

Statement of Child Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse

New Creation Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville Tennessee (the "Church") remains committed to providing and maintaining a safe, nurturing environment for all children and youth under the age of eighteen (18) while in its care during events which are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Church. Implicit in the involvement of persons in ministries to children and youth are biblically based terms COVENANT and SHEPHERD. There is an implied covenant between the leader and the child and the child's parents to be a good shepherd of that child, leading him or her towards an understanding of the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

A commitment to this call includes the adoption and enforcement of this policy on child protection and prevention of child abuse. This policy applies to all clergy, leaders, volunteers, and other persons who work with children in any paid or voluntary capacity. All children's leaders and childcare providers who regularly interact with children or youth must read, agree with, and sign this policy, and affirm that they have not resigned or been terminated from a position or leadership role for reasons related to misconduct.

The Church believes that appropriate personal relationships between adult leaders and children and youth of the Church foster the community of Christ. Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayer), or physical care taking (changing diapers, etc....) are appropriate in our community of caring Christians. Care will be taken, however, the adults do not behave in a sexually inappropriate way during Church sponsored activities, such as demonstrating excessive physical expressions of affection or imposing such expressions upon another individual.

It is the goal of the Church that two adults be present with Children at all Church-sponsored activities. The Church recognizes that there will be times (such as Sunday School, bible study, etc....) when an unaccompanied adult may be present with a group of children or youth or with a single child or youth. If children and youth need to be transported, it should be in groups. An unaccompanied adult will not transport an individual child as part of a church-sponsored activity without specific permission of the child's parent or guardian.

Prohibited conduct includes any form of physical, emotional, or mental abuse of a child, including but not limited to, the exploitation of a child which breached Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship. Sexual exploitation of a child includes, but is not limited to, any interaction between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of an adult. This may or may not include touching.

Prohibited conduct may include, but not limited to:

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of sexual conduct towards a protected minor;
- Sexual Advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a protected minor;
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between an older child and a younger child
- Infliction of physical abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a minor
- Possessing obscene or pornographic (sexually explicit) materials at any function of the Church;

- Possessing or being under the influence of any illegal substances;
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a minor's function of the church;
- Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a minor;
- Carrying any type of weapon while working with children

Tennessee state law provides that any individual who suspects an incident of child abuse or neglect shall report it by calling the Department of Children's Services (DCS) at 877-237-0004. This report is MANDATORY and is not discretionary.

DCS recommends the following when reporting:

- Be specific with your reasons suspicions of abuse or neglect. Include dates of incidents, details of any physical marks and/or behaviors and specific quotes of any indicators the child makes about abuse or neglect.
- If the child reports incidents of abuse or neglect to you, be sure to listen to the child and be compassionate. However, do not ask the child too many questions as they need to discuss the details of the abuse with trained professionals.

New Creation Presbyterian Church additionally requires that:

- You first report suspicions of abuse or neglect to the Program Director or Pastor.
- Immediately thereafter, you shall report the incident to DCS at 877-237-0004
- A report to the Program Director or Senior Pastor does not relieve you of your responsibility to report to DCS and does not justify a postponement of your report to DCS.
- The report to DCS must be made before an investigations is conducted into the validity of alleged misconduct.

All persons involved with the report or investigation shall keep the information in strictest confidence. The Pastor and Vision Team of the Church shall be informed of any complaints.

Upon accusation, the accused is entitled to prompt and fair disposition of such serious charges. It is acknowledged that Church members and pastors are subject to inquiry and discipline under the Book of Order. Physical, mental, or emotional misconduct shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of any Church employee, leader or childcare provider.

- New Creation Presbyterian church is fortunate to have numerous volunteers who work tirelessly with children, youth and some members with disabilities. It is incumbent on our church to be vigilant and safe to all means available in the approval of volunteers who work one-on-one with those dependent members. **THEREFORE adults working in any capacity that involves one-on-one contact or functions that require overnight stays with children who are under the age of 18 or with individuals who have developmental or cognitive disabilities, receive a background check that included the National Sex Offender (50 State) Registry and checks each state of residence for a minimum of the past ten years for felony and misdemeanor convictions.**

Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand New Creation Presbyterian Church's Statement of Child Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse. I understand that it is my responsibility to uphold all policies as indicated in the document.

Signature

Date

Printed Name