

Accountability

Program Leaders, paid or volunteer, are responsible for applying the Child and Youth Protection Policy as it pertains to his or her program. The Commission on Ministry (COM) of Salem Presbytery is responsible for keeping confidential the criminal background checks on those working with children and youth.

Individuals are responsible for completing and submitting the Application to Work with Children and Youth. Individuals are responsible for submitting proof of an up-to-date completed satisfactory criminal background check. (See attached letter for details.)

Application Procedures for

Working with Children

All employees and volunteers who will work with children and youth will be required to complete and sign the volunteer application, acknowledging that they have read this policy and agree to abide by it.

Reporting Procedures

Allegations of Misconduct

Violations of this policy that are not "abuse or neglect" shall be reported to the appropriate ministry leadership. A person who has reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected shall immediately report such information to the Department of Social Services in the county in which the child lives or is found, to the ministry leadership, to the Commission on Ministry (COM), and the General Presbyter. It is Salem Presbytery's policy to report allegations of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect of children and youth to the appropriate government authority, as required by law. By law, reports of abuse are strictly confidential. Salem Presbytery will cooperate fully with government authorities in the investigation of allegations of child sexual and/or physical abuse. Response teams established by the COM seek to aid and counsel both the victim and suspected perpetrator.

Explanation of Terms

For the purposes of the Child and Youth Protection Policy:

Sexual abuse or sexual misconduct includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented by the child.

Sexual harassment includes: sexually oriented jokes or humor, sexually demeaning comments, verbal suggestions of sexual involvement or sexual activity, questions or comments about sexual behavior, graphic or degrading comments about an individual's physical appearance, display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, or repeated requests for unwanted social engagements

Resources

www.brotherhoodmutual.com

www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/

www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/safe-sanctuaries

www.preventchildabusenc.org

www.nsopw.gov

www.protectmyministry.com

www.intellicorp.net

www.fadv.com



Child and Youth Protection Policy

Salem Presbytery
North Carolina

3950 Clemmons Rd.
Clemmons, NC 27012

Policy Statement and Purpose

To further its goal of providing a safe, nurturing, Christian environment for children and youth, Salem Presbytery has established a policy to protect children and youth participating in program activities and retreats from sexual abuse or sexual misconduct. Salem Presbytery cannot, nor can any institution or organization, absolutely guarantee that no harm will befall a child entrusted to its care. However, Salem Presbytery can and, through adherence to this policy, does make efforts to assure that the persons placed in positions of trust and responsibility with respect to the children and youth are persons deserving of that trust and responsibility. The policy also directs that activities involving children, youth and adults are conducted in a manner to minimize the risk of abuse, as well as false allegations of abuse.

For the purpose of this Policy Statement, an “adult” is someone 18 years of age or older and a “child” is a person considered a minor under the laws of the State of North Carolina. A person who is legally incompetent is considered a “child” under this policy.

This policy shall be distributed to all churches in Salem Presbytery and will be provided to new committee leaders.

Training in child and youth safety, and reducing risk is required for all who work with children and youth. Training will be provided yearly by the Presbytery.

Standards of Conduct

- Employees and volunteers who undertake the special responsibility of working with the children of Salem Presbytery shall not engage in acts of sexual misconduct.
- All volunteers who work with children or youth must be regular participants in the life of the church.
- Those who feel called to work with children and youth must be active in their faith community for at least six months before applying to work with children and youth of Salem Presbytery.
- Those who lead children and youth will work in pairs when possible. A teacher or advisor may work alone when there is a visual access; e.g. there is a door with a window, or an open door.
- All childcare providers will work in pairs when possible.
- All chaperones for Youth Council events are required to be 21 years old or older. The Youth Council is responsible for conducting and accepting appropriate volunteer applications.
- When children and/or youth are transported by an employee or volunteer for Presbytery activities, the children and youth should, whenever possible, travel with at least two unrelated adults in each vehicle, or have the express permission of the child’s parent or guardian to travel with only one adult. Parental permission to travel with any employee or volunteer will be obtained in writing annually.
- Permission slips for all activities will incorporate the requirements of this policy.

- Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayer), or physical care-taking (changing diapers, etc.) are appropriate in this community of caring Christians. Care must be taken, however, that physical expressions of affection are not excessive, forced or imposed.
- Those who lead children and youth should be alert to the physical and emotional state of those in their care. Any sign or suspected sign of abuse or neglect must be reported. (See Reporting Procedures for more detail.)

Required Documents

Each individual is required to complete and submit the Application for Work with Children and Youth to the Committee on Ministry of Salem Presbytery. Applications will be kept confidential in a locked file in the Presbytery office.

A criminal background check is required of all who work or travel with children and youth before they begin serving in this leadership role.

Individuals will submit results of an up-to-date completed criminal background check with their application. A letter from the Session confirming up-to-date completed satisfactory criminal background check performed by their church is acceptable documentation.

Criminal background checks must be renewed every five years.

Teaching Elders currently serving congregations in Salem Presbytery have criminal background checks on file at the Salem Presbytery Office, therefore, no extra criminal background check is needed.

See the attached letter for suggestions of where to access criminal background check.