CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ECO A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians CPCRVA.COM

CHILD SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

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DRAFT

1. INTRODUCTION

And Jesus said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." Mark 9:35-37, ESV

“Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Psalm 82:3-4, ESV

God calls us not only to disciple but also to protect our children. Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Whether it is negligent care by volunteers, or malicious sexual or physical abuse, children have been put in harm’s way in churches – all types of churches. Abuse cuts across all social lines.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the emotional, legal, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse or negligence.

Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) desires to be a safe place for all children to attend. We believe that preventative steps can be taken to promote the safety of children and those who volunteer to lead them. God calls us to make CPC a safe place and to protect children from every form of harm, as we create a worshipping community drawn together by God’s grace.

Purpose

CPC’s purpose for establishing this Child Safety Policy Statement and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of our children.

Policies

As a community of faith and a congregation of ECO, we seek to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children as well as that of our ministry volunteers.

The Session of CPC will review, and update if needed, this Child Safety Policy Statement at least every two years.

2. DEFINITIONS

"CM" (Children's Ministry)

- This policy applies to all programs and events that are classified under the "Children's Ministry" of CPC. This includes, but is not limited to Nursery, Preschool and Children's Church, and any other programs and events that are operated under the umbrella of "Children's Ministry."
- This policy DOES NOT apply to the following: Youth Ministry (middle & high school)
- The separate ministry listed above has its own guidelines and safety procedures, which may or may not be equivalent to the policy below.

"CMV" (Children's Ministry Volunteer):

- Any individual who volunteers to work with children or is part of the Children's Ministry.
- This includes, but is not limited to, Nursery Volunteers, Preschool Volunteers, Children's Church Volunteers.

Child Abuse and Neglect

- Please see Appendix C for definitions of sexual, physical, mental, or emotional child abuse, and neglect.

3. VOLUNTEER SCREENING

MEMBERSHIP

- Every CMV is expected to be a professing believer.
- Every CMV will *ordinarily* be a member of CPC prior to working with our children.
- The Session has the right to waive the membership requirement at any point if deemed necessary and prudent.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION AND REQUIREMENTS

- Every volunteer working with or around children, including staff and elders, will complete a written volunteer application.
- The Session or designee will personally review every application.
- All potential volunteers will be searched on the VA sex offender registry.
- The Session will order a criminal background check on every volunteer.

- Volunteers who have previously completed an application should complete a new application at least every five years.

- All applications will be kept in a confidential location in the church office.

- All volunteers must notify the coordinator of their CM team of an upcoming absence and find a replacement.

4. ABUSE PREVENTION

4.1 TWO-PERSON RULE

- At least two unrelated CMVs will ordinarily be present at every CPC function or program involving children.

- At least one of these should be an adult over 21 years old.

- The Session has the right to waive this rule if deemed necessary.

4.2. RATIOS

The following ratios will be used as a goal for all CM classrooms.

- Nursery (6 weeks – 2 years old): Three children to one CMV

- Preschool (3-5 years old): Five children to one CMV

- Children's Church (1^{st} – 6^{th} grade): Eight students to one CMV

4.3. DIAPERS / BATHROOM

- Children under age 4 (boys and girls) will be diapered by a female CMV. No children are to be diapered out of view. Children under age 4 (boys and girls) will be assisted in the bathroom by a female CMV.

- For children aged 4 and older, at least one CMV female should take girls to the restroom, and one CMV male should take boys to the restroom.

    - The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe and then wait outside the restroom for the children.

    - If possible, the CMV should attempt to bring at least two children.

    - When there are only two teachers, children can be sent to the bathroom with a buddy, if deemed safe by the CMVs.

4.4. DISCIPLINE

To help our children feel safe and secure, the following discipline procedures will be followed in all CM classes in the following order.

- Redirect or give verbal warning.
- Time out away from the group until suitable time has elapsed. This will be within the classroom. When a time out is used with a child, the CMV will inform his or her parent(s) after the service.
- If the child is uncontrollable, then parent(s) will be asked to remove the child from class that day.
- For recurring problems, the volunteer will contact the parent to work out a solution. Requiring the parent to attend with the child next week is recommended.

Discipline CANNOT include:

Physical Methods: strike, spank, shake, or slap even when approved by parent(s).

Harsh Verbal Correction: humiliate, degrade, threaten, compare, or criticize

Sexual abuse: inappropriate touch or verbal exchange

Mental Abuse: shaming, withholding love, or cruelty

Witholding: food,water, or other basic needs

No type of abuse will be tolerated. Any violation of these guidelines will be cause for immediate dismissal and possibly, if true abuse occurs, legal action.

4.5. ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES

In the case of suspected abuse by a volunteer during CM event:

Any suspected physical or sexual abuse will be reported immediately to an Elder, who will complete an Abuse Report Form. See attached “Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse” (Appendix B)

If a CMV becomes aware of possible abuse of a child, (s)he must ensure that the child’s parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse has occurred.

If it is deemed necessary, the authorities should be contacted as soon as possible.

In the case of suspected abuse by a parent or guardian:

Any suspected physical or sexual abuse by a parent or guardian should be reported to an elder at the first opportunity.

If a CMV becomes aware of possible abuse of a participant by a parent or guardian, then all due diligence should be used to secure wise counsel and to report the incident to the authorities if it is deemed necessary.

5. ABDUCTION PREVENTION

5.1. TRANSFER OF CUSTODY

Children should never be left unattended. There must be a clear transfer of custody between parents/guardians and CMVs.

When being dropped off, the parent must clearly communicate with the volunteer/worker that custody of the child is being transferred to the volunteer/worker. All due diligence must be taken to ensure that the proper party is responsible.

All children must leave through the door at the back left of the sanctuary. Transfer of Custody occurs at this door only in the presence of one of the CMVs.

If a child does not go through the door with the group, a parent must accompany him to his or her CM room.

First-time visiting parents should accompany children to their CM room to meet CMVs and to turn in/fill out a Child Information Form (Appendix F).

Nursery and Preschool children will be returned to their parents/guardians in the sanctuary at 12:15 p.m.

Children in Children's Church should be met by their parents at the classroom after the service.

5.2 ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Attendance must be taken every time the church has custody over a child, including events that are not on Sunday morning.

Attendance records will be kept on file for at least one year.

5.3 ATTENDANCE SHEETS

A standard attendance sheet is provided weekly for each CM classroom, and for every instance of other CM programs. The CMVs will maintain an attendance sheet while children are arriving.

Recorded on the "Attendance Sheet" is:

Names of CMVs in room
Names of children

Allergy Information
Special Instructions (e.g. feeding time, schedule, potty trained or diapers)

6. FACILITY SAFETY & SECURITY

6.1 AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL

During classes, only approved CMVs, parents, elders, and deacons will be allowed into any classroom or nursery.

In the case of dropping off or picking up, parents may enter a classroom to help transition the child.

CMVs should always have a cell phone available.

6.2 CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT

All classrooms should be equipped with quick reference including:

- Fire-escape plans **[NEED TO OBTAIN]**
- Attendance Sheets
- Proper hand washing/sanitation option
- Child Information Forms (Appendix F)

6.2.1 MAINTENANCE

All equipment and toys should be inspected annually to ensure age appropriateness.

Emphasis should be placed on purchasing equipment and toys that can easily be disinfected.

Broken equipment and toys should be removed immediately.

6.3 FIRE & EMERGENCY EVACUATION AND LOCKDOWN GUIDELINES

Review the established fire & emergency evacuation policy for the church building.

See attached “Fire & Emergency Evacuation Guidelines” and “Lockdown Emergency Guidelines” (Appendices D & G).

These procedures must be reviewed by all CMVs during initial training. An evacuation map must be posted in each room.

6.4 CHEMICAL SAFETY

Cleaning supplies, bacterial wipes and any other non-edible items will be out of reach of children. After toys are cleaned, they will not be given back to the children to play with until the following Sunday to give the toys sufficient time to dry.

7. MEDICAL SAFETY

7.1 FIRST AID PROCEDURES

In order to facilitate a rapid response to a medical emergency at CPC call 911 and contact an elder or deacon.

A first aid kit is located in each of the supply areas located in all three CM rooms. **[NEED TO OBTAIN]**

7.2 ALLERGIES

Food allergies are common and may represent a significant health concern for some infants and children. Consequently, several safety mechanisms will be in place to minimize the chance of food allergen exposure for vulnerable children:

7.2.1. ALLERGY DOCUMENTATION AND AVOIDANCE

In order to avoid inadvertent allergen exposure, CPC will provide goldfish crackers, pretzels and animal crackers as a snacks.

CMVs are to refrain from bringing additional food and beverages into the classroom area during their time of service unless for use in the lesson. If lessons involve the use of food, CMVs will check Child Information Forms to make sure there are no issues with allergies, and CMVs will post what foods are being used on the classroom door.

Parents are to refrain from sending in snacks with their child during Nursery/Sunday Community periods, unless approved by the CMVs.

7.3 INFECTION CONTROL

The primary means for controlling spread of illness among the infants and children under our care are:

Regular disinfection of the nursery environment

Regular hand washing/sanitation

7.3.1. DISINFECTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Appropriate disinfectant wipes will be available in the Nursery room (wipes are not needed in the Preschool room and Children's Church room).

The wipes will be maintained out of the reach of children and will be clearly identified to avoid confusion with diaper changing supplies.

All toys and counter/table surfaces should be cleaned with the appropriate disinfectant after each session.

The assigned CMVs in each classroom will be responsible for cleaning as toys are placed away.

To promote appropriate disinfection, the number of toys in each play area should be regularly assessed to maintain an appropriate number of toys.

The diaper changing area should be cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant after each use.

Frequent hand washing for all nursery CMVs is encouraged, and required after each diaper change.

7.3.2. SICK CHILD/WORKER POLICY

In order to prevent spread of contagious illnesses, infants and children meeting the following conditions will not be allowed to CM classes:

1. Fever greater than 100.4°F within the past twenty-four hours (must be fever-free without the use of medicine)

2. Diarrhea or vomiting in the past twenty-four hours

3. New or unidentified rash

4. Inflammation around the eyelids, red eyes, or eye discharge that is not clear (pink eye)

5. Excessive runny nose (other than clear discharge) or heavy congestion

6. Excessive coughing, persistent sore throat, or wheezing

7. Lice (must be lice and nit free for 48 hours)

CMVs who are acutely ill should contact their CM coordinator with the names of their replacements.

Should a CMV think that a child may have a fever, or other symptom, the parent(s) should be contacted immediately. If necessary, the child will be removed from the classroom.

7.3.3 BITING POLICY

If a child bites another child, both sets of parents should be sent for immediately. The biter must be removed from the classroom for the day. If biting continues weekly, parents can either attend with their child or the child should be removed from the classroom until biting has subsided.

CHILD SAFETY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION:
Given the reality that we live in a fallen world, that the purity and reputation of the church are at stake, and that statistics reflect a national problem crossing social, racial, and age lines, it is necessary and prudent for CPC to adopt and enforce a Child Safety Policy.

PURPOSE:
Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Child Safety Policy and the accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children.

GOALS:
• To safeguard the children of the church from abuse while involved in church activities
• To protect the honor and reputation of Jesus Christ and his church
• To protect volunteers from false accusations
• To protect the church from trauma, scandal, and legal liability
• To offer pastoral care and support to volunteers who have been the victims of past abuse

STATEMENT:
Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a congregation of ECO, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children as well as all of the volunteers. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of volunteers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will provide educational opportunities for all our workers with regard to the appropriate policies and procedures; and we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law.

CONCLUSION:
Psalm 78: 1-4 says, "O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old- what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done." We want our children to know the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, and we are committed to providing opportunities for them to learn and grow in a safe and secure environment.

APPENDIX A

CPC CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

This application is to be completed by all those who will be supervising minors. It is being used to help the church provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for those children who participate in our programs. All information given on this application will be kept in strict confidence. Thank you.

NAME:_____DATE OF BIRTH:_____
Last First Middle

ADDRESS:_____
Street City State Zip

PHONE:_____EMAIL:_____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PHONE: _____

1. Are you a member of Christ Presbyterian Church? (Circle one) YES NO
If not, are you planning on pursuing membership by attending the next membership class? YES NO

2. Please list other CPC ministries you are involved in:

_____

3. Have you ever been arrested for any criminal offense excluding minor traffic violations? YES NO If yes, please explain:

_____

_____

4. Have you ever been arrested for, convicted of, or pled guilty to a felony or an offense involving a minor? YES NO If yes, please explain:

_____

_____

5. Are there habitual sins in your life, or personal traits, which might inhibit your ability to sufficiently care for the children of CPC? YES NO *(If you are unsure, please contact an elder or pastor of CPC to discuss this further.)*

6. I have read the CPC Child Safety Policy Statement and affirm that at no time in the past have I engaged in conduct that would fall within the definition of sexual, physical, mental, or emotional child abuse, or neglect. (Appendix C). YES NO

CPC CHILDCARE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

I am applying to volunteer to serve the children of CPC with the primary purposes of reflecting the grace and love of Jesus Christ to them, and ensuring their well-being, health, and safety. Their needs and their good, not my own, will guide my ministry to them. I will be gentle, truthful, loving, and patient with the children I serve and the people I serve with.

I agree to work in cooperation with my ministry team and parents and to support and encourage my team members.

I commit to arriving on time and attending all meetings for my area of ministry. As much as it is up to me, I will work to be at peace with my ministry team and the families we serve. When conflict arises, I will do my part to seek reconciliation and restoration. I will do all of my work within the parameters of the CPC Child Safety Policy, doing all I can to promote a safe and secure environment and work to prevent child abuse of any kind. I agree to immediately report any abuse I witness or suspect to an elder of CPC.

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. Should my application be accepted I agree to be bound by the CPC Child Safety Policy and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I further state that I have carefully read the policies and application. I understand the content thereof, and I sign this application as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand.

_____ _____

Applicant Signature Date

BACKGROUND CHECK

To ensure the safety of our children, our policy requires that a criminal background check be run on all those who will be supervising minors. We will use a service called Verify Volunteers (www.verifiedvolunteers.com), which allows volunteers to create their own account and submit their information securely, online. Look for an email invitation to complete your background check in the email you provide in this volunteer application.

APPENDIX B

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of suspected child abuse:

_____

Address: _____

Phone: _____Email: _____

2. Alleged victim's name: _____

Alleged victim 's age/date of birth:_____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from alleged victim:

_____

4. Alleged victim's statement (give your detailed summary here):

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to alleged victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

_____

6. Date/time reported to pastor: _____

Summary:

_____

_____

_____

7. Date/time of call to alleged victim's parent/guardian: _____

Spoke with:_____

Summary:

_____

_____

_____

8. Date/time of call to local children and family service agency: _____

Spoke with:_____

Summary:_____

_____

_____

9. Date/time of call to local law enforcement agency: _____

Spoke with:_____

Summary: _____

_____

_____

10. Date/time of call to attorney: _____

Name: _____

Summary:_____

_____

_____

11. Other contacts:_____

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary:_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Section 63:2-100 of the Code of Virginia defines an abused or neglected child as any child under 18 years of age whose parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care:

1) Causes or threatens to cause a nonaccidental physical or mental injury.

2) Causes or threatens to cause a nonaccidental physical or mental injury during the manufacture or sale of certain drugs.

3) Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care.

4) Abandons the child.

5) Fails to provide adequate supervision in relation to the child's age and level of development.

6) Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child including incest, rape, fondling, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

7) Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person who is not related to the child by blood or marriage and who is required to register as a violent sexual offender.

Reporting

Anyone may report suspected abuse or neglect; however Section 63;2-1509 of the Code of Virginia requires that designated professionals who have contact with children immediately report their suspicions. It is not necessary to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. Reports can be made by calling your local social services department or the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-552-7096.

Reports can be made anonymously. If you choose to provide your name, it will not be released to the family who was reported, except by Court order. Persons reporting in good faith are immune from civil and criminal liability pursuant to Section 63:@-1512 of the Code.

What to Look Out for

Information can be found at the VA Department of Social Services website:

http://www.dss.virginia.gov

As stated under the Reporting Section, when the children are in our care at Christ Presbyterian Church, we are "designated professionals" and need to report suspicions.

APPENDIX D

Fire & Emergency Evacuation Guidelines

******* NEED TO OBTAIN *******

APPENDIX E

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

(This form is not intended for suspected child abuse)

Name of person(s) involved in the incident:

_____

_____

Date and time of incident:_____

Did the incident occur on church property during a regularly scheduled event? Circle one: YES NO

If yes, please describe the event in progress and the room or area where incident occurred:

_____

_____

If not on church property, where did the incident occur? _____

Witnesses or other adults present at time of incident:

_____

_____

In the space provided below, write a description of the event as witnessed by you:

_____

_____

_____

What actions were taken in response to the incident?

_____

_____

_____

Were the parents or ministry leader notified? Circle one: YES NO

If yes, write the date and time, and person(s) notified:

_____

_____

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate and complete. (Sign and date below)

Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F

CHILD INFORMATION FORM

Child's name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Allergies: _____

Special Instructions/Medical Concerns: _____

_____

Parent/Guardian
Name(s):_____

Address: _____

Cell Number(s):
_____

Email(s): _____

1. Would you like us to notify you if your child:

a. cries at all

b. cries longer than 5 minutes

c. cries longer than 10 minutes

d. only in an emergency

2. How would you like us to notify you?

a. text: _____

b. come find you in the service

3. What are some of your child's favorite things (item from home, toys, activities)

4. If your child is crying, what are some ways that work best to calm him or her?

5. Is it okay for us to give your child a snack? (pretzels, animal crackers, goldfish). If not, would you like to provide an alternative?

6. Periodically we take photos or video of the children during nursery for our website. Do you give your permission for us to use your child's image on Christ Presbyterian Church printed publications or website?

Yes _____ No _____

7. If needed, is it ok for our volunteers to administer first aid to your child?

Yes_____No_____

Thank you for entrusting the care of your child to us. Your child is very important to us, and we look forward to learning and playing together and sharing the love of Jesus with him or her.

APPENDIX G

LOCKDOWN GUIDELINES

Objective: To provide guidelines to ensure the safety of the CM classes in the event of an active shooter in or around the premises.

If gunshots are heard, or if an elder, deacon, pastor, or staff person at CPC alerts the CMVs that there is a reason for the building to be on lockdown, the following procedure should be followed:

1. All individuals must stay in the room they are in. If anyone is in a hallway or other open space, they must go to the nearest enclosed room.

2. Close all doors and if it is possible to lock them from the inside, do so.

3. Turn off all lights.

4. Move all children as far away from the doors and windows as possible, and into closets if there are any.

5. If there are windows in the room, everyone should remain below window level.

6. If the door has glass, sit in an area of the room where you would remain unseen if someone looks in through the glass.

7. Try to keep all children seated in a group and as quiet as possible.

8. Adults should place themselves between the door and the children.

9. Silence all cell phones and toys.

10. Barricade the door with desks and tables if possible.

11. If possible, turn tables and chairs on their sides and use them as shelter.

12. Remain on lockdown until an elder, deacon, pastor, or staff person alerts you that the emergency has ended.