



The Code of Conduct

for the safety and protection of the children and youth at

Clemson Presbyterian Church

Revised 2018

Clemson Presbyterian Church (CPC) is committed to the protection of the physical and emotional well-being of children, particularly those involved in ministries under the supervision of CPC ministry personnel. CPC works to foster a culture wherein children are nurtured and protected, thus working to prevent physical or sexual abuse. The primary goal of any policy is the protection of the child, as well as the spiritual development of a nurturing covenant community.

Child abuse (sexual or physical) is not in keeping with the gospel, and therefore is not tolerated by CPC. Anyone who is determined to have committed, been convicted of, or confessed to child abuse is disqualified for service that brings them into contact with children or youth participating in CPC programs. Also, those under the discipline of the church may be deemed by the session as ineligible.

In our commitment to the protection of the children, CPC staff and volunteers will adhere to the following code of conduct at all times:

The Importance of Accountability

CPC ministry leaders will plan all ministry involving children and youth in a way that minimizes the risk of physical endangerment of children. Minimizing risk when working with children and youth includes ensuring that the activities of adult staff and volunteers are visible to other adults.

- When possible, staff should ensure classroom doors have windows to improve visibility. If the door does not have a window, the door should be left open.
- Supervision by ministry personnel also reduces risk. Ministry staff or church leaders shall periodically and randomly check areas where children and adults are together.

Discipline

According to Scripture, parents possess the primary responsibility and authority to discipline their children. In a ministry situation, CPC leaders and volunteers possess a derived and limited authority to discipline in a way that teaches (when the issues are ignorance or inexperience) and corrects (when the issue is willful misbehavior) the child. Biblical discipline involves development, not punishment. Therefore, discipline in a ministry context shall not include slapping, hitting, shaming, yelling at, or belittling a child.

Verbal Interaction

Words can be used powerfully to support and encourage a child, especially words of praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Adults shall avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to particular children or youth to the exclusion of others.

Inappropriate verbal interaction can harm a child and includes:

- Language that is shaming, belittling, humiliating, or threatening
- Name calling, cursing, harsh rebuking, or making derogatory remarks about a child
- Telling inappropriate or sexual jokes or making sexually suggestive comments
- Telling personal secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children or youth

Overcoming Isolation

CPC leadership teams will ensure that an adequate number of adults will supervise children and youth events. Ordinarily, ministry to a child or youth on CPC campus should not involve extensive one-on-one contact. In the rare case that it does, the following procedures shall be followed, as applicable:

- At least two adults shall be present when working with children and youth. When this standard is not possible, staff will reduce isolation by:
 - Having a minimum of two children present
 - Informing the parents of the children about the meeting
 - Conducting the meeting during a time and/or in a location where interaction with the children is visible to others
- CPC staff and volunteers shall always be accountable to other adults regarding interactions with children and youth.
- Counseling or other necessary confidential meetings with children and youth shall be done in common areas with open doors and visible (inside), or well-lit areas (outside) and only when another adult is:
 - In close vicinity
 - Aware that the meeting is occurring
 - Willing to stay in the vicinity until the meeting is complete

Technology

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation. Staff and volunteers shall not engage in private messaging/social networking with children and youth of the opposite sex. Private messaging includes electronic correspondence between two individuals.

Parent Involvement

Parents have the primary responsibility and God-given right to the care of their children. CPC is committed to coming alongside the families. For the protection of the children, all adults (including parents) must complete the screening process laid out in the policy document prior to participating in our nursery ministry classes. Parents shall be informed of planned activities and asked to sign a consent form whenever necessary. CPC staff and ministry leaders will make themselves available to parents to answer any questions or concerns that may arise.

Physical Contact

Healthy, caring touch can edify and encourage a child; yet, unhealthy touch causes distress and is abusive. Staff and volunteers shall observe the following guidelines:

- Touch should always be open and public rather than secretive. A hug given in the context of a group is very different than a hug given behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to the need of the child, and not the need of the adult.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- Touch should be with the child's permission. If the child resists, the adult shall respect the child's response and stop touching him/her.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child. Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for a child that he/she is able to do for themselves, including dressing, going to the bathroom, etc.
- Touch should not include violent behavior. Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold a child against their will, or in any way assault a child.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts:

- Verbal praise, side hugs, shoulder-to-shoulder hugs, pats on the shoulder, back or head (when culturally appropriate).
- For smaller children, touching hands, faces, shoulders, and arms, placing your arm around the child's shoulders; hugging or holding the child when others are present.

The following behaviors are inappropriate or may be perceived as inappropriate; therefore, staff and volunteers shall refrain from:

- Touching a child's buttocks, chest, genital area, or thighs
- Showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child
- Sleeping in bed with a child
- Making inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development
- Making flirtatious or seductive looks (even in a joking way)
- Showing any form of affection that is unwanted by the child
- Showing sexually-suggestive videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with a child
- Engaging in any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature
- Making or participating in jokes that are sexual, degrade other people groups, or participants of CPC activities

Adult staff and volunteers shall monitor each other regarding physical contact with children and hold each other accountable by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted. It is always better to gently confront someone whom you believe is behaving in a way that could be interpreted as inappropriate. The goal is to create a culture where children are safe and adult workers strive to remain above reproach regarding interactions with children and youth.

Reporting Abuse:

When anyone has reason to suspect or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of CPC's work and ministry, they must make a timely report to the Ministry Director and/or the Associate Pastor of Youth and Families.

Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand and agree to Clemson Presbyterian Church's Code of Conduct. In addition it is my responsibility to read and comply with any future updates to the policy, the Code of Conduct, or the reporting procedures.

I confirm that I have never committed, engaged in, been convicted of, or confessed to any form of child molestation, exploitation, or abuse.

I agree not to engage in behavior that is abusive to a child.

I agree that as an individual who serves in a position of trust in ministry to children and youth, I will not tolerate the physical, verbal, or sexual abuse or of a child or youth.

I confirm that I understand the procedures for reporting inappropriate behavior and suspected abuse. I agree to immediately report any reasonable suspicion of, or disclosure of, inappropriate behavior between adults and minors, or between an older youth and a younger child to the appropriate leadership immediately.

I understand that I have a part to play in holding other workers accountable to the Code of Conduct and also give my permission to the other adults in our programs to keep me accountable to the Code of Conduct as well.



The Child and Youth Protection Policy - Excerpts

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Work Restrictions

- 1) Children ages five through ten shall be escorted by a volunteer or supervisor to the bathroom. The volunteer/supervisor will make another adult aware that they will be escorting a child to the bathroom. The adult must first make sure the facility is safe and then must wait outside the restroom until the child exits. If the child is a female, she must be escorted by an adult female.
- 2) Children five years of age or younger (boys and girls) may be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female, but the bathroom door must remain unfastened.
- 3) Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper. Diapers may be changed only by female workers.
- 4) Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing or embracing others, etc.
- 5) Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the person. If in doubt, do not release the child until verifying the person is authorized to pick up the child.

Supervision

- 1) Classroom or Activity Workers: At least two individuals (at least one of whom must be over the age of 18) must be assigned to every function, and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area, during every children's ministry program. Both workers must remain with the children at all times except that one worker may escort children to the restroom in accordance with the requirements of Part V herein. The remaining worker must be visible from the door.
- 2) Workers should arrive at least 5 minutes before a scheduled activity and should keep watch over those in their care until all have been picked up by an authorized person. Do not send children out to find their parents, and do not release any child to await transportation.
- 3) Youth (ages eleven and older) do not require two adults to be present for all activities but will utilize classrooms with viewports or open doors. Additionally, a youth worker should not be alone with an individual youth except in those situations where privacy is warranted. In such cases the activity of one or both parties should be clearly visible by other adult supervision (e.g. pastor's office with counselee or counselor visible from the door).

Discipline

- 1) Workers are not permitted to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
- 2) Disciplinary problems should be reported to the workers' ministry leader or to a parent or guardian.

Notice of Injury, Abuse, or Molestation

Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity must immediately inform their ministry leader or the Pastor of Youth and Families of such injury, abuse, or molestation.