

**Memorial Presbyterian Church
Child Abuse Prevention Policy**

Objective: As stewards over God's children, we must take all steps available to provide a safe and loving environment, free of abuse, for those children entrusted to our care.

Strategy:

- 1. Screening** - All Children/Youth Sunday School teachers and aides, special event volunteers (VBS, Kids' Quest, Children's Church), long term special event nursery workers, nursery supervisors, youth ministry volunteers and other personnel who have regular contact with children or youth will be screened for previous abusive behavior. This screening will consist of:
 - a) completing a Children/Youth Ministry Volunteer Application,
 - b) being "known" in the church by regular attendance of at least six (6) months prior to working with children or youth,
 - c) an interview with the Family Pastor or the appropriate ministry coordinator, and
 - d) a background check through the appropriate governmental agencies.

- 2. Supervisor Policy** - It will be the responsibility of the Nursery Coordinator to ensure that at least one trusted church member is in the nursery at all times or nursery workers are supervised by a trusted church member. The Nursery Coordinator will be trained in the prevention, identification, and reporting procedures relative to child abuse.

- 3. Two Person Rule** - Whenever possible, two workers/teachers/leaders will be with any gathering of children and youth *at all times*, including transportation. It is permissible for these two workers/teachers/leaders to be a married couple, as long as both have been fully screened in accordance with this policy. The Pastor of Family Ministry will make routine unannounced visits to any or all Children's Ministry events and classes to verify the Two Person Rule is being enforced. This rule does not prohibit one-on-one mentoring activities between an adult and a youth of the same gender.

- 4. Outside/Off-Site Activities** - Classes that meet outside for games, activities and special events must be in plain view of other groups and follow the Two Person Rule whenever possible. Any off-site activities must be approved by the specific Program Director and have parental permission slips signed.

- 5. Mandatory Reporting** - All workers/teachers/leaders are under "mandatory reporting" of suspected abuse to the appropriate ministry director or elder, who will then report to the proper governmental agency.

- 6. Communication** - Communication of our policies and education in the prevention of, identification of, and procedures for reporting child abuse will become a yearly component of training for all children and youth ministry workers. This will be the responsibility of the Children's Ministry Team and chair.

- 7. Pick Up** - Children in the nursery or any Sunday School class will be released only to their parents or someone pre-designated by the parents.

- 8. Overnight Rule** - In any overnight activities involving children or youth, only adults approved by the appropriate ministry coordinator or leader will be allowed to serve as chaperones. The Two Person Rule applies whenever possible. If the overnight activity involves both boys and girls, both male and female chaperones shall be present. Chaperones should stay in the same room with children or youth or monitor them frequently.

- 9. Discipline** - Workers/teachers/leaders shall not use or threaten any form of physical punishment, including spanking, slapping hands, grabbing, or restraining.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by all of the above-listed policies.

Date

Signature

Printed Name