

Safe Church Policies

First Presbyterian Church of Livermore
Adopted by FPCL Session October 27, 2009
Effective May 31, 2010

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Mark 10:14

The purpose of First Presbyterian Church of Livermore's *Safe Church* policies is to help the church implement and maintain a safe environment for children, youth, and adults that will help them participate freely in the church's ministries and programs. Our goal is for all of God's children to feel the welcome and love of Jesus Christ and to develop a lifelong relationship with Christ.

The objectives of these policies are to:

1. **Protect children and youth.** Our intent is to provide a safe environment for children to learn, grow and experience God's love. We believe that effective ministry for children and youth requires relationships with caring, loving, and mature adults and youth leaders who can demonstrate God's love to them. The safety policies are intended to keep these relationships and all aspects of ministries with minors safe.
2. **Protect adults and leaders.** When adults and leaders are interacting with children and youth, they need to be in a safe place as well. Our intent is to create an environment that sets appropriate guidelines and boundaries and to provide the support that staff and volunteers need to be effective in their roles with children and youth.

By implementing *Safe Church* policies and procedures, we are communicating the importance of *safe church* for children, youth, adults, and the church. We expect all program leaders and programs to incorporate these policies into all activities involving minors, provide detailed guidelines and training for staff and volunteers working with children and youth, and communicate clear expectations for parents, children, and youth about adhering to policies and keeping minors safe.

Screening for people who may have contact with minors:

All persons who may, by virtue of their employment or serving role, have contact with minors must be screened. Staff will be required to comply with comprehensive screening, including a criminal background check, reference checks, and other screening procedures. Volunteers will be required to complete an application that includes contact information and references, and their screening will be conducted through sources such as the Megan's Law website and reference checks. Screenings must be completed before a staff member or volunteer takes on any role with potential contact with minors.

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staff members are informed that such persons are not approved to have any contact with minors involved in church programs and activities.

Session

Session will be responsible for ensuring that all presbytery and church policies regarding *Safe Church* are followed. Specifically, Session is responsible for:

- appointing members of the *Safe Church* Committee (SCC) and having the SCC report at least annually on the effectiveness of *Safe Church* policies and practices;
- ensuring through the SCC and Personnel Committee that all elders, deacons, employees, and other church leaders have received and read these policies;
- ensuring through the SCC and Personnel Committee that all elders, deacons, employees, and anyone participating in ministries involving minors participate in *Safe Church* training, and
- providing the funds and resources necessary for carrying out the *Safe Church* policies.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee will work with *Safe Church* Committee to make sure that policies affecting church staff members are implemented. Specifically, the Personnel Committee will be responsible for:

- ensuring that **all** employment practices comply with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act regarding fair employment practices;
- conducting background checks on **all** current and potential employees;
- appointing a staff member as the records custodian for criminal background checks and making sure that any staff member involved in this process receives the training and support necessary to handle screening information in a confidential, legal, and ethical manner.
- developing procedures and criteria for determining whether screened individuals are approved for their role or position;
- ensuring that all staff persons participate in *Safe Church* training, and
- working with the *Safe Church* committee to develop guidelines regarding working with minors and making sure that staff understand and follow them.

Children and Youth Programs

Program leaders will work with the *Safe Church* committee to make sure that *Safe Church* policies are implemented. Program areas with programs or activities involving minors **will** be responsible for:

- making sure that volunteers participate in *Safe Church* training;
- developing written guidelines regarding working with minors and making sure that volunteers understand and follow them;
- developing written guidelines for parents including expectations for their role in supervising children, expectations for the behavior of children and youth participating in church programs, and information about discipline and *Safe Church* policies that will be followed by staff and volunteers;
- communicating clear expectations for behavior to children and youth, and

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