



Safe Place Policy and Procedures

Fort Hill Presbyterian Church

**Revised and Approved by Session on April 16, 2019
Implemented After Approval**

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1. Policy Rationale

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Mark 10:14b

Children are a precious and sacred gift given to the community by God. They come into the community trusting those responsible for their nurture and care. It is through our actions with children that they learn what it is to be part of the family of God.

Leadership in the Church demands the highest standards of moral integrity and personal responsibility. Violation of the trust of children, youth, parents, college students, the elderly and other vulnerable individuals such as those with physical and mental handicaps breaks relationship not only with the people of God but possibly destroys faith in God. Therefore, in order to welcome all children of God into Jesus' arms the Fort Hill Presbyterian Church provides this policy:

Our Safe Place Policy is to safeguard vulnerable individuals who are entrusted to our care and those called to serve Jesus Christ by caring for them. As members of this congregation and of the Body of Christ, along with parents and guardians, we make a covenant to undertake the Christian nurture of each person when she or he is baptized. Our commitment to Christian nurture means that we will help care for all vulnerable individuals by providing them with a safe and nurturing environment, as well as teaching them the gospel and living out the Christian faith as positive role models.

Churches historically and by nature have been known as protectors, so allegations or evidence of abuse in church sponsored activities is especially devastating. After studying and investigating policies of other organizations and churches, the Session and Staff of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church concludes that in today's environment a well-balanced, proactive prevention policy is a necessity for this church and any institution when entrusted with the care of children, youth, parents, college students, the elderly and other vulnerable members such as those with physical and mental handicaps. Insurance companies require churches to have a formal policy as a preventive measure against abuse by applying this policy to all church staff and volunteers working with these vulnerable individuals. In response to this requirement and to growing public concern over the safety and welfare of all people, Fort Hill Presbyterian Church establishes this Safe Place Policy and Procedures.

With this Safe Place Policy, Fort Hill Presbyterian Church affirms the right of all those attending church functions to be protected from sexual/physical/emotional abuse and neglect, and the right of volunteers and church staff to be protected from unwarranted allegations of abuse and neglect.

2. General Statement of Purpose:

To provide and ensure a welcoming, loving, and safe Christian environment for all who attend Fort Hill Presbyterian Church of Clemson, SC.

This policy is intended to ensure:

- A safe and secure environment for all persons, especially children, youth, college students, the elderly and vulnerable individuals.
- Protection from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse while participating in activities offered by Fort Hill Presbyterian Church.
- Adult volunteers and employees are protected from unwarranted allegations of abuse.
- A mechanism exists to deal with reported concerns and subsequent actions.

This policy includes the following components for protection:

- Screening applicants for employment and volunteer services for a history of behavior potentially detrimental to children, youth, the elderly or vulnerable individuals.
- Training employees and volunteers regarding the policy and appropriate supervision and chaperoning of activities involving children, youth, the elderly and vulnerable individuals.
- Procedures for reporting allegations and/or concerns.
- Procedures for responding to the report of allegations and/or concerns.

3. Definitions:

Abuse: Harmful actions or language toward another person may take many forms. In all cases, abuse may result from the actions of an adult toward a minor or other adult, or the actions of child/youth toward a peer.

- **Physical abuse** is that which results in physical injury, including but not limited to bruises, burns, cuts, welts, fractures, and internal injuries.
- **Emotional abuse** is that which results in impaired psychological growth and development, including bullying, belittling, rejection, constant unequal treatment, verbal assaults, excessive demands on child's performance, and isolation from normal social activities.
- **Sexual abuse** is that which consists of sexual contact or interactions with a child, including physical contact (fondling, genital/oral stimulation, sexual intercourse) and nonphysical contact (exhibitionism, child prostitution, pornography, and voyeurism). See **Sexual Abuse and Sexual Conduct**.
- **Disability abuse** is when a person with a disability (such as a physical or mental handicap) is abused physically, emotionally, and/or sexually due to the person having the disability. Since many disabilities are not visible (Ex: learning disabilities such as dyslexia), it may be difficult to determine that a need exists for understanding and support. Some disabled people are in need of additional support from others throughout their lives, which makes them vulnerable to neglect.

Abused Children/Youth:

Under South Carolina law, an abused child or youth is one whose death results from or whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by the acts or omissions of the child's parents, guardian, or other person responsible for his/her welfare.

Ages of vulnerable individuals:

- **Child:** A child under South Carolina law is a person less than 18 years of age.
- **Youth:** A child who is over the age of twelve and/or at least in the sixth grade. At Fort Hill a youth is any person in 6th to 12th grade inclusive.
- **College Student:** Anyone enrolled in a college or university.
- **Elderly:** A person 65 years of age or older.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** "Vulnerable adult" means a person eighteen years of age or older who has a physical or mental condition which substantially impairs the person from adequately providing for his or her own care or protection. This includes a person who is impaired in the ability to adequately provide for the person's own care or protection because of the infirmities of aging including, but not limited to, organic brain damage, advanced age, and physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction. A resident of a facility is a vulnerable adult. Source: <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t43c035.php>

Child Sexual Abuse:

Any sexual activity with a child-whether in the home by a caretaker, in a daycare situation, a foster/residential setting, or any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim (National Resource Center on Child Abuse)

Elder Abuse:

The World Health Organization defines elder abuse as “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.” The heart of this definition is that it concentrates on situations where there is “expectation of trust” by elder person being abused or neglected.

Misuse of Technology:

The use of any technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including, but not limited to texting, video recording, or emailing suggestive messages and/or images to other persons. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property or at ministry events. When this misuse 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 entity or within the context of ministry.

Neglect:

The failure to use proper care or supervision, or to abandon vulnerable individuals participating in church sponsored activities.

Pornography:

Production, distribution or use of pornography is defined by the General Assembly (1988) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as follows:

- Pornography includes any sexually explicit materials (books, magazines, movies, videos, musical lyrics, TV shows, telephone services, internet sites, live sex acts) produced for the purpose of sexual arousal by eroticizing violence, power, humiliation, abuse, dominance, degradation, or mistreatment of any person, male or female, and usually produced for monetary profit.
- Any sexually explicit material that depicts children is pornography.

Sexting:

The act of transmitting sexually explicit messages through cell phone text messaging, emails, cyber chat, social media, websites, or other means of electronic communication.

Sexual Activity:

May be violent or non-violent, touching or non-touching, and is an exploitation of a person's vulnerability and powerlessness. Within a professional relationship, sexual activity with persons as defined in Sexual Misconduct and Abuse creates a Breach of Professional Responsibility.

Sexual Misconduct and Abuse:

- Examples of sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to, adultery, indecent exposure, sexual activity, sexual intercourse, and sexual acts within a professional relationship.
- Sexual conduct in relation to the following is considered sexual abuse:
 - Any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent.
 - Any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of office or position (D-10.0401c).
 - Any of these activities that occur within the scope of Church activities, or that arise from the alleged perpetrator having a position of authority or power through the Church.
- **Breach of Professional Responsibility**
 - When a person in a position of trust engages in a sexual act, has sexual contact, or creates a sexualized environment with any person to whom he or she owes a professional responsibility.
 - A breach of professional responsibility includes, without limitation, consensual sexual relationships between ministers and laity with whom they have a professional relationship.
 - A romantic relationship within a ministerial relationship or other professional relationship is considered a high-risk relationship that can lead to sexual activity and misconduct.
 - Examples of professional relationships include, but are not limited to, counselor-client; lay employee-church member; minister-church member; Presbytery executive-committee member; supervisor/manager-employee/volunteer.

Sexual Harassment:

The Policy by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 defines Sexual Harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Examples of **sexual harassment** include, but are not limited to:

- **Verbal:** sexual innuendoes; risqué jokes; sexually suggestive or insulting questions, comments or sounds, jokes, whistling, or teasing of a sexual nature; sexual propositions or threats; continuing to make sexual advances or comments or otherwise expressing personal interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome; sexual remarks regarding clothing, body, or love life; or any type of subtle pressure for sexual activity;
- **Visual:** sexually suggestive or gender–derogatory objects, objects, pictures, posters, or letters; leering, or obscene or sexually suggestive gestures; the misuse of electronic equipment, software and/or communications to transmit sexually explicit messages, including but not limited to sexting.
- **Physical:** unwanted physical contact including touching, punching, brushing the body, impeding or blocking movement, sexual intercourse or assault; or rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.
- **Encouraging:** attitudes or patterns of variable, visual, or physical conduct (may or may not be obviously directed at a particular person) that may reasonably be perceived as tending to legitimize, rationalize, or excuse unwanted sexual advances.

4. Responsibility for Implementation and Compliance

Overall Responsibility:

The responsibility for the implementation of and compliance with this Safe Place Policy, as well as the necessary education and training needed to carry it out lies with the Session through the Personnel and Program Support Ministry in cooperation of the Discipleship Ministry. It is suggested that one member from each ministry team be designated the Safe Place Policy and Procedures point person and be responsible for making sure all staff and volunteers within the ministry team are in compliance with required training and background checks.

Discipleship Ministry:

A ministry of the Session that nurtures children, youth, and adults in their spiritual formation. The Discipleship Ministry is a primary ministry where volunteers and staff are trained in the Safe Place Policy and Procedures. A member of the Discipleship Ministry serves on the Safe Place Committee to annually review the Safe Place Policy and Procedures.

Church Activity:

Any activity that is sponsored by the church. A church activity may be held on or off church grounds.

Clerk of Session:

The clerk shall be a ruling elder who serves as the secretary of the session keeping a full and accurate record of its proceedings. The clerk of session shall also serve as secretary for all meetings of the congregation. (Presbyterian Church (USA) *Book of Order*, G-1.0505 and G-3.0107)

Employee or Staff:

Any person who is employed and/or compensated by the Church. Staff employment does not include independent contractors. Nothing herein is intended to change the status of any employee or independent contractor as may be established by federal, state, local or common law.

Facilities:

The Fort Hill Presbyterian Church buildings are supplied with materials needed to maintain a safe environment and to cope with potential emergencies. First Aid Kits and Automated External Defibrillators (AED) are maintained by the Deacons. Fire Extinguishers and Fire Escape maps are maintained by Buildings and Grounds and are located in each room near light switches.

Ordained Officer:

Current elders and deacons of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church. Each year, the Nominating Committee representative will advise potential officers, when first approached to consider serving that they will be

asked to register and submit for a criminal background check performed by a third- party vendor as an indication of leading by example and support.

Personnel and Program Support Ministry:

- A ministry of the Session responsible for the orderly search for church staff, employment, and review and support of staff and programs of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church. A member of this Ministry serves on the Safe Place Committee to review annually the Safe Place Policy and Procedures. This Ministry will offer a compliance update to Session each March; information will include how many currently trained volunteers are on the roles and annual statistics on the number of volunteers needed to execute Fort Hill Presbyterian Church’s ministry to vulnerable individuals. The budget for the implementation of the Safe Place Policy and Procedures and background checks including, but not limited to criminal record checks, is the responsibility of this Ministry.

Safe Place Administrator:

An assigned employee who oversees and initiates employee and volunteer compliance, maintains files and record keeping, and is a member of the Safe Place Committee.

Safe Place Committee:

A combined committee of the Discipleship and Personnel and Program Support Ministries with responsibility to oversee the Safe Place Policy and Procedures’ implementation, monitor compliance, and recommend policy changes and clarifications to the Session. Review of the Safe Place Policy and Procedures will be done annually in January by the Safe Place Committee. Any revisions to the policy and procedures may be presented at a subsequent Session meeting for approval.

Safe Place Policy Trainer:

Staff and members of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church who have been educated on and prepared to instruct others in the Safe Place Policy and Procedures.

Session:

The responsibility of the Session as defined in the Presbyterian Church (USA) *Book of Order* is found in G-3.02. “The session is the council for the congregation . . .The session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the

notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).”

Volunteer:

Any non-employee serving in a leadership role in Fort Hill Presbyterian Church activities or ministries. This includes but is not limited to teachers, assistants, advisors or chaperones.

5. Requirements for Service Positions

Requirements for Employees:

- As a part of Fort Hill’s employment process, all employees are required to complete and sign the Safe Place Ministry Application and complete the Safe Place Policy and Procedures Training.
- A person will not be considered an employee of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church until the application is completed and placed in the employee’s personnel file.
- Prior to any activity of employment within the church, potential employees will also provide a valid form of identification, at least (2) two professional references, the appropriate signed Disclosure and Authorization Form and undergo, and pass background checks, including but not limited to Criminal Records Check and any other related to the position (i.e., motor vehicle, credit, etc.).

Requirements for Member Volunteers:

- Member volunteers are required to complete and sign the Safe Place Ministry Application and to complete the Safe Place Policy and Procedures Training.
- Member volunteers must also provide a valid form of identification and history of volunteer work; a signed appropriate Disclosure and Authorization Form, and undergo and pass a Criminal Records Check and any specific background checks related to the position (i.e., motor vehicle, credit, etc.).
- Member volunteers should have attended worship for at least one year or been a member of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church for six months before working with vulnerable individuals in a ministry program of this church.
- If the volunteer has been a member of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church less than six months, he/she will provide at least (2) two references from a previous church of membership/attendance in which they have served vulnerable individuals within the last 18 months.

Requirements for Non-Member Volunteers:

- Non-member volunteers are required to complete and sign the Safe Place Ministry Application and to complete the Safe Place Policy and Procedures Training.

- Non-member volunteers must also provide a valid form of identification and history of volunteer work; a signed Disclosure and Authorization Form, and undergo and pass a Criminal Records Check and any specific background checks related to the position (i.e., motor vehicle, credit, etc.).
- Non-member volunteers will be interviewed by a member of the Staff or a Safe Place Policy Trainer. The trainer or staff person will obtain at least (2) two references from the church of membership/attendance in which the non-member volunteer has served vulnerable individuals within the last 18 months.

Employee	Member Volunteer	Non-Member Volunteer
Employment Application	FHPC worship for 1 year or member for 6 months	Interview by Staff or Safe Place Policy Trainer
Safe Place Ministry Application	Safe Place Ministry Application	Safe Place Ministry Application
Valid Form of Identification	Valid Form of Identification	Valid Form of Identification
Signed appropriate Disclosure and Authorization Form (for background checks Criminal Records Check and other)	Signed appropriate Disclosure and Authorization Form (for background checks Criminal Records Check and other)	Signed appropriate Disclosure and Authorization Form (for background checks Criminal Records Check and other)
Clear report on CRC and background checks	Clear report on CRC and background checks	Clear report on CRC and background checks
Two professional references	If member less than 6 months— Two references from previous church within 18 months	Two references from church of membership
Completion of Safe Place Policy and Procedures Training	Completion of Safe Place Policy and Procedures Training	Completion of Safe Place Policy and Procedures Training

6. Safe Place Policy and Procedures Training

The following topics will be covered in the Training:

- Rationale for the Safe Place Policy and Procedures.
- Definitions of Abuse and Vulnerable Individuals.
- Responsibility for Compliance and Implementation.
- Requirements for Service Positions.
- Policies governing work with children, youth, and elderly.
- Behavior Guidelines and Discipline Policy which was approved by Session in 2017.
- Procedures for reporting abuse and responding to the report for abuse.
- Tour of the entire church facility including noting the location of First Aid Kits and Automated External Defibrillators (AED) maintained by the Deacons, Fire Extinguishers maintained by Buildings and Grounds, and Fire Escape maps in each room located near light switches maintained by Buildings and Grounds.

Training Schedules:

- Training of the Safe Place Policy and Procedures for new staff and volunteers will be offered at least twice a year.
- Trainings and background checks for employees and volunteers will be considered current for four years from the original date of completion.
- Renewal Training will be offered annually and include updating the following information: Safe Place Ministry Application, and Criminal Records Check. Employees and Volunteers will be advised of any changes in the Safe Place Policy and Procedures since they were initially trained or their last renewal.
- Training in the use of the AED is offered periodically by the Deacons.

Training Database:

- A master database of trained staff and volunteers will be maintained by the Office Administrator. Training dates and renewal dates, along with Safe Place Ministry Applications, and status of completed background and Criminal Records Checks and other relevant checks are kept in the database.

7. Policies for Working with Children and Youth

Supervision of Children and Youth

- Two non-related adults at least 18 years of age must be present at any church-sponsored activity that involves the supervision of minors.
 - The supervising adult, especially those on overnight trips, must have had Safe Place Policy and Procedures training and passed a Criminal Records Check and relevant checks within four years.
 - Parents must be contacted for prior approval if only one trained adult is available for supervision.
 - Children/youth classrooms in the church facilities will have accessible visibility, which will remain unobstructed at all times.
 - A ratio of 1:4 (adult : children) and 1:7 (adult : youth) will be maintained during retreat or travel events, unless specified otherwise by the hosting retreat center.
 - When lodging accommodations are limited so that adults are prevented from being housed in their own room, an adult of the same gender may share a room with multiple children/youth.
- Required Consent Forms per age group:
 - For nursery aged children:
 - All parents or guardians will complete an Emergency Information Form on the particulars for each child including: who is able to pick up a child or children from the nursery, allergies, and any health concerns. These forms are kept in a secure location.
 - Parents or guardians will sign in at the check in station when leaving children at church activities, and receive a label for them and their child. The child will not be surrendered until the parent/guardian label is presented to the leader.
 - In instances when the label system is not in use, persons picking up children will be asked to show identification.
 - For Children's Ministry Activities:
 - All parents or guardians will complete a Waiver and Consent Form for Children's Ministry participation for each child. The Coordinator of Children's Ministry keeps these secured.
 - For Youth Ministry Activities:
 - All parents will complete a Waiver and Consent Form for Youth Ministry participation for each youth. The Associate Pastor for Youth keeps these secured and a copy is sent for each child on overnight trips.

Transportation Guidelines

- Two adults per vehicle are preferred. When two adults per vehicle are not available, the minimum required is one adult and two or more children/youth members—never one to one.

- Parents should be contacted for prior approval if only one trained adult is available for supervision.
- Youth are not allowed to drive other youth on church sponsored trips.

8. Regulations for Reporting of Alleged Abuse

I. This is the South Carolina Code for Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

Title 63 - South Carolina Children's Code

CHAPTER 7

Child Protection and Permanency

ARTICLE 1

General Provisions

SECTION 63-7-310. Persons required to report.

(A) The following persons must report in accordance with this section when, in such person's professional capacity, he has received information that gives him reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected as defined in Section 63-7-20: a physician, nurse, dentist, optometrist, medical examiner, or coroner, or an employee of a county medical examiner's or coroner's office, or any other medical, emergency medical services, mental health, or allied health professional, member of the clergy including a Christian Science Practitioner or religious healer, clerical or nonclerical religious counselor who charges for services, school teacher, counselor, principal, assistant principal, school attendance officer, social or public assistance worker, substance abuse treatment staff, or childcare worker in a childcare center or foster care facility, foster parent, police or law enforcement officer, juvenile justice worker, undertaker, funeral home director or employee of a funeral home, persons responsible for processing films, computer technician, judge, and a volunteer non-attorney guardian ad litem serving on behalf of the South Carolina Guardian Ad Litem Program or on behalf of Richland County CASA.

(B) If a person required to report pursuant to subsection (A) has received information in the person's professional capacity which gives the person reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by acts or omissions that would be child abuse or neglect if committed by a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, but the reporter believes that the act or omission was committed by a person other than the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, the reporter must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

(C) A person, as provided in subsections (A) and (B), who reports child abuse or neglect to a supervisor or person in charge of an institution, school, facility, or agency is not relieved of his individual duty to report in accordance with this section. The duty to report is not superseded by an internal investigation within the institution, school, facility, or agency.

(D) Except as provided in subsection (A), a person who has reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect may report, and is encouraged to report, in accordance with this section. A person, as provided in subsection (A) or (B), who reports child abuse or neglect to a supervisor or person in charge of an institution, school, facility, or agency is not relieved of his individual duty to report in accordance with this section. The duty to report is not superseded by an internal investigation within the institution, school, facility, or agency.

(E) Reports of child abuse or neglect may be made orally by telephone or otherwise to the county department of social services or to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or is found.

(F) Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring a person under the age of eighteen to be a mandated reporter pursuant to subsection (A).

HISTORY: 2008 Act No. 361, Section 2; 2010 Act No. 227, Section 1, eff upon approval (became law without the Governor's signature on June 8, 2010); 2018 Act No. 222 (H.4705), Section 1, eff May 18, 2018.

Effect of Amendment

The 2010 amendment in subsection (A), added reference to "school attendance officer", "foster parent", "juvenile justice worker", and "volunteer non-attorney guardian ad litem serving on behalf of the South Carolina Guardian Ad Litem program or on behalf of Richland County CASA"; and rewrote subsection (C).

2018 Act No. 222, Section 1, rewrote the section, adding religious counselors as mandated reporters and requiring reporters to comply with the individual duty to report.

SECTION 63-7-315. Civil action created for wrongful termination based on employee having reported child abuse or neglect.

(A) An employer must not dismiss, demote, suspend, or otherwise discipline or discriminate against an employee who is required or permitted to report child abuse or neglect pursuant to Section 63-7-310 based on the fact that the employee has made a report of child abuse or neglect.

(B) An employee who is adversely affected by conduct that is in violation of subsection (A) may bring a civil action for reinstatement and back pay. An action brought pursuant to this subsection may be commenced against an employer, including the State, a political subdivision of the State, and an office, department, independent agency, authority, institution, association, or other body in state government. An action brought pursuant to this subsection must be commenced within three years of the date the adverse personnel action occurred.

(C) In an action brought pursuant to subsection (B), the court may award reasonable attorney's fees to the prevailing party; however, in order for the employer to receive reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to this subsection, the court must make a finding pursuant to Section 63-7-2000 that:

(1) the employee made a report of suspected child abuse or neglect maliciously or in bad faith; or

(2) the employee is guilty of making a false report of suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to Section 63-7-440.

HISTORY: 2014 Act No. 291 (H.3124), Section 1, eff June 23, 2014.

SECTION 63-7-330. Confidentiality of information.

(A) The identity of the person making a report pursuant to this section must be kept confidential by the agency or department receiving the report and must not be disclosed except as provided for in subsection (B) or (C) or as otherwise provided for in this chapter.

(B) When the department refers a report to a law enforcement agency for a criminal investigation, the department must inform the law enforcement agency of the identity of the person who reported the child abuse or neglect. The identity of the reporter must only be used by the law enforcement agency to further the criminal investigation arising from the report, and the agency must not disclose the reporter's identity to any person other than an employee of the agency who is involved in the criminal investigation arising from the report. If the reporter testifies in a criminal proceeding arising from the report, it must not be disclosed that the reporter made the report.

(C) When a law enforcement agency refers a report to the department for an investigation or other response, the law enforcement agency must inform the department of the identity of the person who reported the child abuse or neglect. The department must not disclose the identity of the reporter to any person except as authorized by Section 63-7-1990.

HISTORY: 2008 Act No. 361, Section 2.

SC Laws – Code of Laws — <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t63c007.php> accessed 2019.04.05.

II. This is the South Carolina Code for Adult Protection, Duties and Procedures of Investigative Entities.

Title 43 - Social Services

CHAPTER 35

Adult Protection

ARTICLE 1

Duties and Procedures of Investigative Entities

SECTION 43-35-25. Persons required to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adult; reporting methods.

(A) A physician, nurse, dentist, optometrist, medical examiner, coroner, other medical, mental health or allied health professional, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer, school teacher, counselor, psychologist, mental health or intellectual disability specialist, social or public assistance worker, caregiver, staff or volunteer of an adult day care center or of a facility, or law enforcement officer having reason to believe that a vulnerable adult has been or is likely to be abused, neglected, or exploited shall report the incident in accordance with this section. Any other person who has actual knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited shall report the incident in accordance with this section.

(B) Except as provided in subsection (A), any other person who has reason to believe that a vulnerable adult has been or may be abused, neglected, or exploited may report the incident.

(C) A person required to report pursuant to this section is personally responsible for making the report; however, a state agency may make a report on behalf of an agency employee if the procedure the agency uses for reporting has been approved in writing by the Vulnerable Adults Investigations Unit of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division or the investigative entity to which the report is to be made.

(D) A person required to report under this section must report the incident within twenty-four hours or the next working day. A report must be made in writing or orally by telephone or otherwise to:

(1) the Vulnerable Adults Investigations Unit of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division for incidents occurring in facilities operated or contracted for operation by the Department of Mental Health or the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs;

(2) the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program for incidents occurring in facilities, except those facilities provided for in item (1); and

(3) the Adult Protective Services Program for incidents occurring in all other settings.

(E) If the Vulnerable Adults Investigations Unit of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division or an investigative entity receives a report that is not within its investigative jurisdiction, the unit or investigative entity shall forward the report to the appropriate unit or investigative entity not later than the next working day.

(F) No facility may develop policies or procedures that interfere with the reporting requirements of this section.

(G) Provided the mandatory reporting requirements of this section are met, nothing in this section precludes a person also from reporting directly to law enforcement, and in cases of an emergency, serious injury, or suspected sexual assault law enforcement must be contacted immediately.

HISTORY: 1993 Act No. 110, Section 1, eff three months after June 11, 1993; 2006 Act No. 301, Section 5, eff May 23, 2006.

SC Laws – Code of Laws -- <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t43c035.php> accessed 2019.04.05.

III. Any person who is required, pursuant to South Carolina Code Ann Section 63-7-310 or Section 43-35-25, to report incidents of alleged abuse must also report such incidents to the Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor.

IV. Any person who may, pursuant to South Carolina Code Ann Section 63-7-310 or Section 43-35-25, report incidents of alleged abuse may also report such incidents to the Pastor, or in the alternative, the Associate Pastor.”

V. The 2017-2019 PCUSA Book of Order states:

a. G-4.0302 Mandatory Reporting

“Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of physical harm or abuse.”

9. Responding to Abuse Allegations

- 1) When an employee or volunteer becomes aware of any report of alleged abuse, he or she shall notify the Pastor or Associate Pastor, of such report as soon as is practicable.
 - a. When an allegation has been made tell the person, "I hear you."
 - b. Tell the person that you are required to share this with a pastor or Clerk of Session.
 - c. Share with a pastor or clerk of session only what you have been told.
- 2) Anyone accused of abuse will be immediately suspended from further responsibilities involving direct contact with children or elderly in any FHPC activity. The accused will remain suspended until an investigation of the alleged abuse has concluded no merit.
- 3) Upon becoming aware of any report of alleged abuse, the Pastor or the Associate Pastor shall as soon as is practicable notify the Clerk of Session of the reported alleged abuse.
- 4) As soon as is practicable following the report to the Clerk of Session, the Pastor, or the Associate Pastor, will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- 5) As soon as is practicable following the notification of law enforcement, the Pastor or the Associate Pastor, along with the Clerk of Session, shall visit the parents or guardians of the child/youth or elderly person who is the alleged victim of abuse. Provided, however, that nothing herein shall be deemed to require any employee or church member to take any action that would materially interfere with an investigation of any law enforcement agency.
- 6) All reports of alleged abuse shall be treated confidentially and discussed with no one except those whom this Policy provides are to receive notice:
 - i. The Pastor or Associate Pastor shall contact the Foothills Presbytery Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk, the church's insurance agent, and the church's attorney regarding the allegation(s).
 - ii. The Session, the Pastor or the Associate Pastor, in consultation with the above resources, shall determine whether, when, and in what manner the Congregation shall be informed of an allegation of abuse.
 - iii. The Session may choose to ask Presbytery to handle the judicial process on their behalf. When referred to Foothills Presbytery Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk, the Policies and Procedures of Foothills Presbytery are activated.

10. Other Laws, Policies and Procedures

- 1) Whenever it may appear that this Policy is in conflict with a federal, state or local law, such law shall be controlling.
- 2) Whenever it may appear that this Policy is in conflict with the *Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*, the current edition of said *Book of Order* shall be controlling.
- 3) Media contact shall be made to the Pastor, or if not the Pastor, then the Clerk of Session, or the Session's designee.
- 4) Any written records pertaining to the allegations shall be maintained by the Clerk of Session and kept in a secure location at the church.

11. Healing the Congregation

At Fort Hill Presbyterian Church we take every possible precaution to protect all vulnerable individuals attending our programs however we have to recognize that incidents may occur. These situations can have a tremendous impact on the individuals, as well as the entire congregation. “Abuse that is hidden continues to cause anger, confusion and fear in the congregation for years to come. After abuse is experienced, the ministry of recovery must be aimed at assuring justice for all and healing for those who are suffering. Justice and healing will not be achieved in a short time.”[1] To help the community of faith deal with this betrayal of trust, there are five main components necessary for the healing process.

- **Truth telling.**

For healing to begin the silence must be broken by acknowledging what has happened to the congregation. Ignoring the issue could only make things worse. Supporting the safety and well-being of the survivors. Hold abusers accountable for their behavior

- **Sharing and validation of feelings.**

There are many emotions that surround the betrayal of trust; shock, anger, disbelief, and fear. In order to help the community of faith acknowledge and validate these feelings as well as find some resolution, we encourage group mediation with a trained pastoral counselor. Get to know your local domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, and child abuse service providers.

- **Concerning forgiveness:**

“Offering gratuitous forgiveness to the abuser is of no benefit in the healing process for the victim or for the congregation. For healing to occur, painful consequences must be endured not just by the victim, who suffers first, but also by the abuser. When the abuser is truly able to live a changed life and demonstrate sorrow and repentance, then it will be possible for the congregation to offer the grace of forgiveness. Even so, the victim may or may not be able to forgive the harm he or she has suffered, and no pressure to forgive should ever be brought to bear on the victim simply to help the abuser feel better.”[2]

- **Education.**

Commitment to the safety and well-being of all vulnerable individuals is our number one priority. We have to communicate that commitment to the congregation in order for trust to be reestablished. We also must reeducate members on how collectively we can protect all children of God. “Programming with the congregation that is aimed at restoring trust in the church and its workers will be a valuable support ministry. Programs and discussion groups that focus on safety, justice, mercy, and reconciliation in difficult situations will set a solid foundation for their continuing spiritual growth.”[3]

- **Spiritual reflection.**

In a community of faith we turn to God for guidance and direction, especially during difficult times. We turn to Scripture, like the words Paul gave to the Colossians during crisis or the comforting words of Psalm 23 and we pray that the *“peace of Christ will rule in our hearts.”* We turn to God in prayer and emphasize the grace of Jesus Christ that will lift us up and love us forever. Offering opportunities for pastoral or other counseling, Bible study, healing and wholeness services, or prayer times can serve as ways to address the spiritual brokenness when mistrust, misuse of power, and addressing abuse as sin become part of the process of becoming whole.

Answering the question, “What else do we have to do in order to be able to heal?”

As a congregation and as the body of Christ, where do we go from here? What do we need to do to mend ourselves so that we can go about the mission of the church – which is to glorify and serve God? Create an environment of awareness by displaying books and brochures that explore, educate and expand understanding within the congregation. Host information and awareness events with educational materials so that members of the congregation are empowered to lead, serve, and protect the children, the youth, and the elderly. Arrange for a guest speaker for your congregation or community to continue to keep shepherding care of the congregation a priority within the whole church’s ministry.

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe your selves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which in deed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the work of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing songs to God. And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17

[1] Melton, Joy Thornburg, *Safe Sanctuaries for Youth – Reducing the Risk of Abuse in Youth Ministries*, Discipleship Resources: Nashville, TN, 2003, 69.

[2] Melton, 74.

[3] Melton, 73.

12. APPENDIX

A. Resources and Websites:

The following resources are in the Foothills Presbytery Resource Center:

205.66 Fortune 2009

Fortune, Marie M. ***Responding to clergy misconduct : a handbook*** . [Seattle, WA] : FaithTrust Institute, c2009.

253.2 Clergy TRAINER

Clergy misconduct : sexual abuse in the ministerial relationship. Seattle (1914 North 34th Street, Suite 105, Seattle, WA 98103) : Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, c1992.

259.1 Fortune

Fortune, Marie M. ***Violence in the family : a workshop curriculum for clergy and other helpers*** . Cleveland, Ohio : Pilgrim Press, c1991.

259.22 Fowlkes

Fowlkes, Mary Anne. ***The church cares for children : a handbook for childcare in the church*** . Louisville, KY : Presbyterian Pub. House, c1995.

VHS 261.832 Hear

Hear their cries: religious responses to child abuse . Seattle, WA : Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, c1992.

261.83272 Fortune

Fortune, Marie M. ***Is nothing sacred? : the story of a pastor, the women he sexually abused, and the congregation he nearly destroyed*** . Cleveland, Ohio : United Church Press, c1999.

261.83272 Fortune

Fortune, Marie M. ***Sexual violence : the sin revisited*** . Cleveland, Ohio : Pilgrim Press, c2005.

261.83272 MacDonald

MacDonald, Bonnie Glass. ***Surely heed their cry : a Presbyterian guide to child abuse prevention, intervention, and healing*** . [Louisville, KY] : Child Abuse Ministry Project, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), c1993.

261.83272 Reid

Reid, Kathryn Goering. ***Preventing child sexual abuse : a curriculum for children ages nine through twelve*** . New York : United Church Press, c1989.

261.83271 Rifner

Rifner, Lois J. ***We won't let it happen here : preventing child abuse in the church*** . Louisville, Ky. : Bridge Resources, c[2002].

261.83271 Safe

Safe place overview : (resources, processes, training programs ...), March 16, 2006 . [Simpsonville, SC] : Footshills Presbytery, 2006.

261.83271 Safe CHILD

Melton, Joy T. ***Safe sanctuaries : reducing risk of child abuse in the church*** . Nashville, TN : Discipleship Resources, c1998.

DVD 261.83271 Safe

Safe sanctuaries for children and youth [DVD]: reducing the risk of abuse in the church. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, c2004.

261.8327 Striking

Striking terror no more : the church responds to domestic violence . Louisville, Ky. : Bridge Resources, 2006.

261.8344 Fortune

Fortune, Marie M. ***Keeping the faith : guidance for Christian women facing abuse*** . [San Francisco, Calif.] : Harper San Francisco, c1987.

261.8371 Safe YOUTH

Melton, Joy T. ***Safe sanctuaries for youth : reducing the risk of abuse in youth ministries*** . Nashville : Discipleship Resources, c2003.

306.7 Fortune

Fortune, Marie M. ***Love does no harm : sexual ethics for the rest of us*** . New York : Continuum, 2003, c1995.

362.29 Pathways

Pathways to prevention : guiding youth to wise decisions : a prevention guide for youth leaders in faith communities. [Washington, D.C.] : National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, Office of National Drug Control Policy, [2003].

616.8582239 Richards

Richards, Nancy. ***Heal and forgive : forgiveness in the face of abuse*** . Nevada City, CA : Blue Dolphin Publishing, Inc, c2005.

WEBSITES

<http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/>

FaithTrust Institute is a national, multi-faith, multicultural training and education organization with global reach working to end sexual and domestic violence.

OUR MISSION: FaithTrust Institute provides faith communities and advocates with the tools and knowledge they need to address the faith and cultural issues related to abuse.

OUR VISION: FaithTrust Institute envisions a world where all persons are free from violence in relationships, faith is fundamental to ending violence, religious institutions create a climate in which abuse is not tolerated; faith communities become sanctuaries of safety, worthy of our trust; and all of us experience justice and healing in our communities.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES for a Faithful Response to Sexual and Domestic Violence:

- **Faith is fundamental** to ending sexual and domestic violence regardless of our faith tradition.
- Tradition, sacred texts, doctrines, teachings and cultural values will be either a **roadblock or a resource** to ending violence against women.
- **Healing goals** are safety for victims, accountability for abusers, and restoration of relationship (if possible).
- **Justice-making** is the theological and ethical context for the response to the victim/survivor, the perpetrator, and the faith group or congregation.
- **Taking sides** means to not abandon the victim/survivor; to not accept the abuser's behavior; to seek justice for the victim/survivor and repentance for the abuser.
- To recognize and address **gender based violence** is part of our analysis and should be part of our strategy for response.
- The **role of the faith leader** is naming the unmentionable sins and promoting healing and justice.

Creating Safe Ministries

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/creating-safe-ministries/>

GOD INTENDS FOR THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRIES TO BE A SAFE PLACE FOR ALL TO ENCOUNTER GOD AND GROW INTO LIVES OF SERVICE AND FULFILLMENT. WE ARE CALLED TO BE A HOLY COMMUNITY

This website is designed to help all ministries be safe ministries.

- [create policies](#)
- [awareness](#) of prevention practices
- [report misconduct](#)
- [rebuild a broken trust](#) when sexual misconduct occurs

With God's help, we will see a day when "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

B. FHPC Safe Place Policy Incident Report Form

(Please print all information.)

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of abuse of child, youth, or elderly:

(A separate form should be completed for each person involved in order to keep the personal information confidential.)

2. Victim's name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth: _____

Victim's address: _____

Victim's phone number: _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with /report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement (give a detailed summary here, including date/time and location of incident):

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim (Paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): _____

6. Reported to one: pastor / associate pastor / clerk of Session:

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

7. Name of Victim's parent/guardian: _____
Address of Victim's parent/guardian: _____
Phone number of Victim's parent/guardian: _____
Call to victim's parent/guardian: _____
Date/time: _____
Summary: _____

8. Call to local law enforcement agency: **911** _____
Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

9. Call to local Child and Adult Protective Services Agency: **1-888-227-3487 Anderson-Oconee-Pickens hub**

Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

10: Other contacts: _____
Name: _____
Date/time: _____
Summary: _____

Fort Hill Presbyterian Church

C. FHPC Safe Place Ministry Application for Employees and Volunteers

CONFIDENTIAL

Full Legal Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____

How long have you been related to this church? employee _____ member _____

What is your non-member volunteer relationship to this church? _____

In which children/youth program(s) have you been involved in this congregation or other congregations?

Child Abuse Protection Policy Screen

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The attached policies reflect Fort Hill’s commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in church-sponsored activities.

Please answer all questions. Your response will be kept fully confidential.

You may choose to not answer a question, or you may discuss your answer in confidence with a member of staff rather than answering it on this form. Answering yes or leaving a question unanswered, could automatically disqualify an applicant from working with children and youth.

· Do you have a charge pending for an offense that if convicted, would prevent you from being allowed to work with children, youth or elderly? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, explain: _____

· Have you ever been convicted for a crime other than a minor traffic violation?

_____ Yes _____ No

· Are you required to register yourself on the sex offender registry? _____ Yes _____ No

(please attach additional pages if necessary)

Church Activity (for Member and Non-Member Volunteers)

I have been a member of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church since _____.

If you have been a member of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church for less than six (6) months, please list previous church membership, including address:

Previous Church _____

Address _____ Phone _____

1) Name of Reference from Previous Church: _____

Address _____ Phone _____

2) Name of Reference from Previous Church: _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Application Verification and Release

I recognize that Fort Hill Presbyterian Church is relying on the accuracy of information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all of the information that I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize Fort Hill Presbyterian Church to contact any person or entity to provide Fort Hill Presbyterian Church with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release Fort Hill Presbyterian Church and any person contacted by the church from liability involving communication or information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize Fort Hill Presbyterian Church to conduct a criminal records report and any other relevant background check.

I have received a copy of and understand the Fort Hill Presbyterian Church Safe Place Policy and Procedures.

____ Yes ____ No

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

D. FHPC Employment Application: Personal Information

[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

The following is my true and complete legal name and all information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

(Please print)

Other Names/Alias _____ Maiden _____

Social Security* # _____ - _____ - _____ Date of Birth* _____ / _____ / _____

Month / Date / Year

Driver's License # _____ State of Driver's License** _____

Home Street Address _____ Phone Number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Cell Phone _____ Work Phone _____

School Street Address _____ Phone Number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Other Places of Residence—please provide information reflecting the past 10 years not listed above.

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Use additional pages if needed.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

E. FHPC Employment Application: Educational Information

[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

Education High School _____

City and State _____

Year of Graduation _____

College or University _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

College or University _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

Graduate School _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

Seminary _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

(Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

F. FHPC Employment Application: Employment Information

[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

Present Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

(Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

G. FHPC Confidential Reference Report

CONFIDENTIAL

Reference

The applicant named below has applied for a position as _____ at Fort Hill Presbyterian Church. We ask that you take a few moments to complete and return this form in the envelope provided.

[Revise this statement if you will be contacting references by telephone.]

Name of applicant _____

Name of reference _____

Address of reference _____

Phone (daytime) _____ Phone (evening) _____

Relationship to applicant _____

How long have you known the applicant? _____

In what capacity do you know the applicant? _____

How would you describe the applicant's ability to work with children/youth? _____

How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults? _____

How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities? _____

How would you feel about having the applicant working with your child/youth? _____

Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children/youth?

_____. If so, please describe. _____

Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? ____ YES ____ NO

If YES, please describe. _____

Please share any other comments you would like to make. _____

Signature of reference _____

Phone interviewer's name _____ Date/time _____