

P R E S B Y T E R Y
OF EAST IOWA



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES



**Echo Hill Presbyterian Church
Cedar Rapids Iowa**

Approved by Session on April 20, 2009

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ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS IOWA

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Jesus clearly affirmed the great importance of children when he took a little child in his arms and said in Mark 9:37, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” And again when He said in Mark 10:14, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.”

I. INTRODUCTION

I. A. Purpose -

We recognize that abuse of children and youth occurs often in our society and can occur in our church. We are also aware that allegations and incidents of abuse can be devastating to the accuser, accused, their families and the congregation.

We affirm that children and youth are a gift from God and that the future of the church rests with them. We further affirm that it is our obligation to protect their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

The objectives of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures are to:

1. Provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our children and youth.
2. Protect volunteers and paid staff from false allegations of abuse.
3. Provide prompt and compassionate response to allegations of abuse.
4. Protect the church from unfavorable publicity and legal action.

I. B. Statement of Prohibition -

The abuse of children or youth will not be tolerated in any form from any individual(s). Instances of abuse will be reported and dealt with in accordance with this policy. If the instance of abuse is in violation of state or federal law the incident will be reported to law enforcement authorities for investigation and prosecution. When appropriate, sexual and physical abuse will be reported to the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Individuals who have been convicted of, or plead guilty to or no contest to sexual, mental or physical abuse to children or adults shall not be accepted to work with children or youth in any capacity. No unscreened volunteers will be permitted to work with children or youth after September 1st 2009.

I. C. Definitions -

- 1. Adult** - A person must be at least age 19, be at least five years older than the children or youth he or she is working with and have met the screening and other requirements of this policy to qualify as one of the two adults under the two-adult rule or in any other function involving the supervision of, or working with, children or youth.
- 2. Child Abuse** - Child abuse as used in this policy means abuse of any child or youth to include the following: Physical Abuse, including any physical contact intended to coerce or do harm, any hitting, spanking, or shaking. Emotional/Verbal Abuse, including insults, name calling, belittling remarks, unfavorable comparisons with other children or youth, shaming, deliberately causing fear, or using speech to hurt. Spiritual Abuse, including using Scripture or church authority to coerce, control or shame; using threats about condemnation from God or making threats about God withholding love to control behavior. Sexual Abuse, which is defined as any sexual contact with children or youth, including fondling private parts, oral, genital, or anal penetration, sexual intercourse, rape, suggestive sexual comments, showing pornography (sexually explicit material), exposing sexual organs, allowing children or youth to witness sexual activity.
- 3. Child and Youth** - A child is defined as any person from birth through completion of the fifth grade. A youth is defined as any person from immediately following completion of the fifth grade (usually beginning with the summer following the fifth grade) through completion of the twelfth grade or age 18 which ever comes later. During summer fellowship programs a person who has just completed fifth or twelfth grade is considered a youth.
- 4. Christian Education Team** - “Christian Education Team” refers to the team that is responsible for programs and/or events utilizing volunteers who work with children and/or youth.
- 5. Pastor** - “Pastor” refers to the pastor, senior pastor, solo pastor, commission lay pastor, student pastor, or other individual who is serving in the capacity of the pastoral leader of the church.
- 6. Paid Staff** - “Paid Staff” refers to anyone who is paid by the church, or through a contract employment agency, for specific work. (i.e. administrative assistants, custodians, music staff, youth worker staff, Christian educators)
- 7. Volunteer(s)** - The use of the word “volunteer(s)” in this document refers only to volunteers who would be working with children and/or youth and require screening as stipulated in this Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES, PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

II. A. Responsibility for Administration of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures -

- 1. Summary of Responsibilities** - The Session is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures, including screening of applicants, the training and education required by the policy, reporting of allegations or incidents of abuse and responding to such reports. When practical, all or part of these responsibilities are delegated along with the authority to accept or decline any volunteer for any program or area of the church's life concerned with children and/or youth to the Child Protection Team. This Team shall report to the session.

- 2. Composition and Selection of Child Protection Team Members** - The Child Protection Team is composed of three to five individuals selected to represent a cross section of the congregation and appointed by the session. The members may be members of the congregational, not serving on the session, and/or session members. Members are appointed annually and may be reappointed each year to an unlimited number of terms. This allows members of the Child Protection Committee to build up substantial experience and expertise in the content of the volunteer jobs, the provisions of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures and the screening process. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of the Child Protection Committee with other recommended members being: the Sunday School Superintendent, the Christian Education Director, and a representative from the Staff Relations Team. Other church congregation members may be added to the team but the total membership should not exceed five.

II. B. Screening Process for Paid Staff and Volunteer Positions -

The act of screening greatly reduces the risk that child abuse will occur and increases the probability that the objectives of the Policy, as defined on page 2 above will be achieved.

- 1. Screening Process for Volunteers Who Work With Children or Youth** - The Christian Education Team or individuals responsible for children and youth programs will recruit volunteers. The Child Protection Team is responsible for screening volunteers. This screening process shall include the following:
 - a. The Team recruiting the volunteers will supply each volunteer with the “Application for Volunteers Working with Children or Youth” (hereinafter referred to as the “Application” and found as Attachment A, Page 1- 4), along with any other appropriate forms, and request they complete them and return them to the Child Protection Team. The Application consists of:
 - Page 1, Summary of the Child Protection Policy.
 - Page 2, Code of Conduct for Working with Children or Youth.
 - Page 3, Application for Working with Children and/or Youth.
 - Page 4, Background Investigation Consent.

(II.B.1. Continued)

- b. The volunteer will complete the Application and any other forms requested and return them to the Child Protection Team in a self-addressed envelope marked “Confidential, to be opened only by the Child Protection Team” or a similar message.
- c. The applicant will be requested to sign a Background Investigation Consent. (Attachment A page 4)
- d. The Child Protection Team will conduct the screening of volunteers itself, and determine if any volunteer would not be suitable to work with children or youth as a result of information gathered through the screening process. The screening will include a criminal background check and check of the appropriate state sex offender registries for every prospective volunteer going back seven (7) years. If the applicant will be driving children or youth it will also include a review of the applicant’s driving record as detailed in section II.B.3.
- e. Alternatively the Team may elect to acquire this and other background information through a search vendor. The Presbytery office can provide information on contacting such vendors.
- f. Prior to making a final determination on suitability the Child Protection Team will review all applicants with the Pastor to determine if he or she has information that would pertain to the suitability of the volunteer that the Child Protection Team might not have.
- g. The Child Protection Team will also review the volunteers for the various programs with the Church Staff in charge of that program. If the Pastor or Church Staff knows of any reason why any of the volunteers would not be suitable for the position being sought he or she will communicate to the Child Protection Team that such volunteer should not be considered. If the reason for this judgment is felt to be a confidential matter the reason need not be disclosed to the Child Protection Team.
- h. The Child Protection Team will provide the Pastor with a list of any volunteers who are deemed not suitable for working with children and/or youth and the reasons for this conclusion. The Pastor, or an Associate Pastor designated by him or her, and the chair(s) of the Child Protection Team will privately discuss this conclusion with the individual. This interview will give the individual an opportunity to provide additional information he or she feels would mitigate the decision of the Child Protection Team. If appropriate the Pastor may suggest that the individual volunteer for a different position for which he or she is qualified and/or withdraw his or her application to work with children and/or youth. The Pastor may disclose the names of individuals who have been rejected to the team leader of the appropriate children and youth program team(s) (usually the one recruiting the individual). In most cases this disclosure would be made so that the team does not ask the individual to volunteer for a position working with children and/or youth in the future or as a substitute.

(II.B.1. Continued)

- i. The Child Protection Team will maintain a written record of all volunteers who are not selected as volunteers due to the screening results. This list will be maintained in a locked file on the church premises and will be available only to the Child Protection Team. The list will not be circulated to any other individuals or teams except as designated by this policy.
- j. In addition, the Child Protection team will keep on file all completed paperwork used in the screening process. Records will be retained indefinitely, since minors typically may bring charges years after the alleged incident took place. These files may be scanned into computer records.

2. Screening Process for Paid Staff Positions - The Child Protection Team may retain responsibility for screening paid staff or may direct that applications and related documents for paid staff be directed to the Staff Relations Team. Screening of all applicants for paid staff positions shall include the following: (Excluding called clergy who have been previously screened by the Presbytery)

- a. Each applicant will complete an application form supplied by the church. (See Attachment C)
- b. The application will include the listing of at least three personal references. Each reference will be contacted by the church to determine the suitability of the applicant for the position being sought. (See Attachment D to document of reference check)
- c. Each applicant will be interviewed by the appropriate individual(s) and/or team(s).
- d. The applicant's previous employer(s) covering the preceding seven years will be contacted to determine suitability for the position being sought.
- e. The church will contact any organization(s) where the applicant has worked with children and/or youth, also to determine suitability.
- f. The applicant will be requested to sign a Background Investigation Consent. (Attachment A page 4).
- g. The church will request authorities conduct a criminal background check.
- h. The church will check the state Sex Offender Registry as well as the Department of Human Services' Child Abuse Registry for each state where the applicant has lived in the past seven years.
- i. Paid Staff who will be working with children and/or youth will also be asked to read and sign the "Code of Conduct." (See Attachment A, Page 2)

(II.B.2. Continued)

Normally the information contained in the documents resulting from the process described above will be seen only by those who are charged with the responsibility for the hiring decision or making recommendations to the person or group with the final hiring authority. For example, in the case of secretaries and custodians those individuals would be the Staff Relations Team.

The objective of this screening process is to determine the suitability of the applicant for the position being sought and to be able to make a realistic comparison among the several candidates that may apply and thereby select the one best suited for the position. For those positions whose incumbents work with children and/or youth there is the additional objective of protecting our children and youth.

- 3. Drivers Who Provide Transportation to Children and Youth** - Any paid staff or volunteer who provides automobile transportation as a part of an event or program sponsored by the church must:
 - a. Be an adult as defined in section I.C.1.
 - b. Have completed the "Vehicle Operator Application". (Attachment B)
 - c. Have a valid driver's license.
 - d. Have automobile liability insurance. (the church's liability insurance does not cover liability when paid staff or a volunteer is the driver)
 - e. Have a satisfactory driving record as verified in a review by the church of a Motor Vehicle Records check on any paid staff or volunteer who will provide transportation for children or youth.
- 4. Six Month Rule** - Volunteers must be members or actively affiliated with the church for at least six months before being allowed to work with children and/or youth. This rule does not apply to Pastors and paid staff who are hired to work with children or youth.
- 5. Occasional Volunteers** - There will always be the need for occasional volunteers. This would normally be as a substitute for another volunteer. To maintain the integrity of the two-adult rule any such volunteer must work with at least one other adult volunteer who has completed the screening process for the position in question.
- 6. Current Paid Staff and Volunteers** - All volunteers in positions working with children and/or youth on the date this policy is adopted, and paid staff who are employed on the date this policy is adopted shall undergo screening required by this policy to the extent such screening has not been previously performed.

II. C. Selection and Placement of Volunteers -

At the conclusion of the screening process the Child Protection Team will forward to the appropriate church staff or the Christian Education Team a list of all volunteers found suitable to work with children and/or youth under the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

II. D. Confidentiality of, and Access to, Documents Pertaining to Volunteers -

The information provided by volunteers, information gathered during the screening process and any information gathered during the investigation of an allegation of abuse will be seen on a need-to-know basis as stated in this policy. All who have access to any such information shall hold it in strict confidence. Only the pastor and/or staff members serving on the Child Protection Team will have initial access to documents related to screening volunteers, and will use them only to determine the suitability under the policy of each volunteer for the position being sought. Any concerns will be initially handled pastorally; unresolved issues will be referred to the Child Protection Team.

II. E. Lead-time Required for Recruiting and Screening Volunteers -

The Child Protection Team and the Christian Education Team having responsibility for programs utilizing volunteers will coordinate and cooperate to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the recruiting performed by the Christian Education Team, the completion and submission of forms by volunteers, and the screening performed by the Child Protection Team to be completed well before the volunteers are needed. If a volunteer has completed all required forms and has completed the Child Protection training but the Child Protection Team has not completed the screening process then that volunteer is considered a, “volunteer in process”. A volunteer in process will be permitted to work with another screened adult to satisfy the two-adult rule in a similar fashion to the “occasional volunteer” provision in section II. B. 5.

III. RULES OF SUPERVISION AND REPORTING

III. A. Supervision -

- 1. Two-Adult Rule -** A minimum of two adults (paid or unpaid), as defined by this policy, must be present to supervise at each activity involving children and/or youth. Exceptions may be made during an event only in extreme circumstances where the safety and/or security of the children or youth would be compromised. Such a circumstance might be the need for one adult to tend to a sick or injured child. It is the intent of this policy that an event will be cancelled if it is known prior to the beginning of the event that at least two adults will not be present to supervise. The reason for this level of emphasis being placed on the two-adult rule is because it is seen as one of the most effective deterrents to abuse.

Recognizing the necessity and benefit of pastoral counseling, one-on-one sessions are to be permitted, but only if the room or office door is kept open, or a glass or clear panel is installed into the door that allows the pastor to be visible at all times. The same rule applies to music or voice lessons. In these cases written parental consent is required.

(III.A.1. Continued)

The Two-Adult Rule applies both on-site at the church as well as away from the church property. An exception will apply in those cases where a pastor, staff person, or volunteer met the child or youth at a public event and remained visible at all times. For example, eating lunch at school with a child or youth would not be a violation of the Rule. Watching a sporting event or concert from the seating area or bleachers is permissible. In no case should the adult leave the event and be alone with the child or youth.

In cases of retreats and overnight activities involving both male and female children and/or youth, there must be at least two male and two female adults supervising the event(s). In the case of retreats and overnight activities involving only one gender of children and/or youth there must be at least two adults of the same gender as the children and/or youth supervising the event(s). There may be times when it becomes impossible to have two adults of each gender supervising a retreat or overnight activity. An exception to this rule may be made as long as two or more children and/or youth are present at all times, the Child Protection Team approves, and the parent(s) of all participating children and/or youth whose adult supervision does not meet the above stated standard sign a consent for this exception.

In providing transportation for church sponsored events or programs there may be times when it is not practical to have more than one adult present in the vehicle, the one adult being the driver. In these instances the two-adult rule may be suspended as long as two children or youth are present at all times. An exception to this rule may be made for a volunteer to transport one child or youth alone to and/or from a church sponsored activity or event if the volunteer has written permission from the child's parent(s).

2. **Younger Helpers** - There may be cases where it is advantageous to provide leadership training for someone who is younger than 19 and to do so by allowing that person to work with children or youth. In such cases a qualified adult must closely supervise that person and there must be at least two adults supervising the activity as defined above. That individual should receive training similar to that received by adult leaders. These children and youth helpers are not subject to screening and do not have to complete a volunteer application.
3. **Supervision Before, During and After Events** - Supervision will be maintained before, during and after any event involving children until the child is in the custody of his or her parent, legal guardian or a person designated to church personnel in writing by the parent or legal guardian as being authorized to accept custody of the child or youth. Older youth may be allowed to leave after an event on his or her own with written permission from his or her parent or legal guardian. Children and youth participating in activities sponsored by the church will not be left unsupervised.
4. **Activities in View** - All activities involving children and/or youth shall be conducted in areas where the activity can be easily viewed by parents and supervisors from outside the space. This will usually be through a window in the door to the space or having the door open.

(III.A. Continued)

- 5. Parents Visit Activities** - Parents are to be encouraged to visit any activity unannounced.
- 6. Children Remain in Area of Activity** - Children and youth involved in programs should remain within the area designated for the program and not wander to other parts of the church without adult supervision. This will help prevent abuse by other children/youth and adults.
- 7. Physical Force** - Physical force may be used by an adult on a child or youth only to the extent necessary to restrain the individual under the following circumstances: (1) To quell a disturbance or prevent an act that threatens to harm another person; (2) To obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object in the possession of the child or youth; (3) For purposes of self-defense or defense of the safety of others; (4) To protect a child or youth from self-inflicted harm.
- 8. Accompanying a Child to the Restroom** - Adults who accompany a child to the restroom should position themselves such that the child has a sense of privacy but where the adults are able to recognize if the child requires assistance. If assistance is needed, the stall door must stay open to remain visible for supervision. In most cases the adults will be the same gender as the child, although this may not always be practical. It is advisable to take more than one child to the rest room at a time.

III. B. Providing Transportation -

- 1. Permission to Ride** - Written permission must be given by the parent or legal guardian for his or her child or youth to ride in any vehicle provided for transportation to any event sponsored by the church. Such permission may be included in approval given by the parent or legal guardian for the child or youth to participate in the event itself.
- 2. Seat Belts** - All occupants of the vehicle must be wearing seat belts at all times the vehicle is moving.
- 3. Route To and From an Activity** - In cases where two or more vehicles begin the journey at the same place and have the same destination, all vehicles will follow the same route.

III. C. Reporting and Responding to Reports of Abuse -

- 1. Training for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Abuse** - The Child Protection Team will coordinate with the Christian Education Team to ensure effective training is conducted on proper procedures for reporting an incident, or alleged incident, of abuse and responding to such a report.

(III.C. Continued)

2. Reporting Allegations and Instances of Abuse, Preliminary Steps - The person reporting an incident of abuse on church property or in conjunction with a church sponsored program or event (normally an eye-witness, or the first adult informed of the abuse, usually by the alleged victim, or the victim's parents) should first:

- a. Secure the safety of the victim. This may include an immediate call to emergency services as deemed necessary.
- b. Secure the safety of others and stabilize the environment in which the incident occurred. The area should not be left unsupervised by an adult in order to report the incident. The reporting adult may have to employ the help of another adult to inform the appropriate pastor or volunteer of the incident.

3. Reporting Allegations and Instances of Abuse, Initial Reporting –

- a. The reporting adult should report the incident to the staff or volunteer person in charge of the event or program where the incident took place. The person in charge of the event should inform the pastor and the Child Protection Team.
- b. The reporting adult should complete the “Allegation of Abuse Form.” (See Attachment F) The completed report is to be confidentially turned into a member of the Child Protection Team.
- c. The church would not normally have a legal obligation to report an allegation or instance of abuse to civil authorities but the church recognizes a moral obligation to make a voluntary report. Also, the Book of Order requires that if a minister of word and sacrament, an elder or a deacon becomes aware of child abuse he or she must report it to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities with very few exceptions (G-6.0204b, G6-0304b and G-6.0402b). Therefore, when an investigation of an incident or allegation confirms that the incident or allegation is consistent with requirements for mandatory reporting, such reports will be made. This will normally be to the local police department and/or the Iowa Department of Human Services.
- d. If the incident is reportable to civil authorities or if the incident otherwise appears to be substantive it should be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The Stated Clerk shall determine if the situation is such that a special committee of the presbytery consisting of elders and pastors from outside the church where the incident took place should be formed. If so, the Stated Clerk shall form such a committee and oversee its work. Normally this committee would enter the process under the section titled, “Further Response” (III.C.5.) and work in conjunction with the church to the conclusion of the response.

(III.C. Continued)

- 4. Responding to Reports of Abuse, Initial Response** - If the accused is a staff member the initial response should be made by the Pastor-in conjunction with the Child Protection Team. If the accused is the Pastor the initial response should be made by the Child Protection Team. Otherwise, the first pastor or responsible adult supervisor on the scene should make the initial response. He or she should:
- a. Gather pertinent information from the victim, accused and witnesses. Information gathered immediately after an incident or allegation can many times be the most helpful in arriving at what actually happened. Treat all involved with respect. An allegation is not a presumption of guilt.
 - b. Preserve whatever evidence is available.
 - c. Ensure the continued stability of the environment.
 - d. If the accused is an adult supervisor or paid staff member, then relieve that person of duties relating to children and/or youth. The individual shall remain relieved until the investigation is completed and the Child Protection Team makes further disposition. If the individual is a paid staff member and the relief of duties amounts to a suspension from all work the suspension shall be with pay.
 - e. If the Associate Pastor or Minister of Music is the one on the scene, he or she should inform the Pastor.
 - f. Inform the parents or legal guardian of the victim, and of the accused if a minor.
- 5. Responding to Reports of Abuse, Further Response** - Primary responsibility for further response is with the Pastor and the Child Protection Team. It is anticipated that the Pastor, or his designee, one or more members of the Child Protection Team, and one or more members of the committee designated by the Stated Clerk if such a committee is formed for the purpose, will work closely together on the further investigation of the allegation or incident to ensure all aspects are covered completely, accurately and with fairness and compassion shown to all parties as follows:
- a. Pastoral care should be extended to the victim(s) and family(ies), if appropriate.
 - b. Pastoral care should be extended to the accused, and family, if appropriate.
 - c. Seek legal advice and counsel.
 - d. Avoid prejudging a situation. The accused shall be afforded full due process in handling the complaint. The accused should be supported and treated with dignity.
 - e. Continue the investigation to conclusion with recommendations to the session for action.

(III.C.5. Continued)

- f. Cooperate with any investigations being conducted by law enforcement and/or the Iowa Department of Human Services.
- g. Document results of the investigation and file as confidential (See “Allegation of Abuse Investigative Checklist” in Attachment G). If law enforcement authorities or the Iowa Department of Human Services have been notified and are, or will be, investigating the allegations, some of the steps suggested in the “Investigative Checklist may not be necessary or appropriate for the church to take.
- h. Inform appropriate individuals of results of the investigation and action taken. Such individuals may be the victim, accused and parents.
- i. Keep the church’s insurance agent informed of the incident or allegation, investigation progress, conclusions and actions taken, if any.

IV. TRAINING AND ADMINISTRATION

IV. A. Training and Education -

- 1. Training and Education of Volunteers and Staff** - The Child Protection Team may delegate responsibility for training and educating required by the policy to the Christian Education Team and/or the Christian Education Director responsible for children and youth programs and retains oversight. It may delegate such responsibility to the Staff Relations Team for paid staff, except for pastor and retains oversight. It may delegate such responsibility to the Pastor in the case of new staff (paid or unpaid) and retains oversight. The Child Protection Team retains the responsibility in the case of a new Pastor. (In cooperation with the Presbytery)
- 2. All Other Training and Education** - The Child Protection Team will be responsible for annual and on-going training and education of children, parents and the congregation in general on the provisions of the policy and the nature of child abuse, but may coordinate the actual training and education sessions with the Christian Education Team and/or the Christian Education Director.
- 3. New Church Members Orientation** - New church members will receive orientation of the church’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures including requirements for volunteers and staff who work with children or youth. This will be the responsibility of the Session (In cooperation with the Child Protection Team) who may delegate this responsibility to the appropriate church team.

IV. B. Administration of the Policy –

- 1. Updating Records** - Records of staff and volunteers will be updated annually or more often if needed for changes in address, phone, driving record and other pertinent information. Once background checks have been made, volunteers and staff members will be re-checked on a three-year cycle.
- 2. Response to the Media** - One person will be appointed to represent the church to respond to the media in all cases of reported child abuse. This person will normally be the Pastor. There may be occasions, however, when that person should be the staff or volunteer person in charge of the event where the alleged abuse took place or a member of the Child Protection Team. That person will utilize a prepared statement in his or her initial report to the media which will state the church's policy on child abuse and that the allegation is being thoroughly investigated. (See Attachment H for a sample statement)
- 3. Maintenance of Screening Documents** - The screening documents will be maintained by the Christian Education Director or a designated member of the Child Protection Team in a secure, locked cabinet on behalf of the Child Protection Team.
- 4. Monitoring and Follow-up** - The Child Protection Team will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy, evaluating its effectiveness and recommending amendments to the session.
- 5. Enforcement** - If a violation of the Child Protection Policy occurs, the Child Protection Team should contact the Team involved (The Christian Education Team, Staff Relations Team, etc.) privately. If violations persist, or the Team involved proves unresponsive, the Child Protection Team should pursue the resolution of the violation through the Pastor or the Session. In addition a Noncompliance Incident Report Form shall be turned into the Child Protection Team by the reporting adult. (Attachment E)

ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS IOWA

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Summary of the Child Protection Policy

The session of this church has approved a church Child Protection Policy that includes the statement:

“We affirm that children and youth are a gift from God and that the future of the church rests with them. We further affirm that it is the church’s obligation to protect their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. The abuse of children will not be tolerated in any form by the action of any individual. The abuse may be defined as physical, emotional, spiritual, or sexual. All are prohibited.”

A full copy of the policy is available from Christian Education team leaders, CE Director, or the Pastor. A brief description of the policy is as follows:

SCREENING

All volunteers or staff who work with children and/or youth must complete the Application for Working with Children or Youth form and the Background Investigative Consent form. The Child Protection Team will perform a criminal background check, including a check of registered sex offenders. In addition drivers, as part of the screening process, must be an adult and have completed the Vehicle Operator Application. Drivers must have a valid driver’s license and automobile liability insurance.

TWO-ADULT RULE

A minimum of two adults must be present to supervise a church activity involving children or youth. An event will be cancelled if two trained adults are not available. An exception to this is if an adult or child becomes ill DURING an event and has to leave. Exceptions may also be made during counseling/mentoring sessions. These sessions may be conducted with a signed release from the parents with a room door kept open or a glass panel allowing full viewing, as applicable.

SIX-MONTH RULE

Volunteer adults must be members or actively affiliated with the church for at least six months before being permitted to work with children and/or youth.

YOUNGER HELPERS

Children and youth are permitted to help in activities with other children or young people but the Two Adult Rule still applies. They will not be counted toward the numbers needed for appropriate adult supervision nor will they go through the clearance procedures as required by adults.

REPORTING ABUSE

All volunteer adults or staff are to report any incident of apparent or suspected child abuse to the appropriate staff person, Pastor, or member of the Child Protection Team. When an investigation of an incident confirms that the report meets criteria for mandatory reporting, Echo Hill Presbyterian Church will make such a report to the appropriate agency or agencies. Only the Pastor or a member of the Child Protection Team will make comments to the media.

Reviewed by the Child Protection Team, February 24, 2009: Pastor Bill Warhover, Marvalee Vuichard, David Smith, and Ronald Tyne

ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Volunteers and Paid Staff Code of Conduct for Working with Children or Youth

I consider this a vow before God, and a covenant between Echo Hill Presbyterian Church the children and youth with whom I will be working, and their families.

- While working with children and youth, I will conduct myself as a Christian called to service in God's Kingdom.
- I understand that I have been entrusted with the safety and welfare of all children and youth assigned to me. At all times, I will guard their physical safety and mental, emotional, and bodily health. I understand that I have been entrusted with the spiritual health of all the children and youth assigned to me.
- I will take care of my own physical and spiritual health.
- I understand that I must be careful of questionable or "suggestive" situations. I will abide by the two-adult rule. If a child or youth requests time alone with me, I will inform the other adult supervisor and will meet with the child or youth in sight of others, but not necessarily where others can hear us.
- I will never touch a child or youth in anger.
- I will use appropriate signs of affection and Christian caring. I will respect the feelings of those who do not enjoy even the slightest casual touch.
- I will guard my language. I will not swear or use inappropriate language in the presence of children and youth.
- I will set a good example by respecting the property of the church, any off-site location of a church event, and of others and will be a good steward of God's earth.
- I will immediately report any behavior toward a child or youth that seems to be abusive or otherwise inappropriate.

I have read and understand the above Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its provisions.

Signature

Date

ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Volunteers and Paid Staff Application for Working with Children and/or Youth

Note: This application must be completed before engaging in a church activity with children and/or youth.

Name: _____
(Maiden Name if name changed in prior 7 years)

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Contact Info:

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

Previous Addresses (Last 7 years):

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Date You Became a Member: _____ If Not Member, Date You Began Attending: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Driver's License Number: _____ State: _____

Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, a crime, including but not limited to, an offense against a person such as child abuse, substance abuse, related charges other crimes of violence, or theft?

YES NO

If Yes, please explain:

Note: If you have been a victim of physical or sexual abuse or molestation, and you feel this experience could affect your ability to work with children or youth; you are encouraged to confidentially discuss your interest in volunteering with a pastor before accepting this assignment.

Please read the statements on the next page of this form and sign, thank-you.

ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Background Investigation Consent

I hereby authorize Echo Hill Presbyterian Church and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, criminal, or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information, which may be material to my qualifications as a volunteer or for employment now, and if applicable, during the tenure of my volunteering or employment with Echo Hill Presbyterian Church.

I release Echo Hill Presbyterian Church and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims, or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

Signature	Date
.....

~ Area below to be filled out by staff ~

Background checked by: _____

Date background checked: _____

Notes:

Attachment B

**ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA**

Vehicle Operator Application

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Do you have a valid driver's license? **YES NO** Do you have a valid chauffeur's license? **YES NO**

Has your driver's license or chauffeur's license been suspended or revoked in the past ten years?

YES NO If yes, please explain:

Do you carry automobile liability insurance that would cover you when driving children or youth for church sponsored events or programs? *(The church's liability insurance does not cover paid staff or volunteer drivers)*

YES NO

Insurance Company name _____ Agent's name _____

Do you have experience driving a bus? **YES NO** Or a Van? **YES NO**

Have you ever been convicted of, or plead guilty to, or no contest to operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the past ten years?

YES NO If yes, please explain:

Do you have any physical or mental handicap or other limitation that would hinder your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle?

YES NO If yes, please explain:

All passengers in any vehicle operated by me shall wear seat belts while the vehicle is moving and I will not allow more passengers to ride in the vehicle than the capacity specified by the vehicle's manufacturer. I hereby authorize the church to run a Motor Vehicle Records check on me.

The information I have provided in this Application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature _____ Date _____

Echo Hill Presbyterian Church – Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Application For Employment

Please Print		<i>We Are An Equal Opportunity Employer</i>		
Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial	Social Security Number	
Address	City	State	Zip Code	Phone Number
Position or Type of Work Applied For				Rate of Pay Expected \$ _____ per

GENERAL INFORMATION

Are you applying for Full Time , Part Time , or Temporary work?

What days and hours are you available to work? _____

On what date are you available to start work? _____ Are you willing to work overtime? Yes No

Are you at least 18 years old? Yes No

If not, can you provide a valid Work Permit, high school diploma, or equivalent? Yes No

What languages do you speak, read, or write fluently? _____

If hired, can you verify that you have the legal right to work in the United States? Yes No

How long have you lived at your current address? _____

Are you presently on layoff from another job and subject to recall? Yes No

If so, please explain _____

Have you ever served in the Armed Forces? Yes No If so, what branch? _____

Do you have any special skills, training, or experience which may help you qualify for employment? Yes No

If so, please list _____

Do you have any certificates or licenses that may help you qualify for employment? Yes No

If so, please list _____

Do any of your relatives work for this church? Yes No If so, who? _____

Have you applied for work at this church before? Yes No If so, when? _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime, excluding misdemeanors and summary offenses? Yes No

If so, please explain (NOTE: Conviction will not necessarily disqualify applicant.) _____

How did you find out about this employment opportunity? _____

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Type of School	Name and Address	How Many Years Attended	Graduated	Course or Major
High School			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
College			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Post Graduate			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Business or Seminary			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Attachment C, page 2 of 2

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Please start with your most recent job and include all periods of employment, self-employment, job-related military service, and volunteer work.

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

May we contact the employers listed above? Yes No If not, please indicate which ones you do not wish us to contact.

PERSONAL REFERENCES

Please do not list relatives or former employers.

Name and Occupation	Address	Phone Number
1. _____ _____	_____	_____
2. _____ _____	_____	_____
3. _____ _____	_____	_____

CERTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I certify that the information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that, if employed, falsified statements on this Application of Employment form will be considered grounds for termination.

I authorize the church to thoroughly investigate my work experience and any other matters related to my suitability for employment. I further authorize my former employers to disclose to the church any and all information they may have concerning my previous employment. In addition, I hereby release the church, my former employers, and all other persons from any and all claims, demands, or liabilities arising out of, or in any way related to, such disclosure.

I acknowledge that, prior to or during my employment, the church may require any legal testing and/or examination, including but not limited to, medical, physical, drug and/or alcohol, psychological, and skill and aptitude.

I also acknowledge that, if employed, both the church and I have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or advance notice. This employment at will relationship will remain in effect throughout my employment with the church and may not be modified by any oral or implied agreement.

Applicant's Signature	Date
-----------------------	------

ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Children/Youth Staff Reference Check

Applicant Name: _____ Reference Name: _____

Date of Contact: _____ Method of Contact (check one): Telephone E-mail Letter

Reference's Contact Information: _____
(phone number, e-mail or street address)

Reference Type (check one): Former Employer Former Volunteer
 Personal Other (please specify): _____

-
- How long have you known the applicant? Under what circumstances?
 - What is your knowledge of this person's work with children/youth?
 - How would you describe this person's manner of interacting with children/youth?
 - Based on your observation, is this person reliable and dependable?
 - Would you feel comfortable with this person being alone with a small group of children/youth for a period of time? Why or why not?
 - Do you have any concerns we should know about regarding this person's ability to work with children/youth?
 - Were you ever made aware of circumstances in which this person's care of children/youth was called into question or criticized? If yes, please describe the circumstances.

Go to the next page to complete this form

Attachment D, page 2 of 2

- Were you ever made aware of any criminal or civil investigations or actions taken against this person? If yes, please describe the circumstances.

- Do you recommend this person to work with children/youth? Why or why not?

- Is this person eligible to work with your organization's children again in the future? If no, why not?

Additional notes or comments:

Signed: _____ Printed Name: _____
(Person Checking Reference)

Date: _____

**ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA**

**Child Protection Policy
Noncompliance Incident Report Form**

*This form is for reporting a violation of the Child Protection Policy.
If there was an incident of abuse, please fill out the Allegation of Abuse Form (Attachment F)*

(1) Reason for report _____ Date _____

(2) Date, time, and location of incident _____

(3) What portion of the Child Protection Policy does the incident apply to _____

(4) Please describe what happened _____

(5) What action(s) did you take? _____

(6) Were there any witnesses? (Please list names if known) _____

(7) Has the incident been resolved? _____ Yes, _____ No Explain _____

(8) Report submitted by _____
Print *Sign*

(9) Are you a mandatory reporter? _____ Yes, _____ No

(10) Did you report this incident to authorities? _____ Yes, _____ No

(11) If yes, whom did you report this incident to? _____ Date: _____

Child Protection Committee:

Please list the details of the committee's response, dates, committee member's names, and all other related details that apply to this report on the backside of this form.

**ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA**

**Child Protection Policy
Allegation of Abuse Form**

(1) Name of Person(s) filing Report _____

(2) Class/Group _____ Title _____

(3) Alleged Victim(s) Name and age(s) _____

(4) Alleged Perpetrator(s) _____

(5) Event/Activity _____

(6) Witness(es) _____

(7) Date, Time and Location of Incident _____

(8) Describe the alleged victim's demeanor and appearance _____

(9) What action did you take, if any _____

(10) Has the incident been resolved? No Yes Explain the resolution if any. _____

(11) What persons or organizations have been informed of this alleged incident? _____

(12) Description of Incident (use back of page as needed)

I choose to remain anonymous except to those authorized to investigate this incident.

I have or intend to report this incident to law enforcement authorities.

The above information is freely provided and is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Person(s) receiving this report _____ Date _____

ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Child Protection Policy Allegation of Abuse Investigative Checklist

This checklist is to be used by the Pastor, or designee, and the Child Protection Team to guide the investigation into the facts of the allegations of abuse of a child or youth and to document the findings. If law enforcement authorities or the Iowa Department of Human Services have been notified and are or will be investigating the allegation, some of the steps below may not be necessary or appropriate for the church to take.

(1) Name of Child or Youth _____

(2) Address _____

(3) Phone _____ (4) Grade _____ (5) Age _____ (6) Parent(s) _____

(7) Person Reporting _____

(8) Address _____

(9) Phone _____ (10) Relationship to Victim _____

(11) Person who committed the alleged misconduct _____

(12) Address _____

(13) Phone _____ (14) Title/position _____

(15) Relationship to victim _____

(16) What law enforcement or social service authorities have been notified, if any? _____

_____ Date _____

(17) What other organizations have been notified, if any? _____

_____ Date _____

(18) Has any professional examined the child or youth because of the incident? No Yes

(19) If yes, provide details of who, when, where, treatment, if any _____

(Continued on next page)

Attachment G, page 2 of 2

Suggestions of relevant information to obtain from the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, reporter, witnesses, parents and others who may have pertinent information:

1. Description of the abusive event.
2. Date, time and location of the abuse.
3. List of witnesses and observations of each.
4. Is this the first time that an incident like this has occurred to the victim?
5. Is this the first time such an allegation has been made against the perpetrator?

Information from the alleged victim -

Information from the alleged perpetrator -

Information from witnesses -

Information from parents -

Information from the reporter other than the initial report -

Information from others -

Signature of person(s) making this report _____ Date _____

**ECHO HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA**

Sample Initial Statement to the Media

The following is a sample of an initial statement to be made by the church's representative immediately following an incident or allegation of abuse to a child or youth.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We are aware of the alleged incident of abuse involving a child (or youth) of Echo Hill Presbyterian Church.

The appropriate authorities have been contacted and are investigating the allegation. The church has a Child Protection Policy in place to screen all people working with children and youth in our programming. This policy was implemented in 2008.

Pastoral care is being extended to those in need. For the protection of all involved, I cannot disclose any further information at this time.

Thank you.