

**Resources on  
Child Protection Policies  
for Congregations**

**Compiled by the  
Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinating Team  
National Capital Presbytery  
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## Child Protection Policies A Needs Assessment Checklist

The following checklist can help you conduct a quick needs assessment of your child protection policy needs. Please take a moment and check each statement that is true for your church.

Statements left unchecked indicate a procedure or policy area in which your church or organization may be vulnerable to abuse or possible litigation if an incident occurs.

- We currently screen all paid employees, including clergy, who work with youth or children.
- We currently screen all volunteer workers for any position involving work with youth or children.
- We do a reference check on all paid employees working with youth or children.
- We train all of our staff who work with children or youth, both paid and volunteer, to understand the nature of child sexual abuse.
- We train all of our staff who work with children or youth, both paid and volunteer, how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse.
- We take our policies to prevent sexual abuse seriously and see that they are enforced.
- Our workers understand state law concerning child abuse reporting obligations.
- We have a clearly defined reporting procedure for a suspected incident of abuse.
- We have a specific response strategy to use if an allegation of sexual abuse is made at our church.
- We have insurance coverage if a claim should occur.
- We are prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

## What a child protection policy should include

**Preamble:** A statement of purpose, practically and theologically

### **Definitions**

- What is (and is not) sexual misconduct/sexual abuse?
- Who are 'children and youth' for the purposes of this policy?
- To whom does the policy apply (paid staff and volunteers)?

### **Standards of conduct**

- A general statement of appropriate interaction
- The Rule of 2
- Overnight activities
- Appropriate discipline

### **A Plan for implementation**

- Eligibility requirements
  - Church member
  - Waiting period – the Six Month Rule
- Application procedure
- Reference and background checks
- Signed acknowledgment of understanding/covenant

### **How the policy will be administered**

- Who is responsible for oversight of the program?
- Who is responsible for administration (gathering, reviewing and securing applications and other documentation)?
- Who will notify applicants of perceived problems?

### **How members will be made aware of the policy**

- Widely disseminated, especially initially (newsletter, website, announcements, special presentations/classes)
- In new member packets
- Annual reminder to congregation
- At teacher training and orientation
  - Review the policy
  - Renew the commitment/covenant

### **Procedures for handling misconduct allegations**

- To whom should allegations be reported?
  - For complaints against church staff (non-ordained) and volunteers
  - For complaints against ordained clergy
- Who will ensure that all the reports are made?
- Who will maintain contact with the police, the victim and victim's family, the accused?
- Who takes the lead in guiding the session in discussions of further actions?

### **Include date policy is adopted by the Session**

**Send a copy of the adopted policy to Stated Clerk of the Presbytery**

**Evaluate it annually – Is it being followed? Does it need revision?**

## Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

You need no special information when reporting other than the obvious – what happened, where, when and whom. Depending on the jurisdiction and the time of the call, you may talk to a policeman, social worker, psychiatrist, volunteer, etc. All are instructed regarding next steps. Make a note of the person you spoke with, time of the call, and what you reported and heard.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Phone Number</b> (24 hours unless otherwise noted)
<b>District of Columbia</b>	202-671-7233
<b>Maryland State Hotline</b>	
	1-800-332-6437
Montgomery County	240-777-4417
Prince Georges County	301-909-2450 normal business hours 301-699-8605 after hours
St. Mary's County	240-895-7016 normal business hours 301-475-8016 after hours
<b>Virginia State Hotline</b>	
	1-800-552-7096
Alexandria City	703-838-0800
Arlington County	703-228-1500
Fairfax County/Falls Church	703-324-7400
Fauquier County	1-800-552-7096 State Hotline
Loudoun County	703-771-5437
Manassas City	703-361-8277
Manassas Park	703-335-8880, Press 8
Prince William County	703-792-4200

## Contacts and Resources

National Capital Presbytery 240-482-1566

Wilson Gunn, General Presbyter: [wgunn@thepresbytery.org](mailto:wgunn@thepresbytery.org)

Dick McFail, Stated Clerk: [rmcfail@thepresbytery.org](mailto:rmcfail@thepresbytery.org)

LaJuan Quander, Communications Director: [lquander@thepresbytery.org](mailto:lquander@thepresbytery.org)

The Source 240-482-1575

## Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinating Team

Leslianne Braunstein, Convener, 202-329-7800

Julia Schaeffer, Member: 301-587-6844

[www.thepresbytery.org](http://www.thepresbytery.org) >> Resources

>> Policies

Sexual Misconduct Policy

Code of Ethics

>> Source

Search the Source's online catalog of materials: [www.sourceinc.org](http://www.sourceinc.org)

[www.pcusa.org/sexualmisconduct](http://www.pcusa.org/sexualmisconduct)

A new Web site containing a variety of resources for Presbyterians dealing with sexual misconduct issues has gone "live." The theme of the site at [www.pcusa.org/sexualmisconduct](http://www.pcusa.org/sexualmisconduct) is "Safe Churches." Work on the Web site began in response to recommendations from the Independent Committee of Inquiry, which investigated large-scale abuse of missionary children in the Congo between the 1940s and 1970s. Pat Hendrix, the church's sexual misconduct ombudsperson, said development of the Web site was guided in part by the Congo survivors group. The Web site contains sexual misconduct-related definitions, awareness-raising resources, guidelines for creating sexual misconduct policies for congregations, protocols for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct, resources for rebuilding trust that has been shattered in a religious community by incidents of sexual misconduct, and PC(USA) policy statements on sexual misconduct. For more information, contact Pat Hendrix by phone toll-free at 888-728-7228, extension 5285 or by email at [Phendrix@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:Phendrix@ctr.pcusa.org).

**We Won't Let it Happen Here! Preventing Child Sexual Abuse in the Church**  
Presbyterian Church USA, 2002.

To order, call 1-800-524-2612, and ask for PDS# 72-650-97-002. Free.