

THE CHEVY CHASE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**Child Protection Policy****I. PURPOSE**

The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church (CCPC) has established this policy to (a) help provide a safe, nurturing environment for children and (b) safeguard those who supervise children from unfounded accusations of misconduct. This policy applies to all CCPC programs that involve supervision of a child by any CCPC employee or volunteer. To guard against sexual abuse and misconduct from supervisors, CCPC seeks to ensure that those persons responsible for supervising children in the church deserve this trust and responsibility. The policy is also designed to protect those who supervise children by minimizing the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse. Consistent with the policies of National Capital Presbytery, our CCPC policy uses the definitions stated below:

II. DEFINITIONS

“Sexual abuse” or **“sexual misconduct”** includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction with a child when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of another person.

The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior with a child is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child.

“Child” or **“children”** refers to those legally considered minors. A person who is legally incompetent is also considered a “child” under this policy.

“Employee” is the comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are called or hired full-time or part-time to work for the church for salary or wages.

“**Occasional paid sitter**” is the term used to denote those who are hired occasionally for special functions.

“**Volunteer**” is the term used for those who provide services for the church, who receive no financial benefit or remuneration, and who have long-term or potentially unsupervised access to children other than their own.

“**Staff Member**” is the term used for non-clergy employees responsible for CCPC’s education, mission, music, youth, or other programs that involve children.

“**Parent assistant**” refers to parents who provide occasional childcare assistance, under the supervision of a CCPC employee, in church programs in which their children participate. Examples include parents who co-op at the Weekday Nursery School, serve in the nursery on Sunday mornings, or assist with choir practices and performances.

“**Supervision**” includes direct observation or control of activities, and may include visual monitoring of activities via open or windowed doors.

III. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Employees, volunteers, and those supervising children shall not touch, interact with, or otherwise communicate with children in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating. Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayer), or physical caretaking (changing diapers, etc.) are appropriate in this community of caring Christians. Care must be taken, however, that expressions of affection and affirmation are not excessive or imposed on a child.

To protect both our children and their church supervisors, those supervising children should work in pairs. Whenever possible, two supervisors should be present with the children at all activities. On those rare occasions when a teacher or other adult must unexpectedly work alone with a child there must be a visual access at all times (e.g., an open door or window).

Children involved in a church activity should be transported in groups rather than alone. A single adult should not drive a single child without the permission of the child's parent or guardian; when practical, such permission should be obtained in writing. On those occasions when one-on-one counseling or social interaction is appropriate, the supervisor should notify another supervisor where s/he and the child will be. Standards of conduct for all CCPC pastoral staff are defined in the National Capital Presbytery Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct, which is available through the church or presbytery office.

IV. SUPERVISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

_ All Session committees and staff members will seek employees or volunteers in sufficient numbers to staff church programs consistent with this policy.

_ As a condition of employment, any employee or applicant seeking to be employed by CCPC will be required to (a) complete and sign a disclosure statement (b) undergo a criminal records background check; and (c) allow CCPC to contact references.

_ All employees, volunteers, and occasional paid sitters who supervise children and youth must first satisfactorily complete:

(a) an application, providing references to make sure that the applicants is suitable for the position. Committee members should recruit volunteers from those who have been members or active in the life of CCPC for at least six months.

(b) training and orientation which will include a discussion and explanation of this policy.

All employees and volunteers who will supervise children must sign an acknowledgment that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policy.

_ Parent assistants will receive this policy, and complete the accompanying training.

_ Written information about this policy shall be posted in the church office. The

Inquirer's Course for new members also will include information about this policy.

V. REPORTING OF MISCONDUCT

_ A person who has reason to believe that sexual abuse or misconduct covered by this policy has occurred shall immediately report such information to the staff member or pastor supervising the activity. The supervising staff member or pastor immediately shall report the incident to CCPC's pastor/head of staff. In addition, consistent with CCPC's policy, all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct involving children will be reported to the appropriate government authority as required by law. CCPC will cooperate fully with government authorities in the investigation of allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct.

_ The pastor/head of staff will inform the Session that an allegation has been made and reported. Those persons involved in the investigation or report should hold relevant information in strict confidence, subject to such disclosures as are required by Church procedures or required by law. As appropriate, the head of staff will also inform the National Capital Presbytery.

I have read and I understand and I agree to abide by The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church Child Protection Policy.

Name (Please print.)

Signature

Date