

## **SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES:**

### **RECOGNIZING ABUSE**

The following physical and behavioral indicators are listed signs of possible child abuse for you to consider (it is not all-inclusive, nor is it always a firm indicator of abuse). The indicators need to be evaluated in the context of the child's environment. The presence of one or more of these symptoms does not necessarily prove abuse.

#### **Physical Indicators**

- Unusual or unexplained burns, bruises or fractures
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Venereal disease
- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress
- Substance abuse
- Discomfort when sitting

#### **Behavioral Indicators**

- Extreme aggression
- Withdrawal
- Unusually seductive behavior
- Being uncomfortable with physical contact or closeness
- Knowledge of sexual matters beyond their normal developmental age
- Afraid to go home
- Fear of a person or an intense dislike of being left with someone
- Developmental or language delays
- Regressive behavior (a child acting much younger than they are)
- Recurrent nightmares
- Acting apathetic or depressed
- Compulsive overeating or extreme loss of appetite

### **Suggested Screening and Training for Volunteers**

The mission of [YOUR CHURCH] is first to prevent abuse of children and other vulnerable adults. We wish to identify and nurture SafeConduct™, to lead and to guide through adequate training. It is difficult to comprehend that those among us, our friends and family, would commit such acts willingly. Nevertheless, persons who have been presented no behavior standards and do not understand boundaries may unwittingly engaged in behaviors that may be perceived as predatory. Their personal reputations and that of [CHURCH NAME] are then at risk.

To fulfill our leadership obligation, each new employee and new volunteer shall complete a specific program of training annually. Fulfillment of training requirements shall be documented by the session/personnel committee/presbytery or whomever it is appropriate within the congregation's organization and respective program Director (Christian Education; Youth Choir; Day Care; Pre-School, etc.).

Training shall be repeated annually. Records shall be maintained by the session/elders and respective program Directors. Training records shall be audited annually by the session/personnel committees of a congregation/presbytery.

Abuse prevention curriculum shall include:

- Organization level
  - Review of expected conduct and boundaries defined in this policy.
  - Review of standards applicable to ministry.
  - Explanation of procedures for reporting violations of standards of conduct and suspected child abuse.
  - Explanation of individual statutory reporting obligations.
  - Identifying and managing high-risk situations such as bathroom use, transition times, and free times.
  - Physical security procedures.
- Abuse prevention education:
  - Effects of sexual abuse.
  - Types of child molesters.
  - Characteristics of abusers.
  - How child molesters operate-- access, privacy, and control.
  - Protecting oneself from false allegations.
  - Examples of child-on-child sexual abuse, even among young children.
  - Characteristics of children more likely to act out sexually.
  - Characteristics of children more likely to be abused.
  - High-risk activities and circumstances.
  - Specific monitoring and supervision activities to prevent child-on-child sexual activity.
  - How to respond to incidents of sexual activity between children.

(Your Program Directors) shall assure that each employee and volunteer has mastered requirements and provide additional supervision and guidance as required to assure required conduct.

***STAGE ONE SCREENING & TRAINING: ALL VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING “SUBSTITUTES.”***

- Sign off on the code of conduct.
- Read through this Safety Policy and the Presbytery’s Safe Church Policy and sign and agree to its contents within six months of beginning service, and annually thereafter
- All volunteers will have completed a background check to be coordinated by an individual designated by the (*CHURCH NAME*) Christian Education Committee

***Stage two screening & training: regularly scheduled volunteers (Sunday school, children’s church)***

- Complete all of stage one screening.

- Attend a training session within six months of beginning service and annually thereafter.

***Stage three screening & training: regularly scheduled volunteers working with youth group & nursery.***

- Complete all of stage one and stage two screening.
- Complete background check including criminal history check and references to be coordinated by Christian Education Committee
- **Youth volunteers (between the ages of 14-18):** In order to provide a safe environment for children and provide an enjoyable volunteer experience, volunteers must be at least 14 years old and at least 5 years older than the oldest child/youth they are serving.
- **Youth group volunteers:** Those who volunteer with youth must be at least 5 years older than those they are serving and adults
- **Levels of volunteering:** The stages depend on the amount of contact volunteers have with children and youth. Screening and training requirements differ for each sta.
- **Outside Organizations Volunteers:** The San Joaquin Presbytery (*CHURCH NAME*) will not be responsible for the volunteers of outside organizations- for example Boys Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc. It is the responsibility of those organizations to screen and monitor their volunteers. At any point in time if there is questionable behavior of volunteers that disrupt or distract from the work and mission of the Presbytery (*CHURCH NAME*) the organization may be asked to find an alternative place to meet.

**First Aid for Volunteers:**

- For persons who work with children on a regular basis, First Aid and CPR training can be quite important.
- (*CHURCH NAME*) Has a first aid kit readily available to the classrooms (especially those of younger children)
- First aid kits will be provided on trips away from the church.
- All volunteers working with children should know where the First aid kits is/are located.

**Restroom Procedures**

- Most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in the bathrooms. Therefore, the following supervision guidelines are recommended:

When supervising restroom use, adult staff members should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing youths to enter.

a. For “Group Bathroom Breaks”:

- Require staff to take groups of two or more youths to the bathroom – following the “rule of three” or more.
- If the bathroom only has one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff.
- If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many youths as there are stalls.
- Minimize youths of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.

- Require staff to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.
- b. For single use restrooms:
    - Require youths to ask permission to use the bathroom.
    - Require all staff to frequently check bathrooms.
  - c. Prohibit staff from using the bathroom at the same time as youths.
  - d. If assisting young youths in the stalls, the staff should keep the door to the stall open.

## **Teen Leaders (Training and Responsibilities)**

- a. Create a screening process for teen leaders which includes
  - A standard application
  - An interview with behaviorally based interview questions
  - References (from teachers, counselors, family friends, etc.)
- b. Train teen leaders in their role in programs and on program policies about appropriate and inappropriate interactions. This training should include the following information:
  - Appropriate and inappropriate physical and verbal interactions and the importance of maintaining behavioral boundaries between teen leaders and younger youths and between teen leaders and Clergy, employees, and volunteers.
  - Prohibiting teen leaders from being one-on-one with youths.
  - Prohibiting teen leaders from escorting youths to the bathrooms.
  - Prohibiting teen leaders from assisting youths with changing their clothes.
- c. Create a system to monitor the teen leaders.
  - Designate a specific employee or volunteer who is in charge of the teen leadership program and its participants.
  - Require teen leaders to wear clothing or lanyards that identify them as leaders-in-training and differentiate them from both Clergy, employees, and volunteers and from younger youths.
  - Require a supervisor to conduct daily check-ins with teen leaders and their program supervisors.
  - Consider requiring teen leaders to keep a log documenting their daily activities and any problems they encounter. The program supervisor should review these logs daily.

## **SAFE CHILD RESPONSE TEAM**

At every event or activity for minors planned by a [CHURCH'NAM] or of the presbytery, a Safe Child Response Team should be in place. This team should be comprised of at least three members, staff or appointed by the elders of the church. An attorney chosen and secured by the General Assembly entity shall be on-call if needed. The response team will familiarize itself with the terms of this policy as well as established procedures under the Rules of Discipline, *Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* for responding to complaint(s) of alleged child/youth abuse against any teaching elder, ruling elder, employee, or volunteer in a leadership position(s) with the sponsoring entity and any events they may sponsor.

The Safe Child Response Team shall have the following responsibilities in response to allegations of child/youth or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect incurred against any child/youth worker or event participant:

1. Immediately provide for the safety of the alleged victim(s) involved.
2. If the report alleges abuse or harassment of a minor, the response team will:
  - a. immediately ensure the allegation is reported to the civil authorities under state law;
  - b. immediately notify the parents or guardian of the minor;
  - c. notify the insurance company of the allegation and that no investigation has yet occurred.
3. Make immediate decisions concerning the temporary removal of the individual accused from any contact with children or youth pending an investigation and/or removal of the accused from the event until a resolution of the allegations has occurred.
4. Notify designated people at the General Assembly entity immediately of the report of alleged abuse/neglect including an attorney who is on-call throughout the duration of each event, who must be previously secured by the General Assembly entity in case of such allegations during each sponsored event. Any possible media requests will be handled by a designated person or office with advice from the on-call attorney, taking care to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
5. Consult the OGA and PMA about resources available for victims of the alleged abuse prior to each event and have those resources readily available at every event. This will provide victims and their families immediate resources that may aid in the particular spiritual, psychological, or emotional needs and trauma that arise from the devastation of abuse.
6. If the report is against a teaching elder, the response team shall send a written statement of allegation to the stated clerk of the presbytery that holds the teaching elder's membership. This written statement of allegation shall trigger the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II*.
7. If the report is against a ruling elder, the response team will notify the session of membership that an allegation of offense has been received against an elder that triggers the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II*.
8. If the report is against an employee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corp., the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee, Human Resources, and Legal Services. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.
9. If the report is against an employee of sponsoring council or entity other than Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corp., the response team will notify the person(s) or committee

responsible for supervision of the employee. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.

10. If the report is against a volunteer, or nonmember of the PC(USA), the response team will request that the General Assembly entity appoint an investigating committee of three persons to initiate an investigation of the allegations in order to:

a. gather any statements of abuse from those making the report, including any information from the

Safety Response Team, and any party to the abuse;

b. gather any information from the person who was accused of abuse;

c. make written determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter including, but not limited to, making recommendations for prevention as well as response.

11. Provide pastoral counseling for the principal parties involved (accuser(s), possible victim(s), accused, family members).

12. A written summary of any proceedings in such cases will be maintained by the General Assembly entities.

13. Any person bringing a report of abuse or assisting in investigating will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

### **Suggested Church Policy on Registered Sex Offenders and Worship**

We accept that there are risks to be born in our deliberate association with and ministry to sex offenders who are considered a pariah among the community-at-large as evidenced by the many constraints placed upon their interaction with the community. We agree to honor the needs of the congregation and our community to have reasonable assurance that a sex offender in our care will not have an opportunity to re-offend as a result of lapses in our management of the offender.

We shall consider limited participation or membership of a sex offender in our congregation with utmost care which shall include the following elements:

Document understanding of the statutory limitations applying in the State of (Your State) to the movement and activities of a sex offender, taking into account the programs of the church or the operations of tenants. (Examples: Sunday school, day care, pre-school, sports leagues, seasonal camps and associations which serve children and “vulnerable adults”.)

Consider and understand the character of the crimes which have resulted in requiring an individual to register as a sex offender, the passage of time without repeated conduct or behavior and the risk and opportunity of re-offending that is presented by the particular programs of our congregation.

Document understanding of limitations and prohibitions placed upon the offender by courts and probation authorities. The opinion of a mental health professional regarding the suitability of the person to participation in the life of the church shall be obtained. In all cases where probation is in force, we shall obtain the explicit approval of and conditions of participation specified by the probation officer. A recommendation by law enforcement or mental health professionals to deny participation to an offender shall be honored in all cases.

Understanding that, with respect to a person who is an employee, volunteer or in a position of church leadership, who has previously been conviction for acts of sexual misconduct as defined

by insurance contracts, knowledge by church leaders and managers of such prior conviction will have the effect of voiding coverage for the individual employee, volunteer or church leader and for the church for future acts of sexual misconduct by that person.

Given that criminal convictions are a matter of public record, there shall be no expectation of secrecy on the part of the offender. As a condition of participation in our faith community, the offender must agree that the leadership of the church shall make it known to the members, constituencies and customers of the church that we have accepted among us a registered sex offender. The conditions and limitations that apply to participation in the life of the church shall be known to all.

With the advice of legal counsel, and in all cases, the conditions of participation by a registered offender shall be defined by a “limited access agreement” executed by the offender and church. Such agreement shall be approved by probation authorities as may be necessary according to para. 3., above. The agreement shall be reviewed annually to validate on going eligibility. Violation of the agreement by the offender shall be considered as grounds for immediate cancellation of the agreement.

The following additional considerations shall apply:

**Victims in the congregation** – In such case as the victim of a RSO (registered sex offender) is a member of the congregation, employee or is a client of other services provided by the congregation, the RSO shall not be permitted to attend the church or church activities.

**Clergy-penitent privilege** – “Clergy-penitent privilege” is a “Rule of Evidence” defining or limiting information which clergy may reveal in a court of law only. “Clergy penitent privilege” does not prevent clergy from informing the congregation of matters which may be relevant to their safety; it does not require clergy to hold information in secrecy.

Ordained clergy shall assume responsibility and take extraordinary care to understand the scope and limitations of clergy-penitent privilege in the State of (Your State), and the parameters of confidence and privilege as defined by our denomination. Authorized clergy shall inform the leadership of the church of the general principles of confidence and privilege under which (s)he performs his/her clerical duties.

**Escorts** – Conditions of limited access for a RSO will commonly require that the offender have an escort while on the church premises or at church events elsewhere. A person serving as an escort shall not be a spouse, partner or relative of the offender.

#### **Approval & Supervision –**

With the advice and prior approval of the Church Board, a Limited Access Agreement with a Petitioner (known RSO) may be signed only by the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor, in association with other “authorized clergy” and parish associates (escorts), who shall be named in the Limited Access Agreement, shall be responsible for the general supervision of the Petitioner in all of the latter’s activity in relation to the church. Elements of supervision shall include the following:

Knowledge of the terms of the Limited Access Agreement, including activity limitations placed upon the Petitioner.

Knowledge of the Petitioners offense history sufficient to understand the risks of association with the church and its ministries.

Willingness to assert activity limitations and to report any violation of restrictions placed upon the Petitioner.

Willingness to intervene in any onset of a risky or problem behavior.

Willingness to report all cases of non-compliance to the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor shall assess, prior to selection, whether a proposed parish associate is willing to fulfill the above elements of supervision.

**Professional privacy** – Members who are employed in certain occupations may have a statutory obligation to maintain privacy around the criminal history of their clients who may also be parishioners. Such members shall decline to accept leadership roles which may put them in a position of decision-making regarding individuals who may be their professional clients.

**Juveniles** – While the criminal record of a juvenile is ordinarily concealed by the courts, the church may come to know the juvenile's history by other means. Honest disclosure by a juvenile and parents in the volunteer application and screening process may reveal that a record exists without knowing the specifics. While a limited access agreement will be required for the juvenile, as for others, every precaution will be taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality which the law affords a juvenile

**Signing an agreement of behavior** – if a congregation wants to minister to someone who has disclosed that they are a registered sex offender, the congregation should have a policy in place with a code of conduct/agreement on the expectations of the individual while on the church property. See the child/youth forms handout for a suggested agreement of behavior.

## **Suggested Emergency Procedures:**

### **Fire:**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings:**

In the event of a fire on Sunday mornings: all teachers are to take their students to a predetermined designated central location away from the fire and keep their students together until either the fire department has cleared the area, or a pastor/usher has okayed families to go and retrieve their children. Teachers must take count of their students prior to exiting the building and again once their class has gathered in the designated safe zone. Once all students are gathered in the enclosed area, one teacher is to call 911 and then inform the usher of the emergency.

The ushers will inform the pastors who will dismiss the parents to follow the ushers to pick up their students, all other members of the congregation will remain in the sanctuary until all parents have been excused then everyone else will be dismissed.



**Fire Extinguishers:** If the fire is no larger than a trash can use the **PASS** method to extinguish the fire; **P**ull the pin; **A**im at the base of the fire; **S**queeze the handle and **S**weep back and forth at the base of the fire.

Teachers must release their students to an authorized adult (parent or guardian) only.

All leaders will be familiar with the use of fire extinguishers.

**Fire Extinguishers:** Use the **PASS** method; **P**ull the pin; **A**im at the base of the fire; **S**queeze the handle and **S**weep back and forth at the base of the fire.

### **Earthquakes:**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings:**

In the event of an earthquake on Sunday mornings, teachers are to make every effort to get kids as far away from windows as possible and then remove kids from the building (if necessary) as quickly as possible. *Use the Duck, Cover, Hold method:* have kids duck under a table, desk or chair, cover their head and eyes with one hand while they are under the above mentioned objects and then have them with the other hand hold on to the leg of the chair, desk or table.

Once the earthquake has stopped the teacher needs to assess the damage of the room. If the building is unstable (there are cracks in the walls, broken glass on the floor, etc.) the teachers will escort students out of the building and take kids as far away from the damaged building as possible. If the damage is minimal (a few things have fallen off the shelf) the teacher will contact the head usher and let them know everyone is fine and continue with their lessons or dismiss children to their parents/guardian. Teachers are to release their children to authorized persons only (parents/guardians) and only at the direction of either the fire department/ or those in charge (pastor/associate pastor).

In the unlikely event of a gas line break, teachers should remove the children from the building as far away from the smell of gas. **Recognizing a gas leak:** 1 of 3 of the following must apply: 1) you smell gas; 2) you hear the hissing sound of a gas leak or 3) when you are looking at a gas meter and it is spinning quickly: there is a gas leak:

If there is a gas leak send someone to call 911 and advise the dispatch of the gas leak. Where possible and if you can/know how to, try to close the valve where the gas leak is coming from so you can communicate with emergency responders.

### **General Emergencies: (Student is choking, has been injured- broken a bone, is bleeding profusely, vomiting, etc.)**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings:**

If there is an emergency during worship the teacher must find another adult to go and speak with an usher or find an adult to supervise their room while they go, get an usher to inform the child's parent of the situation. If need be the usher should get the attention of the one of the pastors or lay leaders to make an announcement that the said child's parents are needed. If the usher knows the family they will seek the family out first, relay the message and then inform the pastor of what is going on.

All teachers need to know the allergies of their students and will make every effort to not have snacks for children unless approved by all parents.

### **Medical Emergencies:**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings:**

If there is a medical emergency follow these basic principles: check, call, care. Check that the area is safe to enter. Call 911, have one person remain with the injured person while another adult or leader goes to call for help. Give first aid if you are trained and able to do so until help arrives. Have the person who called 911 watch for emergency personnel and direct them to the scene. If there is another adult present have them escort all children/youth away from the scene. Send someone to inform the ushers that there is an emergency with the children/youth so they can get the attention of the pastors or find the parent's of the child who is in need if they know the parents.

### **Floods:**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings**

In the event of a flood on Sunday morning, all people are to remain where it is dry. If the water is half way up the tires or more, no one is to drive home/anywhere. No one should be walking or wading in the water. All kids will remain in an area that is safe and dry.

One person will contact 911 and tell them where everyone is located, what is going on and how many people are in any designated area. After 911 has been called and it is determined safe for people to leave, then and only then will people be excused to leave the premise (or in the event that the flooding is serious enough, 911 personal will do an evacuation).

### **Hazardous Material, Gas Leaks, Etc.**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings:**

If suspicious material is discovered, evacuate the area or building. If there is a smell of gas, immediately leave the building and call 911. If there is an emergency during worship, one adult will go to the sanctuary and inform an usher of what is going on. The usher will inform the pastor of the situation, the pastors will then excuse parents to pick up their children. All people on site will wait for emergency personnel to clear the area and give instruction on how to safely dismiss from the church grounds.

### **Bomb Threat**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings:**

Threats may come as a phone call, suspicious package or in person verbally or physically. If it is a phone or verbal threat note the details of the threat (the caller, the threat, the time of the threat, the location and any other specific details- the person who was making the threat and so on). Contact 911 immediately. Exit the threatened area after calling 911. If this occurs during Sunday morning do not tell people what is going on, simply evacuate the building and wait for more information to be disseminated and all information has been gathered. Wait for emergency personnel to arrive and give further instructions. If this occurs during Sunday school, evacuate the children, have another adult inform the ushers of the situation. Make sure that the children are safe and away from the person who is making the threat. Ushers will inform the pastors and the pastors will dismiss parents to a safe meeting point to pick up their children.

### **Armed and Violent Person**

#### **1. Sunday Mornings**

Call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so. Do not try and negotiate with the person, try simply to remain calm and speak directly with the person. If there is another adult/leader present, ask them to escort children to a safe area. If the threat is in the building, evacuate if you can do so in a

quiet manner. If the threat is outside, shelter in place, lock yourself in an office, close the blinds if there are any, turn off the lights and ask everyone in the room to duck/cover and hold in place. Make sure everyone is away from all entrances and try to hide from the person. If it is safe to do so, send one person to inform the ushers of the situation. The ushers will inform the pastors and the congregation will remain in place until it is determined that emergency personnel are in control of the situation. Once emergency personnel have protected the area the pastors will dismiss parents to pick up their children and then dismiss the rest of the congregation.

**Active Shooter Response**