CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

MANASSAS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ADOPTED BY SESSION

September 18, 2018
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MANASSAS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

SECTION I – PURPOSE

Manassas Presbyterian Church (hereafter referred to as MPC) and its members are committed to the safety, welfare, and protection of all children and youth participating in the activities and programs of the Church. During each baptism of an infant, child or adult, the congregation pledges to uphold that person in the household of God. To these ends, the Session hereby adopts reasonable policies and procedures designed to preclude the possibility that any child or youth (meaning all those 17 years of age and younger) will be subjected to physical or emotional abuse or neglect by Church staff, paid childcare workers, teachers or volunteers while engaged in Church programs or activities. The policies and procedures adopted seek to balance the security, protection, and welfare of the children without unduly intruding on the privacy of staff and volunteers.

SECTION II – DEFINITION

Attachment 1 to this policy provides a summarized list of the complete legal definition of “Abused or neglected child” as found in Va. Code Ann. S 63.2-100 (2017). Also provided in Attachment 1 is the definition of sexual misconduct as found in Va. Code Ann. S 18.2-370.1 (2017), “Taking indecent liberties with child by person in custodial or supervisory relationship; penalties”.

Sexual misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include: sexual abuse of children or adults, rape or sexual assault, inappropriate sexualized behavior, viewing, storing or transmitting pornographic material for any purpose on church property and/or with church owned devices such as but not limited to computers or cellular telephones. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of authority and power, breaching Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantage over another for personal gratification in an abusive exploitative and unjust manner. Child sexual abuse, rape, and sexual assaults are crimes; allegations that these offenses have occurred must be reported to the civil authorities and to Session.

SECTION III – STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Paid staff or adult or youth (under the age of 18) volunteers shall not touch or interact with children or youth in any way that is sexually stimulating, emotionally demeaning, or exploitative. This behavior is always considered forced when the interaction involves a child and an adult, whether or not the victim has consented. Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pat on the back), or physical care (diaper changes or first aid) are appropriate in this or any community of caring Christians. Staff and volunteers must be careful that physical expressions of affection are not excessive or imposed upon another individual.

Those people working with children or youth should work in pairs. Whenever possible, two adults should be present with the children/youth at all activities. It is incumbent upon the
adults (Church School teachers, ELC teachers, Nursery, and ETC helpers, youth advisors, etc.) to take reasonable and necessary steps to ensure two adults are present.

Church School teachers, Extended Time with Children (ETC) helpers, Nursery volunteers, Children’s Choir helpers, Vacation Bible School (VBS) helpers and youth advisors: if you are the only adult in the room with children, seek out another adult, leave the door open, combine your class with another class, and seek out the Director of Education Ministries to assist.

Early Learning Center (ELC) teachers and volunteers will seek assistance from the Early Learning Center Director when there is only one adult in the classroom.

Youth (age 17 and under) may serve as volunteers, for example in Vacation Bible School or ETC, but must work with an adult. The Session of MPC recommends that staff and volunteers transport children and youth in groups rather than alone. In ordinary circumstances, an unaccompanied adult should not drive a single child in a church sponsored activity without the permission of the child’s parent or guardian, preferable in writing.

Virginia Statute (Va. Code Ann. S 63.2-1716 (2017)) contains specific staffing ratio requirements for child day centers operated by religious institutions exempt from licensure. The MPC ELC Director shall ensure that the ELC complies with those staffing ratios.

All overnight activities must have a minimum of two adults present; for mixed youth overnights, there must be both a male and female adult advisor. At no time should one adult be paired with a single youth in overnight arrangements unless they are family members. Parental permission in writing is required for all overnights.

Christian education teachers, youth advisors, nursery supervisors and helpers shall discipline with kindness with the goal of helping children develop a sense of responsibility and self-control. Corporal punishment of any kind within the Church is unacceptable. Corporal punishment includes but is not limited to slapping, spanking, pinching and/or shaking. Punitive techniques that cause physical pain such as assuming an uncomfortable position are not appropriate. Physical restraint of children should be used only when someone’s safety is at risk. Derogatory remarks or comments that humiliate or frighten the child shall not be used. Appropriate discipline establishes clear expectations, provides rewards and incentives for acceptable behavior. Appropriate discipline uses verbal disapproval, loss of privileges, and redirection to teach children acceptable behavior.

Paid and volunteer adults and youth working with children and youth are also tasked with guarding the physical and emotional safety of those in their care and to be aware of signs indicating neglect of the child’s well-being.

SECTION IV – ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPERVISION

The Personnel Ministry Team, in coordination with the Christian Formation Ministry Team, will be responsible for the content and updating of this policy and for oversight as it applies to both
staff and volunteers. The Personnel Ministry Team will be responsible for the practical application of the policies for all MPC paid staff. The Christian Formation Ministry Team will be responsible for the practical application of the policies for volunteers throughout the Church. The Worship Ministry Team will provide support, as needed, regarding volunteers in the children and youth choirs. The ELC Director is responsible for the implementation of this policy in the day-to-day operations of the ELC.

Members of all Ministry Teams with programs involving children and youth and their staff advisors will seek volunteers in sufficient numbers to allow staffing of the programs as stated above.

The MPC ELC Director shall ensure that the ELC meets the employee and volunteer records check requirements of Va. Code Ann. S 63.2-1720.1 (2017).

A copy of this Child Protection Policy Statement must be provided to and signed by all employees and volunteers regularly participating in any MPC program or activity involving children and/or youth.

All paid staff are required to complete the Children and Youth Work Application for Volunteers and Employees, Manassas Presbyterian Church in Attachment 2 and he or she must agree to the same local agency check used by the ELC for their employees. Likewise, volunteers who are working with MPC children and youth on a regular basis (Church school teachers, youth advisors, children choir volunteer) must complete the application. Background checks will be accomplished on all volunteers accompanying children/youth on overnight trips. Otherwise, a background check will not be completed unless deemed necessary by the Child Protection Review Committee (CPRC) or the Session of MPC. The application contains a required statement as to whether he/she has ever been convicted of a crime involving children.

Volunteers will have attended MPC for a period of six months before holding key positions involving children and youth. These volunteers are welcome to work in these programs along with another adult volunteer or staff member and will be subject to the same application process. Applications will be submitted through the Ministry Team chair responsible for the particular program in which the volunteer wishes to participate.

SECTION V – ADMINISTRATION

The Personnel Ministry Team will chair a Child Protection Review Committee (CPRC) consisting of a member each from the Christian Formation, Worship, Property Ministry teams and the ELC Director. The CPRC will provide an annual review of and compliance evaluation with the MPC Child Protection Policy to be accomplished in June.

The Personnel Ministry Team is responsible for review and subsequent approval or disapproval of each staff member application except for the Pastor whose requirements are established and administered by the National Capital Presbytery. The Christian Formation Ministry Team is responsible for review and subsequent approval or disapproval of each volunteer application. The Director of the ELC is responsible for review and subsequent approval or disapproval of each
staff member and volunteer application within the ELC. If an application is disapproved, that decision will be reviewed by the Pastor to determine if any additional actions are necessary beyond the notification to the applicant. Reference checks, police background checks and child abuse checks shall be made when deemed necessary. All documentation associated with the child protection policy and volunteer applications, and all documentation concerning potential allegations of physical or emotional abuse or neglect will be held in confidence by the CPCR, the Pastor, the Director of Education Ministries, Director of the ELC, and whichever staff person is responsible for the program area involved. All staff documentation will be maintained by the Personnel Ministry Team. All volunteer documentation will be maintained by the Director of Education Ministries and the ELC Director and kept in locked storage. Documentation will include as a minimum, the approved application, and other documents related to this policy including a signed receipt for receiving the MPC Child Protection Policy. Applications will be kept on file for a 5-year period past the active service of the volunteer.

In accordance with NCP policy, MPC shall periodically obtain from its insurance agents, confirmation that the MPC liability insurance policy covers sexual misconduct liability for its programs and activities.

SECTION VI – MPC MEMBER AWARENESS

A copy of the approved Child Protection Policy and the Children and Youth Work Application will be made available to the congregation on an annual basis. The policy and Children and Youth Work Application shall be provided to all participants in each new member’s class. All staff members will be required to read and initial the policy on an annual basis, indicating their agreement to abide by the terms of the Child Protection Policy. All volunteers will be requested to read the Child Protection Policy statement on an annual basis and sign an acknowledgement of understanding of its contents.

Church professionals (MPC Pastor and Director of Education Ministries) are required to attend a seminar on the issues of sexual misconduct offered by NCP every three years. A review of the intentions of the Child Protection Policy will be provided by the Christian Formation Ministry Team, on an annual basis, to Church school teachers, Nursery staff and volunteers, Youth Group staff and volunteers, Extended Time with Children (ETC) volunteers, children and youth choir volunteers and Vacation Bible School volunteers. The ELC Director will provide Child Protection Policy training to staff and volunteers on an annual basis.

SECTION VII – PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

The issues of sexual and/or emotional abuse or neglect involving a minor, whether perceived or actual, need to be dealt with immediately, effectively, and with great discretion. Virginia law requires that allegations of abuse or neglect of children be reported immediately to proper authorities. In Prince William County that report is made to Child Protective Services (703-792-4200). It is the responsibility of the Pastor, ELC Director and/or the Personnel Ministry Team chair to see that such report has been made. In every case of alleged abuse or neglect of a child,
the Pastor in consultation with the Administration and Finance Chair, shall contact the MPC insurance liability carrier; verify that Child Protective Services has been notified, and the proper written documentation of the allegations and proceedings is maintained.

The first person to learn of an incident of sexual abuse or misconduct (either by witness of the incident or from the victim) shall immediately report the incident to the staff member supervising the activity, the ELC Director (within the preschool) and as quickly as possible, to the Pastor. The Pastor, in consultation with the appropriate Ministry Team Chair, staff member, and Personnel Ministry Team chair shall conduct an initial inquiry. If the alleged offender is a professional staff member, the report should be made to the Personnel Ministry Team chair and the Clerk of Session. In the specific case of the complaint being made against any ordained minister, the Clerk of Session should notify the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk of National Capital Presbytery and request guidance on the procedure to be followed in processing the allegation and obtaining a Moderator for the Session. The Clerk shall also notify the General Presbyter Clerk if allegations have been raised against a member or non-ordained staff person.

The Personnel Ministry Team chair and/or the Pastor are responsible for maintaining contact with the police, the victim’s family and for determining further actions. The Pastor, as the Moderator of Session, will be responsible for advising the Session as appropriate.

Those individuals involved in any report or investigation should hold information received in strict confidence, subject to such disclosures as required under Church procedure or required by law. The National Capital Presbytery Sexual Abuse Response Team is available as a resource. Further action will be taken in accordance with legal requirements of the County and State and/or MPC and Presbytery personnel policies.
Attachment A - Virginia Code § 63.2-100 (2017)
Title 63.2 – Welfare (Social Services)

Virginia Code § 63.2-100 (2017) – Definitions

Va. Code § 63.2-100 (2017) provides a complete legal definition of “Abused or neglected child”. For purposes of this policy a summarized list is provided below. As used in this title, unless the context requires a different meaning, “Abused or neglected child" means any child less than 18 years of age.

1. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care creates or inflicts, threatens to create or inflict, or allows to be created or inflicted upon such child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means, or creates a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions, including, but not limited to, a child who is with his parent or other person responsible for his care either (i) during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of a Schedule I or II controlled substance, or (ii) during the unlawful sale of such substance by that child's parents or other person responsible for his care, where such manufacture, or attempted manufacture or unlawful sale would constitute a felony violation of 18.2-248;

2. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care neglects or refuses to provide care necessary for his health. However, no child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination shall for that reason alone be considered to be an abused or neglected child;

3. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care abandons such child;

4. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care commits or allows to be committed any act of sexual exploitation or any sexual act upon a child in violation of the law;

5. Who is without parental care or guardianship caused by the unreasonable absence or the mental or physical incapacity of the child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis; or

6. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care creates a substantial risk of physical or mental injury by knowingly leaving the child alone in the same dwelling, including an apartment as defined in 55-79.2, with a person to whom the child is not related by blood or marriage and who the parent or other person responsible for his care knows has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender pursuant to 9.1-902.
Title 18.2 – Crimes and Offenses. Chapter 8 – Crimes Involving Morals and Decency

Va. Code Ann. § 18.2-370.1 (2017) - Taking indecent liberties with child by person in custodial or supervisory relationship; penalties

Sexual Misconduct:

A. Any person 18 years of age or older who, except as provided in 18.2-370, maintains a custodial or supervisory relationship over a child under the age of 18 and is not legally married to such child and such child is not emancipated who, with lascivious intent, knowingly and intentionally

(i) proposes that any such child feel or fondle the sexual or genital parts of such person or that such person feel or handle the sexual or genital parts of the child; or

(ii) proposes to such child the performance of an act of sexual intercourse, anal intercourse, cunnilingus, fellatio, or anilingus or any act constituting an offense under 18.2-361; or

(iii) exposes his or her sexual or genital parts to such child; or

(iv) proposes that any such child expose his or her sexual or genital parts to such person; or

(v) proposes to the child that the child engage in sexual intercourse, sodomy or fondling of sexual or genital parts with another person; or

(vi) sexually abuses the child as defined in subsection 6 of § 18.2-67.10, is guilty of a Class 6 felony.

B. Any person who is convicted of a second or subsequent violation of this section shall be guilty of a Class 5 felony, provided that (i) the offenses were not part of a common act, transaction or scheme; (ii) the accused was at liberty as defined in 53.1-151 between each conviction; and (iii) it is admitted, or found by the jury or judge before whom the person is tried, that the accused was previously convicted of a violation of this section.

Note: Virginia sexual assault statutes indicate that intercourse with a child under 13 is rape regardless of consent and with a child under 15 is carnal knowledge, if there is consent. In concert with VA statutes and NCP policy, sexual misconduct for the purposes of this Child Protection Policy would also include verbal comments, pornographic videos or materials, obscene phone calls, allowing children to witness sexual activity and stalking.
CONFIDENTIAL
Children and Youth Work Application for Volunteers and Employees
Manassas Presbyterian Church

PERSONAL

Date: __________________

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Other Names Used (birth name, nickname) _______________________________________

Street Address _______________________________________________________________

City __________________ Zip Code _____________________________

Home Phone: ___________________ Cell: _________________ Work: _________________

E-Mail Address: ______________________________

Please indicate each program where you are interested in volunteering:

O  Sunday School  O Nursery  O ETC  O Youth Fellowship

O  Children’s Choir  O VBS  O ELC

What experience with children/youth programming have you had in the last five years?

Organization  Program  Dates  Contact (include phone)

Have you at any time ever:

• Been arrested for any reason? ___Yes ___No

• Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, any crime involving children? ___Yes ___No

• Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, a moving violation in the last 3 years? ___Yes ___No

• Been convicted of any misdemeanor or felony traffic offense in the last 3 years, including but not limited to Reckless Driving, Reckless Driving by Speed, Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol/Drugs, Failure to stop at The Scene of an Accident; Hit and Run or Eluding? ___Yes ___No

• Engaged in, or been accused of, any act of child molestation and/or Exploitation, abuse, or neglect? ___Yes ___No
Are you aware of:

- Having any traits or tendencies that could pose a threat to children, youth, or others? ___Yes ___No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others ___Yes ___No

If the answer to any of the questions above is yes, please explain in detail on an attached sheet.

**CHURCH ACTIVITY**

What church or churches have you regularly attended in the past five years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Name</th>
<th>Pastor’s Name</th>
<th>Years Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**REFERENCES** (other than family members)

(1) Name/Relationship ________________________________
Address (Street, city, Zip) ____________________________

Phone(s): ____________________________
E-Mail (if known) ____________________________

(2) Name/Relationship ________________________________
Address (Street, city, Zip) ____________________________

Phone(s): ____________________________
E-Mail (if known) ____________________________

O Approved   O Disapproved   Date: ___________________
Applicant verification and release:

I recognize that the Manassas Presbyterian Church of Manassas, Virginia is relying upon the accuracy of the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all the information that I have provided is completely true and correct.

I authorize Manassas Presbyterian Church to contact any person or entity listed in this application and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide Manassas Presbyterian Church with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize Manassas Presbyterian Church to conduct a criminal background investigation and/or child abuse investigation if the check is deemed necessary.

I understand that I must report any new allegations, accusations of a criminal, traffic misdemeanor, or felony offense that could lead to a conviction to (the Pastor, Christian Education Director, ELC Director, or Chair, Personnel Ministry Team) at MPC immediately.

I voluntarily release Manassas Presbyterian Church and any such organization or entity listed herein by me from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications.

I have carefully read the Manassas Presbyterian Church Child Protection Policy and I understand its contents. I agree to follow the MPC Child Protection Policy.

Signature _________________________________________________Date:______________________

Witness: ___________________________________________________Date:______________________
Attachment B – Annual Child Protection Policy Review Form

ANNUAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING – MPC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

I have read the MPC Child Protection Policy and I understand its contents.

I, ________________________________, agree to follow the MPC Child Protection Policy.

Date: ________________________________
Attachment C – Child Protection Policy Response Form

MANASSAS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
8201 Ashton Ave Manassas, VA 20109

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY RESPONSE FORM

Please check the appropriate line to the best of your knowledge.

________ Yes, I highly recommend _______________________ as a volunteer with Children and youth. (Volunteer’s first and last name)

________ No. I cannot recommend _______________________ as a volunteer with Children and youth. (Volunteer’s first and last name)

If your response is No, please provide additional information in comments below.

How are you acquainted with the volunteer:

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

How long have you been acquainted with the volunteer: _________________________________

Any comments: _________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Reference Signature

Date
________________________________________________________________________________

Please return this form as soon as possible in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Thank you for your time and help.