SAFE CHILD POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KIRKWOOD

General Purpose Statement
The First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood ("Church") seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children, youth, volunteers, and staff who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the following practices, our goal is to protect the children, youth, volunteers, and staff from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior.

Definitions
For the purpose of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" refer to all persons under the age of eighteen years of age. The term "volunteer" refers to any person, unpaid, who is providing programming or supervising activities for children on behalf of the church. (For employees, please refer to the Safe Child Policy for Employees.) "Program Staff" refers to the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Director of Music Ministries, the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries, the Children's Ministries Assistant, and the Music Ministry Associate/Substitute Organist. "Child Abuse" is any action or lack of action by an adult or another child which endangers, harms, or demeans a child's physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual health and development.

Selection of Volunteers
All volunteers who desire to work with children will be screened in the following ways:

1. **Six Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with children until s/he has been involved with the Church for a minimum of six (6) months. *For temporary residents or special situations the six month rule may be waived after a personal interview with a Program Staff Member and the approval of the Pastor.*

2. **Volunteer Information Form ("VIF")**

All persons seeking to become a volunteer working with children must complete a Volunteer Information Form. The VIF will request basic contact information, previous experience working with children, prior church affiliation, a gifts inventory, employment information, and disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The VIF will be stored at the Church on a need-to-know basis.

3. **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of VIF deemed satisfactory, a member of the Program Staff shall schedule a face-to-face interview with the applicant to discuss her/his suitability for the volunteer position.

4. **Criminal Background Check**

The Church shall perform a criminal background check on all persons prior to them working as a volunteer. Prospective volunteers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the Church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will not be allowed to work with children. What constitutes a disqualifying offense will be determined by the Pastor, in consultation with the Program Staff, on a case by case basis. Criminal Background Check forms will be stored at the Church on a need-to-know basis.

Two Adult Rule
It is our goal to have, at minimum, two unrelated adults, employees or volunteers, in attendance at all Church programs and activities for children. *If for some reason only one adult is in attendance, the*

***Open Door Policy** (below) shall be observed.* We do not allow a child to be alone with an unrelated adult on our premises or at any sponsored activity *except for private music instruction with written parental permission.* Married persons are considered one adult under this policy and must, in the absence of another unrelated adult volunteer or employee, adhere to the **Open Door Policy** (below).

Open Door Policy
Doors without windows (classroom, hall, activity room, etc.) shall remain open when, on rare occasions, one adult volunteer or employee is working with a group of children. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside a room.

Allegations of Child Abuse
Child abuse may include:

Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, bullying, and biting.

Emotional abuse – lack of appropriate nurture, love, care, and security including constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.

Sexual abuse – any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a child is being used for sexual stimulation of a perpetrator. It may be violent or non-violent, including behaviors that involve inappropriate touching of a child for a sexual purpose and non-touching behaviors such as inappropriate comments, pornographic videos, obscene phone calls, inappropriate contact via social media, exhibitionism, and allowing a child to witness sexual activity.

Neglect – depriving a child of their essential needs of food, water, shelter, clothing, education, medical care, etc.

In the event that a volunteer at Church becomes aware of or witnesses suspected abuse of a child under her/his care, it must be reported immediately to Program Staff who shall immediately inform the Pastor. The Pastor shall implement the procedures outlined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy for any alleged case of Child Abuse reported to her/him.

Childcare Check-in & Check-out
For children being checked into the nursery, the parent or guardian shall provide the nursery worker with an immediately accessible cellphone number so that, if the need arise, the parent or guardian can be contacted promptly. Only the parents or guardian can check-out the child from the nursery.

It is the desire of the Church to provide not only a safe environment for all children but also a healthy one as well. Parents and guardians are encouraged to be considerate of other children, adults, volunteers, and employees of the Church when placing a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off for nursery or participate in programs or activities for children:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours;
- Green or yellow runny nose;
- Eye or skin infection;
- Persistent cough; or
- Any symptoms that suggest a communicable or infectious disease.

Medication Policy
The Church will NOT administer prescription medications to children. Exceptions to this will be for children with life-threatening conditions, such as asthma or severe allergic reactions, or children with a

medical regimen that intersects with Church programs or activities. Parents or guardians of children with these conditions shall develop a plan of action with the appropriate member of the Program Staff.

Discipline Policy
The Church shall NOT, under any circumstances, administer corporal punishment, including parents or guardians of children while participating in Church programs or activities. **Volunteers shall never administer corporal punishment.**

Restroom Guidelines
Children five years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available then a volunteer or employee shall:

- escort a child to a bathroom;
- ensure the bathroom is empty;
- wait outside the bathroom while the child is inside;
- if the child is taking longer than anticipated, open the door, call the child by name, and assess the situation;
- if the volunteer or employee needs to enter the bathroom to provide assistance, the bathroom door (and stall door) should be propped open; and
- escort the child back to the class, program, or activity.

For the protection of all, volunteers and employees should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and NEVER be in with a child in a stall with the stall door closed.

Accidental Injuries
For minor injuries appropriate first aid (Band-Aids, etc.) shall be provided and the child's parent or guardian shall be informed upon pickup. For injuries requiring medical treatment, the volunteer or employee shall summon the Program Staff person on site and the parent/guardian. If warranted, the volunteer or employee shall call 911. Within 24 hours of the incident, the Program Staff shall submit an INCIDENT REPORT to the Pastor. (Incident Reports can be found in the Church Office.)

Training
Prior to beginning their work with children, volunteers shall receive training on this policy by the appropriate Program Staff person. The Church will strive to provide opportunities for additional training and review of this policy as needed.

Approved by Session on September 19, 2017