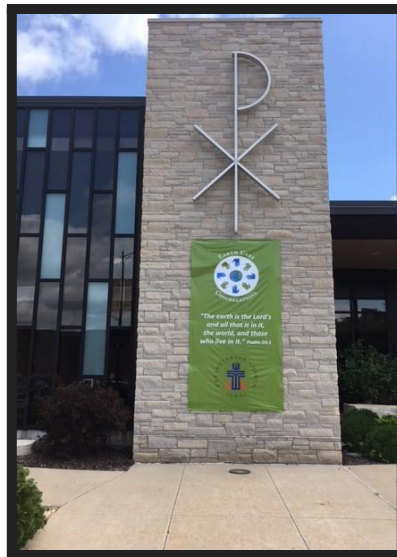


**Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult  
Protection Policy  
of  
First Presbyterian Church  
Columbia, Missouri  
2023 Edition**



**Adopted by the Session**

**June 15th, 2023**

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# **Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy**

## **First Presbyterian Church**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

As Christians, we believe that God created us to live in community with one another. We understand that life in the church is to be lived according to the rule of love. “Jesus said, ‘You shall love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest commandment. And a second is like it. ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37-39) As members of First Presbyterian Church, we are called to create a loving community of faith that seeks the welfare of its members and visitors. Therefore, we are committed to the protection of all who participate in the activities and programs of First Presbyterian. Abuse, exploitation or harassment in any form, physical, emotional or sexual, will not be tolerated. As part of our congregation’s baptismal vows, we covenant with each other to take responsibility for the nurture of faith and to preserve the integrity of each person within our church family. As such, the members of this church have pledged to uphold one another and the sanctity of all. In the spirit of Christ, we teach, strengthen and support the individual’s relationship within the church family.

This Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy covers any person employed by or volunteering at First Presbyterian Church in any capacity involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults and all outside organizations using First Presbyterian facilities for programs involving children, youth and vulnerable adults.

### **DEFINITIONS OF IMPORTANT TERMS:**

- A. **Adult:** a person at least 18 years of age.
- B. **Child:** a person under 18 years of age.
- C. **Youth:** a person in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades; a youth may be an individual who is 18 years old or older, but still in high school.
- D. **Child abuse:** harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, verbal abuse or sexual abuse.
- E. **Appropriate conduct:** conduct that one could reasonably assume would be acceptable and permissible by the child’s parent or guardian and the Session of First Presbyterian Church.
- F. **Employee:** any person serving at First Presbyterian Church in an official, paid capacity.
- G. **Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult Worker:** Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level (except for an event such as Advent workshop where all interactions are in public and attended by multiple certified workers) at First Presbyterian Church’s sponsored events or activities involving children, youth and/or vulnerable adults.
- H. **Vulnerable Adult:** Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.
- I. **Church School Supervisor:** the person responsible for monitoring the children’s and youth classrooms and hallways during Sunday morning church school. This person will assist leaders and teachers as needed and as required by the Policy. The Church School Supervisor may be a volunteer or a staff person.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

In order to provide a safe community for all, First Presbyterian Church requires all employees and volunteers supervising children, youth or vulnerable adults to read the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy adopted by the Session of First Presbyterian Church. These staff members and volunteers must agree to this policy by completing, signing, and submitting the appropriate application forms. In doing so, those individuals will be required to undergo the screening procedures and complete policy training.

All employees will be under the supervision of the Head of Staff/Pastor. All qualifying volunteers will be under the supervision of the respective program staff persons. All employees and volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults must comply with this Policy and the attached Appendix A. These individuals will be required to renew their application forms and complete training once every (3) three years. In addition to policy compliance, all employees and volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults must comply with all state and federal laws, including those which pertain to the safety and welfare of children.

Any non-member or outside group using First Presbyterian facilities for activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults such as Boy or Girl Scout events, retreats, youth group overnights, choirs, and so forth, will be required to comply with the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy of the church. At the time an outside group submits a facilities usage application, it shall be the duty of the Executive Staff Assistant to provide a copy of the Policy to the on-site coordinator and to obtain a written confirmation from the group's on-site representative of their intention to comply with FPC's Policy.

## **Part 1: EMPLOYEE/WORKER SCREENING REQUIREMENTS**

**Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult Worker:** Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at First Presbyterian Church's sponsored events or activities involving children, youth and/or vulnerable adults.

Screening standards<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) Complete and sign a written application for service, either paid or volunteer;
- 2) Complete a personal interview;
- 3) Provide at least three references;
- 4) Agree to a National Criminal Records Check and any other background checks that are deemed necessary by the church. A Motor Vehicle Report will be run on any employee or volunteer who will be transporting children as part of their work or volunteer service.
- 5) Successfully complete all Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy application documents and participate in policy training.

### **Personal/Confidential Information**

Personal interviews will be conducted by the appropriate program staff person or program director; application reviews and reference checks will be conducted by the appropriate program staff person(s); and any required background checks will be submitted by the designated staff representative. The completed report will be reviewed by an individual designated by the Head of Staff/Senior Pastor. Approval will be documented on the attached form(s) prior to an individual beginning service. All confidential information will be kept in secure storage.

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<sup>1</sup> First Presbyterian Church reserves the right to exclude any person from working with children and youth in a church sponsored activity at any time for any reason, including upon information received as a result of screening or as a result of any other information or allegations of misconduct or violation of this policy.

## **Part 2: CHILD, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

### **1) General Guidelines and Procedures**

#### **Rule of Two**

All activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults will be supervised or led by at least two trained and screened employees or volunteers, one of which must be an adult worker. If a situation unexpectedly does not meet these criteria of the policy, then alternatives must be put into place so that the event is in compliance.

#### **Exceptions:**

- a) The opportunity for a church member, whether child or adult, to privately share confidentially their private and personal concerns with another member can contribute significantly to his or her spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. Such private and confidential conversations are an integral part of a caring and loving Christian community. On the other hand, such private conversations create a very high-risk environment for potential abuse situations to arise. If an unaccompanied pastor, program director, or worker meets with an individual to conduct a private discussion, that meeting shall be held at First Presbyterian when the church is open for activities or shall be held in a public place where other persons are able to clearly witness the interaction. In no case shall an unaccompanied pastor, program director, or worker meet with a single child, youth or vulnerable adult at First Presbyterian unless there is at least one other employee, member volunteer, or the parent or guardian of the child in the building and aware of the meeting.
- b) The accompanying Appendix A contains additional exceptions outlined by age group.

### **2) Six Month Rule**

No person will serve as a volunteer with children, youth or vulnerable adult until such a person has been an active participant in the First Presbyterian Church faith community for six (6) months and has completed the application, screening, and training to be in compliance with the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by session.

### **3) Four Year Rule**

All workers must be at least four years older than the oldest program participant.

### **4) Sharing Images**

First Presbyterian Church must first secure legal permission from a parent or guardian (through a photo release form/statement) for any minor or vulnerable adult before publishing his or her image in any digital or print format such as social media, newsletters, TV advertisements or publications.

### **Part 3: REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITY & DISCLOSURE**

Reporting and responding must be handled carefully and confidentially. If there are any concerns, an employee or volunteer shall discuss those concerns with the program staff person supervising the event in which the child, youth or vulnerable adult is participating or that staff person's supervisor.

#### **1) Child Abuse and Neglect are defined by state and federal law.**

#### **2) Initial reporting of suspicious or inappropriate activity**

All allegations shall be regarded as serious, and due consideration shall be given to the rights and privacy of both the alleged victim and the person being accused. Suspicious or inappropriate activity brought to the attention of an employee or volunteer must be reported immediately to the staff person in charge of the event. The person receiving the report of the alleged abuse or suspicious activity shall then document the date, time and circumstances of the alleged incident on the Incident Report Form (Appendix C-4).

#### **3) Responding to the initial report of suspicious or inappropriate activity**

The person receiving the initial report of suspicious activity will report immediately to the Head of Staff/Pastor<sup>2</sup> and/or the Clerk of Session<sup>2</sup> who will contact the proper authorities<sup>3</sup> and inform the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), unless they are the alleged perpetrator. The Head of Staff/ Pastor or a designee will inform the church insurer and seek legal counsel.

- In the case where the Senior Pastor is the alleged perpetrator, the Missouri Union Presbytery should receive the report and act in their place following the policies and guidelines of that higher council.
- In the case where an immediate family member of either the Head of Staff/Pastor or the Clerk of Session is the alleged perpetrator or victim, the Personnel Chair will receive the report and act in their place.

#### **4) Consequences of Violations**

- a) Any person accused of committing a prohibited act, whether an employee or volunteer, will immediately be suspended from participation in all church-sponsored activities and programs with minors or vulnerable adults. Such suspension shall continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protection agency.
- b) Any person found guilty of a prohibited act by a court of competent jurisdiction shall be prohibited from future participation in all church-sponsored activities and programs with minors and vulnerable adults. If a person is an employee of First Presbyterian, such conduct may also result in termination of employment.
- c) Failure to report a prohibited act in a timely manner to the designated person shall be considered a procedural violation of this Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and may be grounds for termination of employment and suspension and dismissal from participation in all children's and youth activities and programs of First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Missouri. Such action may be a violation of state law as well.

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<sup>2</sup> In the absence of the Head of Staff or Clerk of Session, the Personnel Chair shall serve in their place.

<sup>3</sup> Under Missouri law, failure to report child abuse or neglect by a mandated reporter is a class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of \$1,000 and/or one year in county jail. The Missouri Department of Social Services child abuse and neglect reporting number is 1-800-392-3738.

#### **Part 4: EDUCATION AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

1. All employees and volunteers must complete child protection training. The training will:
  - a) Address critical aspects of First Presbyterian Church's Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and ensure that all employees and volunteers understand and are in compliance with the policy.
  - b) Take place on an as needed basis in the form of an online lesson and evaluation or an in-person training.
2. Training must be renewed every three years.
3. In addition to the Policy's procedures and guidelines, Child, Youth, Vulnerable Adult Protection training will:
  - a) Include reasoning and Biblical/theological support for the training, as well as connections to our responsibilities as members of Christ's Church and to the baptismal vows we take with each baptism.
  - b) Include awareness training on issues related to child abuse, an overview of statistics and probabilities of infractions and occurrences, strategies for the protection of children, recommendations about provision of support, and guidance for the victims of abuse.
  - c) Have trainees participate in an evaluation which covers the topics of:
    - 1) Working with children of all ages
    - 2) Instructions on restroom visits and other situations that might require one-on-one interaction
    - 3) Child responses to any portions of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
    - 4) Discussion of abuse issues with children, youth or vulnerable adults
    - 5) Procedures for handling disclosures versus suspicions of abuse
    - 6) Any other thoughts and feelings that might be stimulated by learning about child abuse and its effects
  - d) Conclude with prayers for our children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as all of those who work with them.

#### **Part 5: POLICY REVIEW:**

- 1) The Children and Families and Youth Ministry Teams will have primary oversight for the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, including conducting a minimum of one training session annually for employees and volunteers, ensuring that proper screening procedures are being followed, implementing and supervising risk reduction procedures outlined in the Policy, reviewing record maintenance and security, and conducting an annual policy review and evaluation of the policy's effectiveness.
- 2) The Director of Youth and Children's Ministry will serve as the overseer for the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy with counsel from the Head of Staff of the church.
- 3) In April of each year, the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry will begin an annual review of the Policy and will ensure that all involved ministry teams, program directors, and pastors complete the evaluation form (Appendix C-5) and return it to the Children and Families and/or Youth Ministry Teams no later than the designated date. The Director of Youth and Children's Ministry will also meet with the Executive Administrative Assistant and Financial Coordinator or their equivalent to determine if their designated responsibilities have been carried out as defined by the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and will document the results of these meetings.
- 4) In May, the Children and Families and Youth Ministry Teams will meet to conduct a review of the reports, make any suggestions for amendments to the Policy, and recommend any improvements which

need to be made to ensure that the Policy is followed faithfully. They shall then report to Session at its June meeting the results of the evaluation.

- 5) In conducting the annual review, the Children and Families and Youth Ministry Teams may choose to seek guidance from congregational members who have expertise in the area of child protection or the law.
- 6) The Director of Youth and Children's Ministry will insure that following each yearly evaluation the policy and related documents are updated to reflect any approved changes and that copies of the revised Policy and applicable appendices are distributed to employees, ministry team chairs, program directors; the Executive Administrative Assistant, the Financial Coordinator, and others as needed.



**Appendix A**  
**First Presbyterian Church**  
**Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy**

**Standards for Workers**  
**with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults**

### **Infant and Toddler Programs**

- Each nursery session shall be staffed by at least two workers.
- One adult (employee or volunteer) should be present for every four infants.
- One worker should be present for every 4 toddlers.
- For the purpose of this policy, two adults from the same household count as one adult while serving in the same room. Therefore, a third, unrelated volunteer or helper should be present when a family serves in one room.
- Volunteers or helpers may not spend time in the room(s) when they are not scheduled to serve.
- An employee or volunteer may take children out of the nursery for a compelling reason only, such as to take a child to the bathroom, or in case of illness.
- When toddlers require bathroom assistance in a location outside the nursery, a worker may assist the child and should leave the bathroom door ajar. Staff members or volunteers should diaper infants and toddlers in the nursery room(s).
- For a child who needs extra assistance, a parent or guardian should develop an assistance plan with a volunteer or employee in charge of the class or activity.

### **Preschool Programs**

- At least two workers shall be present in the room(s). The recommended ratio of adults to children is two to ten.
- For the purpose of this policy, two adults from the same household count as one adult while serving in the same room. Therefore, a third, unrelated volunteer or helper should be present when a family serves in one room.
- If a child needs bathroom assistance during the program session, a volunteer or helper may assist the child with the bathroom door ajar.
- Volunteers or helpers may take children from the classroom only for a compelling reason, such as to use the bathroom or in case of illness.
- When children's programs are in session, the meeting room doors and windows should allow for unobstructed views of the room.
- For a child who needs extra assistance, a parent should develop an assistance plan with a volunteer or employee in charge of the class or activity.
- The discipline section of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy applies to programs for preschool children.

### **Kindergarten-5th Grade Programs**

- At least two workers shall be present in the room(s). The recommended ratio is one to ten; some activities may require additional volunteers or helpers.
- Volunteers and employees should not have frequent or lengthy private meetings with children. When a private meeting on the premises is necessary, it should be with the knowledge and consent of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) and with the knowledge of the employee's or volunteer's supervisor in a space visible to the others or in a room with the door ajar and windows unblocked.
- Volunteers and employees should identify, and address bullying behavior observed in their programs immediately.

- Displays of affection toward children should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a high-five, or a light touch to the forearm. Volunteers, helpers, employees, and children should respect the other person's right to refuse a display of affection.
- When children's programs are in session, meeting room doors should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
- Overnight events must always include two adult leaders. A minimum of one male and one female leader must be present if male and female children are present for the activity.
- When meeting off campus, a program must serve a minimum group of two children and must always have two adult leaders present.
- Programs held off-site should adhere to the same safety guidelines as those held in facilities operated by the church. Volunteers or employees should never meet alone off-site with a child.
- Children should not leave the program site unless they are accompanied by a parent, a volunteer, or an employee.
- A volunteer or staff person will notify the parent if a child's behavior warrants removal from an off-site program; an employee or volunteer must be present with the child until the parent arrives to pick up the child.
- Volunteers and employees who transport children to and from an off-site location must follow the transportation section guidelines of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
- Program directors must receive a written consent form from a child's parent(s) or guardian(s) before the child may participate in an off-site activity.
- For a child who needs extra assistance, a parent should develop an assistance plan with a volunteer or employee in charge of the class or activity.
- The discipline section of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy applies to programs for school-age children.

### **Younger Youth (Grades 6-8) Programs**

- At least two workers shall supervise activities for younger youth, unless noted below. The number of adult volunteers or employees should be greater for off-site activities.
- If necessary, a youth class or activity may have only one worker in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, the door(s) to the classroom will remain open at all times, and the Church School Supervisor should be informed of the situation.
- Volunteers and employees should never meet alone with a youth in a residence; however, volunteers or staff may meet alone with a youth in the organization's facility under the following circumstances:
  - with the permission of the youth's parent or guardian;
  - with the knowledge of the volunteer or employee's supervisor; and,
  - when other staff or volunteers are present in the facility at the same time.
  - in a space that allows for an unobstructed view of the parties involved.

- Regardless of the relative ages of the youth in the program, it is never appropriate for a volunteer or employee to date a youth participant in the program.
- Displays of affection on the part of a volunteer or employee toward a youth should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulders, an open-hand pat on the back, a handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. A volunteer or employee should not single out one youth for affection. Affection should not occur in private settings or isolated contexts. A volunteer, employee, or youth will respect the other person's right to refuse a display of affection. Volunteers and employees should not encourage displays of affection in a group context that may intimidate, manipulate, or frighten a youth.
- Volunteers and employees should not privately exchange gifts, phone calls, letters, emails, text messages or other communication that is perceived as intimate in nature with youth. Consider all communication with youth as subject to parental and organizational oversight.
- Volunteers or employees should identify and address bullying behavior when it happens.
- Employees or volunteers must inform parents or guardians if a child or youth expresses thoughts of harming self or others, including thoughts of abusive conduct toward others or if they suspect the youth of using drugs, alcohol, or pornography. See footnote 4 on page 4.
- Overnight events must always include a minimum of two adult leaders. A minimum of one male and one female leader must be present if male and female youth are present for the activity. Three adult leaders must be present if the event is held in the First Presbyterian Church building.
- If there is more than one gender identity represented at overnight events among the participants, there shall be more than one gender identity represented among the adult leaders.
- A volunteer or staff person will notify the parent or guardian if a youth's behavior warrants removal from a class or activity.
- Volunteers and employees who transport youth to and from an off-site location must follow the transportation section guidelines of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
- Program directors must receive a written consent form from a youth's parent(s) or guardian(s) before the child may participate in an off-site activity.
- Whenever programs are in session, there must be an unobstructed view of the room in which they are meeting.
- For a youth who needs extra assistance, a parent should develop an assistance plan with a volunteer or employee in charge of the class or activity.
- The discipline section of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy applies to programs with younger youth.

### **Older Youth (Grades 9-12) Programs**

- At least two volunteers or employees shall supervise older youth, unless noted below. Volunteers and staff should conduct program activities only with sufficient supervision.
- If necessary, a youth class or activity may have only one worker in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, the door(s) to the classroom will remain open at all times, and the Church School Supervisor should be informed of the situation.
- Volunteers and employees should be at least 4 years older than the oldest program participant, unless approved by the Youth Ministry Team. If approved, the individual cannot act as lead, but may serve in a secondary role.

- Volunteers and employees should identify and address bullying behavior among youth in the program and should provide training about the topic for the youth in the program.
- Volunteers and employees should point out and define abusive behavior for the youth in the program and should also sponsor training about the topic.
- Volunteers and staff should not meet alone with youth in a residence. Volunteers and staff may meet alone with a youth if all the under the following conditions are met:
  - with the permission of the youth's parent or guardian;
  - with the knowledge of the volunteer or employee's supervisor;
  - in a public facility in the presence of others;
  - no more than once per week; and
  - no longer than one hour per meeting.
- Regardless of the relative ages of the youth in the program, it is never appropriate for a volunteer or employee to date a youth participant in the program.
- Displays of affection on the part of a volunteer or employee toward a youth should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulders, an open-hand pat on the back, a handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. A volunteer or employee should not single out one youth for affection. Affection should not occur in private settings or isolated contexts. A volunteer, employee, or teen will respect the other person's right to refuse a display of affection. Volunteers and employees should not encourage displays of affection in a group context that may intimidate, manipulate, or frighten a youth.
- Volunteers and employees should not privately exchange gifts, phone calls, letters, emails, text messages or other communication that is perceived as intimate in nature with youth. Consider all communication with youth as subject to parental and organizational oversight.
- Volunteers or employees who consume alcohol or use tobacco or illegal drugs in the presence of youth or offer any of the same to youth during program activities or events shall be subject to discipline and may be reported to civil authorities.
- Youth who consume alcohol or use tobacco, or illegal drugs on the premises of the church during scheduled activities will be dismissed from the activity and may be reported to civil authorities.
- Employees or volunteers must inform parents or guardians if a child or youth expresses thoughts of harming self or others, including thoughts of abusive conduct toward others or if they suspect the youth of using drugs, alcohol, or pornography. See footnote 4 on page 4.
- Overnight events must always include a minimum of two adult leaders. A minimum of one male and one female leader must be present if male and female youth are present for the activity. Three adult leaders must be present if the event is held in the First Presbyterian Church building.
- If there is more than one gender identity represented at overnight events among the participants, there shall be more than one gender identity represented among the adult leaders.
- A volunteer or staff person will notify the parent or guardian if a youth's behavior warrants removal from a class or activity.

- Volunteers and employees who transport youth to and from an off-site location must follow the transportation section guidelines of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
- Whenever a youth program is in session, there must be an unobstructed view of the room in which the group is meeting.
- For a youth who needs extra assistance, a parent should develop an assistance plan with a volunteer or employee in charge of the class or activity.
- The discipline section of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy applies to programs with older youth.

### **Off-Site and Out of Town Programs**

- Activities held away from the church's campus should adhere to the same safety considerations as activities held on campus.
- Out of town and overnight activities should include a minimum of three adult leaders, unless there will be additional supervision at the destination, in which case two adults would be sufficient.
- Out of town and overnight activities must always include a minimum of one male and one female leader if male and female youth are present for the activity.
- If there is more than one gender identity represented at overnight events among the participants, there shall be more than one gender identity represented among the adult leaders.
- Volunteers and employees should not participate in any off-site activity with just one youth without having a supervision plan approved by the volunteer or staff member's supervisor and a parent's or guardian's prior permission.
- Volunteers and employees may not participate in any out-of-town activities with just one youth.
- Parents or guardians of youth participating in off campus events must be notified prior to each event.
- One volunteer or employee and one youth, child and / or vulnerable adult should not be alone together in a vehicle, on a worksite, in an enclosed room, in sleeping quarters, or in any other setting in which the activity is not observable.
- Sleeping quarters shall be segregated by gender; supervised by leaders of the same gender. Unrelated individuals shall not share a sleeping bag or cot. Where gender identity raises concerns, leadership shall arrange for accommodations in concert with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the individual concerned with safety and integration being the primary goal.
- When possible, children under thirteen should use the buddy system when using bathrooms and shower facilities that are located away from sleeping quarters.
- When off-site or out of town, two adult leaders should be involved in addressing any disciplinary matters with attendees. In addition, they should document the content of their interaction. They should return their logs to the church after the event and review them with their supervisor.

### **Discipline**

- No corporal punishment is permitted. This includes spanking, slapping, hitting, kicking, punching, and so on.

- No harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or other verbal humiliation of children, youth and or vulnerable adults is permitted.
- Employees or volunteers should inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) whenever a child or youth misbehaves, misbehavior beyond minor correction occurs or if a pattern of misbehavior becomes apparent.
- Employees and volunteers should report to their supervisor all concerns about unacceptable behavior as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior.
- An additional volunteer or parent should be involved with groups or present for activities in which misbehavior is an ongoing problem.
- Expectations for the behavior of children, youth and/or vulnerable adults should reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline measures should be appropriate to the age comprehension abilities of the one involved.
- Employees and volunteers should regularly remind participants of behavior that is acceptable for the setting. Some participants may benefit from having these expectations in written form.
- New volunteers and employees should be trained in the area of discipline and the use of appropriate discipline measures. Existing employees and volunteers should receive periodic reminders as well.
- Volunteers and employees should try to avoid physical contact or discipline. Some ways to do this include:
  - distracting with another activity;
  - shifting focus to a more acceptable behavior;
  - removing others if another volunteer or employee is available to assist.
- When using timeouts with younger children, the time period should not last longer (in minutes) than the age of the child. (For example, a three-year old should not have to sit for a timeout any longer than three minutes.)
- Employees or volunteers should immediately remove a participant who assaults, harasses, or bullies another person. The bullying participant may be reinstated in the group when the risk to others has been adequately reduced.
- Employees or volunteers may remove a participant from a program at any time for any reason; reinstatement is optional. A participant may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced.

### **Transporting Children**

All volunteers and staff persons who drive and/or chaperone off-site trips involving children & youth shall be in conformance with all aspects of the Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

- When transporting children off-site, there must be at least two adult workers. This may include one per vehicle if there are at least two vehicles with reasonable visibility between one another.
- Preparations should be made so that no one person will drive more than eight hours per day.

- Persons under the age of 21 may not drive the church van.
- Minors should be transported in groups. An unaccompanied adult should not drive a single child, youth, or vulnerable adult (other than his or her own) for a church-sponsored activity without expressed permission, preferably in writing, from the child's parent or guardian.
- Youth shall not drive other youth without the express consent of both the driver's and rider(s)' parents.
- Volunteers and employees must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance before transporting children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- The driving records of volunteers and employees who routinely transport children, youth and vulnerable adults will be reviewed annually.
- Volunteers and employees must abide by state requirements for car seat use, seatbelt use, and airbag safety.
  - Children, youth, and vulnerable adults must wear seatbelts when being transported.
  - Volunteers and employees will not transport in one vehicle more participants than there are available seat belts.
  - When required by law, car seats must be used for younger children.
  - Children under the age of ten may not sit in the front seat if there is a passenger side airbag installed in the vehicle.