

Child and Youth Safety Policy (2018—2019)
“Whoever welcomes a child, welcomes me.” Matthew 18:5

Introduction

We have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and teens to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, First Presbyterian Church of Franklin TN has developed policies and procedures designed to ensure the safety of children and youth connected and participating in our ministries.

Scope of Procedures

These procedures will apply to all activities that are part of FPC Franklin ministries. These policies apply to any person under the age of 18.

Screening for Volunteers

All volunteers, who wish to work with children and/or youth, must complete an application with references. Volunteers will be asked to sign a covenant and consent to a background check.

Policy

We will work to ensure that no harm comes to children and youth by:

1. having at least two unrelated adults present in the room where children and/or youth events, classes, etc., are occurring. When this is not possible, a “roamer” will visit the room periodically.
2. assuring that volunteers are at least five years older than the children or youth in their care.
3. assuring no worker under the age of 18 will have sole responsibility, nor be alone with, any child or youth without oversight.
4. having eye-level windows in classrooms, or door will be kept open.
5. maintaining class rolls for signing children in and out of classes.
6. assuring that only ministry directors, teachers, and/or parents, grandparents, or guardians of children attending the event or class will be present in the classroom.
7. holding training/orientation sessions that includes: (maintaining a record of who has received)
 - ◆ basic First Aid and CPR (provided annually)
 - ◆ church policies for prevention of injury or inappropriate conduct
 - ◆ procedures to be used in ministry with children and youth
 - ◆ appropriate steps to report an incident of abuse
 - ◆ details of state laws regarding child abuse
 - ◆ the seriousness of reported/suspected child abuse and life-changing results that will take place for all parties involved
8. holding counseling sessions with doors open, and others nearby when possible.
9. allowing children to initiate physical contact, not adults; such as hugging and play.
10. providing advance notice and full information about activities involving children and youth.
11. providing appropriate equipment and supervision for activities.
12. maintaining a list of approved drivers (who drive their personal vehicles), for whom we have a photocopy of a valid driver’s license and photocopy of current liability insurance of \$100,000 or more

Responding to Alleged/Suspected Injuries or Inappropriate Conduct

The following are steps to be implemented upon notification of an injury or inappropriate conduct of a child, youth or adult.

1. The Director(s) of Christian Education and/or Youth Ministries are the “designated individuals” who will receive all reports of incidents in their respective program areas. In the case of serious injuries, parents/guardians will be notified immediately. Minor injuries will be communicated to the parents/guardians.
2. All reports are confidential and the Church Administrator shall maintain a record of such reports, and the corresponding committees shall be kept informed.
3. The designated individual, or responsible volunteer as designated by the designated individual, will take appropriate action at the time of the incident.
4. The designated individual will immediately notify the Senior Pastor and Clerk of Session.
5. The designated individual and the volunteers are obligated to report injuries/incidents to the appropriate state or local authority as required by law.
6. The designated individual will then document all steps taken in investigation of incident.
7. The Senior Pastor, or Clerk of Session, will notify an attorney, the insurance agent, and the Presbytery, as appropriate.
8. The designated individual and all other persons involved in the incident will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the person(s) involved.
9. FPC Franklin will cooperate with any official investigation conducted by a governmental agency.
10. The Senior Pastor, an attorney, or someone designated by the session are the only persons authorized to speak to the media.
11. The person(s) under investigation will be suspended from all responsibilities with children and/or youth until investigation is completed.

Consideration of Children and Youth Not Affiliated With FPC Franklin

FPC Franklin is committed to the safety of all children and youth participating in programs and events at FPC Franklin, including those affiliated with outside groups. Therefore, outside groups using FPC Franklin facilities must be aware of this policy and agree to report all alleged or suspected abuse of a child or youth to Tennessee’s Department of Children’s Services.

Oversight

The Directors of Christian Education and Youth Ministries will oversee the implementation of this policy and provide for the safe-keeping of the consent forms at the church. The policy will be reviewed at least annually by volunteers, workers, and church administration, so that all will be reminded of the rules, needed modifications may be made and we keep to the policy. Administration committee shall receive and review a report from the Director of Christian Education and the Director of Youth Ministries on the maintenance of this child and youth safety policy (every 6 months in September and February).

This congregation is committed to showing and sharing the love of God through Jesus to all who come to the church, including children and youth.