



First Presbyterian Church of Naples Children and Youth Ministry Policies

Dear Children and Youth Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church of Naples (FPCN) Children and Youth Ministry!

At FPCN, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These policies and procedures are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children and youth can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide an overview of procedures and policies for volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children and youth, protecting children, youth, staff, volunteers, and the mission of FPCN.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

FPCN Leadership

First Presbyterian Church of Naples (FPCN) Policies & Procedures for Children Ministry and Youth Ministry

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Overview of FPCN Safety System

Because we desire to protect children and youth involved in our ministry, FPCN requires all staff members and volunteers working with children and youth to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual & Other Abuse Awareness Training

FPCN policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid engaging in abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the FPCN Safety Committee. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child or youth for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child or youth, win the child's or youth's trust (and the trust of the child or youth's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child or youth into sexual activity and keep the child or youth from disclosing the abuse.

To equip staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, FPCN requires all staff members and volunteers to complete Ministry Safe sexual abuse awareness training. This training may be required to renew every year.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children or youth are required to complete FPCN'S Screening Process, which includes:

- a Safety Application (employees and volunteers);
- a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers); and
- references to be checked (employees and volunteers).

*A volunteer must attend FPCN for six months (or be recommended by the Director of Children and Youth) before being eligible to serve in positions providing ministry services to children or youth.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

FPCN requires that all volunteers working or volunteering in children or youth activities undergo a criminal background check, annually.

Questions? If you have any questions regarding the Safety Steps, please feel free to discuss further with Human Resources.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

FPCN has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at FPCN to act in the best interest of all children and youth in every program.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

The Florida Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements are: All child care personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse and neglect. "Child Abuse or Neglect" is defined in s. 39.201, F.S., as "harm or threatened harm" to a child's health (mental or physical) or welfare by the acts or omissions by a parent, adult household member, or other person responsible for the child's welfare.

Categories include:

- Physical Abuse or Neglect (i.e. unexplained bruises, hunger, lack of supervision...)*
- Emotional Abuse or Neglect (i.e. impairment in the ability to function, depression...)*
- Sexual Abuse (i.e. withdrawal, excessive crying, physical symptoms...)*

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

FPCN is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and youth and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Florida Department of Children and Families Abuse Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE 1-800-962-2873).

Because sexual abusers 'groom' children and/or youth for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child and/or youth for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any suspected 'grooming' behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

FPCN staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from the Children and Youth Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and/or the Board of Elders.

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor, or the Senior Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child or youth will be immediately suspended from participation in Children and Youth Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by FPCN, law enforcement, or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or youth at FPCN. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from FPCN.

Failure to report a policy violation may be grounds for termination of an employee and volunteer. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving children or youth at FPCN.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at FPCN are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

The Florida regulations regarding reporting of abuse of children and vulnerable adults can be found at www.dcf.state.fl.us.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Children and Youth Ministry, the Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, or the Associate Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Senior Pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

The Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE:

FPCN Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

FPCN Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children and youth, FPCN will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee which will meet once each quarter.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable FPCN Children and Youth Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee will consist of the following members:

Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Director of Children and Youth
Preschool Director
Executive Office Manager
Chair of the Christian Education Committee

MEETINGS

The Senior Pastor will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing FPCN policies and procedures related to children and youth safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children and Youth Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the FPCN Board of Elders regarding safety issues.

Children and Youth Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interaction with children and youth.

1. The Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor and the Chair of the Christian Education committee meet with the Senior Pastor quarterly to discuss safety.
2. **The Associate Pastor** meets with the Director of Children and Youth at least once monthly to discuss Children and Youth Ministry, including safety training and procedures.
3. **Board of Elders** meet with the Director of Children and Youth and the Preschool Director once each year to discuss Children and Youth Ministry, including safety training and procedures.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Director of Children and Youth will be responsible for ensuring that the Education Building is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This may include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers, and children and/or youth.

No child or youth will ever be left unattended in the Education Building or on the children's playground during Children and Youth ministry programming or classes. Children and Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child or youth in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child or youth, that staff member or volunteer will take the child or youth to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child or youth is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children and Youth Ministry staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving to ensure no child or youth has been left behind.

On the children's playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children and youth during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children or youth together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

WORKER TO CHILD/YOUTH RATIOS

FPCN is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all Children and Youth Ministry programs. Every effort will be made to meet the ratios as follows:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

**The above ratios are MinistrySafe minimum recommendations. Where supervision is concerned, more is generally better.*

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Director of Children and Youth. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

DISCIPLINE

It is our policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children or youth. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable** even if expressly authorized by the parent(s) of the child.

This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children or youth. Should there be a behavior problem with an individual child or youth, it is recommended that the volunteer or staff person verbally redirect the child or youth before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another). Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Director of Children and Youth.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery/Preschool children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will attempt to observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 2) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 3) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards.
- 4) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 5) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 3) Children through preschool age will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 4) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card (ex. "Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 5) Children should be verbally assisted where possible. If physical assistance is necessary, another staff member or volunteer should be present, when possible.
- 6) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School age children

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. For the protection of all, staff members and volunteers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Should a school age child need supervision or assistance, at least one adult male should supervise or assist boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should supervise or assist girls to the restroom. If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to

check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her.

Special needs

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians or staff or volunteers trained by the child's parent will change all special needs individuals.

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO CHILDREN/YOUTH

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, staff members and volunteers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's/youth parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by the circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child/youth has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence, or impaired by the use, of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with children and/or youth, or while working with or supervising children and/or youth during any FPCN program or activity.

MEDICATION

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication to any child or youth while serving in Children and Youth Ministry. In the case of the need for an EpiPen, parents will be required to provide medical documentation and instruction.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers serving in Children and Youth Ministry should never be nude in the presence of children and/or youth in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Director of Children and Youth concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children or youth while participating in Children and Youth Ministry activities or programs. Another trained, screened adult should always be present or within hearing/sight distance.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children and/or youth. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children and youth:

1. Children or Youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child or youth in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children or youth while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones or other portable electronic devices may be utilized by the driver while driving Church vans, or vehicles owned or rented by FPCN, unless in an emergency. This prohibition includes the use of devices in hands free mode.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive Church-owned or rented vehicles.
5. Drivers must comply with all applicable laws while transporting children and youth.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child or youth in the care of FPCN staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if a child or youth becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children or Youth Ministry programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child or youth is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child or youth's program will have been invited to participate by the Director of Children and Youth and be required to complete the Church's volunteer application and screening process.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

FPCN is committed to protecting children and youth in its care. To this end, FPCN has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children and youth. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Children and Youth Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children and youth are important for their development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child or youth, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children, youth or Children and Youth Ministry staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children

and Youth Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.

6. Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child or youth. A child or youth's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children and youth under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touching by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Director of Children and Youth, the Preschool Director, the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children or youth, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child or youth in the program. An exception to this is when there is formal sex education planned. This will only be done after informing parents and obtaining parental consent.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child or youth) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) to children or youth in their care.

TOBACCO USE/VAPING

FPCN requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco or vaping products while in the presence of children, youth or their parents, or during FPCN activities or programs. FPCN is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children and youth should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children and youth.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children and youth in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children and youth.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Children and Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers, the Church is responsible for the safety and welfare of the children and youth. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children and youth in their charge.

Children and Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children and youth in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or youth has authority to pick up that child or youth.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child or youth, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Director of Children and Youth before releasing the child or youth.

SUPERVISION

Staff members and volunteers in Children and Youth Ministry are expected to provide adequate supervision for children and youth in their care while working in church programs.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of First Presbyterian Church of Naples (FPCN) Children and Youth Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I understand and agree to follow and abide by these policies and procedures during my service at FPCN.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any policies and procedures may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by FPCN.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to the Director of Children and Youth.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between FPCN and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new policies and procedures that are created and distributed, as well as manual policies and procedures that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of First Presbyterian Church of Naples (FPCN) policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page is to remain attached to FPCN Children and Youth Ministry Policies.]

Policies and Procedures

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