

North Alabama Presbytery, Inc.
Child Protection Policy
Approved February 18, 2017

North Alabama Presbytery is committed to the safety, welfare and protection of all children and youth participating in the activities and programs of the Presbytery. Therefore, the Presbytery hereby adopts reasonable policies and procedures in order to minimize the possibility that any child or youth (17 years of age and younger) will be subjected to any form of abuse or neglect by Presbytery staff, paid childcare workers, teachers, camp counselors, or volunteers while engaged in Presbytery programs or activities.

Standards of Conduct

No harmful or diminishing behavior towards children (including physical, verbal, emotional, sexual harm or abuse) is tolerated at North Alabama Presbytery meetings and/or events. Paid or volunteer leaders shall not touch or interact with children or youth in any way that is sexual, emotionally or verbally demeaning, or exploitative. Common expressions of affection and affirmation (side hugs, high-fives, fist-bumps) or physical care (diaper changes or first aid) are appropriate in this or any community of caring Christians. Staff and volunteers must be careful that physical expressions of affection are not excessive or imposed upon another individual.

Paid and volunteer leaders working with children and youth are tasked with guarding the physical and emotional safety of those in their care and to be aware of signs indicating neglect of the child's well-being. At least two adult leaders/chaperones will be present for any activity and additional adult volunteers are required to provide adequate supervision and care appropriate to the number of children participating. Staff and volunteers shall transport children and youth in groups rather than alone.

Implementation

An Event Form (APPENDIX A) must be completed and approved by the responsible committee and submitted to the Coordinating Team prior to advertisement of the event and/or the recruitment of volunteers and leaders. A Child Protection Policy statement must be provided to and signed by all employees and volunteers participating in any Presbytery program or activity involving children and/or youth.

All persons working with children and/or youth in North Alabama Presbytery shall complete Child Protection Training and shall have an annual background check.

In general, volunteer applications will be accepted only after six months of active involvement in a church within the Presbytery as certified by the Session of that church. Applications will be submitted through the committee chair responsible for the particular program in which the volunteer wishes to participate. The completed application will be forwarded to the Executive Presbyter Stated Clerk, who will ensure a criminal background check is completed. (APPENDIX B)

Procedures for Handling Misconduct Allegations

G-4.0302 of the Book of Order includes the following statement on mandatory reporting which applies to all presbytery activities as well as to particular congregations:

Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

The State of Alabama Mandatory Reporting Requirements apply to all persons in North Alabama Presbytery, whether paid or volunteer, who work with children and/or youth. Issues of abuse or neglect involving a minor, whether witnessed or suspected, shall be dealt with immediately, effectively, and with great discretion. Alabama law requires that any suspected abuse or neglect of children and/or youth be reported immediately to proper civil authorities. Please note that Madison County, Alabama has additional reporting requirements (Appendix C). In addition, within North Alabama Presbytery, reports of abuse or neglect of children or concerns regarding possible abuse shall be reported to the Executive Presbyter Stated Clerk.

A list of resources for Child Protection Training and Mandatory Reporting Requirements are attached to this policy Appendix D).

Appendix A
North Alabama Presbytery
Event Form

Event name and description:

Sponsoring committee, ministry or task force:

Date(s) and time:

Transportation arrangements plan:

Facility and arrangements (describe for all activities, including sleeping accommodations and restrooms):

Overview of program activities:

Leadership plan, including responsibilities of all adult leaders and chaperones:

Contact Person for this Event

Name:

Phone:

E-Mail:

****Please submit the completed event form to the responsible committee for approval prior to advertising the event and/or recruiting volunteers and participants.**

**Appendix B
Children and Youth Worker Application
Volunteers and Employees**

Form date: _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

In which Children/Youth Program (s) are you seeking to become involved?

What skills or interests would you bring to the Children/Youth program?

What experience with children/youth have you had the in last 5 years? (list organizations, programs, dates, and contact information)

What church/churches have you attended in the last five years? (Church name, Pastors, Phone Numbers)

Have you at any time:

Been arrested for any reason?	Yes	No
Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, any crime involving children?	Yes	No
Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, a moving violation in the last 3 years?	Yes	No
Engaged in, or been accused of, any act of child molestation and/or exploitation, abuse or neglect?	Yes	No
Are you aware of:		
Having any traits or tendencies that could pose a threat to children, youth or others?	Yes	No
Any reason why you should not work with children, youth or others?	Yes	No

References:

Please list two references other than family members:

Name	Relationship	E-Mail Address	Phone
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1 _____

2 _____

Verification of Active Involvement in a North Alabama Presbytery member congregation:

I certify that the applicant has been an active participant and/or member of _____ (name of Church) in _____ (city) for a period of at least six months.

Clerk of Session signature: _____ Date: _____

Applicant Verification, Background Check and Release:

I recognize that North Alabama Presbytery is relying upon the accuracy of the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all the information that I have provided is completely true and correct.

I authorize North Alabama Presbytery to contact any person or entity listed in this application and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide NAP with information, opinions, and impression relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize NAP to conduct a criminal background check through state law enforcement agencies and Protect My Ministry, Inc. By signing below, I voluntarily and knowingly authorize North Alabama Presbytery or its authorized agents to obtain or prepare a background check. I release North Alabama Presbytery and any such organization or entity listed herein by me from liability involving the communication of information related to my background or qualifications.

Signature _____ Date _____

I wish to receive a copy of any report on me that is requested. Yes No

Name:

Last: _____ First: _____ Middle: _____

Other names used including maiden name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Gender: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State Issued: _____

APPENDIX C

**MANDATORY REPORTING
AND HOW TO REPORT**

State of Alabama Mandatory Reporting Requirement § 26-14-3

All hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, nurses, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, members of the clergy as defined in Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report, or cause a report to be made of the same, orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority.

To Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect:

National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-4ACHILD (1-800-422-4453)

DHR: (256) 535-4500

Rape or Domestic Abuse: 911

Madison County Reporting

Reports in Madison County, Alabama must be made by contacting DHR (256) 427-6200

APPENDIX D

Training Programs and Resources

Protect My Ministry - www.protectmyministry.com

Screening and Background checks for volunteers
Offers online child protection/prevention training

Not with My Child - www.notwithmychild.org

Offers education, advocacy, and training for child abuse prevention

National Child Advocacy Center - www.nationalcac.org

The NCAC Virtual Training Center offers FREE online training programs including live and archived Webinars and recorded trainings

Darkness to Light - www.D2L.org

Darkness to Light offers online training and facilitator led training
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training – Stewards of Children

Guide One Insurance - www.guideone.com

Offers background checks through Check & Protect
Child Abuse/Sexual Misconduct: policies, prevention, protection
How to deal with Sex Offenders

Church Mutual - www.churchmutual.com

Offers abuse prevention programs and numerous templates in English and in Spanish for creating prevention policies and programs.

Insurance Board - www.insuranceboard.org

Insurance Board (UCC + Disciples + Presbyterian) offers the Safe Conduct Workbench. Here you will find templates, self-assessment tools, background check tools, and online training

Additional Resources:

- 1- Know the laws of your local, county, and state government (they may differ from one another particularly in reference to mandatory reporting)
- 2- Denominational Resources: www.pcusa.org