

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

First Presbyterian Church
Lansing, Michigan

Christian education and development for children and youth in a safe, nurturing environment is one of the most important goals of our church. All parents, teachers, staff and members must be committed to this goal if it is to be achieved. All must feel free to come to the staff and the Christian Education Committee members for the program to continue to make improvements.

In furtherance of this goal, having clear procedures and policies for the programs that involve the young people of our church is necessary. These policies and procedures are best broken down into two administrative areas: one area is the screening of personnel; the other is operational.

The screening procedures may cover the following positions: child care providers both paid and volunteer, Sunday School teachers, fellowship leaders, retreat leaders, Christian education staff, Vacation Bible School leaders, Mission Trip leaders, and coaches of youth teams.

All persons filling any of the aforementioned positions may be asked whether they have a criminal record and may be asked to fill out a form allowing the church to ask the State Police for a criminal records review. In addition, paid staff will be asked to complete an application and submit references, which will be checked by the people doing the hiring.

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

1. The membership of the church shall be reminded, at least annually, of their vows during the baptism of the children and youth of the church and encouraged to be observant and helpful in their development.
2. Parents shall be informed of who the members of the Christian Education Committee are and encouraged to contact these people on anything that may be of concern to them in programs involving the children and youth of our church.
3. There shall be no secrets, but communication between young people and adults will remain confidential, if it does not violate the law.
4. Children in kindergarten and younger shall have two people age 16 years or older present when child care or church programs are being provided.
5. All corporal punishment is strictly prohibited.
6. The classrooms shall be easily viewable from the outside and the superintendent and other staff shall regularly look in on the classrooms.
7. The classrooms shall be open to visitation at anytime.
8. 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.
9. All complaints of a serious nature shall be reported to the Head of Staff.
10. All complaints of serious misconduct shall be investigated promptly by the Head of Staff and a report shall be made to the chair of the Christian Education Committee.
11. Per state law, members of the clergy and regulated child care providers are "mandated reporters" in instances of suspected or actual child abuse.
12. All reports that require no church action shall be held in confidence.

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

Revised 8/02, 10/02, 9/07, 11/12