

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING THE WELL BEING OF MINORS

PURPOSE

The members of First Presbyterian Church (hereafter "FPC") believe that we are called by God to commit to the safety, welfare, and protection of all children and youth participating in the activities and programs of FPC. This commitment includes protecting them from abuse or harassment of any form, whether physical, mental or sexual, and calls for the creation of a safe haven for all children and youth in our care. During each person's baptism into this covenant community of FPC, the members of the church pledge to uphold that person in Jesus Christ and to teach, strengthen, and support the individual's relationship to the household of God. In keeping with these commitments, and in order to preserve the integrity of all within our community of FPC, protect our children and youth, our leaders, and our church body, and to facilitate the prevention of abuse, Westminster Presbyterian Church of Nacogdoches, Texas, institutes the following policies and procedures.

POLICIES

All activities and programs of FPC, regardless of location, involving children or youth will be subject to the following policies:

1. The Session must approve all volunteers and employees who work with children and youth. The session may delegate this responsibility to the Christian Education Committee.
2. No person shall be recommended to the Session of FPC for approval as an employee or volunteer leader with children or youth until such person has been an active participant at WPC for six months and a Confidential Information Form (Appendix A), a Covenant of Conduct (Appendix B), and a security background check have been completed. Employees will be required to complete a reference check form (Appendix A). Any exceptions must be approved by the moderator of the session and apply only to volunteers, not employees.
3. A volunteer who has been active in the life of our congregation for less than six months must be paired with someone who has been an active participant for longer than six months when working with youth or children.
4. It is the responsibility of each volunteer and employee to comply with these policies and procedures. All volunteers and employees who work with children must attend a training session every three years in which these guidelines and the subject of preventing physical, mental, or sexual abuse are presented and discussed. Opportunities for training in CPR and First Aid also will be periodically provided.
5. At all times a minimum of two adults, 21 years of age or older, will be assigned to supervise or lead all activities involving children or youth. Adult leaders for children's activities may be assisted by a responsible youth, 15 years of age or older, who has been approved by the CE committee and trained in the Safeguarding Policy.

Youth entering the 7th grade and older may assist adult leaders with Vacation Bible School activities.

For overnight activities, there must be an adult male assigned to provide leadership if boys are present and an adult female if girls are present. An adult assigned to lead activities must be at least five years older than the oldest participant.

6. Parents should sign a Publicity Release (Appendix D) for all children and youth participating in church activities.
7. The following documents must be obtained at least once each year in September, or before a child or youth participates in an overnight activity or in an activity occurring away from the church's campus: an Activity Participation Release, and a Medical Release (Appendix E).
8. A Youth Covenant (Appendix F) must be signed by all youth who regularly participate in congregational activities for youth. Parents must also sign this covenant. This covenant must be renewed each year in September.
9. Volunteers and employees who drive children and youth on the congregation's behalf must be twenty-one years old and have an Auto Safety Certification Form (Appendix C) on file in the church office including copies of a valid driver's license and proof of insurance.

When possible, there will be at least three people present in any vehicle, either two adults and one minor or one adult and two minors. When this is not possible, parental or guardian consent must be obtained.

All occupants of a personal vehicle must use a seat belt and proper child safety restraints. Children and youth shall not be transported in the bed of a pick-up truck, on a motorcycle, or an all terrain vehicle.

This policy shall not prohibit adult volunteers or employees from providing transportation in an emergency situation. The adult shall make a reasonable attempt to contact a parent or guardian prior to providing such transportation.

Transportation to and from meetings at the church is not part of children's or youth activities.

10. FPC will not tolerate any act or omission as specifically described in Prohibited Acts (p. 5).
11. Any violation of policy shall be reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in Reporting Policy Violations (p.6).

PREVENTION

Paid staff, teachers of children or youth, and volunteers for church activities or programs for children or youth will be required to complete a Confidential Information Form (Appendix A) and a Covenant of Conduct (Appendix B) providing confidential information necessary to perform security background checks on each individual. In addition, paid staff will be required to complete a reference check form (Appendix A). While this process understandably intrudes into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background and reference checks, and the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be considered confidential.

Security Background checks for persons 18 and older, including a national criminal search, will be conducted by the Church's Administrative Assistant (hereafter "Administrator"). Additionally, two character references will be checked by the Christian Education Committee or the Session for paid staff. The written results of the security background checks and the reference checks initially will be reviewed by the Administrator. After this initial review, if the Administrator determines that further review should be made, the Administrator will call the moderator of the Session or appropriate program staff to determine the disposition of the application (Appendix A) and the appropriate pastoral response. Security Background checks shall be updated every three years in January.

Without the written permission of the paid staff, teachers of children or youth, and volunteers for church activities and programs for children and youth (and except as may be required by law), the information contained in the Confidential Information Form, the results of the security background check, and the results of the reference check will be disclosed only to the persons designated in the previous paragraph.

The Administrator will maintain a locked storage cabinet in the church for all Confidential Information Forms, Covenants of Conduct, Auto Safety Certification Forms (Appendix C), and the results of the security background checks and reference checks. The results of the security background checks will be destroyed every three years as information is updated.

Outside groups using FPC facilities are required to follow the FPC Statement of Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding the Well Being of Minors. All leaders of non-FPC sponsored groups and events using FPC facilities, which have direct supervision of children or youth, are expected to adhere to the policies. Upon receipt of the policy from FPC, the leader(s) must review the Policy, sign the Outside Group Leaders Reference Form (Appendix G) to acknowledge their review of it, and confirm their agreement to follow the policy. Although FPC will not perform background checks, seek personal or professional references, review employee records, or obtain civil and criminal records for such groups, leaders are expected to conduct their own due diligence in this regard. Outside groups assume the responsibility and risk for their groups.

DISQUALIFICATION

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by the results of the security background check, the following will disqualify a person from participating in the leadership or sponsorship of any church activity involving children or youth:

1. Any active indictment alleging the offense of, or any conviction for: murder, aggravated assault; sexual abuse; sexual assault (rape); aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child; incest; indecency with a child; inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child; possession or promotion of child pornography; sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor; employment harmful to children; or abandonment or endangerment of a child.
2. A DWI or DUI conviction during the past 10 years shall disqualify a person from transporting youth and children of FPC by motorized vehicle, whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of the security background check.

All other convictions or charges for any crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the Administrator as described above. If an applicant disputes information that appears in his/ her criminal history record transcript, he/ she may appeal through the Texas Department of Public Safety (Appendix H).

PROHIBITED ACTS

The following acts are prohibited by this Policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any FPC sponsored activity or program. Any observation or personal knowledge of such violations must be immediately reported to the Moderator of the Session, the Clerk of Session, or the Moderator of the Christian Education Committee after the safety of the child or youth has been assured.

1. Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct toward a child or youth;
2. Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a child or youth;
3. Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any children or youth of any age;
4. Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child or youth;
5. Physical neglect of a child, children or youth, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to activities of FPC. Adequate supervision means the type of supervision a reasonable person would provide in the same or similar situation;
6. Causing mental or emotional injury to a child, children or youth;
7. Possessing obscene or pornographic materials at any function of FPC;
8. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, offering alcohol or illegal drugs to youth or children or being impaired by legally prescribed drugs during church sponsored programs involving children or youth;
9. Carrying any type of weapon on church property unless legally sanctioned; and
10. Profanity, inappropriate language or jokes, and any kind of harassment in the presence of or about children or youth.
11. Sharing inappropriate details of one's personal life or asking children and/or youth to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal, or electronic.

REPORTING POLICY VIOLATIONS

The Christian Education Committee shall oversee the orientation, education and conduct of teachers and volunteer leaders.

In addition to the procedures prescribed in this Statement, the Christian Education Committee shall adopt and implement such other procedures as may be necessary to accomplish the purpose and policies set forth in this Statement.

The Statement of Policies and Procedures for Safeguarding the Well-being of Minors shall be reviewed periodically by the Christian Education Committee, and approved by the session every three years.

A list of those persons who are approved to work with children and youth shall be maintained. This list shall be provided to the appropriate committee moderators and staff by the Administrator.

In order to maintain an environment free of destructive acts toward all children and youth, the staff, teachers, parents, and volunteers of FPC must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation thought to be in violation of this Policy. All questions or concerns of any suspected abusive behavior or harassment shall be directed to the Moderator of the Session, the Clerk of Session or the Moderator of the Christian Education Committee (hereafter Response Team). If the complaint is against an ordained staff member, the General Presbyter or the Chair of Committee on Ministry at the Presbytery of New Covenant shall be contacted.

In the event anyone personally witnesses an occurrence in violation of policy, that person will be asked to complete an Incident Report Form (Appendix J). Anyone who should witness such a situation should consider the following recommendations as to how such a situation should be handled to insure the security of the child or youth involved and to protect against physical, emotional, or psychological injury to all persons involved.

The following are the steps to take in case any occurrence of an alleged violation of the Policy; and should be covered thoroughly in training:

1. Personally secure the safety of the child, children, or youth;
2. Do not leave the child, children, or youth alone to report the incident.
3. Report the incident immediately to the designated person on the Response Team;
4. Do not personally confront the alleged or accused violator of the policy;
5. The person witnessing the violation or the person initially contacted by a child reporting a violation will complete an Incident Report Form (Appendix J);
6. Allow the designated person to provide you with instructions for reporting the incident to the parents or guardian of the child, children or youth;
7. Report abuse incident within 48 hours to Children's Protective Services (800-252-5400) if applicable in the presence of a Response Team member.

In the event a minor observes, suspects and reports abusive conduct regardless of where or when the conduct occurred, the person initially contacted by the child should contact the designated person to complete a written Incident Report. Record in the Incident Report the words originally spoken by the child and the child's conduct and demeanor observed concerning the incident. An Incident Report Form must be immediately completed.

RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF POLICY VIOLATION

An alleged violation will be referred immediately to a Safeguard Committee comprised of the Moderator of Session, and three discreet persons appointed who understand the issue of confidentiality. The Safeguard Committee shall take such actions as it deems appropriate in the investigation and handling of the Incident Report and it shall have access to a spokesperson to the media, an attorney, and counselor for both the alleged victim and alleged abuser. The moderator of the session or the designated person on the Safeguard Committee will be solely responsible for all communications on behalf of FPC, including those with parents and the media.

When an allegation is made, the Safeguard Committee will be responsible for timely contacting law enforcement authorities, as required by law. The Safeguard Committee should also contact the church's insurance company. The Safeguard Committee will ensure that pastoral care needs are addressed and will notify the accused and the accuser that they have the right to retain their own counsel. The Committee will have a prepared position statement for the media and will interface with the Presbytery and the church's insurance company.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a Prohibited Act (p. 5), whether a paid staff member or volunteer, will be suspended from participation in all church sponsored activities or programs involving minors. Such a suspension shall continue until a disposition of the alleged violation has been made by the Safeguard Committee.

The disposition shall be based upon such evidence as the Safeguard Committee deems appropriate. The evidence may include the results of any investigation by the church or law enforcement or child protection proceeding, or the filing, prosecution, or outcome of any criminal charges or other legal proceedings. The Safeguard Committee may, at its discretion, delay disposition pending the outcome of any investigation or proceeding involving the alleged violation.

Upon disposition, if a majority of the Safeguard Committee believes from the evidence that any person has committed a prohibited act, such person shall be prohibited from future participation in all church activities for children and youth, either permanently or for such length of time and in such manner as the Safeguard Committee shall determine in its discretion. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment.

PASTORAL CONCERN: If the Safeguard Committee determines that the allegations are false, the Pastor will determine any appropriate pastoral response.

A Prohibited Act must be reported immediately, and any failure to do so shall be considered a procedural violation of policy. The Session may treat such violation as grounds for termination of a staff member or as grounds for the suspension or prohibition from participation in all children and youth activities and programs of FPC by any member.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FORM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS
*Must be completed by all volunteers and employees
working with children and/or youth*

Your honest answers to the following questions will assure our church family, parents, and children of the finest care we can provide. This information is sought as one way of protecting not only our children and youth, but also you, the adult, who works within our church family. There is no presumption of "guilt" when reviewing your answers to some of these questions. We invite open, honest discussion around any of your areas of concern. *In addition, if you prefer, you may choose to discuss your answers with a member of our pastoral staff.*

Part I- For Criminal Background Check

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Other Names You Have Used: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____ - _____ - _____

Gender: _____

E-mail: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How long have you lived at this address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____ Place of Employment: _____

Name as it appears on Driver's License: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ Driver's License State: _____

Part II

1. In what area(s) of ministry with children and youth do you wish to serve?
2. How long have you been active in the life of First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Texas?
3. What about your journey of FPC has brought you to this ministry with children and youth?
4. What gifts and experience do you bring to this ministry?
5. Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor, except minor traffic violations)? If “yes”, please describe.
6. Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary action, complaint or allegations that you violated any employer’s or any organization’s policy concerning sexual misconduct? If “yes”, please describe.
7. Have you ever been charged with a sexual offense, offense relating to children, or crime of violence? If “yes”, please describe.
8. Have you ever been reported to a social service agency, law enforcement agency, child abuse registry, or similar organization regarding child abuse or neglect? If “yes”, please describe.
9. Is there any other fact or circumstance involving your background that would cause you or the church to have concerns about your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of minors? If “yes”, please describe.

Would you like to meet with a member of the pastoral staff regarding your answers to the questions above? Yes No. If yes, and you would prefer a specific staff member, please indicate your choice:

Part III- Authorization and Release

I understand and agree that:

- a. All information I have provided may be verified. I agree to release from liability any person or organization that provides information regarding me, including these persons I have listed as references. I do hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Texas, its employees, representatives and agents from any claims or causes or action relating in any manner to the verification of or attempts to verify the information provided, attempts to contact references or conversations with any references. I understand that any information received will not be disclosed to me, and I hereby waive any right I have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me on this form.
- b. By signing this form, I certify and affirm that the information I have given is true, complete and correct in all respects.
- c. I hereby give my permission for First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Texas to obtain information relating to my criminal history record through the appropriate agency. The criminal history record, as received from the reporting agencies may include arrest and conviction data, as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications. I understand this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment or volunteer position with the church. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to review the criminal history, and a procedure is available for clarification if I dispute the record as received. I, the undersigned, do for myself and heirs, executors and administrators, hereby release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify the investigating agency and each of their officers, directors, employees, and agents and hold them harmless from and against any and all causes of actions, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims and demands whatsoever, and any and all related attorney's fees, court costs and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become an employee or a volunteer.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please Print Name: _____

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

(if under 18) *No background checks will be done on children under the age of 18.*

This form is confidential and will be kept in a locked file in the office of First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Texas.

Part IV- For Employees Only

References: Please list two personal references who are familiar with your character and/or your work with children and youth. Contacts at other churches are appropriate. Please do not include relatives and members of church staff. References are confidential.

1. Name: _____
Address: _____
Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
Nature of the relationship with you: _____

2. Name: _____
Address: _____
Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
Nature of the relationship with you: _____

CHARACTER REFERENCE FORM- FOR EMPLOYEES

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1801 19TH STREET HUNTSVILLE, TX 77340

Name of Employee: _____

This form is being used to help First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Texas, provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. The person mentioned above has given us your name as one who would attest to his/her character. We would appreciate it if you would return this form to us in the enclosed envelope or fax to 936-564-0204 as soon as possible. Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.

1. How long have you known this person? _____
2. In what capacity do you know this person? _____
3. Describe the situation(s) in which you have observed this person working with children or youth.

4. How would you describe this person's ability to work with children/youth?

5. How would you describe this person's ability to work with adults?

6. Would you recommend this person for a position working with children or youth?
_____ Yes (*please comment*) _____ No (*please comment*)

7. Please share any other comments you would like to make on the back of this sheet.

Signature of Reference or Phone Interviewer: _____

Reference Name: _____ Title/ Occupation: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ (Other) _____

All information is CONFIDENTIAL

First Presbyterian Church Use Only:
Mail/Phone Reference- Circle one
Processed by: _____ Date: _____

COVENANT OF CONDUCT
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS
For adults working with children and/or youth

I agree to refrain from all "Prohibited Acts" during any Westminster Presbyterian Church activity or program.

1. I will not verbally, emotionally, mentally, physically or sexually abuse children, youth or other adults.
2. I will not engage in any sexual activity of any kind.
3. I will provide proper supervision and exercise sound judgment in providing a safe environment at all times.
4. I will not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care. I will only use physical restraint in situations necessary to protect the child or others from harm.
5. I will not possess obscene or pornographic materials at any function of FPC.
6. I will not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, will not offer alcohol or illegal drugs to youth or children, will not be impaired by legally prescribed drugs during church sponsored programs involving children and/or youth.
7. I will not carry any type of weapon on church property or at church events involving children or youth unless legally sanctioned.
8. I will not use profanity, inappropriate language or jokes, or any kind of harassment in the presence of or about children and/or youth.
9. I will not share inappropriate details of my personal life or ask children and/or youth to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal, or electronic.
10. I will respect the rights of children and youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. I will discourage children/youth from touching others in an inappropriate manner.
11. I will do my best to be alert to the physical and emotional state of children/youth in my care.
12. Personal phone calls and texting during supervision of children and youth should be limited.

In signing this form, I hereby state that I have received, read, and understand the "Statement of Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding the Well Being of Minors." I agree to abide by the policy set forth, including following the Covenant of Conduct. Further I affirm that the information I have provided on the Confidential Information Form is true and correct.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please Print Name: _____

AUTO SAFETY CERTIFICATION

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

Must be completed by all adults who may be driving children/youth for a WPC sponsored event

Driver:

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Driver's License Number/ State: _____ Date of Expiration: _____

Restrictions: _____

Have you been convicted or pled guilty or no contest to any moving violations within the past five years?
If "yes", please describe. _____

Have you ever had your driver's license suspended, revoked, or refused? If "yes", please describe.

Vehicle Information & Insurance Coverage:

Vehicle Model & Year: _____ # of Seats with Seatbelts: _____

License State & Plate Number: _____

Name of Owner: _____

Owner's Address: _____

Phone: _____

Auto Insurance Company: _____ Policy Number: _____

Insured's Name: _____ Policy Expiration Date: _____

Certification: I certify that the information on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that as a volunteer driver for Westminster Presbyterian Church, I must be 21 years of age or older, possess a valid driver's license, have the proper and current vehicle registration, and have the required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport children and/or youth participants to/from a church sponsored event. I further certify that I have and will use a seatbelt for each passenger and will comply with state traffic laws when transporting children and/or youth participants to a church sponsored event.

Signature of Driver: _____ Date: _____

I have attached a copy of my **Driver's License** and a copy of my **Auto Insurance**. ___ Yes* ___ No

**Photocopy of driver's license and insurance card is required for processing*

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Publicity Release**

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

On occasion, First Presbyterian Church takes photographs or makes audio or video recordings of children and/or adults involved in church activities. Such photographs or recordings may be used by staff and participants to remember activities and participants, and may be used in the church's publications or advertising materials to let others know about its ministry. Any public use of such recordings must be approved by the church. The church may also invite local news organizations to photograph or record our events for news reporting or special interest features.

I consent to the use of any such photograph or audio or video recording of the child named above or me if I am participating, to be used, distributed, or displayed as agents of the church deem appropriate.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

-OR-

*I **do not** consent to the use of any such photograph or audio or video recording of the child named above or me if I am participating, to be used, distributed, or displayed by agents of the church.*

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Activity Participation Release**

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Other Phone(s): _____

Age of child: _____ Birthday: _____ Grade: _____

Functions and Activities:

It is my understanding that participating in the programs, recreational activities, and other activities of First Presbyterian Church is a privilege. Prior to my child's participation in such activities, I acknowledge that there are certain risks associated with these activities, including, by way of example, physical injury due to activity-related accidents, physical injury due to transportation-related accidents, illness, or even death. In addition, I acknowledge that there may be other risks inherent in these activities of which I may not be presently aware.

Release of Liability:

By signing this Participation Release, I expressly warrant that the child named above or I, if I am a participant, am capable of withstanding both physical and mental demands of the activities discussed above. I also expressly assume all risks of the child or me participating in the activities, whether such risks are known or unknown to me at this time. I further release First Presbyterian Church and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, and agents from any claim that my child may have or that I may have against them as a result of injury or illness incurred during the course of participation in these activities. This release of liability shall include (without limitation) any claims of negligence or breach of warranty. This release of liability is also intended to cover all claims that members of the child's family or estate, heirs, representatives, or assigns may have against First Presbyterian Church or its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents.

Indemnification:

I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless First Presbyterian Church and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents from any and all claims arising from my participation in its activities and programs, or as a result of injury or illness of my child or me during such activities.

I represent that I am the parent/guardian of the child named above, who is under 18 years of age or a participant in activities for children and/or youth at First Presbyterian Church. I have fully read the above Participation Release and am fully familiar with the contents thereof.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Form valid until September 30 _____

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Medical Release**

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Other Phone(s): _____

Age of youth/child: _____ Birthday: _____ Grade: _____

Family Physician: _____ Phone: _____

Medications Taken: _____

Allergies: _____

Other Pertinent Health Information: _____

Medical Insurance Company: _____ Group No.: _____

Medical Insurance ID No.: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contacts:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

First Aid and Emergency Medical Treatment:

I recognize that there may be occasions where the child named above or I, if I am a participant, may be in need of first aid or emergency medical treatment as a result of an accident, illness, or other health condition or injury. I hereby give permission for agents of First Presbyterian Church to seek and secure any needed medical attention or treatment for the child named above, or me if I am a participant, including hospitalization, if in the agent's opinion such need arises. In doing so, I agree to pay all fees and costs arising from this action to obtain medical treatment. I give permission for attending physician(s) and other medical personnel to administer any needed medical treatment, including surgery and, again, I agree to pay for the medical treatment.

I also agree to notify agents of First Presbyterian Church if there are any changes in the above information that I have submitted.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Youth Covenant**

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

We, the youth of First Presbyterian Church, covenant to be a Christian community together by following these standards:

☩ **We will love one another**

- ☒ Treat others the way we want to be treated.
- ☒ Be kind to each other.
- ☒ Try to get along, even when we disagree.
- ☒ We will pray for each other.
- ☒ When we break the covenant we will forgive each other and remind each other nicely to follow it.

☩ **We will make youth a safe place to be**

- ☒ We understand that bringing or using illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products will not be tolerated, and will result in my being sent home immediately.
- ☒ We will not go anywhere alone, and will travel with an adult at all times when we are off church property.
- ☒ If we leave the area that we are gathering, we will tell an adult where we are going.
 - ☞ Especially when we leave an event, even if it is with our parents!
- ☒ We will use appropriate language
 - ☞ If you're not sure it's appropriate, don't say it
- ☒ We will avoid sarcasm and smart-aleck remarks.
- ☒ We will talk about appropriate things
- ☒ We will keep our voices at the right level for the activity we are doing.
 - ☞ No screaming or loud noises
- ☒ When praying or reading aloud or other activities we have the right to pass
- ☒ We will keep appropriate confidences
 - ☞ The "Vegas rule"- 'What happens at youth group stays at youth group'
- ☒ We will follow the rule of 3*
 - ☞ 2 youth + 1 adult or 2 adults + 1 youth
- ☒ We will not purple*
 - ☞ Boys and girls will not be in the same room without an adult present.
- ☒ We will use common sense.
- ☒ We will not hit each other, etc.

*Language below defines the term.

We will respect each other

- ✘ We will listen to each other when they are talking.
- ✘ We will make sure everyone who wants to add to the conversation has the chance to.
- ✘ We will speak kindly of each other
 - ✎ 2 put-ups for every put down
 - ✎ Not talking about others behind their backs
- ✘ We will abstain from inappropriate sexual behavior or other acts of disrespect while at youth activities.

✦ **We will respect our space**

- ✘ We will clean up after ourselves, picking up our trash, etc.
- ✘ We will use the furniture, etc. in the youth room appropriately.
- ✘ We will limit ourselves to 1 snack and 1 drink per youth meeting.
- ✘ We will accept responsibility for our part in all damage and necessary repairs to any host property, including damage to vehicles in which we are traveling.

✦ **When we're at youth activities we'll be at youth activities**

- ✘ We will not use our cell phones, i-pods, etc. during youth. (Most of the time!)
- ✘ We will participate, and allow others to participate too.
- ✘ When it's time to be serious, we'll be serious, and have fun when it's time to have fun.

✦ **We will love God, love each other, and HAVE FUN!!!**

I accept the responsibility of keeping this covenant.

Youth Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read and discussed this covenant with my youth and understand that noncompliance with any part of the covenant could result in my child being sent home, at my expense if there is any, from any church activity.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

OUTSIDE GROUP LEADERS RELEASE FORM
POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING THE WELL BEING OF MINORS
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

As a representative of _____ (Group/Organization Name),
I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding the Well
Being of Minors, including the Covenant of Conduct, of First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Texas.
On behalf of said group/organization, I/we agree to adhere to said policy and Covenant of Conduct
during any events the group/organization sponsors at First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Texas. I/we
further understand that outside groups using the facility of First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Texas,
assume the responsibility for due diligence in ensuring the safety of children and youth participating in
non-First Presbyterian Church sponsored events.

Leader's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Leader's Printed Name: _____ Title: _____

APPEAL OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD

If an applicant disputes information that appears in his or her criminal history record transcript, he/she may appeal through the Texas Department of Safety. He/she must follow the procedure to review personal criminal history record, which includes getting fingerprints and sending the prints along with the appropriate form and fee to the Department of Public Safety. If it is determined that the record is indeed the applicant's own criminal record, and the applicant feels that there is a mistake in the criminal record, a letter should be written specifying the area of concern. An investigation will be conducted to determine whether or not an error has been made.

This letter should be addressed to:
Texas Department of Public Safety
Error Resolution Department
P.O. Box 15999
Austin, Texas 78761-5999

SUSPECTED ABUSE INCIDENT REPORT FORM

CONFIDENTIAL

Name of child or youth: _____ Age: _____

Child's parents or other person responsible for the child's care: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____

1. Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

2. Name(s) of those suspected of abuse of causing neglect: _____

3. Describe the incident/ nature and extent of injuries/ statement made by minor:

4. Describe minor's demeanor and/or appearance:

5. Name of person(s) who witnessed the incident

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

6. What action has been taken?

7. Present location of child or youth:

8. Name, age, and condition of other children in the home, if known:

9. Any other relevant information:

The information contained in this document is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Printed name of person reporting: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

According to the 1995-6 Texas Family Code, Section 261.001, “**Abuse**” is defined as the following acts or omissions by a person:

- A. Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning;
- B. Causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning;
- C. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator, that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;
- D. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child;
- E. Compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct as defined by Section 43.01 (3), Penal Code; or
- F. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of a child is obscene as defined by Section 43.21, Penal Code.

“**Neglect**” includes:

- A. Leaving a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator of the child;
- B. The following acts or omissions by a person:
 - 1. Placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child’s level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child;
 - 2. Failure to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Physical Abuse

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns, especially when the child cannot adequately explain the cause
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in an unusual pattern that may indicate a human bite, cigarette burns, or the use of an instrument on the face, arms, or palms
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Fear of going home or seeing a parent
- Injuries that appear after the child has not been seen for several days
- Unseasonable clothes that may hide injuries to the arms or legs
- Reluctant about sitting down; unable to hold a pencil
- Evidence of poor self-concept
- Complaints of beatings or other harsh treatment
- Chronic runaway

Sexual Abuse

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted disease
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with members of the opposite sex
- Exhibits sexually suggestive or promiscuous behavior
- Knowledgeable about sexual relations
- Reports sexual assault
- Complaints of pain or itching in genital area
- Unusual odors from genital area
- Drawings or writings with strong, often bizarre sexual theme
- Suicide attempts
- Regressed, clingy behavior
- Poor peer relationships
- Declining grades
- Abrupt change in behavior

Emotional Abuse

- Speech disorders
- Habit disorders
- Conduct disorders
- Developmental lags
- Delinquent behavior
- Overly adaptive behavior
- Substance abuse

Neglect

- Obvious malnutrition
- Dirty hair and body/offensive body odor
- Habitually dressed in torn and dirty clothes
- Obvious fatigue and listlessness
- Unattended for long periods of time
- In need of glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Begs for or steals food
- Abnormally short or underweight for age

HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD DISCLOSING ABUSE

1. Listen
2. Be sensitive to vague disclosures
3. Avoid expressing shock or outrage
4. Don't Threaten or condemn the alleged perpetrator
5. Let the child know you believe him/her
6. Tell the victim he/she was right to disclose
7. Assure the child the abuse was not his/her fault
8. Reassure the victim that he/she will be safe
9. Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible
10. Get as many details as the child is comfortable disclosing
11. Write down exactly what the child said
12. Do not try to investigate
13. Do not confront the alleged abuser
14. Follow authorized reporting procedures

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Safeguard Committee Members