

Cumberland Presbyterian Church

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION AND PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE and EMERGENCY RESPONSE

_____ *Cumberland Presbyterian Church*, located in _____ (the “Church”) remains committed to providing and maintaining a safe, nurturing environment for all adults (18 and older), children, and youth under the age of eighteen (18) while in its care during events which are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Church.

Ministries with Children and Youth

Implicit in the involvement of persons in ministries to children and youth are the Biblically based terms COVENANT and SHEPHERD. There is an implied covenant between the leader and the child and the child’s parents to be a good shepherd of that child, leading him or her towards an understanding of the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

A commitment to this call includes the adoption and enforcement of this Policy on child protection and prevention of child abuse. This policy applies to all clergy, leaders, volunteers and other persons who work with children in any paid or voluntary capacity. All children’s leaders and childcare providers who regularly interact with children or youth must read, be in agreement with, and sign this policy, and affirm that they have not resigned or been terminated from a position or leadership role for reasons related to misconduct.

The Church believes that appropriate personal relationships between adult leaders and children and youth of the Church foster the community of Christ. Common expressions of affection (appropriate hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayer) or physical caretaking (changing diapers, etc.) are appropriate in our community of caring Christians. Care will be taken, however, that adults do not behave in a sexually inappropriate way during Church-sponsored activities, such as by demonstrating excessive physical expressions of affection or imposing such expressions upon another individual.

It is the goal of the Church that two adults be present with children at all Church-sponsored activities. The Church recognizes that there will be times when an unaccompanied adult may be present with a group of children or youth or with a single child or youth. In those circumstances, if an adult must be alone with children or youth for a brief given time (such as Sunday school or Bible class), he/she can only do so when subject to being visually observed at all times, such as through an open door or door with window. If children and youth need to be transported it should be in groups. An unaccompanied adult will not transport an individual child in a Church-sponsored activity without the permission of the child’s parent or guardian.

Prohibited conduct includes any form of physical, emotional, or mental abuse of a child, including but not limited to the exploitation of a child, which breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship. Sexual exploitation of a child includes, but is not limited to, any interaction between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of an adult. This may or may not include touching.

Prohibited conduct may include but not be limited to:

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of sexual conduct towards a protected minor;
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a protected minor;
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between an older child and a younger child;
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision;
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a minor;
- Possessing obscene or pornographic (sexually explicit) materials at any function of the Church;
- Possession or being under the influence of any illegal substances;
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a minors' function of the Church;
- Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a minor;
- Carrying any type of weapon on Church property.

The first person to learn of an incident of misconduct toward a child during a Church-sponsored activity (either a person witnessing or told about the incident, or the victim) should immediately report this incident to the Youth Director, Children's Coordinator, Director of Christian Education, Pastor, or designated Elder. The Session shall seek such professional advice as deemed necessary and shall take appropriate steps to determine whether there is any validity. Any potentially valid incident shall be reported promptly to civil authorities. All persons involved with the report or investigation shall keep the information in strictest confidence. The pastor of _____ Church and the Session shall be

informed of any complaints that are deemed to be potentially valid.

Upon accusation, the accused is entitled to prompt and fair disposition of such serious charges. It is acknowledged that Church members and ministers are subject to inquiry and discipline under the Confession of Faith and the Rules of Discipline of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Physical, mental or emotional misconduct shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of any Church employee, leader or childcare provider.

I have read and agree to comply with these policies. I also state that I have not been arrested or convicted of a crime involving sexual abuse or misconduct as defined in this Policy Statement, or resigned from or been terminated from any position for reasons relating to sexual, physical, or mental abuse or misconduct, as defined in this Policy Statement. I hereby agree to authorize any background check Church may choose to conduct, and to sign any documents necessary to do so.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Care for All Persons

Fire Safety

In the event of a fire, all persons will be directed to _____ and wait for fire personnel to arrive. No person shall re-enter the building until cleared by a emergency professional.

Storm Warning

In the event of a storm warning, such as a tornado, all persons should remain in the building and report to _____ and wait until the storm warning has passed. No person shall leave the building during this time.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, the following procedures should be followed.

1. Call 9-1-1
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Spokesperson for the Church

In the event of any type of incident, all media should be directed to the designated session representative, _____. This should be the only person in conversation with the media at any time.