

**Central Presbyterian Church
Geneseo, New York**

Child Protection Policy

Purpose

The members of Central Presbyterian Church (CPC) are committed to providing a nurturing environment for children and to safeguarding those participating in its activities. This policy outlines practices and procedures to protect children from incidents that might cause physical or emotional harm and to guide staff and volunteers, protecting them from false allegations of abuse.

Definitions

Children – People less than 18 years of age.

Child abuse – An act or failure to act by a person responsible for a child's care which results in serious physical or emotional injury, creates a substantial risk of such injury, or results in an act of sex abuse against the child or risk of such an act. The injury may be intentional or the result of ignorance or neglect.

Child sexual abuse – Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, any inappropriate contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person. This contact or interaction between a child and an adult is always considered forced, whether or not it was consented to by the child.

Members – All who belong to or regularly attend this Church.

Volunteers – Those who provide services for this Church and receive no remuneration or monetary benefits. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups.

Screening of Those with Responsibilities Requiring Interaction with Children

1. Procedures for paid staff screening

- a. Applicants for paid positions will complete an employment application listing prior experience and references.
- b. References will be checked by the Personnel Committee or the Director of Christian Education with notes kept in a confidential personnel file. The registry of known sex offenders will also be checked.
- c. An applicant with a history of incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse will not be hired for work involving contact with children.
- d. Applicants will be interviewed by the Pastor and members of the Personnel Committee.
- e. A criminal background check will be performed after an applicant has provided a signed authorization. (See Appendix A) The criminal background check will not be needed if the applicant is performing work outside the church which has required a check. Information gained will be carefully considered before an applicant is hired to work with children.

2. Procedures for volunteer screening

- a.** Applicants for volunteer positions working with children will complete a volunteer application listing prior experience working with children and references. (See Appendix B). No application will be needed if a family member/guardian or church member known to paid staff volunteers in the nursery or a church school class on an occasional basis.
- b.** References may be phoned.
- c.** If an applicant has been attending CPC for less than six months, the applicant will be asked for permission for CPC to contact the church(es) last attended.

All applications and references will be confidential and maintained in a locked file.

Training

Both paid staff and volunteers working with children will receive copies of the CPC Child Protection Policy and given updated copies as revisions are made. After studying the policy they will sign the Acknowledgment of Receipt of the Child Protection Policy. (See Appendix C). These forms will be kept in confidential personnel files. Paid staff will receive a copy of the Policy each year to review as part of staff appraisal. Paid staff will review the policy with volunteers at the start of each academic year.

Safe Practices

Open Door – When working with children, staff and volunteers will use rooms with windows that allow the interiors to be visible to those outside the room or will leave doors open. Doors will never be locked. Parents are welcome to visit at any time.

Two Leader – If possible two leaders should be present for work with CPC’s children. For nursery care one leader may be a teen, fourteen or older. If two leaders can not be present the open door practice must be followed.

Rest Room Use – Before children from the nursery use the restroom an adult or teen will check that the room is empty. One adult or older teen should stand outside the open restroom door when children from the nursery are in the room. If more than one child is using the restroom, the children should be of similar age.

Neither physical nor verbal abuse will be tolerated.

Injuries during Church Activities – First Aid kits are available in the church kitchen and nursery for simple injuries during a church activity. All injuries should be reported to the parent/s when the child is picked up. For more serious injuries the parent/s should be contacted at once.

Fire safety – Those interacting with children should be aware of nearest exits. In case of fire children should be escorted from the building at once. When children’s safety is assured, a worker should dial 911.

Computer Use – Use of computers during church sponsored activities will be closely monitored by adult leaders.

Return of Children – Nursery workers will release children only to their parent/grandparent/guardian or to an adult previously approved. When older children attend activities leaders will remain at the activity site until all children have been picked up by a parent/grandparent/guardian or by a previously approved adult.

Vehicle Use – Drivers must be 18 or older and hold valid NYS licenses. The transportation of one child with only one adult present should be avoided except in emergency situations. If it is planned for one adult to drive one child, advance parental permission should be obtained.

Overnight Activities – For overnight activities two adults must be present. If the children include both boys and girls, both male and female leaders must be present. Situations must be avoided that would allow one adult and one child to share a bedroom. If both boys and girls are present, the activity should be held in a large, open room with precautions taken for privacy in dressing and restroom use.

Response to Allegations of Abuse

CPC will take all allegations of child abuse seriously. Anyone suspecting the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of a child at CPC whether by direct observation or by hearing of such abuse will report it to the Pastor, the Director of Christian Education or the Clerk of Session. All allegations will be given to the Clerk of Session who will decide if the allegation requires a discussion with the concerned adult(s) about the church's Child Protection Policy or requires further measures.

If the allegation requires further measures and if the adult involved is a CPC staff member or volunteer that person will be prohibited from any contact with CPC children until the issue is resolved. The safety of the child or children involved is the first concern.

The following guidelines will apply:

All reports will be confidential except as outlined above.

Both alleged victim(s) and accused will be treated with dignity and respect.

The Pastor/Clerk of Session will:

Notify the parent(s)/guardian of child/children involved about the incident.

Following NYS Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6, Section 415, reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment shall be made immediately by telephone (New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register - 1(800)342-3720) and in writing within 48 hours after such oral report. Written reports shall be made to the appropriate local child protective services on this form (Report of Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment, DSS-2221-A).

The Clerk of Session will:

Appoint an investigative committee composed of members of Session and the Personnel Committee. The committee will document the incident. The reporter will complete an Incident Report (See Appendix D) Reports from other witnesses will be gathered as necessary.

Report the incident to the Presbytery and insurance company.

Contact the appropriate civil authorities.

Meet with the accused and show the accused the written report of the accusations.

Dissemination

After the Policy is approved by session, it will be provided to the congregation. Paper copies will be available in the narthex at the time of dissemination. This procedure will be repeated if the Policy is revised.

The Policy will also be available on the church website (cpcgeneseo.org).

Appendices

Appendix A – Background check authorization

Appendix B - Application for volunteer

Appendix C – Acknowledgment of receipt of Child Protection Policy

Appendix D – Incident reporting form

5/2016; 3/2017; 3/2018

Geneseo Central Presbyterian Church
Child Protection Policy: Appendix A
Background Check Authorization
CONFIDENTIAL

Print Name: (last, first, middle) _____

Former Name and Dates Used: _____

Current Address: _____

Previous Address (from): _____

Previous Address (from): _____

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Telephone(s) Number: _____

Driver's License Number/State: _____

The information in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize Geneseo Central Presbyterian Church (CPC) and its designated agents and representatives to conduct a comprehensive review of my background to generate a report for employment purposes. I understand that the scope of the report may include, but is not limited to the following areas: verification of Social Security number, current and previous residences, employment history, education background, character references, drug testing, civil and criminal history records from any criminal justice agency in any or all federal, state, county jurisdictions, driving records, birth records, and any other public records.

I further authorize any individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency (including the Social Security Administration and law enforcement agencies) to divulge any and all information, verbal or written, pertaining to me, to CPC or its agents. I further authorize the complete release of any records or data pertaining to me which the individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency may have, to include information or data received from other sources.

I hereby release CPC, the Social Security Administration, and its agents, officials, representatives, or assigned agencies, including officers, employees, or related personnel both individually and collectively, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind, which may, at any time, result to me, my heirs, family or associates because of compliance with this authorization and request to release.

Signature _____ Date _____

Geneseo Central Presbyterian Church

Child Protection Policy: Appendix B

Volunteer Application

To protect the children of Central Presbyterian Church staff, volunteers who will be interacting with children are asked to provide information about themselves. This information as well as that from background checks will be kept in confidential personnel files.

Print Name: (last, first, middle): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email address: _____

Previous Address (if present address valid less than one year):

Driver's License # _____

Are you 18 years of age or older? Yes No (If less than 18, give birth date) _____

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? Yes No

Have you been charged with negligence or physical/sexual abuse? Yes No

Have any complaints or allegations of misconduct involving children been made against you? Yes No

If yes, were the complaints or allegations resolved in your favor? Yes No

I grant permission to Central Presbyterian Church to contact the churches and other personal references given. I know that this information helps protect the children of Central.

Signature _____ Date: _____

References (Please do not give names of family members)

Name Address Phone

Name Address Phone

Name Address Phone

Geneseo Central Presbyterian Church

Child Protection Policy: Appendix C

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge that on (date) _____, I received a copy of The Child Protection Policy of the Geneseo Central Presbyterian Church; that I have read the policy; that I understand its meaning, and that I agree to conduct myself in accordance with the policy. I understand that this acknowledgment will be retained in my personnel file.

Signature _____

Printed name _____

Relationship to Central Presbyterian Church _____

Date _____

5/16

Geneseo Central Presbyterian Church
Child Protection Policy: Appendix D
Incident Reporting Form

Your name: _____ Date: _____

Contact information: Address _____

Telephone _____

Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?

My own concerns ___

Those raised by someone else _____ Please explain giving name(s) and contact information for those concerned.

Name(s) of children involved: _____

Description of incident or concern including date, time and location. (Use back of sheet if necessary.)

Were there other witnesses? Yes/No (Use back of sheet if necessary.)

Name(s) of other witness(es): _____

Contact information for other witnesses:

(over)

In regard to this incident, please provide details for any person alleged to have caused incident/injury.

Name _____

Age (if child) _____

Address/telephone _____

Please provide details of actions taken to date.

Has the incident been reported to external agencies? Yes/No

If yes, please provide further details.

This account is true to the best of my knowledge:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____