



# Child Protection Policies

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### Why? - Book Of Order

G-3.0106 mandates that each council “shall adopt and implement ... a child protection policy.”

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/>

- ### How?
- Have session or council create a committee to draft policy
  - Take final draft of policy to session/council for review and approval
  - Make it a policy of your council

- ### Drafting Team
- Law enforcement
  - Lawyer
  - Social worker
  - Child protection advocates
  - Clergy/staff clergy liaison
  - Insurance company staffer/broker
  - Teacher

### Resources to Help Create Policies

## Resource

- Safe Ministries page – PMA website
- <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/>

## Safe Ministries Page



## GA Policy

- Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures
- Can be found on Safe Ministries Page
- It is a sample for your consideration
- May be too detailed, too involved

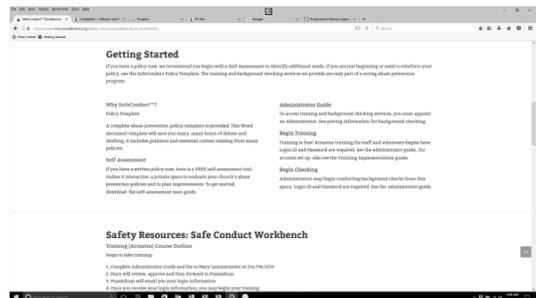
## Insurance Board Resources

- Helpline 866-607-7233
- If you are a customer, get assistance beyond what is available on Helpline
- Even if not a customer, can use Work Bench to help create a policy
- The brochure for the Helpline is on the Safe Ministries website

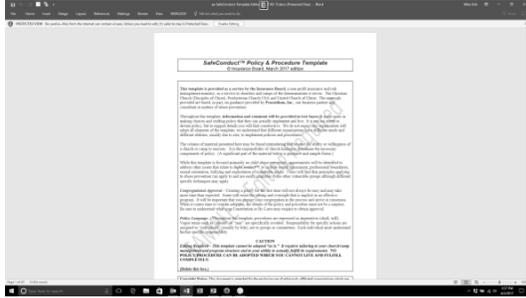
## Work Bench

- Safe Conduct Work Bench
- Self Assessment
- Abuse Prevention Policy Template
- <https://www.insuranceboard.org/safety-resources/safeconduct-workbench/>

## Workbench



## Policy Template



## Getting Started: Start by Asking: When?

### When?

- When does your organization provide supervision of minors
- Think it through – make a list
- When do parents or guardians turn over minors to your care?

### When?

- Break out list into areas and age groups and events
  - Nursery
  - Child care during worship
  - Sunday School (only Sunday?)
  - Youth Group
  - Youth Choirs
  - Mission Trips
  - Montreat

### When? Third Parties

- Keep in mind church calendar
- What groups are in church buildings on what days at what times?
- Where will minors be at the same time?

### Where?

## Where

- Take each 'when' item and analyze it by then looking at where
- Ex. where do we hold Sunday School?
  - Make a list of rooms and buildings
  - Think about issues related to those locations – security for example
  - Where are vulnerabilities?
  - Who teaches each class?
  - How many are supervised in each room?

## Who Has Access to the Where?

## Who – People With Access

- Who has access to each Where?
  - Caregivers
  - Teachers
  - Parents/Grandparents/Guardians
  - Church employees
  - Non-parent adults/chaperones
  - Public
  - How do you control access

## Create Authorization

- Create an authorization form for a background check and consider if a reference check is needed
- Get permission from each person, signed
- Agree to have background check performed
- Limit who gets access to the results

## Who – Background Check

- Any situation in which an employee or volunteer will have regular access to minors = background checks
- Annually or every other year for "regulars"
- Review it and decide which convictions are not acceptable
- Make a list in the policy
  - Murder, rape and violent crimes – obvious
  - Child abuse, child pornography – obvious
  - What about DUI, unsafe driving – if person will drive minors

## Other Disqualifiers

- Think about what else might disqualify someone
  - Accusation of sexual misconduct through church processes
  - Finding of sexual misconduct
  - Person who violated BOO
  - Person who violated policy of a council
  - Registered sex offender

### Who – Special Events

- Some parents or adults are chaperones only for special events
- Background check within a reasonable period of time before that event
- Include as part of planning for event
  - Youth group overnights, camping
  - Mission trips
  - Montreat

### Identify Checker

- Talk to insurer about what company will perform background check
- Insurer may require a certain company
- Or suggest companies
- Praesidium is a partner with PCUSA and the Insurance Board

### You May Get Push Back

- People will resent background checks
- Members who have served Sunday School or youth group for years will be upset
- Explain: group meeting, not personal, have to have process to protect children (policy required by BOO, following best practices)
- Everyone has to get checked to be fair to all who volunteer

### Protocol

- Create a protocol or checklist for background checks
- When, how (release form), which convictions will bar service
- **Follow it every time**

### Forgiveness

- Some will want you to make exceptions for people who need a second chance
- We are the church, there is forgiveness
- But you need to draw a hard line
- **No second chances that put minors at risk!**

### Forgiveness II

- Check with your insurer, it will likely refuse to provide coverage if you allow people convicted of sexual and other crimes, etc. into child care
- Check if on probation, terms may not allow person near a school
- **DO NOT** check your brain at the door and let your heart overrule your brain

## **Temptation**

- Remember:  
One person's forgiveness is another person's temptation  
Would you invite an alcoholic who is in recovery to work in your bar? Or liquor store?  
Would you trust/want the person in question to provide care to your minor child, your grandchildren?

## **Next Step:**

## **The What**

## **What – Specific Rules**

- Consider specific rules for specific situations
- Include them in the policy
- Either in a separate section (see PCUSA policy) or if you break your policy down by "when," in each when section

## **How Many?**

- Think about how many adults for each when and situation (ratios)
  - How many per Sunday School class?
  - How many for a sleepover/which genders?
  - How many for driving?

## **Hall Monitors**

- Why?
- First, they can keep an eye on minors and escorts outside or classrooms/rooms of events
- Second, they can be checkers ("disrupters")
- Have them randomly visit rooms
- If an abuser sees random visits, they feel disrupted and will not act

## **Structural Rules**

- Seek expert advice
- Classrooms with glass in doors or open door policy
- Privacy in restrooms, showers
- Sleeping arrangements
  - Boys and girls separate rooms
  - Adult chaperones in rooms or privacy
  - No adults cuddling or under blankets with minors

## Physical Rules

- Hugging? Yes or no
- Kissing?
- Appropriate discipline (no hitting, smacking, spanking)
- Photography? (tagging on internet)
- Neglect (do not deprive of food, water)

## Technology

- Too easy to communicate: email, IM, text, Facetime, etc.
- What will you tolerate re communications?
- Okay for leader of Youth Group to communicate with minors on regular basis
- What about others?

## Code of Conduct

- Consider a code of conduct
- Do's and don'ts
- Pass out during training
- Ask caregivers, teachers, chaperones to sign to acknowledge received/read
- Once created, enforce it
- If violated, what happens (one chance, then done? -o- tolerance?)

## Reporting

## Process

- Policy should have process to report inappropriate behavior
- There are several entities which should get such a report:
  - Folks onsite
  - Leadership of the council
  - State officials
  - Possibly leaders of other councils

## Responding to Reports

- Not enough time to discuss responding in depth – See Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Suggestions:
  - NEVER ignore a report of inappropriate behavior or potential abuse
  - ALWAYS investigate, no matter the source
  - Some sources may seem unreliable or irksome, investigate anyway

### **Insurer**

- Share a draft of the final plan with your insurer
- Ask for comments and input
- You want insurer's buy-in
- You want insurer to know you are complying with BOO and you are trying to engage in best practices to protect minors

### **Training**

- A policy is useless without training
- When it is final, train all caregivers, teachers, chaperones – and staff
- At minimum, require they read and sign the policy
- If possible, conduct annual training for Sunday School teachers, caregivers, Youth Group adults/chaperones – and staff

### **Empower Minors**

- Consider empowering minors, esp. teens
- Give them information about appropriate conversations, appropriate touch
- For older youth, and esp. on overnights, explain appropriate behaviors and what is not appropriate
- **MAKE SURE THEY KNOW** – if they see something, say something; if they feel something is wrong, report it – **NO MATTER WHO**

### **What NOT To Include**

- Do not include any obligations or provisions that you **cannot** fulfill
- Do not create an outsized, complicated policy that does not fit your needs
- The GA's Child Protection Policy and its Procedures may be too detailed and not fit the needs of a church with 100 members and few children

### **Questions?**