing of gifts.

We, The Presbyterian Church of Danville, believe that God has given us the gifts to be good stewards and witnesses to the life and work of Jesus Christ. We are called by God to lead our church and our neighbors into the uncertainty of the future with love and inclusiveness.

Our Ministry with children is guided by the understanding that all children are a gift of God. We share in affirming that:

All children are created by God and created good;

All children are a gift to the whole human community;

All children have a real faith and gifts for ministry;

All children have the right to be children;

And all children are not just tomorrow, but they are today.

SECTION ONE
SUPPORTING THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church of Danville to encourage and support parents and/or guardians in their role as the primary caregivers and instructors for their children.

We urge parents and guardians to:

- a) Actively supervise and direct the movements of their children while on church property and at church-related activities.
- b) Take responsibility for giving age-appropriate instruction to their children regarding contact with others and the concept of 'safe touch.'
- c) Be open and communicative with church employees and fellow members about concerns that may arise.
- d) Complete a registration form for each child participating in church activities.

In turn, we will strive to offer the types of programs and information that will assist parents and guardians in fulfilling these responsibilities.

SECTION TWO EMPLOYEE HIRING, VOLUNTEER SELECTION AND SCREENING

It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church of Danville to hire employees and select volunteers who have been carefully and prayerfully chosen and trained to work with children.

To implement this policy, the following actions are undertaken:

A. Safe Child Team

This policy will be administered by the Safe Child Team. The Safe Child Team is comprised of:

- Pastor as Head of Staff,
- Building Supervisor,
- Director of Christian Formation
- Director of Youth,
- Chair of Youth Formation,
- Chair of Children's Formation, and
- Chair of Personnel Committee.

The Safe Child Team shall report to the Session and shall be responsible for screening and supervising volunteers and for the training of staff and volunteers regarding this policy.

The Safe Child Team shall be responsible in the event that an allegation is made for the documentation and reporting of said allegation to proper authorities, and report to the Session. The Session can make recommendations for further action.

B. Committees Responsible for Staff and Volunteers

1. The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for the hiring screening, and supervision of all staff specifically: Pastor, Director of Christian Formation, Director Of Music, Director Of Youth, Building Superintendent, Financial Manager, and Church Secretary.

The Children's Formation Committee shall be responsible for the hiring and supervising of all paid and volunteer nursery care givers for events in which there is a church sponsored nursery.

The Clerk of Session shall ensure that the Session designate an active elder annually or as needed to function as an alternate member of the Safe Child Team if a member is the accused during an investigation.

C. Employee Hiring

1. The term “employee” means a person, age 18 and over, who actively performs services for the church and receives a salary or wages for such services.
2. As part of the job application process, a candidate will complete an “Employee Screening Form”, (Exhibit A). Employees on staff at the time this policy is implemented will complete a Screening Form. Screening Forms will be made part of every employee’s personnel file and will be kept in accordance with the established procedures and practices for maintaining all other personnel records.
3. As part of the job application process, the selected candidate will undergo a full criminal background check performed by an appropriate law enforcement agency sanctioned by the Session. Employees on staff at the time this Policy is implemented will undergo a “Criminal Background Check”. (Exhibit C) The cost, if any, of the background check will be borne by the church. The results of the background check are confidential and will be kept in a secure location on church property to be reviewed only by the Safe Child Team.
4. The screening process must be completed to the satisfaction of the Chair of the Personnel Committee prior to an offer of employment.
5. Every successful candidate will be expected to participate in a training program as described in Section TWO (E) of this Policy.

D. Volunteer Selection

1. The term “volunteer” means a person, age 18 and over, who provides services to the church without remuneration and who has or expects to have supervisory responsibility for children and youth under the age 18.
2. A volunteer is required to complete a Volunteer Registration Form, (Exhibit B), in order to supervise children and youth under the age of 18. Registration Forms will be part of the volunteer registration records and maintained by the Safe Child Team. As part of the volunteer registration process, every volunteer will undergo a criminal background check performed by an appropriate law enforcement agency sanctioned by the Session. (Exhibit C) The cost, if any, of the background check will be borne by the church. The results of the background check are confidential and will be kept in a secure location on church property to be reviewed only by the Safe Child Team. Depending on the results of the background check, the Safe Child Team can then decide if a further interview with the volunteer is necessary and can allow the volunteer, with any restrictions, or can disallow the volunteer.
4. The volunteer registration process must be completed to the satisfaction of the Safe Child Team in order for a volunteer to have supervisory responsibility for

children and youth under the age of 18.

5. Every volunteer will be expected to participate in a training program as described in Section TWO (E) of this Policy.

E. Training

The Safe Child Team shall be responsible for the development and implementation of the training related to this policy.

1. Employees and volunteers are expected to attend periodic training sessions related to the Safe Child Policy. Training sessions will be scheduled in advance with a minimum two-week notification of the date, time and place of training. Employees and volunteers who are unable to attend a scheduled training session must make alternate arrangements for training.
2. Employees on staff at the time this Safe Child Policy is implemented are expected to participate in a training session within one month of the date this Safe Child Policy is implemented. Newly hired employees are expected to participate in a training session within three months of the date of employment. Exceptions may be allowed with the approval of the Safe Child Team—Employees are expected to participate in periodic re-training activities. Evidence of participation in the training programs will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
3. Volunteers providing services at the time this Safe Child Policy is implemented are expected to participate in a training session within one month of the date this Safe Child Policy is implemented. Volunteers who begin providing services after the date of implementation of this Safe Child Policy are expected to complete training prior to the time services are provided. Exceptions may be allowed with the approval of the-Safe Child Team. Volunteers are expected to participate in periodic re-training activities. Evidence of participation in the training programs will be maintained as part of the volunteer's registration records.
4. The issues to be addressed in the training sessions include, but are not limited to the following:
 - the definition of child abuse,
 - sexual and physical abuse symptoms,
 - what constitutes inappropriate conduct,
 - church policies that govern working with children or youth,
 - the civil and criminal consequences of misconduct, and
 - Kentucky state law and the mandatory reporting procedures for observed or suspected misconduct.
5. At the conclusion of each training session, employees and volunteers will complete a Training Confirmation Form (Exhibit D) that discloses the date and

content of the training session. The document will be placed in the employee's personnel file or volunteer's registration record as evidence of training.

SECTION THREE SUPERVISION

It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church of Danville to supervise employees and volunteers who work with children and youth under the age of 18 in a manner that reduces the risk of harm to both children and adults.

To implement this Safe Child Policy, the following actions are undertaken:

A. Supervision of Children and Youth

1. It is the intent of the church for two employees or volunteers, preferably unrelated, (collectively referred to as "adults") to be present during any church activity involving children and youth under the age of 18. This "two-adult" rule applies to church-sanctioned activities that occur on or off church property. In the event only one adult is present to supervise, parental permission shall be obtained prior to the activity. The adult should notify an appropriate church leader of such activity in advance. Children attending the church's regular Sunday school program are supervised by a teacher in a classroom that has a window in the door and is in close proximity to other classrooms.
2. Except as noted above, two adults will be present before and after all church-sanctioned activities, until all children and youth are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.
3. Infants and children through 5th grade shall be released only to a parent, a legal guardian, or an adult who brings them to church, or a designated other as listed on the registration form following any church class or activity and child care.
3. The appropriate church leaders shall make random visits to all classrooms and other activities involving children and youth under the age of 18 to insure that practices described herein are being followed.
4. Only adults who have been cleared in advance with the proper church leaders shall be allowed to chaperone overnight activities involving children and youth under the age of 18.
5. Inappropriate conduct or relationships between an adult and a child or youth under the age of 18 should be confronted immediately and investigated. Adults are encouraged to warn each other when questionable behavior is displayed. Warnings will be issued to the adult, and his/her services will be terminated immediately for continued violation of such warning.

B. Church Property

1. Windows or sidelights should be installed on doors to classrooms or other areas used by children and youth under the age of 18. Windows should be made of shatterproof glass. Window coverings should not obstruct the view inside the room.
2. In the alternate, doors to such classrooms or other areas should be left open so that persons passing by can observe inside.

SECTION FOUR REPORTING

Child sexual abuse thrives when it goes unnoticed or unreported. It is the moral obligation and official policy of The Presbyterian Church of Danville to comply with all applicable laws and regulations relating to the reporting of suspected cases of abuse.

To implement this policy, the following actions are undertaken:

A. Mutual Accountability and Personal Responsibility

1. Adults are mutually accountable for inappropriate behavior with children. Adults are encouraged to warn each other when questionable behavior is displayed.
2. Reports of possible child abuse should be quickly communicated to the Pastor. Such reports will be held in confidence.
3. Reports of noncompliance with the procedures and practices contained herein should be communicated to the Safe Child Team. Such reports are considered an act of caring and will be held in confidence.
4. Adults have a legal requirement to report suspected cases of abuse. (See Section FOUR (B), below.) Reporting suspected cases of abuse to the proper church leader does not discharge an adult's reporting duty under state law.

B. Compliance with Kentucky State Law

1. Adults will comply with the provisions of KRS 620, the Child Protection Act.

The Definition of an Abused or Neglected Child

- KRS 620.020(1) defines an abused or neglected child as a child whose health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm when his parent, guardian or other person exercising custodial control or supervision of the child:
 - (1) inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical or emotional injury by other than accidental means;
 - (2) creates or allows to be created a risk of physical or emotional injury to the child by other than accidental means;
 - (3) commits or allows to be committed an act of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or prostitution upon the child;
 - (4) creates or allows to be created a risk of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or prostitution upon the child;
 - (5) abandons or exploits such child; or

- (6) does not provide the child with adequate care, supervision, food clothing shelter and education or medical care necessary for the child's wellbeing.

The Definition of Abuse and Exploitation

- KRS 620.020(37) defines abuse and exploitation as emotional or physical harm or sexual abuse as follows:
 - (1) Emotional harm means harm to the mental or psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child as testified to by a qualified mental health professional.
 - (2) Emotional injury means an injury to the mental or psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child as evidenced by a substantial and observable impairment in his or her ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard to age development, culture and environment.
 - (3) Physical injury means substantial physical pain or any impairment of physical condition.
 - (4) Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to any contacts or interactions between a child and an adult in which the parent, guardian or other person having custodial control or supervision of the child or responsibility uses or allows, permits or encourages the use of the child for the purposes of the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person.
 - (5) Sexual exploitation includes involvement of the child in prostitution or acts of obscene or pornographic photographing, filming or depicting of a child.

Who Shall Report?

- KRS 620.030 requires that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected or abused shall *immediately* cause an oral or written report to be made to a local law enforcement agency or the Kentucky State Police, the Department for Social Services, the commonwealth's Attorney; or the County Attorney.

Penalty for Failure to Report

- Any person intentionally violating this law shall be guilty of a Class B Misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment of not more than 90 days and/or a fine of not more than \$250.

SECTION FIVE COMMUNICATION

It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church of Danville to communicate the goals and objective of the Safe Child Policy to our church family and the community to educate and engage them in our efforts to keep our children safe and protected in God's loving hands.

To implement this policy, the following actions are undertaken:

A. Congregational Communications

1. Prior to the date of implementation of this Safe Child Policy, the congregation will be introduced to its goals and policies through face-to-face and written communications. The Congregation will be notified of any significant changes to the Safe Child Policy following its implementation. The Congregation shall receive periodic progress reports and updates on the Safe Child Policy as needed.
2. Information with respect to the Safe Child Policy will be distributed to all new church members. A Volunteer Registration Form may be included in the manual given to each new member.
3. If the Safe Child Team becomes aware of a Registered Sex Offender attending services or church functions, a letter shall be sent to the congregation informing them that a registered sex offender is attending worship and/or church activities and offering them more information by contacting the Pastor.
4. If any staff member or volunteer in ministry becomes aware that a Registered Sex Offender is living within one thousand (1,000) yards of the church, or attending church services or church functions, that staff member or volunteer has an obligation to inform the Pastor or a member of the Safe Child Team immediately.

B. Public and Crisis Communications

1. The implementation of this Safe Child Policy, along with periodic updates and announcements relating to it, will be published in the church's regular informational section in THE SALT SHAKER, the church's newsletter.
2. In the event of an allegation of abuse, the Pastor is the only designated spokesperson for the church. In the event the Pastor is unable to perform the duties of spokesperson, the chair of the Personnel Committee becomes the designated spokesperson.
3. In the event of an allegation of abuse, follow these guidelines:
 - Document all efforts of the handling of the incident.
 - Report the incident immediately to the insurance company, attorney and

denominational officials.

- Contact the proper civil authorities following the guidance of the insurance company and attorney. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation.
- Notify the parents of the child involved unless contra-indicated for the safety of the child.
- Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child or youth member is secured.
- Do not prejudge the situation. Extend pastoral resources as needed. The care and safety of the victim is a top priority.
- Treat the accused with dignity and support. The accused shall be relieved temporarily of his or her duties and not permitted to be on church property until an investigation is completed.
- When dealing with the press, a prepared public statement is needed. (Exhibit E) Under all circumstances, the privacy and confidentiality of those involved must be safeguarded. Do not engage in denial, minimization or blame.

SECTION SIX ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Matters

A. The Safe Child Team or a Program Administrator appointed by the Safe Child Team will administer the Safe Child Policy.

1. The Safe Child Team will:
 - Maintain up-to-date records including Screening Forms, Registration Forms, and Training Certifications.
 - Submit requests for criminal background checks to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Confirm that background checks are returned in a timely manner and delivered to the Pastor for confidential safe storage.
 - Maintain records on training and advise when one or more adults need to receive that training.
 - Perform such other duties related to the on-going administration of the Safe Child Policy as may be requested by the Pastor, Moderator of the Session or other Committees.

B. Authority; Amendments to the Safe Child Policy

1. This Safe Child Policy may be implemented and amended by a majority vote of the Session of The Presbyterian Church.
2. The Safe Child Policy will be periodically reviewed by the Session to determine its effectiveness.
3. The Safe Child Team will recommend to the Session that it approve any amendments it deems appropriate. The Safe Child Team may seek legal review of such amendments.
4. The Safe Child Team will communicate any amendments to the policy to the appropriate employees and volunteers within 30 days after such amendments are approved.