

Presbytery of St. Augustine Child Protection Policy

As part of our baptismal vows as members of the church of Jesus Christ, we promise to guide and nurture- by word and deed and with love and prayer- the children and youth within our care. Jesus reminds us in the Gospel of Matthew (19:14), “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” As a presbytery, we endeavor to maintain the spiritual, emotional and physical safety of our children and youth in our care. Therefore, we require the following guidelines and practices be implemented.

1. All adult workers, paid and volunteer, sign and certify that they have read and understand the current Child Protection Policy in the Presbytery of St. Augustine.
2. Adult-children/youth ratios shall be observed at all times.
3. Respect for the privacy of children, youth, and adults is expected at all times unless the health and safety of the individual is at risk.
4. Responsible use of digital devices and social media platforms is expected in all situations.
5. Children and youth are encouraged to immediately tell an adult about any inappropriate situations. If inappropriate activities are reported, the adult will immediately give the information to the supervising adult or the Lead Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, the Presbytery Moderator or the Chair of Council.
6. All adult workers, paid and volunteer, will abide by the adopted policies of Presbytery of St. Augustine, including the Sexual Misconduct Policy.
7. Two-adult rule: Two non-related adults must always be present in groups of Minors or Vulnerable Adults. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible for both in person and online gatherings. All Child and Youth Workers and volunteers must be a minimum of four years older than the age group they lead or supervise.
8. View Windows and Open Doors: When Minors and adult workers or volunteers are in a room, if the door is closed, the door must have a view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door must remain open at all times.

Florida Mandatory Reporting Statutes:

Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.) mandates that any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, neglected, or abandoned by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Abuse Hotline of the Department of Children and Families, 1-800-962-2873. Abuse may be reported online [here](#).

More information from the Florida Department of Children and Families may be found [here](#).

The following information is taken from the PCUSA Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. The full policy can be found [Child-Youth-Vulnerable Adult Policy 2020 \(GA 2020\) \(00131876\).DOCX](#)

Definitions:

Child: A child is defined as a person between the ages of 0–11

Youth: A youth is defined as a person between the ages of 12–17

Minor: A minor is defined as any child or youth between the ages of 0-17.

Ratios for adults, children and youth:

The adult to child ratio is 2:10, for both in person and online gatherings.

The adult to youth ratio is 2:17, for both in person and online gatherings.

Supervision requirements:

All children and youth workers must be at least 18 years old and four years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.

Code of Conduct when working with Minors that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors:

- Display of sexual affection toward a Minor.
- Discussion of sexual encounters with or around Minors.
- Involving Minors in personal problems or issues.
- Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with Minors.
- Using or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs in the presence of Minors.
- Possessing sexually oriented materials-including printed or online pornography- on Presbytery of St. Augustine property, or property being utilized for a church event.
- Having secrets with Minors.
- Staring at or commenting on the bodies of Minors.
- Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with Minors.
- Working one-on-one with Minors in a private setting.
- Abusing Minors, including but not limited to:
 - o Physical abuse: hit spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain.
 - o Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse.
 - o Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
 - o Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
 - o Neglect: withhold food, water, or shelter.
 - o Permit Minors to engage in: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.