

***CHILD AND YOUTH
ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM
FLINT RIVER PRESBYTERY***

Amended January 10, 2015

CHILD AND YOUTH ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR FLINT RIVER PRESBYTERY

Introduction

To help protect children and youth, Flint River Presbytery has adopted the following Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. It is important that all Flint River Presbytery paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent sexual abuse against children and youth. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children and youth.

Purpose

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child and youth abuse in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist Flint River Presbytery in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

Definitions

The following terms used herein are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff*: Any pastor or other adult who is paid to work with the children and youth of Flint River Presbytery.
2. *Child/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday.
4. *Volunteer*: Any unpaid person who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
5. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
6. *Child Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying.

Protection and Prevention

Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures will be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of children and youth or who directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over children and youth.

1. *Session Endorsement*: Anyone who wishes to work with children and youth in Flint River Presbytery must be endorsed by the Session of his/her church. (Attachment 1)
 - a. *Six-Month Rule*: All paid staff and volunteers over the age of eighteen (18) must be a member of a church in Flint River Presbytery for at least six months before being endorsed by the Session. [Pastors and non-member lay employees of the church are exempt from this rule.]
2. *Employment Application/Volunteer Application*: Anyone who will work with minors must complete the Employment Application or the Volunteer Application. (Attachment 2)
3. *Statement of Faith*: All paid staff and volunteers are required to submit a Statement of Faith (no longer than one page, double spaced) to the responsible staff member of Flint River Presbytery.
4. *Criminal Background Check*: Flint River Presbytery will conduct a Federal criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers over age 18 who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors. All Federal criminal background checks will be updated every 2 years. The form must be completed and returned with the Application (Attachment 3)
5. *Training*: all paid staff and volunteers must
 - participate in a training session (generally held just prior to the event) led by a staff member of Flint River Presbytery,
 - must review this Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program Policy,
 - and must sign and return the Certificate of Acknowledgement. (Attachment 4)

Confidentiality

Information obtained throughout this process will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted.

Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, Flint River Presbytery:

1. Will have an adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving children and youth. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.
2. Will monitor the facilities during activities involving children and youth.
3. Will release children under the age of 13 only to a parent or guardian, and will utilize sign-in and sign-out sheets.
4. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking children and youth on trips.
5. Will use two paid staff or volunteers when transporting children and youth in vehicles.
6. Will require that young children be accompanied to the restroom and the paid staff or volunteer wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
7. Will encourage children and youth to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of Flint River Presbytery property.

8. Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.
9. Will designate a minister member of Flint River Presbytery as "confidential counselor" to whom any minor can go at any time, without special permission, to discuss any problems he or she is having.
10. Will assure that co-educational events have both male and female chaperones.
11. Will have at least one staff or volunteer in the room when children or youth are present and at least one staff or volunteer area chaperone with unobstructed view into the room. Doors will be left fully open.. Speaking to a child or youth one-on-one will be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.

*Exceptions to these Supervision Procedures must be reported to the responsible
Flint River Presbytery staff member in a timely manner*

Behavioral Guidelines

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, he/she should be informed that such touching is inappropriate.
3. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
4. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult or other minor, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor(s) to an individual with supervisory authority.
5. If one-on-one pastoral care is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.
6. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of Flint River Presbytery for handling.
7. Paid staff and Volunteers shall prohibit any and all forms of bullying, hazing, or sexual contact between or among participants.

Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence.

3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

Response to Sexual Abuse

Persons who engage in sexual misconduct are in violation of the principles set forth in scripture and in the *Book of Order* [D-10.0401c] of the PC(USA) and of the Sexual Misconduct Policy of Flint River Presbytery.

Flint River Presbytery will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

The presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy describes the process for documenting a report of sexual misconduct and the requirement to report any allegation.

- The first person to learn of an incident of sexual misconduct should not undertake an inquiry alone or question either the accuser/victim or the accused.
- Reports of abuse should be immediately made to event leadership and to the Stated Clerk of Flint River Presbytery.
- All youth event leaders and paid staff are mandatory reporting officials with the responsibilities defined under the duties of elders and deacons in the *Book of Order* [G-4.0302].

Adopted: May 1, 2012

Amended: November 13, 2014

Amended: January 10, 2015

Attachment 1

Session Endorsement

The Session of _____ Presbyterian Church of _____,
Georgia, meeting on _____, 20____, being fully satisfied with this person's suitability to
work with children and youth of Flint River Presbytery and confident that he/she has a mature
faith, hereby endorses _____, and recommends her/him for
service with children and youth of Flint River Presbytery.

Clerk of Session

_____ is (is not) 18 years of age or older.

(If older than 18, and not a pastor or non-member lay employee) I certify that he/she has been on the
active membership roll of this church for longer than 6 months.

Clerk of Session

Attachment 2

**Flint River Presbytery
Youth and Children Events
ADULT LEADER APPLICATION**

EVENT/ACTIVITY_____

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY STATE ZIP_____

HOME PHONE_____ WORK PHONE_____

EMAIL_____

HOME CHURCH_____

EMERGENCY CONTACT_____

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE IN CHURCH AND/OR OTHER ACTIVITIES

REFERENCES

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY STATE ZIP_____

HOME PHONE_____ WORK PHONE_____

EMAIL_____

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY STATE ZIP_____

HOME PHONE_____ WORK PHONE_____

EMAIL_____

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Clerk of Session

Date

All staff will agree to follow the Flint River Presbytery Abuse Prevention Policy
All staff will agree to a background check using the attached form.

Attachment 4

**Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program
Acknowledgment**

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. Flint River Presbytery reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with Flint River Presbytery or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of Flint River Presbytery's Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of Flint River Presbytery.

Print Name

Signature

Date