



PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA

CHILD / YOUTH / VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

**Approved at the 153rd Meeting of the Presbytery of South Louisiana
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PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA
CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of Presbytery of South Louisiana (hereinafter may be referred to as “Presbytery”), and all entities of the Presbytery, that all church members, church officers, nonmember employees and/or contractors, and volunteers of congregations, councils, and entities of the church are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy applies to all Presbytery sponsored activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Where the policies of local congregations and the Presbytery conflict, the more restrictive policy shall apply.

II. Definitions

The following words/terms are defined for use in this *Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy*. To the extent any word in the policy is not defined by this Article II, that word/term should be given its normal, dictionary defined, and commonly understood meaning, given the context of the word within the policy.

“Abuse” means any act, attempted or inflicted, or any failure to act, that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult. Each state has its own statutes regarding what is defined as child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse. This policy advises that all sponsoring councils and entities of the Presbytery consider and be familiar with state statutes pertaining to the location of each event/activity.

“Child” means a person between the ages of 0–11

“Child/Youth Worker” means any person, volunteer, paid staff, or contractor who participates at any level at any event sponsored or organized by the Presbytery or its Entities, or other such activities involving children and/or youth.

“Council or Entity” means any council or entity of the Presbytery of South Louisiana within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that is tasked with the responsibility of planning events and activities for children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

“Mandatory Reporting Incident” means an incident which is witnessed or otherwise gives cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect, or that abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child’s death.

“Minor” means a person between the ages of 0–17 years-old.

“Misuse of Technology” means the use of technology that results in the harassment or abuse of a child/youth. This includes, but is not limited to, using technology to send suggestive or violent messages and images to a Protected Person. Adults should not have any technological contact with a child or youth that is not either pre-approved by the child/youth’s legal guardian with a signed waiver, or done in an open public medium, such as a church website or other public social media program.

“Protected Person” means any youth, minor, or vulnerable adult as defined in this section.

“Vulnerable Adult” means a person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

“Vulnerable Adult Abuse” means any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

“Youth” means a person between the ages of 12–19, as this is the age of most of the people utilizing a youth program.

III. Mandatory Event Rules for Working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

The sponsoring council or entity of the Presbytery shall ensure that the following measures are in place and that the following actions shall be taken for each event or activity involving Protected Persons?:

- A. Rule of Three (3): Whenever possible, child/youth workers shall maintain groups of three (3) or more shall be observed when in the presence of Protected Persons. The group of three (3) can be comprised of two (2) Protected Persons and one (1) adult, or two (2) unrelated adults and one (1) Protected Person. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible.
- B. All child/youth workers and volunteers must be a minimum of four (4) years older than the age group they lead or supervise.

- C. Ratios: The adult to child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10. The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities shall not be below 2:17. If possible, there should be one (1) adult of each sex when there are one (1) or more child or youth of each sex in a group. This requirement is complimentary to the Rule of Three from Article III, Section A above.
- D. View Windows and Open Doors: Where the Rule of Three may not be observed because of an emergency situation, one (1) Protected Person and one (1) adult worker or volunteer may occupy a room together under the following circumstances: (i) if the room door has a viewing window, the door may be closed; or (ii) if the door does not have a viewing window, the door shall remain open at all times.
- E. Age appropriate training to children and youth shall be provided regarding behavior that should be reported to the caregiver or leader of the event.
- F. Transportation:
1. All drivers at child/youth events must have proper licensure and insurance on file with the organizing council;
 2. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger;
 3. No minor under eighty-five (85) pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle;
 4. Current car seat and other seating laws must be obeyed in any state through which children and youth are transported;
 5. All drivers transporting Protected Persons must be over the age of twenty-five (25) and shall be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs;
 6. If a charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks are performed on their drivers;
 7. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted above (See Article III, Section C).
 8. No minor and/or youth may be a driver of any vehicle, including golf carts or other similar means of conveyance, at any event or activity.
- G. Forms: The legal guardians of each minor must provide the appropriate information and medical forms for each activity/event. The information form should include all

contacts for legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the minor's health insurance card. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for off premises events. (The information form is Appendix D).

- H. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing council must be released by a signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian. All such forms must be stored at the event site, in a secure place with restricted access. (The media and photo release form is Appendix E).
- I. Each event/activity leader shall ensure that event rules are read aloud and reviewed with participants at each event/activity. The rules, whenever possible, shall be delivered to each child/youth worker prior to the event. These rules shall include, but are not limited to, a code of conduct specific to the event/activity, a list of prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity, and information related to reporting abuse. The code of conduct, prohibited and expected behaviors list, and abuse reporting information shall be given in written form to each participant, their legal guardian(s), and child/youth workers of the event, as well as discussed thoroughly at the beginning of the event/activity.
- J. Children/youth and adults must maintain different showering times at events in which bathrooms and shower rooms are shared in housing.
- K. Adults shall not share beds, blankets, sleeping bags, pillows, or mats with children or youth. The exception to this rule is for the occasional situation where a legal caregiver/parent needs to stay with their child/youth. If a child/youth requires a caregiver/parent, prior written permission must be obtained from the child/youth's parent/legal guardian and kept on record by the entity of the Presbytery which organized the event. It is permissible for adults to sleep in the same area as children or youth if there is one large communal sleeping area, however, adults shall not share beds, blankets, sleeping bags, pillows, or mats with any children or youth.
- L. If there is a gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex, transgender, gender-fluid, and/or non-binary Protected Person participating in the event, special accommodations may be provided whenever possible or appropriate. Some examples of these accommodations are (but are not limited to): separate sleeping, dressing, and bathing areas.
- M. All volunteers and employees at any Presbytery entity sponsored events shall abide by a code of conduct that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors. This code of conduct shall also apply to all electronic communication, including communication made via social media. Prohibited behaviors include but are not restricted to:

1. Display of sexual affection toward a Protected Person;
2. Use of profanity or off-color jokes;
3. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around Protected Persons, except in the context of sexual education for the purpose of religious instruction, and only then with the written consent of their parents or guardians;
4. Dating or developing a sexual, romantic, or otherwise inappropriate relationship with a Protected Person;
5. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children, youth, or vulnerable adults;
6. Viewing or possessing sexually oriented materials—printed or digital—on church property or property being utilized for a church event;
7. Having secrets with Protected Person;
8. Staring at or commenting on the bodies of Protected Person;
9. Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with Protected Person;
10. Working one-on-one with Protected Persons in a private setting without proper permissions, and without open doors or viewing windows; and
11. Abusing Protected Persons; in any way, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessary restraint;
 - b. Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse;
 - c. Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, engage in voyeurism, or sexually oriented conversations;
 - d. Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly;
 - e. Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter; and
 - f. Permit children, youth, or vulnerable adults to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

IV. Screening, Training, and Background Checks

- A. The Presbytery strongly urges each local church to adopt its own screening procedure, which includes a security background check to ensure the safety and protection of its own children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The Presbytery relies on the local churches to fulfill its own responsibility to its children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Local congregations will be responsible for screening the child/youth workers they send to any Presbytery of South Louisiana events in a capacity to supervise minors. The Presbytery will abide by its own screening procedure for all child/youth workers and volunteers who will serve as chaperones and/or staff for any Presbytery led overnight event, trip, and camp. Where the policies of local congregations and the Presbytery conflict, the more restrictive policy shall apply.
- B. A child/youth worker, whether on a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer basis, shall be subject to the following:
1. The sponsoring and/or organizing council's receipt of a completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the event's code of conduct, prohibited and expected behaviors list, and abuse reporting information has been read.
 2. All child/youth workers must be at least eighteen - years - old (18) and four (4) years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.
 3. The sponsoring and/or organizing council must get the applicants consent to a criminal background check. The sponsoring and/or organizing council or entity must consult with the insurance company through which they have coverage to determine what background checks are appropriate for their particular event. The sponsoring council or entity should cover the costs of the background checks for all child/youth workers. These checks shall be run no more than thirty-six (36) months prior to the event. This time restraint is also at the discretion of the sponsoring and/or organizing council's insurance company's requests.
- C. No person may serve as a child/youth worker who has a conviction on his/her record, pleaded nolo contendere, is under investigation for felonies or misdemeanors, or has a history of or behavioral patterns including, but not limited to, any of the following:
1. Criminal homicide;

2. Aggravated assault;
3. Any crime involving a battery;
4. Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
5. Sexual abuse;
6. Sexual assault;
7. Any Sexual battery crime;
8. Injury to a child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult;
9. Incest;
10. Indecency with a child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult;
11. Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult;
12. Possession or promotion of child pornography;
13. The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
14. Employment harmful to child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult;
15. Neglect, Abandonment, or endangerment of a child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult;
16. Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
17. Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult;
18. Any crime that involves sexual misconduct or sexual abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a minor;
19. Any crime that involves misuse of technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
20. Any crime of violence, as defined by the Louisiana Criminal Code; and
21. Any crime that involves abduction and kidnapping.

All other convictions or charges for any crimes not listed above, may be reviewed by the sponsoring entity.

In addition, if a council or Presbytery entity is aware that a person has a prior conviction on his/her record, pleaded nolo contendere, is under investigation for felonies or misdemeanors, or has a history or related behavioral pattern involving one of the aforementioned crimes or a related crime, the person shall be ineligible to attend a child/youth event in any capacity whatsoever.

- D. Whenever a Presbytery entity sponsors and/or organizes an event for children or youth, for which the agency will invite children or youth from other church councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the councils who select the persons shall not send a person to act as a child/youth worker whom the council knows has violated the provisions of the Book of Order or policy of a local congregation and/or the Presbytery that pertains to sexual misconduct and/or child/youth abuse.
- E. Any person rejected as a child/youth worker shall be entitled to an appeal to the Presbytery for any disqualifying background check information. The Presbytery will assign a three (3) member panel to review of the person's background check. This panel shall review the background check, and its decision to disqualify or allow the person to be a child/youth worker shall be final and binding. No other appeal will be available to any person disqualified as child/youth worker.
- F. Whenever a Presbytery entity sponsors and/or organizes an event for children or youth that invites children or youth from other councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the Presbytery entity shall:
 - 1. Provide guidance to the councils sending persons to be child/youth workers concerning the requirements that: (i) the council perform and pay for background checks for potential child/youth workers; and (ii) how to evaluate the background check for offenses that would disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker.
 - 2. Provide guidance to the councils on when to perform the background checks and with what background check provider.
 - 3. Identify someone from the sponsoring and/or organizing entity of the Presbytery to be the designated recipient of the background checks who shall:
 - a. Review every background check received;

- b. Identify criminal convictions on background checks that disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker;
- c. Notify the organizing and/or sponsoring entity if the designated recipient believes an error has been made in selecting a child/youth worker whose background check indicates that the person is disqualified as a child/youth worker; and
- d. Report to the sending council each potentially disqualifying background check and related concerns so that a formal decision can be made by the council intending to send such a person.

V. Confidentiality of Records and Reporting

The Presbytery of South Louisiana shall maintain all child/youth worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files. Disclosure of any document(s) contained within any of these files shall be made only upon receipt of a request from the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery, or of a duly executed and valid court order, warrant, or lawfully issued subpoena. Upon receipt of a subpoena, no disclosure shall be made until after notice is made/attempted to the person(s) identified in any responsive documents within a reasonable amount of time for said person(s) to file any legal objection they may have.

1. Notice to any affected party shall be made at the last known address for any person(s) identified.
2. A reasonable amount of time to produce documents following notice to any affected person(s) is variable, based upon the date of compliance identified within the subpoena itself. When time permits, seven (7) days following notice is a reasonable amount of time for Notice to reach an interested person.
3. A copy of the Subpoena shall be provided with the Notice to any affected person. The Notice itself should state, generally, the following information:

We have received the attached subpoena, and you have been identified within responsive documents. Unless you take legal action and the issuing court orders us not to produce the documents, we are required by law to provide these records and will do so by the date indicated on the subpoena. You should seek legal counsel if you have any questions.

VI. Reporting and Presbytery Response Team

The *Book of Order* defines the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s understanding of trust, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting in G-4.03. Those in ordered ministry and certified Christian educators should consult the most recent edition of the *Book of Order* to more fully understand their obligations and responsibilities on these issues.

A. General Rule Applied to all Adult Presbytery Members:

1. The Presbytery of South Louisiana expects that all its adult Presbytery members will report witnessed sexual abuse of minors to law enforcement or the Department of Children and Family Services as required by the Louisiana Criminal Code, La. R.S. § 14:403, and the Child in Need of Care Act, La. Ch.C. Art. 603, *et seq.* An adult witnessing sexual abuse of a minor shall immediately report such abuse to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services at 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437), and/or call 911 if a life is in immediate danger. Suspected abuse of vulnerable adults shall be reported to 1-800-898-4910 and for anyone over the age of 60 to 1-833-577-6532. Failure to report the abuse to the civil authorities as provided by this paragraph is an offense in Louisiana. No privilege or contract shall relieve any person from the requirement of reporting. This is a general rule that applies regardless of where the witnessed sexual abuse occurs or the adult member's contemporaneous capacity as an event leader or child/youth worker. A knowing and willing failure to abide by these laws through compliance with this Paragraph by any adult who has acknowledge receipt of this Policy is a violation of criminal law and shall also be deemed a violation of this Policy.

B. Event Reporting Rules:

1. The General Rule stated above applies to all adults attending Presbytery events, regardless of such adult's capacity or role at the event.
2. Prior to any event, Protected Persons shall be instructed to report to any event leader or child/youth worker of the Presbytery entity organizing or sponsoring the event any suspicions or knowledge of any type of abuse of any Protected Person, and to report such incidents which occur at the event as soon as possible. Any event leader or child/youth worker receiving information under this paragraph shall share that information immediately with the Presbytery of South Louisiana Response Team (see Article VI, Section C). In the event such information causes an event leader(s) or child/youth worker(s) to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect or that abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death, a "Mandatory Reporting

Incident” ,the event leader(s) or child/youth worker(s) receiving information under this paragraph shall be Mandatory Reporters for the purposes of Article VI.

3. Anyone who is not a Mandatory Reporter, as provided below, who suspects abuse may report such suspicion to any event leader and/or child/youth worker of the event. Child/youth workers shall report such reported suspicions to the event leader, and any event leader receiving information under this Paragraph shall report such suspicion to any Stated Clerk or any other leader designated by the sponsoring Presbytery entity of the event. If the suspicion arises during an event, any person receiving information under this paragraph shall share that information immediately with the Presbytery of South Louisiana Response Team (see Article VI, Section D).

C. Mandatory Reporting Duties:

- a. Child/youth workers, both employees and volunteers, are “Mandatory Reporters” while in the scope of their employment or volunteering for the Presbytery under Louisiana law. Any such worker has a lawful duty to report any incident which gives cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect or that abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death, a “Mandatory Reporting Incident” .Failure to report results in a criminal violation for the Mandatory Reporter, and False reports subject the reporter to civil liability and criminal liability for violation of RS § 14:403(A)(3). If a Mandatory Reporter, including those falling under the General Rule Applied to All Members, event leaders, and/or child/youth workers, reports abuse in compliance with this Policy in good faith, meaning such reporters have a reasonable belief the reported abuse occurred, such persons are statutorily immune from civil and criminal liability under Article 611 of the Louisiana Children’s Code.
- b. All Event Leaders of events that are organized or sponsored by the Presbytery or its affiliated local churches shall complete an online training course offered and/or approved by the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services prior to leading any Presbytery Event. A record of completion shall be kept by the Presbytery or local church organizing or sponsoring the event.
- c. All Child/youth workers leaders shall be offered training and instruction by the Entity organizing the event, with such training including instruction on legal obligations of the child/youth workers as Mandatory Reporters

under Louisiana law. Prior to each event, event leaders shall distribute to all child/youth workers a summary of their legal responsibilities as Mandatory Reporters.

- d. If a child/youth worker or event leader witnesses sexual abuse, as provided in Article VI, Section A, receives information, or some other incident occurs to cause the event leader or worker to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect or that abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death, a "Mandatory Reporting Incident", the event leader and/or child/youth worker shall report such Incident to any Stated Clerk or any other leader designated by the sponsoring Presbytery entity of the event and shall share that information immediately with the Presbytery of South Louisiana Response Team (see Article VI, Section D), and such Response Team shall advise the event leader and/or the child/youth of to immediately report such abuse to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services at 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437), and/or call 911 if a life is in immediate danger. Suspected abuse of vulnerable adults shall be reported to 1-800-898-4910 and for anyone over the age of 60 to 1-833-577-6532.
- e. If a report is provided to any civil authority pursuant to this Article VI, Section B, persons witnessing the abuse and/or reporting the abuse as a Mandatory Reporter shall not disclose the contents of such report without first obtaining legal authorization to make such a disclosure.

D. Presbytery of South Louisiana Response Team

At every event or activity for Protected Persons planned by a council or entity of the Presbytery of South Louisiana, a Response Team will be trained by the sponsoring council or entity and be on-call throughout the entire duration of the event. This team shall be comprised of at least three (3) people appointed by Presbytery of South Louisiana. An attorney chosen by the Presbytery entity shall be on-call for all events if not included in the Response Team.

The Response Team shall 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 abuse of a Protected Person against any Minister of the Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Pastor, ruling elder, employee, or volunteer in a leadership position(s) with the sponsoring entity and any events they may sponsor.

The Response Team shall be a standing committee of the Presbytery Coordinating Council and shall have the following responsibilities in response to allegations of abuse or neglect of any Protected Person 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 Protected Person, the Response Team will:
 - a. immediately ensure the allegation is reported to the civil authorities under state law and help any Mandatory Reporters report such allegation in compliance with applicable laws;
 - 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 a Protected Person, investigations, and/or the removal of the accused from the event until a resolution of the allegations has occurred.
4. Notify designated people (as outlined in Appendix F) at the Presbytery 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 Presbytery 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 Presbytery about resources available for victims of the alleged abuse and have those resources available to the victims within twenty-four (24) hours. 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 Minister of the Word and Sacrament or a Commissioned Pastor, the Response Team shall send a written statement of allegation to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery that holds the Teaching Elder's pastor'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 council 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 Presbytery, 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 a sponsoring council or entity other than the Presbytery, 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 Presbytery, the Response Team will request that the Presbytery appoint an investigating committee of three (3) 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 Response Team, and any party to the abuse;
 - b. gather any information from the person who was accused of abuse; and
 - 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, and/or family members).
12. A written summary of any proceedings in such cases will be maintained by the Presbytery entities.
13. Any person who, in good faith, reports abuse or assists an investigation into alleged abuse shall not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

VII. Social Media Usage and Electronic Communications

- A. Persons who create public pages on behalf of Presbytery entity programs shall monitor communications and assure that employees and volunteers do not have inappropriate conversations with Protected Persons. These persons shall also prohibit the posting of inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or the posting of inappropriate comments on any pictures.
- B. If a Protected Person reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any suspected abuse.
- C. When using Facebook, another messaging platform, or other forms of electronic communication to communicate with children or youth, the authorized entity shall inform parents/guardians of each child or youth that the latter is communicating with the person via the platform, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.
- D. All communications, including electronic and social media messages, shall be held to the code of conduct as defined above in accordance with Article III, Section M.

Some examples of electronic communication are (but are not limited to): phone calls; texting; communicating via cell phone, video, and/or computer games and gaming systems; video calls via cell phones, FaceTime, Zoom, Google Classroom, Webex, Skype, Google Meet; messaging via platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Venmo, Youtube, MeWe, WeChat, Tumblr, Reddit, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Telegram, Meetup, Medium, Twitch, Discord, Steemit, VK, Quora, Vimeo, Parler, Houseparty, TapeReal, Clubhouse, Nextdoor, Vero, BeReal.

VIII. Signing of Policy and Application to Serve

Each adult engaged in the leadership of a Presbytery or associated entity Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult event shall acknowledge receipt of the Presbytery of South Louisiana's Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy (See Appendix A). This acknowledgment shall again be signed by any covered person when these policies are updated or modified. In addition, each person engaged in leadership of a Presbytery entity Child or Youth event shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this policy.

IX. Violations of Policy

Failure to abide by the standards of conduct outlined in this policy will result in a full disciplinary process. Once a report is made to the Presbytery of South Louisiana Response Team, the Response Team shall be responsible for the reasonable investigation, execution of this policy's procedures, and related communications. Communication with all the involved parties shall take place no more than thirty (30) days after the initial report.

Appendix A

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE RECEIPT OF THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

I hereby acknowledge that on _____, I received a copy of the Presbytery of South Louisiana’s Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures. I affirm by my signature below that I have read the policy, I understand its meaning, I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the policy and seek guidance if necessary before signing this Acknowledgement, and I hereby agree to conduct myself in accordance with the policy. I further acknowledge that, as a supervisor of children/youth/vulnerable adults, that I may be considered a Mandatory Reporter under Louisiana law and that I have received, read, and agree to perform my Mandatory Reporting responsibilities in compliance with such law or laws.

Printed Name and Title _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B

**PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA CHILD/YOUTH/
VULNERABLE ADULT INCIDENT REPORT**

DATE OF INCIDENT _____; TIME _____

REASON FOR REPORT _____

PRESBYTERY EVENT NAME AND LOCATION _____

NAME, ADDRESS, AND TITLE OF REPORTER: _____

PROTECTED PERSON(S) (SUSPECTED VICTIM(S) NAME, AGE, SEX, RACE: _____

NAME(S) of PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S): _____

PROTECTED PERSON(S) ADDRESS: _____

NAMES AND AGES OF PROTECTED PERSON'S SIBLINGS: _____

NATURE, EXTENT, CAUSE OF PROTECTED PERSON'S INJURIES: _____

SUSPECTED PATTERN OF ABUSE TO CHILD OR SIBLINGS? YES: [] NO: []

QUOTE THE CHILD'S/YOUTH'S FIRST WORDS VERBATIM: _____

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE CHILD'S/YOUTH'S Demeanor/APPEARANCE: _____

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED: _____

WHAT ACTION DID YOU TAKE? _____

HAS THE INCIDENT BEEN RESOLVED? YES ___ NO ___

EXPLAIN: _____

INJURY REQUIRES PHYSICIAN/HOSPITAL VISIT? YES ___ NO ___

NAME OF PHYSICIAN/HOSPITAL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHYSICIAN/HOSPITAL PHONE NUMBER: _____

MEDICAL ATTENTION THAT WAS DESIRED AND/OR REQUIRED: _____

NAMES OF WITNESS(ES): _____

SIGNATURES OF WITNESS(ES) (IF POSSIBLE): _____

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE WITNESSES' Demeanor/APPEARANCE: _____

SIGNATURE OF REPORTER: _____ TODAY'S DATE: _____

An adult witnessing sexual abuse of a minor and/or an Event Leader or Child/Youth Worker who believes that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect or that abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death shall immediately report such abuse to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services at 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437), and/or call 911 if a life is in immediate danger. Suspected abuse of vulnerable adults shall be reported to 1-800-898-4910 and for anyone over the age of 60 to 1-833-577-6532; call 911 if a life is in immediate danger. Any reporter making a report in good faith is immune from civil and criminal liability under Article 611 of the Louisiana Children's Code.

Appendix C

YOUTH/CHILD EVENT STAFF APPLICATION FORM

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Cell #: _____ Home #: _____

Church: _____

City: _____ Church Phone: _____

Place of Employment: _____

Please answer the following questions honestly (attach sheet if necessary):

- 1) In what area of ministry do you wish to serve and why?

2) What gifts and experience do you bring to this ministry?

3) 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?

Yes _____ No _____ (If yes, please explain)

4) Have you ever been arrested, charged, indicted or convicted for any criminal offense (misdemeanor or felony) other than a traffic violation?

Yes _____ No _____ (If yes, please explain)

5) Have you ever had your driver's license suspended or restricted for any reason?

Yes _____ No _____ (If yes, please describe the date(s) and reasons for each occurrence.)

6) Other than the above questions, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would cause you or the church to have concerns about your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and/or youth?

Yes _____ No _____ (If yes, please explain.)

References: Please list two persons who are familiar with your character and abilities. Contacts at prior churches are appropriate. Please do not include relatives. References are confidential.

1) Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell #: _____ Home #: _____

Nature of the relationship with you: _____

2) Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell #: _____ Home #: _____

Nature of the relationship with you: _____

I understand and agree that:

1) 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, the Presbytery of South Louisiana, its officers, directors, employees, representatives, and/or 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.

2) By signing this form, I certify and affirm that the information I have given is true, complete, and correct in all respects.

3) I hereby give my permission for the Presbytery of South Louisiana 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 action, 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.

4) I fully understand the Presbytery of South Louisiana's Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, including any such duties and responsibilities that might arise as a Mandatory Reporter under the Louisiana law, and agree to abide by applicable laws and procedures.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form is confidential and will be kept on file at the Presbytery of South Louisiana office.

3. Please list and explain any major illness a Participant experience in the last year:

4. Should a Participant's activities be restricted for any reason? If yes, please explain.

5. Date of last tetanus shot:

6. Does the Participant wear glasses or contact lenses?

7. For the Participant's safety and our knowledge, is the participant a:

Good swimmer? Fair swimmer? Non-swimmer?

GUARDIAN PERMISSION:

I, _____ the parent and/or guardian of _____
 _____ (the "Participant"), by these presents do give my permission for the Participant to attend and participate in all Presbytery of South Louisiana activities, and for the Presbytery of South Louisiana to provide any necessary transportation for this Participant. I understand the schedule of events and know the costs involved.

I further understand that responsible adults will supervise their activities; however, I also recognize that accidents and/or illnesses occur. In the event of such an accident and/or illness, I recognize that it may be necessary to proceed with medical and/or dental treatment for the well-being of my child. I hereby authorize the directors, officers, employees, and/or agents of the Presbytery of South Louisiana to take my child to medical authorities and hereby authorize the attending physician, surgeon, and/or dentist to exercise their professional judgment; assess the risk incident to the illness or injury; and to choose the necessary treatment their professional judgment determines to be necessary for the health and well-being of my child including, but not limited to, the administration of examinations, diagnostic tests, medication (including anesthetics), performance of surgery, and any and all medical and/or dental care of treatment deemed necessary, as though I personally was giving them my full approval and support. I further agree to assume responsibility for all medical bills resulting from any such medical treatment.

Further, should it be necessary for the participant to return home prior to schedule as a result of accidents or illness, disciplinary action or otherwise, I hereby agree to assume responsibility for all transportation costs. I hereby release, forever discharge and agree to hold harmless Presbytery of South Louisiana, its directors, employees, and/or agents from any and all liability, claims, and demands, in the event of personal injury, sickness or death, as well as property damage and expenses of any nature or kind which may be incurred by the undersigned and the Participant that may occur while the Participant is participating in the Presbytery of South Louisiana activities.

The undersigned further agrees to hold harmless the Presbytery of South Louisiana, its directors, officers, employees, and/or agents from any liability sustained by said church as a result of negligent, willful, or intentional acts of the Participant, including any expenses incurred.

Parent/Guardian name (printed) : _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant Code of Conduct and Covenant:

Because each Participant is representing the Presbytery of South Louisiana, Christ, and your own families, we expect each student to conform to these rules of conduct during sanctioned youth activities:

- Respect one another, staff, and adult leaders;
- Participation within the group is expected;
- Refrain from the use of individual electronic devices such as cell phones, video games, and music players while involved in Presbytery activities;
- Respect the church's and other people's property;
- Respect and comply with event schedules and rules;
- No possession or use of alcohol, drugs, e-cigarettes or other vaping devices, and/or tobacco;
- Participant must have guardian permission to drive to youth events;
- No fighting, weapons, fireworks, lighters, and/or explosives;
- No offensive or immodest clothing;
- No inappropriate sexual behavior, in action or in speech, or other acts of disrespect toward the leaders or other youth while at youth activities

Participants who fail to comply with these expectations may be sent home at their guardian's expense.

I have read the rules of conduct, the above evaluation of my health, and permission to participate in youth group activities. I agree to abide by those.

Participant's name (printed): _____

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA MEDIA AND PHOTO RELEASE

I grant permission to the PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA and its present and former elders, trustees, officers, directors, associate directors, leaders, employees, administrators, executors, successors, and assigns permit the use of my child's name and/or photographs in any publications of PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA, including but not limited to brochures and newsletters, and to use my child's name and/or photographs in electronic versions of the same publications or on the PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA web site or other electronic forms such as social media.

I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs or printed or electronic matter that may be used in conjunction with them, now or in the future, whether that use is known to me or unknown. I hereby agree to release, defend, and hold harmless PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA and its present and former elders, trustees, officers, directors, associate directors, leaders, employees, administrators, executors, successors, and assigns, including any firm publishing and/or distributing the finished product in whole or in part, whether on paper or via electronic media, from and against any claims, damages or liability arising from or related to the use of the photographs, including but not limited to any misuse, distortion, blurring, alteration, optical illusion or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in taking, processing, reduction or production of the finished product, its publication or distribution.

I am the parent or legal guardian of the above named child. I have read this media release before signing below, and I fully understand the contents, meaning and impact of this release. I understand I am free to address any specific questions regarding this release by submitting those questions in writing prior to signing, and I agree that my failure to do so will be interpreted as a free and knowledgeable acceptance of the terms of this release.

Child or Participant's name: _____

Signature of Participant or Adult Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Designated Contact persons for the Presbytery of South Louisiana

Stated Clerk *(until 2/28/23)*

Barry Chance

barry@pbysouthla.org

985 415 2630

Stated Clerk *(after 3/1/23)*

Nanette Cagney

nanette@pbysouthla.org

337 794 6197

General Presbyter

Richard Williams

richard@pbysouthla.org

502 554 0272

Presbytery of South Louisiana Youth Ministry Coordinator

Amy Heintz

amy@pbysouthla.org

318 230 4235