



Alpharetta Presbyterian Church

Child and Youth Safety Policies and Procedures

This manual is the property of
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I. Purpose

Alpharetta Presbyterian Church (APC) seeks to provide a safe and caring environment for its children and youth. This policy has been written to help protect children, youth, and other vulnerable populations from sexual, physical, verbal, and emotional abuse or harassment. This policy also establishes protection standards and expected conduct for Approved Volunteers and staff. Adult sexual misconduct is addressed in APC's Adult Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures document. Additionally, APC Day School and Scouting America have their own specific and unique compliance documents. However, these organizations are held, at a minimum, to the standards defined herein.

These policies and procedures have been created to supplement and clarify policies already required in the "Christian Discipline" section in the *Book of Order*. They do not override or replace anything stated in the current BOO. If any policies herein conflict with or differ from the Book of Order, the Book of Order always takes precedence.

II. Definitions

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children: The Presbyterian Church USA's (PCUSA's) Book of Order defines sexual abuse as " . . . sexual conduct [with] any person under eighteen years of age or without the mental capacity to consent." (D-10.0401c) This includes the use or coercion of any child to engage in, or to assist in, any sexual conduct (or simulation for the purpose of producing a visual depiction) including (but not limited to) molestation, rape, indecent exposure, the viewing of pornographic materials, and the specific acts listed in Georgia Annotated Code 19- 7-5(b).

Note: Where the word *child* is used, it should be understood to include youth and other vulnerable populations such as disabled or senior adults.

Sexual Harassment: This includes unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This includes unwelcome sexual jokes, innuendo, unwelcome or inappropriate touching or display of sexual images that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit others.

Presumed Consent: The assertion that a particular act is between consenting adults does not apply in relationships where there is a disparity of power, such as those between a minister and a parishioner or an adult with a person with developmental disabilities or a minor child.

Physical Abuse: This includes (but is not limited to) non-accidental punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand or object) and unnecessarily restraining or neglecting a child. APC considers such contact physical abuse even if the child sustains no injuries, or the adult never intended injury. Corporal punishment, including physical discipline such as paddling or spanking, is never tolerated at APC.



Emotional and Verbal Abuse: This includes (but is not limited to) belittling, insulting, rejecting, teasing, bullying, and unreasonable demands beyond a child's capabilities. Such actions threaten a child's psychological development, and APC considers them emotional abuse even if there is no change in the child's behavior, mood, response or cognition.

III. Church Staff

1. **Church staff** is defined as all paid employees of APC, including day school staff.
2. All W-2 church staff shall read this policy and receive training upon, and as a condition of, employment. Training will be repeated every 3 years throughout employment. Records of proof of completion will be maintained by each administrator for their area (Staff, Volunteers, Dayschool). Any 1099 contract employees will be held to the aforementioned policy if they specifically work with children or youth programs.
3. As a condition of employment, all church staff must consent to a criminal history and identification confirmation (background check). These confidential reports will be kept in a separate and locked file. Rechecks will be performed every 3 years.
4. All new church staff must attend the first available Child and Youth Safety Policy training available (online or in person) and thereafter every 3 years. Those completing online training will complete the “Child and Youth Safety Questionnaire” online form and those records will be maintained in personnel files.
5. All church clergy must satisfy and abide by the clearance and the educational and professional standards of the PCUSA and the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.
6. Any person who has been convicted of the sexual, physical or emotional abuse of children cannot work on our church staff. Any person accused of abusing or exploiting children (as defined in this policy) will be placed on paid administrative leave until the allegation is resolved.

IV. Church Leadership

All Elders and Deacons must complete the Child and Youth Safety Policy training session, virtually or in-person, every 3 years throughout their volunteer service.



V. Selection and Screening of Volunteers

1. An “Approved Volunteer” for APC ministries is defined as an adult leader working with children/youth who:
 - a. Has consented to and successfully completed a background check, including a criminal history and identification confirmation
 - b. Has attended and successfully completed the first available Child and Youth Safety Policy training available (online or in person) and repeated the training thereafter every 3 years.
 - c. Has completed a “Child/Youth Approved Volunteer Information Form”. All of these forms will be provided by Children/Youth Ministry leadership.

Those completing online training will complete the “Child and Youth Safety Questionnaire” online form and those records will be maintained in personnel files.

All adult volunteers wishing to work with children/youth on a consistent basis (monthly or more frequently) must be confirmed by Session as Approved Volunteers.

When the **3 requirements above** are satisfactorily completed, the volunteer’s name will be submitted to Session and, if approved, will become an Approved Volunteer.

2. If you do not consent to a criminal history and identification confirmation (background check), you cannot serve as an Approved Volunteer (see #5 of this section below) at Alpharetta Presbyterian Church.
3. Adults who have been convicted of sexual, physical or emotional abuse cannot serve as a volunteer in church-sponsored programs for children/youth. Any person accused of the sexual, physical or emotional abuse of children cannot volunteer until the accusation is cleared.
4. If a background check comes back with an adverse finding, it will be given directly and confidentially to the Lead Staff for the appropriate ministry for review and decision. The Senior Pastor will provide consultation if necessary. The applicant will be notified that their background check results are under review. They will also be given a copy of the background check, the contact information of the background check company, and a copy of the FCRA’s “A Summary of your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.” They have a right to dispute the information with the agency.



5. A confidential record of individuals who are unable to become approved volunteers or approved drivers (whether because of an adverse finding on a background check or pastoral/other knowledge of individual's history) will be kept in a locked drawer in the Senior Pastor's office.
6. An adult should never be alone with children/youth.

Best practice is to have 2 "approved volunteers" when working with children/youth, but having 2 adults at all times is essential.

7. Persons serving in the following positions on an ongoing basis (regular or frequently recurring role, as opposed to a one-time fill-in) are required to be Approved Volunteers:
 - Sunday School Teachers
 - Youth Volunteers and Assistants
 - Whiz Kids Tutors
 - ACT 1 Volunteers
 - Choir/Music Volunteers
 - Nursery Staff and Volunteers
 - Open Arms Volunteers
 - Confirmation Teachers/Leaders
 - Youth and Confirmation Mentors
 - Vacation Bible School Volunteers
 - Summer Camp Volunteers
 - Mission Trip Volunteers
 - Scouting America (BSA) Volunteers (refer to section VI below)
8. Youth who lead children on a consistent basis (regular or recurring volunteer in an assigned role, VBS, nursery help, choir help, etc.) must attend the first available Child and Youth Safety Policy training (online or in person) and repeat the training thereafter every 3 years, review this policy annually, and sign and date the policy. Those completing online training will complete the "Child and Youth Safety Questionnaire" online form. A copy will be retained in church records. Best practice will be to include examples of and discussions of what behaviors are/are not appropriate for bonding with kids in a church setting.
9. Committees which seek adult volunteers to work with children/youth must recommend them to the Session for approval as Approved Volunteers after all requirements outlined above are satisfactorily completed. If Session approves an Adult Volunteer, that approval is valid for one year from the date of the approval. Renewal of Session approval is



required annually to continue as an Approved Volunteer. This is typically done at the July session meeting before the start of the school year.

10. All volunteers working with and providing guidance to children/youth must exhibit appropriate behavior when working with children including: appropriate language (no profanity, no belittling, and no sexual banter, either explicit or by innuendo), and appropriate physical contact (no pushing, no striking, no wrestling, and no unwelcome touching).
11. Other prohibited conduct includes using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or being impaired by legally prescribed drugs during church sponsored programs. Any tobacco or vapor device use is also prohibited when working with children and youth. Possession or use of weapons is prohibited when working with or transporting children and youth.
12. Gifts may be given on a group basis and for special occasions only. Staff and volunteers are not allowed to give gifts to individual children/youth without the knowledge and permission of the parents/guardians. Cash is never to be given.
13. Persons violating this policy may lose "Approved Volunteer" status. If "Approved Volunteer" status is lost, they will be unable to serve as volunteers with children/youth until the APC Session restores "Approved Volunteer" status.
14. The Children and Youth Ministries will maintain a list of Approved Volunteers. Regular/ongoing volunteers must be listed in order to work with children and youth. A volunteer may lose status if:
 - a. Their status is not renewed annually by Session.
 - b. They have been reported as violating these policies and are under inquiry by the CIC (see Section IX)
 - c. They fail to pass the requirements above at the required renewal intervals.
 - d. The adult is accused or convicted of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse of children/youth after the background check has been completed.

VI. Policies for Scouting America (BSA) Volunteers

1. Scouting America (BSA) Approved Volunteers, working with children/youth, must be a registered volunteer with Scouting America and be at least 18 years old. At least 2 of the Scouting America (BSA) adult volunteers, with troops that are chartered by APC, wishing to work with children/youth must:
 - a. Consent and apply to complete a background check (every 3 years) previously referred to in Section III.



- b. Complete APC’s Child and Youth Safety Training online or in person. Those completing online training will complete the Child and Youth Online Questionnaire. Those records will be maintained in the personnel files.
- c. Sign the APC Facility Use Form.

To help ensure compliance with this policy the Scouting America (BSA) Charter Representative, Scout Master and/or Committee Chair will be responsible for the following:

- a. Providing all registered volunteers of your Troops/Packs with a copy of the **APC Child- Youth Safety Policies PDF** document. This document outlines the APC Child and Youth Safety procedures.
- b. Providing APC with an annual report confirming the date their adult volunteers met APC’s **three** Child and Youth Safety requirements.
- c. Quarterly, as new volunteers join the troop/pack, provide APC with an updated list of any new volunteers before January 15, April 15, July 15 & October 15 of each year.

The cost of criminal history and identification confirmation required to meet this policy shall be paid for by the BSA applicant during the online application entry process.

1. If a background check comes back with an adverse finding, it will be given directly and confidentially to an APC pastor for review and decision. The applicant will be notified that their background check results are under review. They will also be given a copy of the background check, the contact information of the background check company, and a copy of the FCRA’s “A Summary of your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.” They have a right to dispute the information with the agency.
2. APC Chartered Units of Scouting America (BSA) shall comply with the adult volunteer screening, two-deep leadership, adequate supervision, tour permits, event transportation, pickup and drop-off, bathroom use, and all other youth protection guidelines of the BSA.
3. A Scouting America (BSA) adult volunteer should never be alone with children/youth.

VII. Outside Groups using the Facilities

As part of the “Facility Use Request” application, outside group/organization leaders must sign and return the Child and Youth Safety Policy for Outside Groups Acknowledgement Form, annually, indicating that they have read this policy and will abide by it. Failure to do so will result in their facility privilege being revoked. Additionally, outside groups working with youth and children shall submit the names of two adults who will be present at all scheduled events. These two adults must successfully complete a state and national background check and complete APC’s Child and Youth Safety training. The office assistant shall keep this information in a locked file.



VIII. Safety Policies and Procedures

1. General

- a. Best practice of the church is two Approved Volunteers present when tending children/youth at church programs. When one-on-one contact between an adult and a child/youth is required (such as pastoral counseling) the meeting will be conducted in view of other adults.
- b. All classrooms and meeting rooms which do not have an unobstructed glass panel must remain open. If a door does not have a glass panel, the top-half of the door must remain open.
- c. Registration Forms for each child/youth participating in church sponsored events must be completed annually by the parent/guardian. These forms will be kept in a locked file in the Children's Ministry office, the Day School office, the Youth Ministry's office, or the Open Arms office.
- d. All Approved Volunteers should wear name tags when attending to children/youth.
- e. Any dangerous or broken items in the church or on its property should be reported immediately to the property manager for repair.
- f. Corporal Punishment or physical discipline will not be used by anyone working with children/youth in the church or its programs. Staff and Volunteers must comply with APC's Children and Youth Ministry Discipline Policy.
- g. Any suspicious person(s) on the church property must be reported immediately to a church staff member or event leader.

2. Trips

- a. Parents/guardians of children/youth must sign and return Child and Youth Overnight Trip Consent Form before their child(ren) may attend church-sponsored off-site overnight events.
- b. All drivers for church events involving youth/children must be at least 25 years old, submit photocopies of a valid driver's license and a valid insurance card, and successfully complete a 3-year background check on their driving record.
- c. No DUI, reckless driving convictions in the last three years will be acceptable.



- d. Best practice for vehicle use with youth/children is two adults per vehicle. Never one-on-one youth/child and adult.
- e. Drivers cannot use cell phone while operating the vehicle except for hands free navigation.
- f. Seat belts must be worn at all times. Children under 12 may not sit in the front seats. Child safety seats must be used as required by law. Drivers will inspect seats to assure that all kids are buckled before beginning to drive.
- g. First aid kits must be taken on all trips (i.e., activities or events which are held off church property).

3. Care for Children/Youth

- a. Any APC member or staff of this church engaged in ordered ministry who suspects that a child has been abused at home or elsewhere, **as mandated reporters**, (defined according to Georgia code § 19-7-5(c)(1) must notify civil legal authorities-typically the Division of Child and Family Protective Services (DFCS) immediately. Abuse Hotline: 1-855-GACHILD.
- b. If a child/youth arrives with a fever, intestinal upset or contagious condition worse than a mild cough or runny nose, the volunteer, teacher or leader should ask the parent to remove the child from the program until he/she is well. The child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to the program.
- c. In order to ensure the safety of all children, children may be redirected or moved to a situation where the child is removed from other children per the Child Discipline Policy. When absolutely necessary, appropriate restraint will be used in order to save the life of a child, to protect a child or an adult from physical harm and/or to prevent someone in the room from causing harm. In such situations, parents will be immediately contacted to provide further support.
- d. Parents or caregivers of younger children must keep those children within their care and/or eyesight at all times while on the property. In no case should a child be left unattended in a vehicle or on the playground.
- e. Preferred practice is for fifth graders and younger to be escorted to and from their classroom/meeting place by a parent/ authorized guardian or an Approved Volunteer. Children should be released only to those authorized on their registration or sign-in form or as specified by the parent or guardian. Siblings over the age of 14 can pick up a younger sibling.
- f. Leaders should be at the event 30 minutes ahead of the start time.



- g. Youth and children should arrive not more than 15 minutes before the scheduled program start time. Adults bringing youth to church activities are responsible for confirming that the activity is occurring as scheduled and that the minimum required adult supervision is present before leaving their child or children. Parents or caregivers should pick up no later than 10 minutes after the event is over.
- h. APC is not responsible for the transportation arrangements of children/youth coming to, or departing from, sponsored activities. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to inform their children and the approved adult volunteers of any restrictions on their children's transportation to and from activities. The approved adult volunteers will supervise throughout the activity and remain until all children/youth have departed.
- i. Youth/Child participants/parents must sign in for all activities. If emergency contact information is not already on file, it should be provided at the time of sign-in.
- j. If a child/youth needs adult assistance in a restroom, the door must remain ajar and another volunteer must be present.
- k. If a younger child cannot be comforted, nursery attendants will make every effort to locate parents/guardians before the child becomes too distraught. Parents will be contacted on their cell phones to facilitate this practice.
- l. Diaper bags, sippy cups, bottles and other personal possessions brought into the nursery should bear the child's name or be tagged with the appropriate number entered on the sign-in sheet.
- m. Nursery toys will be cleaned and sanitized after use.
- n. While on the playground, volunteers will monitor all areas of the playground, being especially mindful of high areas, gates and swings.
- o. A minimum of two adults must be present at all times when supervising children or youth. No adult should ever be alone with a child/youth.
- p. Nursery Care Ratio: Ideal nursery care ratio is 1 to 5
- q. Children's Sunday School Classes: When participation exceeds 20, additional adult volunteers will be added at a ratio of 1 to 10 in order ensure appropriate supervision, safety and care. An adult should never be alone with children/youth.
- r. Youth Ministry Ratios: In group activities with greater than 24 youth, the ideal adult/youth ratio should be 1:15. On trips, the ideal adult/youth ratio is 1:8. An adult should never be alone with children/youth.



4. First Aid and Fire Safety

- a. All approved volunteers will be given instructions for fire, tornado, or other emergencies. This includes inclement weather and evacuation plans.
- b. The Property Committee will ensure that all fire extinguishers, alarms, and emergency lighting are functional and that evacuation routes are posted in every classroom. Property manager will test and restock defibrillator parts annually.
- c. Children’s Ministry will check the three main First Aid Kits in the building annually for expired contents. These are located in a marked cabinet in the church kitchen, the bookshelf next to the elevator in the upstairs lobby, and the credenza in the church welcome lobby. Dayschool is responsible for keeping their first aid kits up to date as well. All respective areas of ministry will be responsible for their own additional first aid kits. The location of the LifeVac will be indicated on all maps in all classrooms.
- d. Refer to the “Emergency Response Plan” for further information.

5. Social Networking/Media

APC recognizes the wide use and supports the ministry potential of social media. Because information and exchanges disclosed on social media and computers are not private, all staff and approved adult leaders for youth and children are expected to refrain from online and IT communications or activities related to APC that are inappropriate to the mission of APC or inconsistent with the spirit of this Child and Youth Safety Policy. What a person shares with others through social media should be considered public and permanent. Therefore, APC staff and approved youth/child leaders are expected to be thoughtful, professional and appropriate in the ways they present themselves in all electronic communications and social networks.

Staff members or approved child/youth leaders who use the computers, text, email, or social media, within an APC church function/activity, in inappropriate ways (for example: pornography, vulgarity, illegal activity, bullying, graphic violence, etc.) will be subjected to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination (for staff) and removal from leadership (for volunteers).

Staff members or approved child/youth leaders who communicate to youth via text, email, or social media platforms must include a second approved adult volunteer, or the parent of the youth. Staff members or approved child/youth leaders should not have undocumented one on one communications with any youth or child via electronic methods including but not limited to social media platforms. No disappearing message apps (snapchat, Instagram vanish mode, etc.) are to be used for ministry communications. Parents must give permission for communications to their children via text, email, or social media chat functions.



IX. Reporting and Inquiry Procedures

The **Crisis Inquiry Committee, (CIC)**, reviews all incidents that allegedly violate the Child and Youth Safety Policies observed within our buildings, on our property, or at an event sponsored by APC. The CIC shall ensure an objective, effective, expeditious and caring response to alleged misconduct. The CIC will report and make recommendations to the Session on each incident.

1. CIC Composition and Term

The CIC will be composed of three members of APC, selected by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Session. The CIC will preferably comprise a legal professional, a professional educator, and a licensed counselor. Members will serve a three-year term, which may be renewable. An elder currently serving on Session shall not serve on this committee. The Senior Pastor of Alpharetta Presbyterian Church shall serve as the staff resource.

2. Duty to Report

Any staff member, pastor, deacon or elder shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of privileged communication as defined in Book of Order *G-4.0302*, or (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) he or she reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

Source: PCUSA Book of Order G-4.0302

3. Reporting and Notification Procedures

As **mandated reporters** in the state of Georgia, as defined according to Georgia code § 19-7-5(c)(1), if anyone witnesses or suspects physical or sexual abuse (as defined in Section II)

1. Immediately after securing the safety of the victim, he or she must first notify civil authorities, typically the Division of Family and Child Services (DFCS) 1-855-GACHILD
2. He or she must next provide a written notification “Incident Report Form”) to a pastor or Clerk of Session. (The pastor or Clerk of Session will confirm that the civil authorities have notified the parent or guardian of the child, unless the parent or guardian is the alleged abuser, of the alleged abuse and the CIC.)

Anyone who suspects or who has witnessed an incident of emotional or verbal abuse or harassment (as defined in **Section II**) on church property or at a church-sponsored event must, after securing the safety of the victim, report that incident immediately and provide a written notification to a church staff member or Clerk of Session. The recipient of this report



will immediately notify the parent/guardian of the child involved unless the parent or guardian is the alleged abuser. The recipient of this report will then notify the CIC.

On behalf of the Session, the clerk will, in confidence, provide written and verbal notification to the alleged abuser of his/her removal from all children/ youth activities pending inquiry. If the alleged abuser is a staff person, that person will be placed on administrative leave with pay, pending inquiry. If the incident is reported to the Division of Family and Child Services (DFCS), DFCS, not APC, will notify the alleged abuser.

If applicable, the Clerk of Session will also notify our liability insurance, legal counsel and the congregational consultant or stated clerk of the presbytery.

All incidents involving Ministers of the Word and Sacrament must be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

4. CIC Inquiry Procedure

The CIC shall proceed with the inquiry in the following manner:

1. Receive the written claim of abuse from the Clerk of Session.
2. Advise the Clerk of Session and confirm immediately that a report has been made to law enforcement in cases of child physical and sexual abuse.
3. When an investigation begins, the CIC will ask the clerk to immediately notify the members of Session with the following statement:

“The Crisis Inquiry Committee is investigating a recently reported incident. The individuals involved and the incident itself must remain completely confidential. We ask that you keep the committee and those involved in your prayers. Please allow this committee the leeway to perform the task you have charged it to do. If asked, please mention that an inquiry is ongoing, that you do not know the details, and that the CIC is handling it. We will provide an update at the next Session meeting. Thank you.”

4. The Session is encouraged keep the following in mind during the inquiry period:
 - Our scriptures support **confidential** care and discipline within the church (Matthew 18).
 - Both parties deserve to be heard and cared for, and will be provided pastoral care and counseling during the inquiry process.
 - Often in pastoral care, the caregiver has to recognize her own curiosity and her own desire to set things right. Both of these well-intentioned responses can get in the way of offering what the care receivers actually need. To that end, Session members are encouraged to recognize and set aside curiosity and any desire to be involved in a solution in deference to the wisdom of the CIC that has been duly elected and their prescribed way forward for all to remain in community.
5. The Session may, at its discretion, create a Special Commission, preferably comprising the pastors providing counseling and the Clerk of Session. This Commission will receive the



detailed report from the CIC, with names and details of the incident in question, and will track the progress of the inquiry, maintain confidential records of Session proceedings and decisions, if any, and will determine the level of information that should be shared with Session, keeping them informed as the Commission deems appropriate.

The CIC will undertake its work expeditiously and meet in-person with all parties within 15 days. The primary goal of this step is to confirm whether a violation of this policy did or did not occur. The CIC will endeavor to complete and submit a written report to the Special Commission or Clerk of Session, including any recommendation, within 30-days of notification of said incident.

As the CIC undertakes its work, it should consider the following:

- Recommend that all parties seek professional psychological or certified pastoral counseling.
- Recommend immediate pastoral care for the reporter, the alleged victim, the alleged offender, their families, congregations and governing bodies.
- Recommend remedial actions within the Session, congregation and/or activity area directly affected.
- Treat the alleged offender with Christian kindness and respect.
- Advise the reporter or the alleged victim that he or she may file a written statement of the alleged offense with the Clerk of Session pursuant to the "Rules of Discipline" of The Book of Church Order if there has been no admission of misconduct and the allegation is to be pursued.

The CIC shall not:

- Advocate for any party
- Act as legal counsel for any party
- Act as counselors to any party
- Replace the authority of the Session
- Enforce a specific remedy or disciplinary action
- Breach confidentiality

If the incident is reported to legal authorities, the CIC will cooperate with those authorities and will support and guide the church family, as needed.



If an inquiry is made by the press, public, or congregation, the following statement may be issued by the clerk of session:

“An incident report of abuse has been forwarded to the proper authorities. APC will safeguard the privacy of all involved and treat them with dignity, respect, and support.”

CIC Findings, Recommendations and Final Report

Within 60 days of the initial report, the CIC and the clerk of session will produce and deliver to Session a written report of the church's response. This “Session Report” should be brief and contain only relevant factual information.

Separately, a detailed “Final Report” will be prepared and presented to the Commission or Clerk of Session. This report is in addition to the initial report and will be kept in a locked file in the Senior Pastor’s office. It shall include:

- Names and addresses of all parties
- A summary of the allegation(s)
- A summary of the facts as stated by all parties
- A summary of the CIC's investigative actions
- The remedy, if any, sought by the alleged victim
- The CIC's findings, and whether the abuse is substantiated
- The CIC's recommendations
- A list and signatures of the CIC members

The Final Report should be written in ink or typed to prevent tampering. The report must be signed, dated, witnessed, and kept in a locked file in the Senior Pastor’s office. Only the Senior Pastor and the Clerk of Session (and the members of the Special Commission, if applicable) shall have access to the locked file. Note: if the Senior Pastor is involved in the incident in question, the Session may revoke his/her access and may assign it to another APC clergy member.

If an allegation is unsubstantiated, the CIC may recommend to the Session whether the staff member or volunteer should be allowed to return to work at the church. It will consider the individual's likely effectiveness in working with minors following an allegation and investigation of child abuse, sexual harassment, or other prohibited conduct. Even if unsubstantiated, most allegations require follow up.

Therefore, the moderator of Session, in consultation with the pastoral staff, will respond with Christian care and concern to the reporter and/or alleged victim, the vindicated person’s family,



and the congregation, if appropriate.

X. Policy Implementation and Revision

The Church staff that oversees children and youth programs is responsible for the following:

- Sponsor a minimum of two Child and Youth Safety Policy training sessions each year.
- These training sessions may be either in-person or online training session options. It is encouraged that a staff member or approved volunteer's initial Child and Youth Safety policy training take place in person. The online option should include watching the training video and successfully completing a quiz.
- Educate parents, church members and friends of the church about this policy, and make it available for review in the church office and on the church's website.
- Ensure the church and its ministries are in compliance with this policy.
- Recommend, in consultation with the CIC, to the Session any needed changes in the policy.
- The Session will review this policy and approve any necessary revisions and conduct an audit annually to ensure compliance. Church staff that oversees children and youth programs should participate in this review.

