

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

Adopted by Session on September 18, 2017



Central to the mission of Southminster Presbyterian Church is providing a nurturing shelter, and a safe spiritual, emotional and physical fellowship for children and youth. In order to do that, it is necessary to have policies and procedures that protect all parties (children, youth, staff, leaders and all participants) in programs for all.

The following policy is designed to ensure safety and to build and maintain trust. The focus is to prevent interactions that are recognized by the law as abusive or recognized by both law and policy as inappropriate, and to establish procedures for handling all abuse of an interactive nature. This encompasses physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental and emotional abuse. The policy is implemented during Southminster Presbyterian Church sponsored events, with the exception of those for the Child Care Center and the Nursery School, who have their own state regulations and policies.

I. DEFINITIONS

A. PERSONNEL

1. **Adult** is any person who is 18 years or older.
2. **Child/Youth** refers to any person considered a minor under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, that is, a person who is under 18 years of age. Even when a youth is serving in a leadership role for younger children/youth, an individual under age 18 can never be considered an adult and must still be considered a youth under all safe church requirements.
3. **Vulnerable Adult** is any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.
4. **Vulnerable Adult Abuse** is any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.
5. **Leader** is any adult (age 18+) who has direct contact with and responsibility for children and youth.
6. **Youth leader** is any adult between the ages of 18-21.
7. **Visitor** is an individual who has contact with children/youth, but is not directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or control of children and does not have routine interaction with children or youth.
8. **Staff** are paid employees of Southminster Presbyterian Church.
9. **Direct contact with children** means the care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.
10. **Mandated Reporter** means that effective 12/31/14, the PA Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) imposes a reporting mandate, or requirement, on any adult who comes into contact with children in the course of his or her work or professional practice,

specifically including “clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization,” or “an individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual’s role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, is a person responsible for the child’s welfare or has direct contact with children.” This includes volunteers, as well as staff. These adults are known as “mandated reporters.” (as defined CPSL Title 23 PA.C.S. Chapter 63)

11. **Routine interaction** means regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person’s employment or volunteer responsibilities.
12. **Conflict of Interest** means any person with any duty, responsibility, or authority under this Policy that has competing interests or loyalties that either do, or may, affect any decision of such person with respect to his or her duty, responsibility, or authority under the Policy. Any person with any duty, responsibility or authority under this Policy that has a Conflict of Interest must disclose the Conflict of Interest to a member of the Safe Church Committee, and recuse himself/herself from such duty, responsibility or authority immediately. Conflicts of interest are difficult to describe in a definition, so the following examples illustrate situations that are a Conflict of Interest, to serve as a guide to when a Conflict of Interest exists:
 - a. Any family, to any degree, relationship with any party with respect to an incident, specifically including the alleged perpetrator and/or a victim or member of the family of either of them;
 - b. Any close personal relationship, other than family, such as mentor, supervisor, or teacher;
 - c. Any romantic or sexual relationship with any party with respect to an incident; and
 - d. Any current or prior employment or volunteer relationship.

B. PROPERTY

1. **Church** refers to Southminster Presbyterian Church (799 Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania).
2. **Campus** is the property owned by the church including Southminster House, Windy Ridge, the vehicles, both owned by the church and private vehicles, used for transporting children, youth, staff and leaders to and from church sponsored events.

C. COMMITTEES AND TEAMS

1. **Disciple Making Committee** is a Committee of Session comprised of: four Session members, the Director of Children’s and Family Ministries, the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, and other committee members. One Elder from this committee will serve on the Safe Church Committee as the Session liaison for a three year term.

2. **Safe Church Committee** is a permanent Committee under the direction of Session, by the Disciple Making Committee.
 - a. The members of the Committee shall be:
 - i. Five members of the congregation and one Elder currently serving on the Disciple Making Committee.
 - ii. In addition, the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries and the Director of Children's and Family Ministries will participate in meetings of the Committee as staff liaisons.
 - b. The Committee has responsibility for the Safe Church Policy, including, but not limited to:
 - i. regular review of the policy for effectiveness; drafting recommended changes for Session review;
 - ii. implementation and enforcement of all aspects of the policy;
 - iii. training staff and volunteer leaders;
 - iv. representing Southminster, through the "Response Team", in all respects of a reported incident, from the time the incident is reported; protecting the identity and confidentiality of all parties involved in an incident;
 - v. review the Safe Church policy on an at least bi-annual basis, as well as make sure that all aspects of the policy are properly enforced and executed on the campus;
 - vi. The member from the "Disciple Making Committee" will report the meeting minutes to Session after each meeting.
 - c. Any church member, volunteer, child, youth, or youth leader may report any activity they feel is not right to any member of the Safe Church Committee with complete confidentiality.
 - d. The Committee is also responsible for monitoring the culture and relationship of the staff to prevent or ameliorate any strained or negative relationship. The Committee shall report any concerns to the Personnel Committee.
 - e. Safe Church Committee members each serve three year terms, with members rolling on and off each year. They are nominated directly by the Nominating Committee of Session. Members to Safe Church Committee shall be nominated from the pool of previously ordained Session members, who are not currently serving on Session.
3. **Response Team** – Response Team – The Response Team consists of a member of staff and one member of the Safe Church Committee trained in Youth Protection and Mandated Reporting. **The Response Team or Personnel Committee will immediately provide for the safety of the alleged victim(s) involved**
 - (a) Once an incident, **not involving a staff member**, has been reported to the civil authorities, Childline, the "**Response Team**" functions as Southminster's "Designated Agent" for dealing with all aspects of the reported incident.
 - i) **If the accused is not a staff member The Response Team will:**

- (a) Notify Head Pastor, unless the Head Pastor has a Conflict of Interest, in which case the Associate Pastor will be notified. The Pastor will notify Session with the approved statement of response.
 - (b) Notify the parents of the victim.
 - (c) Notify the Insurance Company - Cincinnati Insurance Company: 877-242-2544
 - (d) Generate appropriate responses for church and media if necessary
 - (e) Develop a plan for necessary healing for victims, accused, and church, where appropriate
- OR**
- ii) **If the accused is a member of staff**, the Elders of the Personnel Committee trained in Youth Protection, Mandated Reporting and Book of Order discipline procedures will function as the response team and respond as outlined below.
 - (a) Mandated Reporter will notify the Personnel Committee Chair, currently serving on Session.
 - (b) Personnel Chair will notify Session with the approved statement of response.
 - (c) Notify the parents.
 - (d) Notify the Insurance Company - Cincinnati Insurance Company: 877-242-2544.
 - (e) Generate appropriate responses for church and media if necessary.
 - (f) Notify the **Response Team** who will develop a plan for necessary healing for victims, accused, and church, where appropriate.
 - iii) The **Response Team** shall be solely responsible, subject to Session, for all matters related to a reported incident, specifically including, but not limited to:
 - (a) relationship with victims and their families, including counseling and/or otherwise meeting their needs;
 - (b) relationship with the authorities;
 - (c) relationship with the accused perpetrator, including removal of any staff or volunteer from all duties with respect to children or youth;
 - (d) all communication with any media; and communication of appropriate information to the Members, and the Community at large.
 - iv) No member of the Response Team that has any actual or apparent conflict of interest with respect to any incident shall continue on the

Response Team with respect to said incident. In the case of any conflict, the other member shall appoint a new member from the same class as the member with the conflict, i.e., a staff member will replace the staff member, etc.

4. **Investigation** – The Response Team (or anyone else representing Southminster) shall UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES investigate any incident that is reported, and shall not interrogate, interview, or otherwise discuss the incident with the accused perpetrator. After an incident is reported, neither the Response Team, nor anyone else representing Southminster, shall interrogate or discuss the incident with the victim and/or victim’s family. The Response Team or member of the ordained Pastoral staff may meet with the victim and/or family for the purpose of supporting them, and may discuss the incident, only if the discussion is initiated by the victim or family.
5. **Confidentiality** – The identity of the Mandated Reporter shall be strictly confidential, and shall not be revealed to anyone. The identities of the victim and accused perpetrator shall also be kept confidential, to the maximum extent possible. If the perpetrator is charged with a crime, his/her identity is a matter of public record and may become known.

D. CHURCH SPONSORED EVENT

- a. Any regularly scheduled event on the church campus and trips approved by the Session including but not limited to: retreats, mission trips (national and international), off campus music events, off-campus field trips with Church School or the youth group.

E. CHILD ABUSE – DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE FOR LEGAL PROSECUTION

- a. In the section below, the word child is understood to include the definitions for all children and youth.
- b. These definitions of abuse are from the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (CPSL [Title 23 PA.C.S. Chapter 63], as amended December, 2013, to be effective December 31, 2014. They do not apply to consensual activities between a child who is 14 years of age or older and another person who is 14 years of age or older and whose age is within four years of the child’s age.

Child abuse is intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

1. Physical abuse causing bodily injury through any recent act or failure to act. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act. Bodily injury is impairment of physical condition or substantial pain. The following are “per se” acts of child abuse (meaning the act itself, apart from the outcome, is considered child abuse).

- a. Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
 - b. Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
 - c. Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.
 - d. Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.
 - e. Interfering with the breathing of a child.
 - f. Causing a child to be present at a location while a violation of 18 PA.C.S. §7508.2 (relating to operating a methamphetamine laboratory) is occurring, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
2. Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
 3. Mental abuse causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through an act, or failure to act, or a series of such acts or failures to act. Serious mental injury is a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:
 - a. renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or
 - b. seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.
 4. Neglect causing serious physical neglect of a child. Serious physical neglect is any of the following when committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child's life or health, threatens a child's well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs a child's health, development or functioning:
 - a. A repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to supervise a child in a manner that is appropriate considering the child's developmental age and abilities.
 - b. The failure to provide a child with adequate essentials of life, including food, shelter or medical care.
 5. Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.
 6. Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
 7. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act. Sexual abuse or exploitation is any of the following:
 - a. The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - b. Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in any individual.
 - c. Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 - d. Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.

- e. Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming.
8. The following are acts of child abuse:
- a. Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known:
 - Is required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender under 42 PA.C.S. Ch. 97 Subch. H (relating to registration of sexual offenders), where the victim of the sexual offense was under 18 years of age when the crime was committed.
 - Has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under 42 PA.C.S. §9799.24 (relating to assessments) or any of its predecessors.
 - Has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child as defined in 42 PA.C.S. §9799.12 (relating to definitions).
9. Any of the following offenses committed against a child (Criminal code)
- a. Rape, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3121 (relating to rape).
 - b. Statutory sexual assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault).
 - c. Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse).
 - d. Sexual assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault).
 - e. Institutional sexual assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3124.2 (relating to institutional sexual assault).
 - f. Aggravated indecent assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).
 - g. Indecent assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3126 (relating to indecent assault).
 - h. Indecent exposure, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).
 - i. Incest, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 4302 (relating to incest).
 - j. Prostitution, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 5902 (relating to prostitution and related offenses).
 - k. Sexual abuse, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children).
 - l. Unlawful contact with a minor, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 6318 (relating to unlawful contact with minor).
 - m. Sexual exploitation, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 6320 (relating to sexual exploitation of children).
10. Age of Consent:
- a. In Pennsylvania, children less than 13 years of age cannot grant consent to sexual activity. Teens between the ages of 13 and 15 can consent to sexual activity with peers within a four-year age range. People aged 16 and older can legally consent to sexual activity with anyone they choose, as long as the other person does not have authority over them as defined in Pennsylvania's institutional sexual assault statute.

II. STAFF/LEADER CODE OF BEHAVIOR

- A. A volunteer/leader can be found to have not violated the law, but can still be in violation of the Safe Church policy if they have violated the “Leader’s Code of Conduct”.
- B. CODE OF CONDUCT: The staff and leaders of Southminster Presbyterian Church will:
1. represent the Church in a faithful, authentic and loving way, supporting the teachings, disciplines and tradition of the Christian Church;
 2. exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity in their day-to-day work and personal lives;
 3. conduct themselves in a professional manner in both church and work environments, avoiding any flagrant or public misconduct;
 4. hold one another accountable to conduct and standards appropriate to their respective roles;
 5. foster the dignity of each person and be committed to the best interests of others;
 6. respect the integrity of all individuals and protect the confidentiality of all information to which they have access;
 7. abstain from taking advantage of any relationship with a child, youth, or youth leader for their own benefit;
 8. abstain from physical, sexual or emotional abuse towards anyone;
 9. abstain from neglecting a child, youth, youth leader who is in their care;
 10. abstain from a romantic relationship of any kind with a child, youth, youth leader whether physical, sexual, or emotional;
 11. pray for the children, youth, and families of the church community.

III. PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

A. Screening and Training

Prior to working with children and youth in any program, all church staff and volunteer leaders shall have:

1. Signed a disclosure statement (see Appendix A & B) indicating that the person has received, read and agrees to comply with the Safe Church Policy and with the Code of Behavior.
2. Completed all required clearances and background checks. As of the date of this policy, they are:
 - a. Report of Criminal History from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP)
 - b. Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse).
 - c. Leaders who HAVE NOT been a resident of Pennsylvania for the last 10 years shall also complete a Finger-Based Criminal History (FBI).
 - d. Leaders who HAVE been a resident of Pennsylvania for the last 10 years shall swear and affirm in writing that they have not been disqualified for service based upon criminal conviction.
 - e. Additionally, FBI fingerprinting is required from all paid staff members.

3. It is the individual's responsibility to ascertain and submit the required clearances to the office manager.
 - a. If the required background checks come back clean, the office manager is permitted to give approval for the leader to begin service.
 - b. If the background check reveals any prior offenses, then the matter shall be referred to the Safe Church Committee within 30 days, who:
 - i. will review the results of the background check to determine whether the person is suitable to work with children/youth;
 - ii. may choose to meet with the person to question him/her directly, but is not required to do so;
 - iii. will make the final decision on all church related activities;
 - iv. when appropriate, the Church and Safe Church Committee will work to find additional ways for that person to be involved in the activities of the church that do not relate to the nature of the offense.
4. The following individuals are exempt from clearance requirements:
 - a. Any individual who is deemed a "visitor" in their limited role in interacting with youth and children. Any individual who is deemed a visitor must still sign the "Code of Conduct".
5. Staff must take part in the Child Abuse Prevention and Mandated Reporter Training, which must be taken online before work with children and youth can begin, and should be redone every 5 years. A certificate of the completed program must be given to office manager. All leaders are encouraged, but not required, to take the program. Child abuse certifications for other licensed professions can also be submitted as long as they are accepted by the licensing board of the professional association. The program can be found at the website:
www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu
6. All leaders must attend a Safe Church training workshop that will be conducted by a member of the Southminster staff and the Safe Church Committee.
 - a. The content will be reviewed biannually by the Safe Church Committee.
 - b. All leaders should attend a training workshop every year.
 - c. All background checks must be renewed every 60 months or as required by Pennsylvania State Law.
7. The "lookback period" for criminal charges related to child abuse can be up to 50 years. It is incumbent upon Southminster to maintain records of all volunteer and student activity. The office manager will maintain an electronic file of all clearances and signed documents for leaders and volunteers. The office manager will also maintain all child/youth permission forms, as well as Session minutes approving all church sponsored events. The office manager will save all documents in a given year in one electronic folder or storage device. Session will get a completed report that this was done every year.

B. Adult Supervision

Our goal is to provide a safe physical, emotional and spiritual environment for all. The church appreciates volunteers of many ages working with children and youth and will permit leaders to assist in appropriate situations once the following policies are met:

1. All leaders must have been affiliated with Southminster Presbyterian Church as demonstrated by participation in the worship and programming of the church or through affiliation with Southminster Presbyterian Church for a reasonable time before they will be permitted to serve as a leader with children and youth.
2. Open Door Policy: Each room set aside for children and youth on campus shall have a door with a window in it or a half door. The top half of all half doors shall remain open.
3. Rule of 3: There should be at least two leaders with a group of children or youth. A leader may be alone with a group (2 or more children/youth) in a room or open area that complies with the Open Door Policy as long as there is at least one other adult (staff member, parent, or other leader) in the building who is aware of their presence.
4. A leader may meet one-on-one with a child/youth in a room or open area that complies with the Open Door Policy and as long as there is another adult in the immediate vicinity (within earshot), who is aware that the meeting is happening.
5. A leader may be one-on-one with a child/youth in emergency situations (restroom trips, calming an upset child) as long as the other leader(s) are notified just prior to and immediately after the situation is resolved. If the emergency situation will require more than 5 minutes and if the child or youth's parent or guardian is not available, another leader should be asked to assist with the situation.
6. Only a child's parent, guardian, or personal aide should be assisting a child in toileting or in an incident with soiled clothing; this includes changing diapers.
7. A leader may provide transportation to/from campus for a church sponsored event only with the written consent of a parent/guardian. Written consent may be in the form of an electronic communication such as a text or email.
 - a. Drivers are strongly discouraged from being alone in a vehicle with child/youth. If at all possible, there should be a second child/youth or another leader in the vehicle as well.
 - b. Drivers have the responsibility to make sure parents know the location of child/youth and the persons in the vehicle.
 - c. A driver must be at least 25 years old. Clearances and background checks are required, along with a valid state driver's license and valid insurance coverage.
8. A leader shall not meet with a child/youth in a private location where there are no other adults immediately present. Public places, such as restaurants and coffee shops, are acceptable places to meet as long as there are other adults immediately present.
9. There must be at least two adults accompanying children/youth on any overnight trips. If both male and female children/youth are present, male and female adult leadership is required. When staying overnight, an adult should never share a

room with only one child or youth, with the only exception being parents / guardians with their own children. If appropriate accommodations are not possible, use discretion with the leader(s) on site.

10. No leader should have secrets with youth/children.
11. Staff and leaders are never to give gifts to individual children/youth without the prior knowledge of the parents.
12. Staff, leaders and others must show discretion before touching another person. Physical contact with youth should occur only when appropriate and should not occur in private.
13. Leaders, volunteers, and others that have contact with youth or children shall never be involved in a romantic or sexual relationship of any nature (including same sex) with any child, youth, or youth leader, regardless of the age of either the leader or the child, youth, youth leader, or the difference in age.
14. Leaders shall never use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.

C. Electronic Communication Guidelines

1. Direct Contact: It is permissible for leaders to make contact with children and youth through electronic, non-vocal means pursuant to the following stipulations:
 - a. Parents/Guardians must be aware that the communication is taking place.
 - b. The communication is either public or there is a record of it stored electronically.
 - c. A leader should make every attempt to not delete electronic communication that has been sent or received from a child/youth.
 - d. Any form of communication which does not allow for some kind of record (such as Snapchat) is not recommended by staff and leaders.
2. Any staff or leader who is active on social media may “follow” and “be followed by” children/youth connected to the church pursuant to the following stipulations:
 - a. They have the consent and knowledge of the parents/guardians.
 - b. If staff and leaders choose to participate in social media in such a way that children and youth are aware of their participation, they should be mindful of what they are posting and how it might reflect on them as leaders in the church.
 - c. If staff and leaders choose to “follow” children/youth social media accounts, they shall be cautious in how they interact to avoid any type of behavior that could be seen as demeaning, inappropriate, or abusive.
 - d. The staff and leader must accept all friend requests from church leadership and parents, unless there is a specified reason to deny the request made in advance.

D. Outside Organizations Using Southminster Facilities

1. All individuals and groups using Southminster with direct contact with children/youth for private lessons, community meetings, overnight accommodations, etc. must agree to abide by the Safe Church policy. They must

sign the written agreement that they have read and understand the policies of the church. Access to church facilities will not be granted without agreement to this policy.

2. Individuals using the church for private lessons must also have all clearances and forms completed, and agree to the “Rule of 3” and the “Open Door Policy”. If not following these policies, the instructor must have written permission from the parent/guardian that they are waiving these requirements in advance of a lesson taking place. Failure to follow these provisions will result in discontinuation of church facility use.

IV. ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS FOR SELF-HARM

Although outside the scope of child abuse for mandated reporting, Southminster strives to address all aspects of safety for children and youth in our community. With regards to issues of self-harm (examples include: suicidal ideation, mental health crisis, eating disorder, or drug/alcohol abuse, etc.), all adult leaders and volunteers must immediately notify a member of the Pastoral staff if they notice behavior disruptions indicating self-harm. Pastoral staff will have annual training on community resources and available response options to help get the child or youth immediate care. Pastoral Staff will also notify parents. The Response Team will be notified for continuity and to support both parties. If the issue is a mental health issue as opposed to a report of abuse, the person becoming aware of this should direct the parents to Re:solve Crisis Network at 1(888)796-8226.

V. PERSONS WHO MUST REPORT ABUSE

According to Pennsylvania State Law, the mandate to report child abuse is imposed on any individual who comes into contact with children/youth in the course of his or her work or professional practice. Staff and leaders who perform services for Southminster Presbyterian Church should also consider themselves to be mandated reporters if they come into contact with children and youth during the course of their volunteer work. These mandates are criminally enforceable under Pennsylvania law. If an individual has enough suspicion to ask about a particular scenario, that is enough to report and the individual is mandated to do so. Legal immunity is granted to any individual who, in good faith, makes a report of suspected child abuse, even if he/she was not under a legal obligation to do so.

VI. INCIDENTS TO BE REPORTED – (SEE PA CHILD PROTECTION LAW – 42.42)

A. Persons Who Must Report Abuse

1. Alleged past or present physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect of a child will be reported, regardless of where the incident occurred. Child abuse disclosed directly to a mandated reporter must be reported to the proper authorities. In addition, second-hand reports of abuse that are received by a mandated reporter must also be reported to the proper authorities if they afford the mandated reporter “reasonable cause to suspect” that child abuse has occurred.

2. The mandate to report applies to all child abuse, not just abuse that has been perpetrated by church personnel. Possible abusers could include for example, parents, relatives, older siblings, neighbors, youth group or sports leaders, family friends and other children. It is recommended that any doubt concerning the application or interpretation of these provisions should be resolved in favor of reporting. The civil authorities will determine the particulars and take appropriate action.
3. If ever in doubt, make the report. Both legally and by the expectations of this policy, if you are a leader of the church, you must activate the response team if you have any suspicions of child abuse.

B. General Procedures for Reporting a Child Abuse Incident

1. Childline: call **1-800-932-0313** or electronically:
www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home
2. If you reported the abuse by phone, file a CY-47 report within 24 hours with local Child Protection Services. (See Appendix C)
3. Provide a copy of CY-47 form to either member of the Response Team within 24 hours. This includes a member of staff or any member of the Safe Church Committee. The first person given the report will create the full Response Team by notifying one other member most appropriate to respond to the particular scenario to complete the Response Team. Names for current staff and safe church committee members can be found on the Southminster website www.spchurch.org and on the posted resource forms throughout the church.
4. In the event of imminent danger, contact local police. A written report is to be made within 48 hours and sent to the Child Protective Services agency in the county in which the abuse occurred.
5. Under the new law, the DHS (Department of Human Services) will notify the mandated reporter of the results of the investigations within 30-60 days.
6. Do not discuss the situation with the alleged offender. You are not the investigator.
7. Confidentiality: Any communication regarding a child abuse case must be limited to the proper reporting authorities until such time as a clear determination of the allegation has been made.

C. Reports regarding abuse will include:

1. The name, age, and address of the child/youth.
2. The name and address of the child/youth's parent or guardian.
3. The name and address of the church administrator.
4. The name, work and home address of the perpetrator.
5. The nature of the alleged offense.
6. Any specific comments or observations that are directly related to the alleged incident and the individuals involved.

- D. If a Southminster Presbyterian Church staff member or leader is suspected:
1. Follow the steps above in “General Procedures for Reporting” and activate contact with the Chair of the Personnel Committee on Session or a member of the Safe Church Committee.
 2. Notify Southminster Presbyterian Church’s liability insurance company (Cincinnati Insurance Company: 877-242-2544).
 3. The accused individual will immediately be suspended from the church and all activities pending the investigation and resolution of the accusation. This suspension shall be with pay and benefits.
 4. Contact the Pittsburgh Presbytery. The Staff member on the Response Team will handle this portion.

VII. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe environment for all children and youth who are served by Southminster Presbyterian Church. By articulating a code of behavior through training and education, guidelines for prevention, recognition of child abuse and through a clear procedural response, Southminster Presbyterian Church strives to establish an environment where the emotional, physical, and spiritual safety as well as the spiritual growth of our children can be strengthened and nourished.

Southminster Presbyterian Church Safe Church Policy

APPENDIX A

Print Name Here: _____

AFFIRMATION

As a staff member/leader in children and youth ministries; or as a staff person who works with children and youth, I affirm my commitment to support Southminster Presbyterian Church as a safe place for children and youth. I recognize that Southminster Presbyterian Church has adopted the above Safe Church Policy. I have read and understand the policy, support it, and agree to abide by it. I affirm that I will do my part in providing a nurturing Christian environment in which our children and youth can develop in faith and in trust.

- I certify by my signature that I have not to my knowledge been the subject of any investigation, complaint or legal or church related action involving a reported instance of abuse of children or youth, and I have never been refused, resigned from or been asked to resign from a position for reasons related to such sexual abuse.

- I have been the subject of any investigation, complaint or legal or church related action involving a reported instance of abuse of children or youth, and I have never been refused, resigned from or been asked to resign from a position for reasons related to such sexual abuse. I offer the description of the situation on the back of this sheet of paper for your review.

Signature: _____

Name (Printed): _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Addendum

I have been the subject of an investigation or instance of alleged abuse of children or youth as follows (provide a summary of the factual circumstances):

The outcome of the matter was as follows:

The name and address of other persons knowledgeable of these circumstances are:

Signature: _____

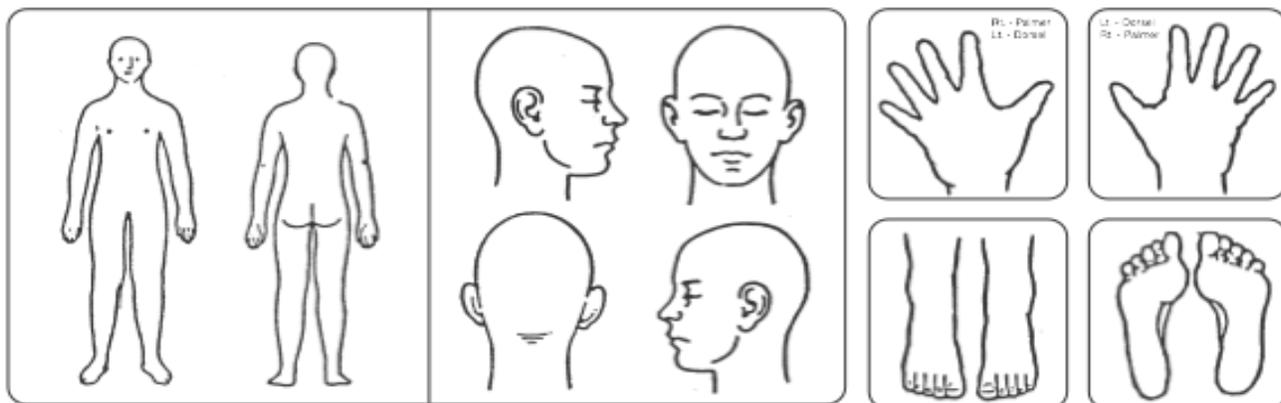
Name (Printed): _____

Date: _____

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE (CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE LAW - TITLE 23 PA CSA CHAPTER 63)

PLEASE REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE, EXCEPT FOR SIGNATURE. PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

1. NAME OF CHILD (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
1A. PRESENT LOCATION IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE			COUNTY	
2. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE MOTHER (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
3. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE FATHER (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
4. OTHER PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)		COUNTY	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
5. ALLEGED PERPETRATOR (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)		COUNTY	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
6. FAMILY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (Excluding Above Names)		RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	NAME (Last, First, Initial)	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD
A.			D.	
B.			E.	
C.			F.	
DESCRIBE INJURIES/CONDITION AND WHY YOU SUSPECT ABUSE/NEGLECT. INCLUDE EVIDENCE OF PRIOR ABUSE TO THIS CHILD, SIBLING OR PERPETRATOR. (PLEASE REFER TO OPPOSITE SIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION). PLEASE NOTE EXACT LOCATION OF THE INJURY(S) ON MODEL BELOW.		COUNTY WHERE ABUSE OCCURRED		DATE OF INCIDENT



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APPENDIX C

Code of Behavior for Leaders

Print Name Here: _____

In the work of ministry of Southminster Presbyterian Church, we, as adults and youth leaders, recognize that Jesus affirms and values each child. Jesus said, whoever welcomes one child in my name welcomes me. Jesus said that we are not to allow children to stumble. We are to guide, encourage and nurture God's children so that they will develop a relationship with Jesus Christ (Matt 18:5-6).

Southminster Presbyterian Church is committed to protecting the children and youth who are entrusted in our care and to ensure that those offering services are in a right relationship with those who are receiving services. This includes promoting a healthy environment for all who participate in the activities at the church or outside the church.

We are called to "live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3).

In this spirit, I commit that I will maintain the follow stipulations:

1. represent the Church in a faithful, authentic and loving way, supporting the teachings, disciplines and tradition of the Christian Church;
2. exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity in my day-to-day work and personal lives;
3. conduct myself in a professional manner in both church and work environments, avoiding any flagrant or public misconduct;
4. hold myself and others accountable to conduct and standards appropriate to their respective roles;
5. foster the dignity of each person and be committed to the best interests of others;
6. respect the integrity of all individuals and protect the confidentiality of all information to which they have access;
7. abstain from taking advantage of any relationship with a child/youth for their own benefit;
8. abstain from physical, sexual or emotional abuse towards anyone;
9. abstain from neglecting a child/youth who is in their care;
10. abstain from a romantic relationship of any kind with a child/youth whether physical, sexual, or emotional
11. pray for the children, youth, and families of the church community.

Signature _____
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Southminster Facility Usage Safe Church Agreement

Print Name/Organization Here: _____

AFFIRMATION:

_____ (print name or organization) affirm my/our commitment to support Southminster Presbyterian Church as a safe place for children and youth. I/We recognize that Southminster Presbyterian Church has adopted the above Safe Church Policy. I/We have read and understand the policy, support it, and agree to abide by it while utilizing the Southminster Campus. I/We understand that if we cannot agree to any of the terms outlined in the above document that we should not use Southminster facilities or agree to sign this form. I/We understand that ignorance of these laws and policies is not an excuse for any situation that occurs during my/our usage of the facility.

I/We take full responsibility for the approved clearances of the adults connected to our organization. I/We can choose in what capacity we need those documents secured, and assume full legal liability for those adults.

Signature: _____

Name (Printed): _____

Date: _____