

Presbytery of the Coastlands
Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
Adopted March 23, 2021

I. Introduction

The Presbytery of the Coastlands Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy was developed and approved by the Presbytery of the Coastlands to establish a proactive policy to maintain a safe environment for children, youth, and adults at Presbytery-sponsored activities. This policy does not cover activities organized by individual congregations within the Presbytery. Instead, each congregation is responsible for maintaining a safe environment and establishing their own specific policies to do so.

II. Definitions

Adult - Persons aged eighteen years and older.

Child or Children - Persons from birth through fifth grade.

Youth - Persons from sixth grade through and including age seventeen, as well as any youth who turns eighteen during the school year, i.e., September through August.

Vulnerable Adult - Any person eighteen years old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

- III. Scope:** This policy aims to prevent all child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse, including sexual abuse. As defined as in the Book of Order: "Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position." (Book of Order, D-10.0401c).

The Presbytery will not tolerate any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. It also forbids any use of technology that results in the harassing or abusing of a child, youth or vulnerable adult. This includes using technology to send suggestive messages and images to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

At no time shall any adult working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults pursue a dating, sexual, or romantic relationship with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in person or through technology or social media.

The Presbytery of the Coastlands' Council is committed to all involved being aware of and following this policy. To this end, the policy shall be posted on the Presbytery website

and distributed to event organizers and leaders.

The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring the required screening, detailed below, has been completed and documented.

The Commission on Ministry or another qualified team assigned by the Council shall be responsible for responding to any reports or accusation of questionable or inappropriate behavior toward children, youth, or vulnerable adults that occur in or on Presbytery-sponsored premises or at any Presbytery-sponsored activities and insuring all appropriate and legally required action has been taken.

III. Reporting Procedures

A. Obligation to Report

When an adult leader receives information about prior abuse or has reason to believe abuse has occurred at any Presbytery-sponsored activity or event, a report must be made to the Stated Clerk within 24 hours. For purposes of this Policy, the term “reason to believe” shall mean evidence which, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause those individuals to believe that a child, youth, or vulnerable adult may be a victim of abuse or neglect.

B. Reporting Steps

1. No matter who the alleged abuser is, if there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse or neglect of a child or youth has occurred, the reporting person who suspects, believes or witnesses the inappropriate treatment of a child or youth shall contact the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Child Abuse Hotline (State Central Registry) at 1-877-NJABUSE (1-877-652-2873). If the possible victim is a vulnerable adult, the report should be to the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services, Adult Protective Services in the appropriate county office which can be accessed by calling 609-588-6501 or 800-792-8820 or by referring to the attached listing. If the person is in immediate danger, the report should also be made to **911**.
2. If the alleged abuser is a member of a congregation in Presbytery of the Coastlands, a report shall be made to the Stated Clerk, according to the provisions of D-10.0101 of the *Book of Order*.
3. If the alleged abuser is a minister of the Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder) in the PCUSA, a report shall be made to the Stated Clerk and the Moderator of the Commission on Ministry (for a member of the Presbytery of the Coastlands), or the Stated Clerk of the presbytery of membership, according to the provisions of D- 10.0101.

4. Once the Department of Children and Families or the Department of Human Services has been contacted, the presbytery's insurance carrier shall also be notified.

IV. Immediate Response to Suspected Abuse or Neglect Against a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult at a Presbytery Event

- A. Remove the accused from direct contact with Child, Youth, Vulnerable Adult
- B. Provide immediate medical attention as the situation demands
- C. Call the appropriate authorities (police, ambulance, medical professional, parents)
- D. Record the names of those present for an incident report
- E. Provide the appropriate care to all participants
- F. Inform the Stated Clerk about the incident

V. Screening Procedures

This section sets forth the screening procedures that shall be used for staff and volunteers at Presbytery-sponsored activities who are responsible for the supervision of children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

The Presbytery relies on local congregations for providing qualified volunteers for Presbytery sponsored activities. Approval and/or disapproval of any volunteer shall be at the discretion of the event supervisor and the Stated Clerk. The Presbytery of the Coastlands expects that minimally, volunteers from the local congregation be:

1. Persons known by a congregation at least six (6) months.
2. Persons who have completed screening by the congregation

A. Criminal Background Checks

Because of its concern that the community of faith should be a place of trust and safety for all members, but especially for the most vulnerable among us, the Presbytery of the Coastlands will perform a criminal background check on all staff at Presbytery-sponsored events. In addition, volunteers who have not had a criminal background check done by their local congregation will be subject to this procedure as well.

1. Prior written permission will be obtained from the person to be checked using an application which includes their Social Security number. If the person has not been issued an SSN but has been issued an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), this ITIN can be supplied instead. If neither are available, then the volunteer will need to use the alternate verification process that is name-based and includes providing copies of government issued photo identification

as well as written recommendation of a Pastor of a member church in our Presbytery in order to check the name and date of birth against the information the volunteer provided in the screening process.

2. Criminal background checks will be conducted by a reputable outside firm, using standard criteria for the purposes of child, youth and vulnerable adult supervision. For any staff or volunteers driving as part of a Presbytery-sponsored event, the background check must include a Motor Vehicle Report.
3. The Stated Clerk of the presbytery is authorized to conduct the background checks and to maintain a secure record of all persons checked. If a background check identifies anything that makes the person ineligible, that person shall be notified. Among others, any convictions or pending prosecution of an allegation of child abuse, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy or endangerment of a minor would disqualify a person from being in contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

VI. Training Procedures

All staff and volunteers shall complete training as prescribed by the Council and/or activity organizers, to include but not be limited to receiving a copy of this policy and signing a document that they have received and will adhere to this policy.

NEW JERSEY ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Atlantic

Atlantic County Division
of Intergenerational Services
Shoreview Building
101 South Shore Road
Northfield, NJ 08225
Phone: 888-426-9243
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.atlantic-county.org

Bergen

Bergen County Board of Social Services
218 Route 17 North
Rochelle Park, NJ 07662
Phone: 201-368-4300
After Hours: 1-800-624-0275
www.bcbss.com

Burlington

Burlington County Board of Social Services
795 Woodlane Road
Mount Holly, NJ 08060
Phone: 609-518-4793
After Hours: 856-234-8888
www.bcbss.org

Camden

Camden County Board of Social Services
600 Market Street
Camden, NJ 08102
Phone: 856-225-8178
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Cape May

Cape May Division on Aging and Disability
Services
4005 Route 9 South
Rio Grande, NJ 08242
Phone: 609-886-2784, ask for Intake Social Worker
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Cumberland

Resources for Independent Living
614 East Landis Avenue, 1st Floor
Vineland, NJ 08360
Phone: 856-825-0255
After Hours: contact local police or 911

Essex

FOCUS, Hispanic Center for Human Dev., Inc.
441-443 Broad Street
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: 866-903-6287
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Gloucester

Gloucester County Division of Social Services
400 Holly Dell Drive
Sewell, NJ 08080
Phone: 856-582-9200
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Hudson

Hudson County Adult Protective Services, Inc.
6100 Adams Street
West New York, NJ 07093
Phone: 201-537-5631
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Hunterdon

Hunterdon County Division of Social Work Services
P.O. Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900
Phone: 908-788-1300
After Hours: 908-782-4357
www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/social/socserv.htm

Mercer

Mercer County Board of Social Services
200 Woolverton Street
Trenton, NJ 08650
Phone: 609-989-4346
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.mcboss.org

Middlesex

Family and Children's Services
191 Bath Avenue
Long Branch, NJ 07740
Phone: 732-745-3635
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.fcsmonmouth.org

Monmouth

Family and Children's Services
191 Bath Avenue
Long Branch, NJ 07740
Phone: 732-531-9191
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.fcsmonmouth.org

Morris

Morris County Office on Aging, Disabilities and
Community Programming
340 West Hanover Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07960
Phone: 973-326-7282
After Hours: 973-326-7282
www.morrishumanservices.org

Ocean

Ocean County Board of Social Services
1027 Hooper Avenue
Toms River, NJ 08754
Phone: 732-349-1500
After Hours: 211
www.co.ocean.nj.us/socialservices

Passaic

Passaic County Board of Social Services
80 Hamilton Street
Paterson, NJ 07505
Phone: 973-881-2616
After Hours: 973-345-2676
www.pcbss.org

Salem

Salem County Office of Aging and Disabilities
110 Fifth Street, Suite 900
Salem, NJ 08079
Phone: 856-339-8622
After Hours: 911 in case of emergency
www.salemcounty.nj.gov

Somerset

Somerset County Board of Social Services
73 East High Street
P.O. Box 936
Somerville, NJ 08876
Phone: 908-526-8800
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.socialservices.co.somerset.nj.us/aps.htm

Sussex

Sussex County Division of Social Services
83 Spring Street, Suite 203
P.O. Box 218
Newton, NJ 07860
Phone: 973-383-3600
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Union

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese
of Newark (CCAN)
505 South Avenue E
Cranford, NJ 07016
Phone: 908-497-3902
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Warren

Warren County Division of Aging
and Disability Services
165 County Route 519 South
Belvidere, NJ 07823
Phone: 908-475-6591
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.seniorservices.co.warren.nj.us

For additional information:

NJ Department of Human Services • Division of Aging Services • PO Box 812, Trenton, NJ 08625-0812
Phone: 609-588-6501 • Emergency or After Hours: 911 or local police
www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/services/aps

Presbytery of Central New Jersey Program Guidelines

These guidelines review best practices, and it is the Presbytery's desire to abide by them, and to encourage all local congregations in the Presbytery to do so as well. It is expected that for each Presbytery-sponsored event (in-person or virtual), the event coordinators provide written documentation as to how they are handling each of the items below. This written document needs to be provided to the Council for approval at least six weeks before the event.

Approval and/or edits shall be provided back to the event coordinator at least three weeks before the event. Prior to the event all staff and volunteers should be provided appropriate training on all policies and procedures.

A. Registration and Attendance

All children, youth, and vulnerable adults must be registered to attend Presbytery-sponsored programs and activities by a parent or guardian. Attendance must be taken for both leaders and participants and records provided to the Presbytery within 48 hours after the event. For virtual events, appropriate security measures must be employed to prevent non-registered attendees.

B. Adult Supervision

All events must be staffed with at least two (2) unrelated adult leaders who are 22 years or older. Activities in different rooms require two (2) unrelated adult leaders per room. If a one-on-one conversation is necessary with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, it shall be held in view of others.

C. Special Accommodations

Parents and guardians are encouraged to notify the event organizers if their child, youth or vulnerable adult needs any accommodations that would require adaptations to this policy. The event organizers will work with the family, leaders, and/or special consultants to provide reasonable and appropriate adaptations that will allow for a positive experience for all involved.

D. Child and Youth Bathroom Procedures

The Event Coordinator will specify age-appropriate procedures for restroom use.

E. Driving

When transporting children or youth (other than a parent or guardian's own child, youth, or vulnerable adult) during Presbytery-sponsored programs or activities, written

permission must be provided by the parent/guardian. All authorized drivers must be twenty-five (25) years or older and have a copy of a valid operator's license and current automobile insurance on file with the event organizer. Background screenings for authorized drivers must include a Motor Vehicle Report.

1. The license plate number of the vehicle and the cellular telephone numbers of the driver and other adults shall be provided to the event organizer before departing.
2. No adult should be alone in a vehicle with only one child, youth or vulnerable adult.
3. The number of persons per vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts in the vehicle. All occupants must use seat belts at all times.

F. Youth Overnight and/or Off-Site Activities

The required adult to youth ratio for overnight chaperones for any ministry with children or youth shall be 1:6 (although 1:4 is preferred). Gender balance is required. At least one (1) of the adult leaders shall carry with him/her duplicate copies of the permission slips and medical releases for each youth attending the activity. All overnight activities must have at least two (2) unrelated adults supervising the activities. If the group is coeducational, there must be at least two (2) adult males and two (2) adult females to accompany and supervise the group. Separate sleeping areas for male and female participants must be provided. Adults shall not share dormitory or hotel rooms with youth, unless the two are related, except in situations where only one large sleeping area is provided for all youth and adults.

G. Proper Display of Affection

The event coordinator will provide guidance based on the age of children or youth participants to all leaders regarding appropriate displays of affection being mindful of necessary boundaries.

H. Appropriate Relationships and Communications with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

The event coordinator will provide guidance based on the age and ability of children, youth or vulnerable adult participants to all leaders regarding appropriate relationships and communications, including electronic communications such as texts, emails, and social media. All electronic communication should be preserved so that it can be reviewed by parents, guardians or event organizers if the need arises.

I. No Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, or Vaping

All adults working with children, youth or vulnerable adults in a Presbytery-sponsored activity, program, or event shall refrain from vaping, and consuming or using illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco during the entire course of the event.

J. Gifts

Adult staff and volunteers shall not give gifts to individual children, youth or vulnerable adults. Gift giving should be done on a group basis for special occasions only. Gifts should not be elaborate and should be appropriate to the occasion.

K. Discipline

Any interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider a child, youth, or vulnerable adult's dignity and well-being. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, correction, and positive reinforcement. Reinforce good and appropriate behavior with praise and thanks. Event organizers and leaders should provide training on age-appropriate and effective means of discipline and should be available throughout events to assist and supervise volunteers with discipline as needed.