

## Child Protection Policy

**Statement of Purpose:** Milwaukie Presbyterian Church (MPC) is committed to the safety, welfare, and protection of all children and youth and strives to provide an environment free from abuse or harassment of any form (physical, mental or sexual).

**Statement of Policy:** Milwaukie Presbyterian Church affirms that all people are to be treated with dignity and respect. The purpose of the Child Protection Policy is to set forth standards and procedures so that no child or youth is subjected to any form of abuse or harassment by MPC employees, teachers, other volunteers, or other youth while engaged in MPC activities or programs. The standards and procedures implemented in this Policy seek to uphold this community of faith's commitment to protect the well-being of the children and youth of MPC, whether members or guests.

### Definitions

Examples of acts that will not be tolerated nor accepted include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical Conduct:** Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a child or youth; any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a child or youth; sexual advances of any kind between any person and a child or youth; infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child or youth; physical neglect of a child, children or youth, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of MPC.
- **Verbal/Written Conduct:** Emotional or psychological mistreatment of a child, children or youth, including verbal or written abuse.
- **Visual Conduct:** The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of MPC.
- **Substance Abuse:** The presence, possession or being under the influence of any illegal drugs, the consumption of (except when taking communion) or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a children's or youth function at MPC.

### Standards and Procedures

All MPC activities and programs involving children or youth are subject to the following requirements:

1. **Two adult rule:** Activities shall be conducted within sight/supervision of two or more adults, at least one of which is five years older than the youth being supervised.
2. All volunteers who are assigned to supervise or lead activities involving children must have attended Milwaukie Presbyterian Church at least six months prior to being assigned to supervise or lead activities involving children.
3. These volunteers and all MPC employees who are assigned to supervise or lead activities involving children are required to:
  - a. Complete a Volunteer Information Form.
  - b. Sign an acknowledgement that the Child Protection Policy has been read and is understood.
  - c. Submit to a criminal background and registered sex offender check.
  - d. Provide three references that may be checked.
4. **Volunteer Information Forms** are administered as follows:

- a. The head of the Christian Education Committee, in conjunction with Youth Ministry and Children's Ministry Staff, will ensure that all volunteers receive, complete, and return Volunteer Information Forms (which include a criminal background check and a sex offender check). These checks will be conducted and reviewed before volunteers begin their service. Staff and Committee chairs will maintain signed forms and records in a secured storage facility at Milwaukie Presbyterian Church.
- b. The head of the Personnel Committee ensures that all employees receive, complete, and return Volunteer Information Forms (which include a criminal background check and a sex offender check). These checks will be conducted and reviewed before staff begin their service. The Personnel Chair will maintain signed forms and records in a secured storage facility at Milwaukie Presbyterian Church.
- c. The head of the personnel committee will review results of criminal background and registered sex offender checks and character references for employees and will maintain the signed forms and records in a secured storage facility at Milwaukie Presbyterian Church.
- d. Questionable Volunteer Information Forms or background/reference checks will be referred to the appropriate committees for review and action.
- e. Youth and Children's Ministry Committee chairs will audit Volunteer Information Forms and background checks at least annually to ensure that they remain on file for all current employees and volunteers.
- f. All records will remain active and on file for five years. After three years, new criminal background and registered sex offender checks will be done on active or returning employees and volunteers. Records older than five years will be destroyed.

5. Whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the criminal background or registered sex offender checks, the following will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership or supervision of any children or youth's activity: any type of conviction for murder, rape, aggravated assault crimes related to drugs, sexual abuse, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, injury of a child, incest, indecency with a child, inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child, possession of or promotion of child pornography, sale or distribution or display of harmful material to a minor, employment harmful to children, abandonment or endangering a child.

**Note:** While information required for the Volunteer Information Form and the security background check may be perceived as invasive, the security of our children and youth outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information, whether voluntarily disclosed or the result of security background and reference checks, as well as the disqualification of any person who has volunteered is to be kept in the strictest of confidence.

**Reporting Violation of Policy:** It is the individual responsibility of everyone at MPC to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission or situation thought to be in violation of our Child Protection Policy. Any known or alleged physical, emotional, or sex abuse must be reported to child protection services. All questions or concerns regarding suspected activity of abuse or harassment should be directed to the pastor, youth director, children's ministry coordinator, or any personnel committee member. All church officers (pastors, elders and

deacons) are mandatory reporters.

In the event of a policy violation, the individual witnessing the incident or the individual to whom a child or youth reports abusive conduct will be requested to fill out an incident report.