**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

# MINOR AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## POLICY APPLICATION STATEMENT

All church members, employees, contractors and volunteers are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with minors and vulnerable adults. This Policy applies to all First Presbyterian Church sponsored activities that involve minors and vulnerable adults.

## DISTRIBUTION

Copies of this Minor and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures ("Policy") shall be made available to all church members, contractors and volunteers in hard copy, electronically or via the internet.

## POLICY RATIONALE

The implementation and documentation of a Minor and VulnerableProtection Policy strive to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

1. Minors, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me." The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.
2. Any type of abuse involving minors, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving Church of Christ's healing and hope for community and individuals, not a Church that brings harm and hurt.
3. The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and their family when abuse and neglect happen. The Church is unable to do the full work of Christ, due to the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, but it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm can be perpetrated that woefully hinders God's call on the Church.
4. The Book of Order states, "The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life," and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church's care, including minors and vulnerable adults (Book of Order W-2.3013).
5. Minors and vulnerable adults are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So also, the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ's love, in the same way taking up all minors and vulnerable adults into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environments in which to grow in every way.

**PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN PROVIDING PROGRAMMING FOR MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

When members of First Presbyterian Church - Lincoln provide care and supervision for minors and vulnerable adults at one of its events the following procedures shall be utilized.

**DEFINITIONS**

Church: Church is defined as First Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, NE.

Child: A child is defined as a person between the ages of 0-12 years old.

Youth: A youth is defined as a person between the ages of 13-19

Minor: A minor is defined as any Child or Youth 0–19 years-old.

Child/Youth Worker: Any volunteer or paid staff who participates at any level at Church sponsored events or activities involving minors. This includes chaperones who accompany minors to and during meetings, events, and activities covered by this Policy.

Vulnerable Adult: Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent or for whom a conservator has been appointed under the Nebraska Probate Code (NS 28-371).

Vulnerable Adult Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment or exploitation of a Vulnerable Adult.

Child/Youth Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in physical injuries, neglect, and or sexual molestation or abuse, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, or exploitation of a minor.

Sexual Abuse: In the Book of Order, sexual abuse is defined as, “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 without the 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.)

Misuse of Technology: The use of technology that results in harassing or abuse of a minor or Vulnerable Adult.

Sexual Misconduct: is defined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy and its Procedures (219th General Assembly (2010) and revised by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (2013).

Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this Policy to include:

Child sexual abuse; including, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a minor and an adult when the minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a minor and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the minor. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen. In Nebraska, the age is nineteen.

Sexual harassment; defined for this Policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or their continued status in an institution;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or

- an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or minors.
- Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.

Sexual conduct is offensive, obsessive or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another.

Sexual Malfeasance; is defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship that results in misuse of office or position arising from the professional ministerial relationship.

Misuse of technology; use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting or emailing suggestive messages and images. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse.

There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church or within the context of ministry.

**Gift Giving and Receiving**

Employees and members are prohibited from giving gifts to individual minors and vulnerable adults except when the gift is authorized by a supervisor or designated administrator or given to everyone in a group.

**SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**

A Child/Youth Worker, whether on a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer basis, shall be subject to:

1. The organizing Church ’s receipt of a completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the policy has been read.
2. All Child/Youth Workers must be at least sixteen years old and those in leadership positions must be four years older than the oldest Youth whom they are serving.
3. The applicant is required to consent to a criminal background check. The church should cover the costs of the background checks for all Child/Youth Workers. These checks shall be run prior to the event. (This time restraint is also at the discretion of the organizing church’s insurance company’s requests. Child/Youth Workers who participate annually in events may only be required to have one (1) background check every three years or the time frame required by the insurance company.
4. All Child/Youth Workers, paid, contracted, or volunteer, must participate in training prior to assuming duties involving minors and vulnerable adults. The training is to be provided by the Church and shall cover the Child/Youth protection policy thoroughly as well as methods of abuse prevention and a detailed plan of reporting. The Church may contract with others to provide these trainings. These trainings shall further cover:
    a. What constitutes Minor and VulnerableAdult Abuse and neglect.
    b. How to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
    c. State laws concerning definitions of abuse and reporting.
    d. Mandatory criminal background checks and the security of those files.
    e. Explanation of the importance of the application and screening processes.
    f. Appropriate boundaries with Minors, especially regarding adult/Child/Youth ratios, transportation and use of technology.

g. If an overnight event is planned, discussions of boundaries involving appropriate sleeping arrangements and restroom/shower facilities use shall be discussed.

h. CPR and First aid training will be offered to all full time employees on periodic timeframe,

5. No person may serve as a Minor and VulnerableAdult Worker or volunteer who has a conviction on their record of certain felonies or misdemeanor crimes toward minors or vulnerable adults in a local, state or federal court or in an ecclesiastical proceeding that includes actions that fall under definitions or prohibitions set forth in this Policy and other convictions reviewed by risk assessment team. Convictions of felonies or misdemeanor crimes toward minors, and vulnerable adults include but are not limited to

    - Criminal homicide;
    - Aggravated assault;
    - Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
    - Sexual Abuse;
    - Sexual assault;
    - Injury to a minor;
    - Incest;
    - Indecency with a minor;
    - Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a minor;
    - Possession or promotion of child pornography;
    - The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a Minor;
    - Employment harmful to a minor;
    - Abandonment or endangerment of a minor;
    - Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
    - Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a minor;
    - Any crime that involves Sexual Misconduct or Sexual Abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a Minor;
    - Any crime that involves Misuse of Technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of Minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
    - Any crime that involves the use of force, such as assault or endangerment;
    - Any crime that involves abduction and kidnapping;
    - Any crime that involves drinking and driving, such as driving while intoxicated.

6. In addition, if any staff member or member of the Church is aware that a Child/Youth Worker has a prior conviction for one of the aforementioned crimes or a related crime, the Child/Youth Worker shall automatically be ineligible to attend a Child/Youth event in any capacity.

7. Whenever the Church organizes an event for Minors for which the Church will invite Minors from other church councils who will be supervised by Child/Youth Workers, the Staff member who selects the Youth workers shall:

a. Not send a person to act as a Child/Youth Worker whom the council knows has violated the provisions of the Book of Order or policy of a local congregation or presbytery pertaining to Sexual Misconduct or Child/Youth protection.

b. Not send a person to act as a Child/Youth Worker for Minors when that person is also scheduled to provide leadership at the event, in which they would not be able to provide adequate supervision.

This notice shall be sent to the invited church council prior to the event.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

The Church shall maintain all Child/Youth Worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

**REPORTING**

The Church will publicize a procedure for reporting any prohibited actions and have copies available at all times in a public place at the church. Anyone suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of child abuse may report such violation to any leader of the Church.

(In Nebraska any individual who has reasonable cause to believe that a Minor and Vulnerableadult has been subjected to child abuse or neglect or observes such child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in child abuse or neglect, they shall report such incident or cause a report of child abuse or neglect to be made to the proper law enforcement agency or appropriate state authorities. Nebraska Revised Statute 28-711)

A leader of the Church who receives a report of abuse will report Minor and Vulnerable adult abuse promptly to local law enforcement and/or appropriate state authorities. Any minor who suspects or has knowledge of any type of Minor and Vulnerable adult abuse is invited to share the knowledge with any adult leader of the church sponsored event. Any adult who has knowledge or reasonable suspicion of Child/Youth abuse should be made aware that state law requires them to report that immediately to local law enforcement. After reporting to law enforcement, they shall notify the head of staff.

RULES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Church shall ensure that the following measures be in place and actions taken for each event or activity involving Minors and Vulnerable Adults:

1. Child/Youth Workers and persons working with vulnerable adults shall:
    a. respond to Minors and Vulnerable Adults with respect and consideration and treat all of them equally, regardless of race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender,, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identification, Church /expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service or veteran status or religious affiliation; and
    b. act as a positive role model for Minors and Vulnerable Adults by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity.
    c. maintain appropriate boundaries when in positions of power with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
    d. Not give money or gifts to Minors, except within the context of a group gift given to all participants in the celebration of special events or recognitions.

2. Two-adult rule: Every step should be taken to assure two non-related adults be present in groups of children/youth or Vulnerable Adults. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible for both in-person and online gatherings.
3. Ratios: The adult to Child ratio for all Child-related events/activities is 2:10 for both in person and online gatherings. The adult to Youth ratio for all Youth-related events/activities is 2:17 for both in person and online gatherings. Every step should be taken to assure two adults of different genders are present when there is one or more children/youth of different gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios and gender diversity be compromised.
4. 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.
5. Adult workers/caregivers should respect the privacy of the minors and vulnerable adults to whom they provide care. Responsible use of digital devices and cell phones is required in all situations (ex. Taking age-appropriate photographs and movies, not taking photographs of Minors who are not fully clothed). Adults and Minors are required at all times to wear appropriate attire. Child/Youth Workers are not permitted to take photographs of Minors or Vulnerable Adults under their care or at the meeting or event and share them in any way, including on the internet, without the written permission of a parent or guardian of the Minor or Vulnerable Adult.
6. Age-appropriate education to minors and vulnerable adults should be provided regarding behavior that should be reported to a caregiver or leader of the event.
7. Transportation: All adult drivers at Child/Youth events must have proper licensure and insurance on file with the organizing Church. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. No Minor under eighty-five pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers transporting Minors and Vulnerable Adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs. If a charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks on their drivers. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 2 in this section. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).
8. Forms: The legal guardians of each Minor must provide the appropriate information and medical forms for each activity/event. The information form should include all contacts for legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the Minor's health insurance card. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for any off-campus events. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing Church must be released by a signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian as well as the Minor. All such forms must be stored at the event site, in a secure place with restricted access. A copy of the form shall be kept in the church office.
9. Each event/activity must ensure that rules are gone over with participants at each event/activity. These rules shall include but are not limited to a code of conduct specific to the event/activity, as well as a list prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity. The code of conduct and prohibited and expected behaviors list should be given in written form.
10. Minors and adults must maintain different showering and grooming hours at events in which bathrooms and shower rooms are shared in housing.

11. Adults should never share sleeping quarters with Minors. The exception to this rule could be when a minor shared sleeping quarters with their legal guardian or parent. An additional exception would be in a group setting, in a large space, while also still following the two adult rule.
12. All volunteers and employees at any Church sponsored meetings and events who are responsible to supervise Minors and Vulnerable Adults must also abide by a code of conduct that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors. Some of these prohibited behaviors include but are not restricted to:
    a. Display of sexual affection toward a Minor.
    b. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
    c. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around Minors or Vulnerable Adults or in any way involving Minors in personal problems or issues.
    d. Dating or becoming "romantically" involved with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
    e. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
    f. Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
    g. Having secrets with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
    h. Staring at or commenting on the bodies of any other person.
    i. Engaging inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
    j. Working one-on-one with Minors or Vulnerable Adults in a private setting that is not visible to others.
    k. Abusing Minors or Vulnerable Adults in anyway, including (but not limited to) the following:
        i. Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restraint.
        ii. Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse.
        iii. Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
        iv. Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
        v. Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
        vi. Permit Minors or Vulnerable Adults to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.
13. Restroom procedures:
    a. Should first check that bathroom is not already occupied by another adult.
    b. Never take a child alone to the restroom. You must be accompanied by another adult or other children.
    c. It is recommended when taking children to the restroom, that a Worker only take children of the same gender as the Worker whenever circumstances permit.

d. Children in Kindergarten or younger must be escorted to the restroom by an adult. Children in grades above kindergarten may be sent in pairs to the restroom, without adult supervision. Workers should monitor this situation closely.

e. Children should have as much privacy as possible. Enter a bathroom stall only when absolutely necessary to assist the child, keeping the door open.

f. Diapers are only to be changed in designated, highly visible areas and in the presence of other Workers or have the parent/legal guardian change the diaper.

14. Nursery Guidelines

a. The Nursery is available for children ages infant to pre-kindergarten. Older children may be permitted to stay at the discretion of the Worker supervising the Nursery.

b. At least one adult must be present in the Nursery for every four children attending the Nursery if any of the children are eighteen (18) months old or younger. If all children attending the nursery are more than eighteen (18) months old, at least one adult must be present in the Nursery for every 6 children. However, a minimum of two adults shall be present at all times, regardless of the number of children.

c. One of the adults must be a "Worker" as defined by this Policy having completed all requirements contained herein. For purposes of the nursery only, the second adult may be a person sixteen (16) years or older.

d. All children attending the Nursery shall be signed in and out by their parent or guardian

**Social Media and Electronic Communications as it relates to Minors and Vulnerable Adults**

Social networking holds a very legitimate and worthwhile place in ministry. Through texting, email, Facebook, X, Skype, online video gaming and other similar platforms, ministry workers can communicate in meaningful ways. In an effort to ensure the safety of both the ministry worker and student, and to clarify what is and is not appropriate when utilizing these "ministry tools," the following guidelines have been put in place. Adherence to them is not only responsible as a representative of First Presbyterian Church, but as they are intended to promote a safe and loving atmosphere, is also faithful to the greater Church as well.

1. General Guidelines:

a. All communication sent digitally (email, social networking sites, notes or posts, etc.) is NOT CONFIDENTIAL and must be available to be shared or reposted with others.

b. Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent, as a window in the door provides transparency in the physical world.

c. In the virtual world healthy boundaries and safe church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world.

d. Use prudent judgment in the time you contact students through social media.

e. When possible, communication should be sent to entire groups, on their wall or in public areas - not in private messages – this includes images

f. Phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are the preferred mode of communication when responding to emotionally driven communication or pastoral emergencies.

g. When using social networking tools, ALWAYS be intentional about what is communicated, to whom it is sent, and when it is done, and what repercussions it might have.

h. Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse/neglect/exploitation of minors, elders and vulnerable adults apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world.

2. Email:

   a. Email can be an appropriate and effective means of communicating basic factual information such as the time of an event, agenda for a meeting, text of a document, etc.

   b. Email is not an appropriate communication method for matters that are pastorally or legally sensitive, emotionally charged or require extensive conversation.

   c. If an email message is longer than a couple of sentences, then the matter might more properly be addressed via live conversation.

   d. Whenever possible, another adult should be included (cc'd) in an email message, especially if the information shared is potentially sensitive.

   e. All users should note that humor and sarcasm can be easily misinterpreted in an email.

3. Online Social Media:

   a. Adults who minister to minors are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile.

   b. Adults will not submit "friend" requests to minors or youth. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults.

   c. Should a youth send a "friend" request, adults should carefully consider the appropriateness of accepting that request, recognizing that doing so gives that youth access to see other wall posts on the adult's site, whether from that adult or other "friends" of that adult. In all cases, should an adult accept a friend request from a youth, the parent(s) shall be informed and given the opportunity to "friend" the adult as well.

   d. Adults shall not use "invisible ink" apps/messaging technology in communicating with youth participants. These "invisible inks" apps are defined as those where private direct messages, once viewed by the recipient are/can be deleted from both the sending and receiving device, either automatically or manually. Example apps include: WhatsApp, Snapchat.

   e. Any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a minor has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited should be immediately reported to local law enforcement and clergy, then documented for church records Do not alter any posting or finding until Law enforcement has collected any needed digital evidence and they advise you to remove the material. Immediately take a screen shot of the electronic post in the event the poster deletes it.

4. Groups on Social Networking Sites:

   a. Groups will have at least two unrelated adult administrators.

   b. Groups privacy settings will be set to "closed" but not "hidden" or "secret."

c. Social networking groups for youth should be open to parents of current members.

d. Parents are informed that the content of youth pages or groups that are not sponsored by the church are NOT within the purview of adult youth leaders.

5. Texting/Cell Phone interaction

    a. If a student texts you after hours and it's not an emergency, wait until morning to reply.

    b. The "home phone rule" is a basic rule of thumb to use – if at all possible, do not text, chat, or email back-and-forth with students at a time you would not normally call their home phone line, i.e. before 9:00 AM or after 9:00 PM

    c. Video Chatting with students (Through cell phone platforms such as Face Time or online with Skype and the like) is strongly discouraged – if you must, be aware of what you're wearing, of your surroundings and of what's in the background.

6. Behavioral Covenant

    a. Materials posted on Church Sponsored sites (and/or group pages) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL.

    b. Content deemed inappropriate will be removed from the site or group page.

    c. Appropriate and respectful language shall be used at all times, especially in regards to events and persons. Language deemed inappropriate will be removed by the site administrator.

    d. Eligibility of membership to join a social networking group is limited to staff, those who are a member of the particular youth group, and their parents.

    e. Persons will be removed from membership when they cease to be a part of the particular youth group, due to moving away, inactivity, leaving the church, or becoming too old for the group.

    f. Persons shall also be removed for persisting in inappropriate postings or behavior

    g. Individuals may tag themselves in photos but adults should not tag youth or children in online photos or social media sites.

    h. Any post to an open social media site or page should refrain from using the name or any other personal information of any minor under the age of 19, even if parents have signed a waiver to use their photo or image.

**Social Media Communications**

Persons who create public pages on behalf of Church programs are responsible for monitoring communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

Persons having social media privileges on behalf of the Church shall treat private unsolicited communication from Minors and Vulnerable Adults as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting is a violation of the code of conduct.

If a Minor and/or Vulnerable Adult reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any "suspected abuse" in accordance with Nebraska state law.

When using social media to communicate with Minors and Vulnerable Adults, the authorized staff person shall inform parents/guardians of each Minor and Vulnerable Adult that the latter is communicating with the person via social media, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

Social Media Code of Conduct

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

1. Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
2. Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
3. Prohibit private messages between employees/volunteers and Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
4. Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
5. Provide Minors and Vulnerable Adults, and their parents and guardians with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
1. Encourage parents and guardians to play a role in monitoring their Minor's and Vulnerable Adult's interactions with employees and volunteers.
2. Continuously remind Minors and Vulnerable Adults how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
3. Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct. At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized staff member shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to Minors and Vulnerable Adults and parents/guardians.

**Misuse of Technology**

No minister, employee, contractor or volunteer shall misuse technology in the following ways:

1. Using technology to send suggestive messages and/or images to a Minor.
2. Having contacts by Misuse of Technology to contact a Minor or Vulnerable Adult that is not preapproved by the Minor's or Vulnerable Adult's legal guardian with a signed waiver, unless the contact is on an open public medium, such as a Church website or church or Church social media program.
3. View pornography or sites (ex. dating websites) which include pornography or naked bodies on the premises of the Church or at an event, activity or meeting, no matter where it is held.

**Virtual Meeting Code of Conduct**

Child/Youth workers, ministers, employees, contractors or volunteers must follow any virtual meeting policies or protocols of the Church when planning and conducting a virtual meeting on virtual meeting platforms (ex. AltarLive, Zoom, Skype) with one or more minors or vulnerable adults:

1. Adults should seek permission from the parent or guardian who has legal custody of a minor before inviting the Minor to participate in a virtual meeting. Such permission can be sought in any hard copy or electronic registration forms but must be a separate and clear section seeking permission of the parent or guardian. The option to observe the virtual meeting (without visual or verbal participation) should be made available upon request to the parent or guardian. The permission section of the registration form shall provide the parent or guardian with information (name, contact information, including telephone/text) on how to report concerns, issues or to make reports of inappropriate

conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse by an Adult or any participant that occurs before, during or after a virtual meeting.

2. Adults and meeting organizers should advise a parent or guardian who has legal custody of a Minor of the following so that the parent or guardian is aware of it when giving permission for the Minor to participate in the meeting that a meeting will be recorded;
3. No Adult is permitted to meet one-on-one or one Adult with a group of Minors either in a virtual meeting space or a breakout room. There must be at least two (2) Adults in any virtual meetings or breakout room or other virtual meeting space.
4. All Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings shall dress appropriately for the meeting. No meeting participants shall wear inappropriate (that is, sexually suggestive, exploitive or voyeuristic - "Inappropriate") clothing or clothing that displays Inappropriate or offensive (that is sexually demeaning or suggestive, pornographic, voyeuristic, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, intimidating, threatening, profane or abusive – "Offensive") messages.
5. No Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings are permitted to make displays of Inappropriate or Offensive messages by putting a sign or note in front of the camera in some form or fashion.
6. Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings should be considerate and not carry the phone or device they are using to participate in the meeting into private areas of their meeting space, such as bathrooms, with any camera or microphone on and the meeting is in progress.
7. No Adults or Minors are permitted to use the chat function, the name section, or any other feature of a virtual platform for Inappropriate or Offensive purposes during a virtual meeting, including, but not limited to:
    - Displaying Inappropriate photographs or images, such as pornography or photographs of anyone who is naked or inappropriately attired.
    - Displaying Offensive or Inappropriate messages.
    - Providing links to Offensive and Inappropriate websites or platforms.
    - Bullying, discriminating against or harassing anyone based upon their race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification /expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information or religious affiliation.
8. No Adult is permitted to use the private chat function of a virtual meeting platform to communicate privately with one or more Minors except when the privacy or dignity of the Minor requires it. If a private chat is necessary, it must be recorded and must copy another Adult. Otherwise, all chat communications must be done openly so that all participants, including the other Adults, parents or guardians in the virtual meeting can see the chat communications. This should be announced at the start of every virtual meeting. (Exceptions: if the Adult is designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse).
9. If a Minor attempts to contact an Adult using the private chat function, the Adult should not respond. If an Adult attempts to contact a Minor using the private chat function, the Minor should not respond. (Exception: unless the Minor is contacting the Adult designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse or that Adult is contacting a Minor who made a report.)

10. No Adult is permitted to use other means of communication (such as texting or email) to communicate privately with one or more Minors before, during or after a virtual meeting. No Minor is permitted to use other means of communication (such as texting or email) to communicate privately with one or more Adults before, during or after a virtual meeting. (Exception: if the Minor made a report to the Adult and the Adult is designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse).
11. Adults and meeting organizers shall provide Minors with information (name, contact information, including telephone/text) on how to report concerns, issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse by an Adult or any participant that occurs before, during or after a virtual meeting. Adults and meeting organizers are responsible for making mandatory reports of sexual misconduct or abuse as required by the Book of Order (G-4.0302) and under local, state, and federal law.

**Suspected Child Abuse**

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse:

1. All Workers shall be familiar with the definitions and descriptions of child abuse listed above.
2. If you suspect that a child at First Presbyterian Church has been abused the following steps are to be followed.
    a. IMMEDIATELY report the suspected abuse to the appropriate member of First Presbyterian Church staff or the head of staff. As per Nebraska state law, all mandatory reporters are also required to notify law enforcement.
    b. DO NOT interview the child regarding the suspected abuse. This will be conducted by a trained professional. It is your responsibility to report SUSPECTED abuse, not to verify the abuse has occurred.
    c. DO NOT discuss the suspected abuse with other workers, parents, etc. All information regarding the child should be kept confidential with the First Presbyterian Church staff and the proper authorities.
    d. First Presbyterian Staff will provide a written report regarding the suspected child abuse which shall include the name of the child, the individual suspected of committing the abuse, if known, any other children or adults present at the time of the abuse or who may have knowledge of the suspected abuse, and a detailed description of the suspicions and how the allegation originated. This report is to be completed within 24 hours of when the suspicion arose and given to the Head of Staff.
    e. After the suspected child abuse case has been reported, proper steps will be taken by First Presbyterian Staff to report the suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities. The adult reporting the suspected abuse will also be informed of their responsibility to report their reasonable suspicians to the appropriate authorities.
3. Failure to Follow Policy 1. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other Workers must be reported to appropriate First Presbyterian Staff. 2. Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved from duty at the sole discretion of First Presbyterian Staff or Personnel Committee.

SIGNING OF POLICY AND APPLICATION

Each adult engaged in the Session, Deacons, Stephen Ministry and all Programs that include children/youth/vulnerable adults at First Presbyterian Church, as well as all employees shall acknowledge receipt of the First Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Minor and VulnerableAdult Protection Policy and Its Procedures by signing a form verifying they read the Policy. In addition, each person engaged in the service to others away from the church proper shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this Policy.

**PROCESS TO REVIEW AND REVISE THIS POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES**

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed during odd numbered years. Revisions will be made as required by state law or the First Presbyterian Church.