



**WHITEWATER VALLEY PRESBYTERY  
CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT  
PROTECTION  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

5

6 **1.0 APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY**

7 It is the policy of the Whitewater Valley Presbytery (“WVP” or “the Presbytery”)  
8 that all Presbytery members, staff, volunteers, contractors (Collectively  
9 “Presbytery Personnel”), as well as church members, church officers, employees  
10 (whether church members or nonmembers,), volunteers (whether church  
11 members or nonmembers), contractors, and vendors of congregations and related  
12 church entities within the Presbytery shall maintain the highest standards of  
13 integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children,  
14 youth, and vulnerable adults. This Policy applies to all persons identified above  
15 regardless of whether they are paid or not paid by the Presbytery. This Policy  
16 applies to all Whitewater Valley Presbytery sponsored activities that involve  
17 Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults and to all participants in these activities.  
18 This Policy also applies to meetings, events, or conferences where the Presbytery  
19 provides care for Minors but does not apply to meetings, events or conferences for  
20 which the Presbytery reimburses parents or guardians for childcare expenses for  
21 Minors or Vulnerable Adults but where such care is not provided directly at the  
22 meeting, event, or conference and Minors or Vulnerable Adults are not present.

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24 **2.0 DISTRIBUTION**

25 Current copies of this Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and  
26 Procedures (the “Policy”) shall be made available to all Presbytery Personnel and  
27 member churches and posted on the Presbytery website.

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29 **3.0 POLICY RATIONALE**

30 The implementation of this Policy is intended to reduce the risk of abuse and  
31 neglect and rests on the following rationale:

- 32 • Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults are a gift from God and the  
33 Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The  
34 Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In

1 Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” The  
2 Church is to be a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of  
3 Christ.

- 4 • Any type of abuse involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults has  
5 lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the  
6 call of the Church to be a life-giving presence of Christ’s healing and hope  
7 for community and individuals, not a presence that brings harm and hurt.
- 8 • The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and the  
9 victim/survivor’s family when abuse occurs. The Church is unable to do  
10 the full work of Christ, due to the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies  
11 abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, but it also  
12 suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly,  
13 in instances of abuse within the Church of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable  
14 Adults, immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical  
15 harm may be perpetrated that woefully hinders God’s call on the Church.
- 16 • The *Book of Order* states, “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the  
17 Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person  
18 in the Christian life,” and Presbyterians believe this baptismal  
19 commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the  
20 church’s care, including Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults (*Book of*  
21 *Order* W-2.3013).
- 22 • Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults are not only persons of care and  
23 service in the Church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and  
24 love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when  
25 he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And  
26 he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So  
27 also, the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ’s  
28 love, in the same way taking up Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults  
29 into its arms and blessing them; providing for them safe, thriving, and  
30 nurturing environments in which to grow in every way.

#### 31 32 **4.0 DEFINITIONS**

33 The following definitions apply to this Policy:

34 **Child:** A Child is a person between the ages of 0-11.

35 **Youth:** A Youth is a person between the ages of 12–17.

1 **Minor:** A Minor is a Child or Youth between the ages of 0–17 years-old.

2 **Adult:** A person aged 18 years or older but not including a “Vulnerable Adult.”

3 **Child/Youth Worker:** Any Adult who participates as staff, volunteer, contractor,  
 4 or vendor at a Presbytery sponsored event or activity involving Minors. This term  
 5 includes chaperones who accompany Minors to and during Presbytery meetings,  
 6 events, and activities.

7 **Vulnerable Adult:** Any person aged 18 years or older without the developmental  
 8 or cognitive capacity to consent.

9 **Vulnerable Adult Worker:** Any Adult who participates in the capacity of staff,  
 10 volunteer, contractor, or vendor at a Presbytery sponsored event, meeting, or  
 11 activity where Vulnerable Adults are present. This definition includes chaperones  
 12 or private caregivers who accompany Vulnerable Adults to and during Presbytery  
 13 meetings, events, and activities.

14 **Child/Youth Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in physical, sexual,  
 15 psychological, or emotional abuse, neglect molestation, mistreatment, or  
 16 exploitation of a Child or Youth.

17 **Vulnerable Adult Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in physical, sexual,  
 18 psychological, or emotional abuse, neglect molestation, mistreatment, or  
 19 exploitation of a Vulnerable Adult.

20 **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual Abuse means “Sexual Abuse” as it is defined in  
 21 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) *Book of Order*, i.e., “Sexual abuse of  
 22 another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any  
 23 person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent;  
 24 or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation,  
 25 or misuse of ordered ministry or position.” (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

26 **Sexual Misconduct:** means “Sexual Misconduct” as it is defined in the PCUSA  
 27 Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures (219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010)) and  
 28 as revised by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (2013), and  
 29 as it may be revised or amended in the future.

30 **Sexual Misconduct** is the *comprehensive term* used in this Policy to include:

31 **Sexual Abuse** as defined in the *Book of Order* (see above).

32 **Sexual Abuse of a Minor or a Vulnerable Adult** includes, but is not  
 33 limited to, any contact or interaction between a Minor or Vulnerable Adult  
 34 and an Adult when the Minor/Vulnerable Adult is being used for the sexual  
 35 stimulation of the adult or of a third person. The behavior may or may not

1 involve touching. Sexual behavior between a Minor/Vulnerable Adult and  
2 an Adult is always considered forced whether or not apparently “consented”  
3 to by the Minor/Vulnerable Adult.

4 **Sexual Harassment** means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that  
5 creates a hostile or offensive environment it includes verbal, nonverbal, or  
6 physical acts, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal,  
7 visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- 8 a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a  
9 term or condition of an individual’s employment, or their continued  
10 status in an entity;
- 11 b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for  
12 employment or other decisions affecting an individual;
- 13 c. the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering  
14 with an individual’s work performance or participation in entity or  
15 activities by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive  
16 environment for the individual; or
- 17 d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes or comments,  
18 unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals  
19 that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or  
20 children.

21 **Sexual Conduct** is offensive, obsessive, or suggestive language or behavior  
22 of a sexual nature, including unwelcome or unacceptable visual, auditory, or  
23 physical contact, which is injurious to the physical or emotional health of  
24 another.

25 **Sexual Malfeasance** is defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual  
26 activities or Sexual Conduct within a professional or ministerial relationship  
27 that results in or from misuse of the professional or ministerial office or  
28 position.

29 **Misuse of Technology** is the use of technology that results in Sexual  
30 Harassment or Abuse of another person, including sending or posting  
31 suggestive messages or images. It is never appropriate to view pornography  
32 while present at a Presbytery sponsored activity or on church or Presbytery  
33 premises. Misuse of Technology that includes a Minor or Vulnerable Adult  
34 is considered Sexual Abuse of the Minor or Vulnerable Adult.

1 **5.0 SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**

2 5.1. Any “Worker” with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults, whether  
3 paid or unpaid staff, volunteer, or contractor (and at the request of the  
4 Presbytery, any vendor), shall:

5 5.1.1. Timely submit to the Presbytery a completed, signed, and  
6 approved application; background check authorization forms; and a  
7 signed form verifying the event policy has been read and agreed to.

8 5.1.2. Be at least eighteen years old and four years older than the  
9 oldest Youth whom they are serving.

10 5.1.3. Consent to a comprehensive background check, including a  
11 criminal records background check. The Presbytery will cover the  
12 costs of the background checks for Workers. These checks shall be  
13 run no more than six (6) months prior to the event. Workers who  
14 participate annually in multiple events may only be required to have  
15 one (1) background check per calendar year, or more often in the  
16 discretion of the Presbytery or at the request of its insurer(s).

17 5.2. At least once every three years or more often in the discretion of the  
18 Presbytery, all Child/Youth Workers must participate in training provided or  
19 approved by the Presbytery. The training sessions shall cover this Policy as  
20 well as methods of abuse prevention and a detailed plan of reporting. The  
21 Presbytery may contract with others to provide these trainings. These  
22 trainings shall also cover:

- 23 • What constitutes Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult abuse and  
24 neglect.
- 25 • How to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- 26 • State laws concerning definitions of abuse and reporting  
27 requirements.
- 28 • Mandatory criminal background checks and the security of  
29 those files.
- 30 • Explanation of the importance of the application and screening  
31 processes.
- 32 • Appropriate boundaries for those working with Minors,  
33 especially regarding adult/Child/Youth ratios, transportation,  
34 and use of technology.
- 35 • If an overnight event is planned, discussions of boundaries  
36 involving appropriate sleeping arrangements and use of  
37 restroom/shower facilities shall be discussed.

- Other related topics.

5.3. At least once every three years or more often in the discretion of the Presbytery, all Vulnerable Adult Workers must participate in training provided or approved by the Presbytery. The training sessions shall cover this Policy as well as methods of abuse prevention and a detailed plan of reporting similar to the training for Child and Youth Workers. The Presbytery may contract with others to provide these trainings.

5.4. In addition, no person may serve as a Worker with Minors/Vulnerable Adults who has engaged in certain wrongful conduct or been convicted of certain felonies or misdemeanors, including, but not limited to, any crimes or wrongful conduct involving:

- The intentional or negligent death of another person;
- Use of force, such as assault, battery, or endangerment of another person;
- Abduction and kidnapping;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a Minor or Vulnerable Adult;
- Intentional bodily or emotional injury to a Minor or Vulnerable Adult;
- Substance abuse or drinking and driving, such as driving while intoxicated;
- Possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
- Sexual Misconduct particularly if it involves misconduct with a Minor or Vulnerable Adult;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a Minor or Vulnerable Adult;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a Minor or Vulnerable Adult;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure;
- Misuse of Technology for sexual purposes, including possessing, creating, or distributing child pornography; or
- Employment harmful to Minor or Vulnerable Adult.

1 5.5. Any person who has a prior conviction for or who has been found  
2 liable for wrongful conduct of any of these aforementioned acts, shall  
3 disclose the information to the Presbytery and shall automatically be  
4 ineligible to be a Worker with Minors or Vulnerable Adults. Whether a  
5 person who has a prior conviction for or who has been found liable for  
6 wrongful conduct of any of these aforementioned acts may otherwise attend  
7 an event where Minors or Vulnerable Adults are present shall be determined  
8 in advance by the Presbytery.

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10 **6.0 CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

11 The Presbytery shall maintain all Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Worker  
12 applications, results of background checks, and related information in  
13 confidential, secured files according to the Presbytery's record retention policy  
14 and practices.

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16 **7.0 EVENT RULES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS AND**  
17 **VULNERABLE ADULTS**

18 The Presbytery shall ensure that the following measures are in place, rules  
19 observed, and actions taken for each event or activity involving Minors/Vulnerable  
20 Adults and that Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Workers shall:

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22 7.1. Respond to Minors and Vulnerable Adults with respect and  
23 consideration and treat all of them appropriately for their age and ability, but  
24 without regard to their race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, marital  
25 status, sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, creed, protected  
26 disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service or  
27 veteran status or religious affiliation.

28 7.2. Act as a positive role model for Minors and Vulnerable Adults by  
29 maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity.

30 7.3. Maintain appropriate boundaries when in positions of power or  
31 authority with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.

32 7.4. Not give money or gifts to Minors or Vulnerable Adults, except  
33 within the context of a group gift given to all participants in the celebration  
34 of special events or recognitions.

1 7.5. Follow the “two-adult rule”: Two non-related adults must always be  
2 present in groups of Minors or Vulnerable Adults. The only exception is if  
3 an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible for in person or  
4 online gatherings. All Child and Youth Workers must be at least four years  
5 older than the age group they lead or supervise.

6 7.6. Maintain Ratios: The adult to Child ratio for all Child-related  
7 events/activities is 2:10 for any in-person or online gathering. The adult to  
8 Youth ratio for all Youth-related events/activities is 2:17 for any in-person  
9 or online gathering. The ratio of Workers to Vulnerable Adults shall be 2:10  
10 for any in-person or online gathering. There shall also be one adult of each  
11 gender when one or more Minors/Vulnerable Adults of each gender are  
12 present in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios and gender  
13 diversity be compromised.

14 7.7. View Windows and Open Doors: When Minors, Vulnerable Adults,  
15 and Workers are in a room with the door(s) closed, the door must have a  
16 view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door  
17 must remain open at all times.

18 7.8. All persons are required to wear appropriate attire at all times.

19 7.9. Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Workers should respect the privacy of  
20 the Minors and Vulnerable Adults to whom they provide care. Responsible  
21 use of digital devices and cell phones is required in all situations. No  
22 Worker is permitted to take photographs of Minors or Vulnerable Adults  
23 under their care or at a Presbytery meeting or event and share them in any  
24 way, including on the internet, without the written permission of a parent or  
25 guardian of the Minor/Vulnerable Adult.

26 7.10. Age appropriate training to Minors and Vulnerable Adults should be  
27 provided regarding their behavior and behavior that should be reported to a  
28 Worker, caregiver or leader of the event.

29 7.11. Transportation: All drivers at or providing transportation for events  
30 for Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults must have valid licensure and  
31 insurance on file with the Presbytery. All vehicles used must have seat belts  
32 for the driver and each passenger. No Minor under eighty-five pounds may  
33 sit in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers transporting  
34 Minors/Vulnerable Adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be  
35 informed that if their personal vehicle is used, their insurance would be  
36 primary if an accident occurs. If a vehicle is rented, or any outside carrier is  
37 contracted to provide transportation for a Presbytery event for

1 Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adults, the company hired must have criminal  
2 background checks on its drivers, proper licensure, and insurance coverage.  
3 Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 7.2above. No Minor  
4 may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts or similar off  
5 road vehicles at events).

6 7.12. Forms: A parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of each Minor must provide the  
7 appropriate information, consent and medical forms for each activity/event.  
8 The information form should include full contact information for  
9 parents/legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the  
10 Minor's health insurance card. Additional signed consent forms may be  
11 required for particular activities or events. The consent forms may include  
12 permission for photographing or recording and for publication of any  
13 photos/recordings of the event in social media or material published by the  
14 Presbytery. The participant's parent/legal guardian may provide written  
15 consent photographing/recording/publication after the event but before  
16 publication. All of the foregoing forms must be stored at the event site  
17 during the event in a secure place with restricted access and later must be  
18 maintained by the Presbytery according to its record retention policy and  
19 practices. Similar forms and permissions shall be required for events for  
20 Vulnerable Adults.

21 7.13. Each event/activity must ensure that rules are announced and  
22 discussed with participants at each event/activity. These rules shall include  
23 but are not limited to a code of conduct specific to the event/activity, as well  
24 as a list prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity.  
25 The code of conduct and prohibited and expected behaviors list should be  
26 given in written form to each participant and legal guardians, as well as  
27 discussed thoroughly at the beginning of the event/activity and thereafter as  
28 needed.

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30 7.14. Minors and adults must maintain different showering and grooming  
31 hours at events in which bathrooms and shower rooms are in shared housing.  
32 These hours must be posted on site.

33 7.15. Adults should not share sleeping quarters with Minors. The exception  
34 to this rule is for the occasional legal caregiver/child situation or parent/child  
35 situation requiring special care for the Child. If a Minor requires a  
36 caregiver/parent, written permission must be given and kept on record from  
37 the Minor's parent/legal guardian. Similar rules apply for Vulnerable Adults.

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7.16. All Presbytery Personnel and Workers with Minors/Vulnerable Adults shall not engage in Sexual Misconduct and shall not engage prohibited behaviors such as but not limited to:

- Display of sexual affection toward a Minor/Vulnerable Adult.
- Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
- Discussion of sexual encounters with or around Minors or Vulnerable Adults or in any way involving Minors/Vulnerable Adults in personal problems or issues.
- Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of Minors and Vulnerable Adults or during the activity or event.
- Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a Presbytery event.
- Having secrets with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- Staring at or commenting on the bodies of Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communications with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- Working one-on-one with Minors or Vulnerable Adults in a private setting or out of sight of others, unless special written permission by a parent/legal guardian has been given for such activity.
- Abusing Minors or Vulnerable Adults in any way, including (but not limited to) the following:
  - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain.
  - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse.
  - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
  - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
  - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
- Permitting Minors or Vulnerable Adults to engage in hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, abuse, sexual activity, or use alcohol, tobacco, vapes, controlled substances, or drugs.

1 **8.0 CONSENT TO THIS POLICY; APPLICATION TO SERVE**

2 Each Minor/Vulnerable Adult Worker and each Adult engaged in the leadership of  
3 a Presbytery event shall acknowledge receipt of the Presbytery’s Child/Youth/  
4 Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy by signing a form verifying they have read and  
5 agreed to abide by the Policy. In addition, each Minor/Vulnerable Adult Worker  
6 and each Adult engaged in the leadership of a Whitewater Valley Presbytery event  
7 shall consent to any background checks required by the Presbytery and understands  
8 that they may be subject to Church Discipline for a violation of this Policy.  
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10 **9.0 APPENDICES**

11 9.1. Other Policies and Codes: The Presbytery maintains other policies  
12 and procedures or Codes of Conduct that apply in whole or in part to this  
13 Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedure. These other  
14 Policies or Codes listed below are to be applied and followed as a part of this  
15 Policy and as if they were set forth in full here. These other Polices and  
16 Codes are to be applied and followed as a part of this Policy in their current  
17 form and as they may be amended or revised by the Presbytery from time to  
18 time.

- 19 • Sexual Harassment Policy, including but not limited to its Article VI.,  
20 Reporting Allegations Of Sexual Misconduct;
- 21 • Social Media—Electronic Communications Regarding Children,  
22 Youth, and Vulnerable Adults;
- 23 • Social Networking Code of Conduct, including its provisions  
24 regarding Misuse of Technology; and
- 25 • Virtual Meeting Code of Conduct.

26 9.2. Consent and Permission Forms: The following permission or consent  
27 forms shall be used in connection with this Policy. These forms may be  
28 changed or revised and new or different forms may be required by action of  
29 the Presbytery from time to time without requiring the Presbytery to revise  
30 or amend this Policy.

- 31 • Application to Serve as Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Worker;
- 32 • Background Check Authorization Form;

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- Verification of receiving, reading, and agreeing to this Policy or any specific event/activity policy;
- Parent/legal guardian Consent and Medical Disclosure Form for Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Participation, including full contact information and a copy of the health insurance card for the participant.
- Permission for Photographing or Recording and for Presbytery Publication of any photos/recordings of Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adults participating in Presbytery events.

27 For Stated Clerk Use only: This Policy was first duly adopted by the Presbytery of  
28 Whitewater Valley on May 3, 2025.  
29 This Policy was duly modified/amended by the Presbytery of Whitewater Valley  
30 on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.