

HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy (CYVAPP)

Updated – September 2022

Introduction

Highland Presbyterian Church seeks to provide a welcoming environment for every child, youth, and adult that is free from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. We are committed not only to maintaining a community, but also to building it, and not only to maintaining trust but also to enrich the atmosphere of trust in our community. As the Gospel witness makes abundantly clear, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more, will be demanded.” (Luke 12:48)

In receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, we enter into a sacred covenant with God and are adopted into the covenant family of the Church (W-2.3004, Genesis 17:714, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22). As the Church and the body of Christ, we are united with all the people of God in every place and every time (W-2.3005, 1 Corinthians 12:1213, Ephesians 4:4-6). We are bound to serve and respect the dignity of every human being (G-1.0200, W2.3004, Micah 6:8). When, therefore, this solemn trust is broken through some form of misconduct, particularly sexual, not only is someone’s dignity diminished and their well-being seriously harmed but harm is done to the community of faith. In today’s environment, a proactive sexual abuse prevention policy is important for any institution entrusted with the care of children and youth. In response, Highland has established this Policy.

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APPENDIX

- A. NCDHHS Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency, https://www.ncleg.gov/DocumentSites/Committees/NCCFTF/Intentional%20Death%20Prevention/2018-2019/Presentations%20and%20Handouts/Mandatory%20Reporting%20of%20Suspect%20Child%20Abuse%20Neglect%20and%20Dependency_OConnor.pdf
- B. Adult Protective Services <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/adult-services/adult-protective-services>
- C. Child Protective Services <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/child-welfare-services/child-protective-services>

FORMS

1. Volunteer Application and Background Check Consent Form
2. Incident Report Form
3. Confirmation of Report to Forsyth County Department of Social Services Form
4. Youth Volunteer Covenant For 6th - 12th Grade Youth
5. Volunteer Covenant Statement
6. Safe Driver Form
7. Volunteer Driver Qualification Form and Agreement for Use of Personally Owned Vehicles
8. Parental/Guardian Consent Form for Photo/Video Use
9. Agreement for Non-Affiliated Groups Utilizing Church Facilities

1. Purpose of Policy

- a. To provide a safe and secure environment for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults involved in any of the ministries of Highland Presbyterian Church.
- b. To protect Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse while participating in any of the ministries of Highland Presbyterian Church.
- c. To guide Highland Presbyterian Church as an institution in the conduct of its employees and volunteers and to prevent incidents and allegations of abuse.

2. Applicability of Policy

This policy addresses five (5) components of the protection of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults:

- a. Procedures and a Code of Conduct for Pastoral and/or Program Staff and Volunteers of Highland Presbyterian Church serving Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults.
- b. Reporting of incidents of abuse/neglect/dependency.
- c. Responding to incidents of abuse/neglect/dependency.
- d. Screening of applicants for employment and Volunteer service for a history of behavior potentially detrimental to Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults.
- e. Training of employees and Volunteers in the protection of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.

3. Scope of Policy

- a. This policy applies to all persons, whether Pastoral, Program, part-time Nursery Staff, or Volunteers, participating in ministry at Highland Presbyterian Church.
- b. All individuals employed by and volunteers of Highland Presbyterian Church are governed by this policy, which supersedes all prior Child and Youth Protection Policy statements. An obligation to abide by the policy will be written into the contract of each paid staff member.
- c. An individual may be terminated from employment and/or volunteer service for failure to observe and abide by this policy. This action may be taken regardless of the outcome of any investigation.
- d. Each person must assume responsibility for their own actions in working with Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults and for attending training offered on this policy.

- e. Employees and volunteers must assume responsibility for the actions of other employees and volunteers around them working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults to ensure a safe environment for all.

4. General Definitions

- a. **Child (or Children)** means anyone under age 11.
- b. **Youth** means anyone between the age of 12 and 18.
- c. **Youth Volunteer** means a Youth, age 12-18, serving alongside two Adults. Only one of these Adult Volunteers may be related to the Youth Volunteer.
- d. **Adult** means any person who is 18 years or older and is at least (5) years older than the oldest Child or Youth in the group.
- e. **Vulnerable Adult** means any person 18 years of age or older who:
 - i. an individual age 18 or older who has the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for themselves.
 - ii. It can also refer to one who is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
 - iii. A vulnerable adult is one that has a substantial mental or functional impairment.
 - iv. A vulnerable adult, due to the reasons listed previously, may also require specific care from community resources. Substantial functional impairment is an inability referring to physical limitations. Substantial mental impairment is a disorder of mood, thought, perception, memory, or orientation. This grossly impairs the person's judgement, behavior, or ability to be independent.
 - 1. Dohler, Bailey, Rice, and Katch (May 31, 2016). "[Supportive Housing Helps Vulnerable People Live and Thrive in the Community](#)" (PDF). *Policy Futures*. Retrieved 2022-05-06.
- f. **Nursery Staff** means individuals hired and paid to provide Childcare for Highland Presbyterian Church.
- g. **Pastor** means the supervising pastor.
- h. **Pastoral and Program Staff** means all pastors, the Director of Music, and the Director of Christian Education.
- i. **Support Staff** means the Office Business Manager, Administrative Assistant, and paid Nursery Staff.
- j. **Church Employee** means anyone who is on the church payroll, including Program and Support Staff, except Pastoral Staff, who are employed by Salem Presbytery.
- k. **Campus** means the property of Highland Presbyterian Church.
- l. **Child Abuse:** A child is considered abused if his or her parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker does any of the following: (Appendix C)
 - i. Causes serious physical injury to the child that does not happen by accident or allows another to do so.
 - ii. Creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury to the child, other than by accident, or allows another to do so.
 - iii. Uses cruel or grossly inappropriate discipline on the child or allows another to do so.

- iv. Commits certain sex crimes against the child or permits or encourages the child to commit sex crimes or participate in sex crimes.
 - v. Causes serious emotional damage to the child or allows another to do so.
 - vi. Commits a crime of human trafficking, involuntary servitude, or sexual servitude against the child, or allows another to do so.
 - vii. Encourages or approves of delinquent behavior that involves immoral acts by the child.
- m. **Sexual Abuse** means any contact or interaction between a Child or Youth and an Adult when the Child or Youth is being used for the sexual stimulation of the Adult or a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a Child or Youth and an Adult is always considered forced whether consented to by the Child or Youth. As per the PC(USA) definition, this applies to a Child or Youth under the age of 18. *(From PC(USA) Sexual Misconduct Policy and its Procedures)*
- n. **Neglect:** A child is neglected if the child does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline, from the child's parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker; or the child has been abandoned. A child is neglected if the child lives in an environment injurious to the child's welfare. A child is also neglected if the child is not provided with necessary medical or remedial care.
- o. **LGBTQ** is a combination of letters meant to represent persons who identify in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and/or Queer communities.
- p. **Gender identity** is the personal sense of one's own gender. Gender identity can correlate with a person's assigned sex at birth or can differ from it.
- q. **Sexual orientation** describes to whom a person is sexually attracted. Some people are attracted to people of a particular gender; others are attracted to people of more than one gender. Some are not attracted to anyone.
- r. **Gender expression** is the external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice.
- s. **Gender non-conforming** means exhibiting behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits that do not correspond with the traits typically associated with one's sex; having a gender expression that does not conform to gender norms.
- t. **Transgender** is a term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex at birth.

5. **Screening**

- a. The screening and hiring of paid staff will be done by the following individuals, committees, or entities.
 - i. Any paid assisting staff for the areas of Children's ministries, including paid Nursery Staff, shall be done by the Director of Christian Education with the approval of the Christian Education Committee.
 - ii. Any paid assisting staff for the areas of Youth Ministry shall be done by the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults with the approval of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Committee.
- b. The Director of Christian Education/Christian Education Committee and the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults/Youth and Young Adult Ministry Committee are responsible for the recruitment, training, and ongoing supervision of all Volunteers in these respective areas of ministry.

- c. Screening Volunteers follow these vital steps:
 - i. Volunteers must have had a consistent relationship with Highland Presbyterian Church for at least 6 months; exceptions to this length of time will only be waived with the knowledge and approval of the Pastoral/Program Staff as indicated on the individual's Volunteer Application Form.
 - ii. Volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application Form and Criminal Background Check Consent Form (Attachment 1). Background checks will be performed on Primary Volunteers each year and at least every third year for Secondary Volunteers.

- d. Levels of Volunteer Status:
 - i. **Primary Volunteers** are individuals having a high level of contact with Children and/or Youth. Those Volunteers serving for extended periods of time such as overnight events, trips, retreats, and any Volunteer driver are considered Primary Volunteers. Primary volunteers must complete the required training on this policy annually.
 - ii. **Secondary Volunteers** are individuals serving with Children and/or Youth with a low level of contact while on-campus at Highland Presbyterian Church. Secondary Volunteers serve as church school teachers, nursery Volunteers, and any other Volunteer serving with Children and/or Youth for a limited number of hours (<3 hours at a time). Secondary volunteers must complete the required training on this policy every three years.
 - iii. **Youth Volunteers** are Volunteers, ages 12-18, who wish to Volunteer serving Children at least 5 years younger than themselves. Youth Volunteers must always be accompanied by two unrelated Adults when serving with Children. Youth volunteers must complete the required training on this policy annually.

6. Training

All Church Employees, Nursery Staff, and Volunteers working with Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults will participate in initial training on this Policy. Additional follow-up training will be as recommended by the Pastoral and/or Program Staff and approved by the Session. This training may include online training options or such other training options as may be approved from time to time by the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adult Ministry and/or the Director of Christian Education.

In addition to completion of approved training, volunteers must (1) attest to having read this Policy and (2) agree to follow its terms. If a volunteer chooses to participate in an online course, a completion certificate must be submitted to the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adult Ministry or the Director of Christian Education prior to volunteering.

- i. Primary volunteers must complete the required training on this policy annually.
- ii. Secondary volunteers must complete the required training on this policy every three years.
- iii. Youth volunteers must complete the required training on this policy annually.

These are the Session approved training modules on this policy.

- a. In-person training at Highland Presbyterian Church (August each year and other times as designated by the Pastoral and/or Program staff).
- b. The online training module of this policy.
- c. The alternative online platform training module, **Darkness to Light/Stewards of Children** (www.d2l.org/stewardsofchildren/). When using this training alternative, the Volunteer must also read this policy and indicate that they fully understand the policy.
- d. NOTE: Youth Volunteers must complete both the training on this policy and complete the Youth Volunteer Application Form each year.
- e. All signed forms will be stored and maintained through the Office Manager. Private information (social security and driver's license numbers) will be blacked out after the completion of background checks in compliance with our insurance company.

7. Procedures

a. General Procedures

- i. Unobstructed Visibility All events involving Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults are to be conducted in such a manner that parents, guardians, other Volunteers, or church staff can visit and/or observe the activity at any time.
- ii. Two Unrelated Adult Rule There are to be (at least) two unrelated Adults present in all situations where Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults are gathering for programming, fellowship, and/or any other activity sponsored by Highland Presbyterian Church. If a Youth Volunteer is present, there must be two unrelated Adults present also. Only one of the Adult Volunteers can be related to the Youth Volunteer.

Our goal and expectation are to always have at least two unrelated Adults present with Children and/or Youth. However, if circumstances arise in which only one Adult or two related Adults are available for a group of Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults, the following steps are to be observed:

1. The Pastoral and/or Program Staff member(s) supervising the activity or event will be informed.
2. The classroom doors must remain open and all windows into the classroom are unobstructed.
3. The Pastoral and/or Program Staff member present supervising the activity will attempt to identify a second unrelated Adult to monitor the classroom by periodically walking by or stopping in the classroom.

Absent exigent circumstances, an Adult should seek to avoid placing themselves in situations where they are alone with one Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult out of sight from other Adults. However, we understand that circumstances may arise where this is not feasible (e.g., one adult goes to get help when an accident or injury occurs). In such instances, those adults involved should seek to limit the duration of such circumstances and comply as much as feasible under the circumstances with this Policy.

iii. Restrooms and Diapering

1. Children should be encouraged to use the restroom with a parent before and after class or other activities. Parents using the Nursery are encouraged to leave the infant or toddler in a clean diaper.
2. Adults overseeing the care of Children needing to go to the restroom are to be aware of their own visibility as well as the Child's privacy.
3. Diapering is to be done by the Paid Nursery Staff only unless the parent of the Child is present, in which case that parent is to change the diaper.
4. Diapering is to only be done in plain view of other Adults.
5. Only Adult Volunteers are to accompany Children to the restroom.
6. When accompanying a preschool-aged Child to the restroom, the best practice is to take two or more children to the restroom as a group. When accompanying preschool-aged Children, the door of the restroom is to remain open if the Child requires assistance. If the Child does not require assistance, the Volunteer is to wait outside of the bathroom stall.
7. Elementary school-age Children may go to the restroom on their own or choose a same-gender "buddy" to accompany them to the restroom.
8. If a Child or Youth is sick and/or requires assistance, the Volunteer is to call for help from a second Adult.
9. If off-site, all Children shall be accompanied to the restroom by an adult who shall wait outside the door or stall for the Child.
10. If off-site with Youth, they may use the restroom at any time. Adults should be informed anytime a Youth leaves the group to use the restroom.

iv. Empty Room Policy

1. After any activity involving Children, Youth, and/or, Vulnerable Adults the room(s) are to be checked to ensure that all participants have vacated the room(s).

v. Inclusivity of Transgender or Gender Non-conforming Children and/or Youth

1. As we seek to provide a safe and healthy environment for all Children and/or Youth at Highland Presbyterian Church, intentional steps are needed to address LGBTQ Children and/or Youth. Open communication between LGBTQ Children and/or Youth, their parents, and the Volunteers and Pastoral and/or Program staff working with Children and/or Youth is strongly encouraged before entering ministry with these age groups.

b. Transportation

The following rules apply when transportation of Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults is being provided by Pastoral and Program Staff members or Volunteers for any designated church activity.

- i. All drivers must be established as Primary Volunteers.

- ii. When transporting Children, the driver must be accompanied by at least one additional unrelated Adult.
- iii. When transporting Youth and/or Vulnerable Adults, the driver should be accompanied by at least one additional unrelated Adult. If there are not enough unrelated Adults present, no fewer than three people, of any combination of Adults, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adult, shall be together in a vehicle. For example two unrelated Adults + one or more Youth and/or Vulnerable Adult; a married couple plus one additional Adult + one or more Youth and/or Vulnerable Adult; one Adult + two or more Youth and/or Vulnerable Adult.
- iv. If a situation arises where it becomes necessary for one Adult to transport one Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult, the Pastoral and/or Program Staff Member supervising the activity shall contact the parent or guardian of the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult and inform them of the transportation situation. With the permission of the parent or guardian, as soon as the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult has been dropped off, the Pastoral and/or Program staff member supervising the event shall attempt to contact the parent or guardian to inform them that the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult is safely at the destination.

c. Overnight Activities

- i. The Pastoral and/or Program Staff member supervising an overnight, off-campus event or activity shall ensure that every participant provides a completed and signed permission slip (signed by a parent or guardian), including permission for emergency medical care and information and phone numbers to contact a parent/legal guardian in case of an emergency. These signed permission slips will be taken by the member of the Pastoral and/or Program Staff on the trip. If no Pastoral and/or Program Staff member is on the trip, they will be given to an Adult Volunteer on the trip so that they are available in case of emergency.
- ii. At least two unrelated Adults should accompany Children and/or Youth on trips, retreats, and other times that Children and/or Youth gather at or away from the church property. At least four Adults are preferable so that in the event of an emergency, there will be adequate supervision.
- iii. There shall be at least one Adult of each gender present at co-ed overnight events. At single-gender overnight events, at least one of the two or more Adults present shall be of the same gender as the Children/Youth.
- iv. Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults should have separate sleeping arrangements from Adults when possible. If shared space is necessary, a minimum of two unrelated adults must be in the sleeping area during sleeping times.
- v. Adults must have separate showers and changing times from Youth.

d. Gender Non-conforming Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults During Overnight Events

- i. At overnight events, participants typically sleep in lodging areas according to their gender. Gender non-conforming Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults

will be allowed to sleep in the room according to their gender identity, but there is not a “one-size-fits-all” housing policy for gender non-conforming Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults. Some gender non-conforming Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults may feel more comfortable housing with the gender that correlates with their gender expression, others with their biological sex. Thus, it is vitally important for the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults and/or the Director of Christian Education to openly communicate with the gender non-conforming Child, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adult (and ideally, their parents) before the overnight activity about their sleeping preference in order to facilitate inclusion and aid the Child and/or Youth in having a positive experience.

- ii. All participants will use the bathroom that corresponds with their expressed gender identity. Any Child, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adult who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided access to a single-user restroom. However, no participant shall be *required* to use such a restroom because they are gender non-conforming.
- iii. In the event that a Youth, Vulnerable Adult, and/or supervising adults attending an overnight activity identifies as gender non-conforming, conversation with all participating Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adult and their parents or guardian will discuss shared accommodations and arrangements.
- iv. All Primary and Secondary Volunteers at Highland Presbyterian Church will receive training for best practices regarding anti-bullying and the inclusion of LGBTQ participants. The goal is to provide an emotionally and physically safe environment for all.

e. Electronic Communications and Social Media

- i. This Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy applies to digital ministry, including social media accounts, texting, digital conferencing platforms (such as Zoom), and email, just as it does to in-person interactions. Therefore:
 - 1. Parental consent must be obtained in writing if there is to be electronic communication between a Child, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adult and a Staff member or Volunteer.
 - 2. Any online or texting groups must include at least two unrelated adults AND at least two unrelated children/youth.
 - 3. In social media posts (including but not limited to Facebook and Instagram) Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults should NOT be tagged or identified by name.
 - 4. Parental consent must be obtained in writing before images of Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults are posted on Highland Presbyterian Church's social media accounts.
 - 5. Parental consent must also be obtained if Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults will be identified in live-streamed worship services or other live-streamed events, such as (but not limited to) baptisms and Youth Sunday.

6. Pastoral and/or Program Staff should monitor text and social media groups for inappropriate content. Inappropriate content will be removed and individuals who author such content may be removed from groups at the discretion of the group administrator.
7. If using a device while in the presence of Children, Youth, and/or, adults should be aware of the content on the device, making sure that Children and/or Youth in proximity are not exposed to inappropriate images, language, or other inappropriate content.
8. Pictures of Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults taken during church-sponsored events should NOT be posted on personal social media accounts as the photo consent form grants consent for Highland Presbyterian Church's social media accounts ONLY.
9. Adults, whether Pastoral and/or Program Staff, or Volunteers, who learn of anything through social media/texting that may indicate a Child, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited must report that information immediately to the appropriate staff, such as the Director of Christian Education or Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults and/or the Pastor.
10. To report Child pornography, obscenity, or to report a cybercrime go to: www.cybertipline.com

8. Code of Conduct

- a. Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back/high fives), or physical caretaking (changing diapers, etc.) are appropriate in our community of faith. However, those physical expressions of affection should not be excessive or forced and adults should ALWAYS respect a Child, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults' right to reject physical touch that makes them feel uncomfortable and shall not disregard a Child, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults' right to say no.
- b. Neither Pastoral and/or Program Staff nor Volunteers may use physical discipline (such as spanking) or withhold necessities (such as food) as a means of discipline. Physical restraint may only be used by trained adults when necessary to protect a Child, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adult and/or others.
- c. Consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or being impaired by legally prescribed drugs while Volunteering with Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults is prohibited.
- d. Possessing or using concealed weapons or firearms while Volunteering with Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults is prohibited.
- e. Smoking, vaping, or use of tobacco products is prohibited while on the campus of Highland and anytime Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults are present.
- f. Buying, possessing, and use of fireworks or other explosives are prohibited while participating in any Highland events or activities.
- g. Profanity, inappropriate jokes and/or media, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and/or any kind of harassment are prohibited.
- h. Pastoral and/or Program Staff and Volunteers are not to release Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults to any unauthorized person including but not limited to grandparents,

older siblings, and/or other church members unless prior permission has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian.

- i. All individuals, be they Pastoral and/or Program Staff or volunteers, are to wear the appropriate dress when volunteering with Children and/or Youth. Clothes should not display inappropriate pictures or language (such as profanity or racial slurs).
- j. When working with Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults, Pastoral and/or Program Staff and Volunteers are to avoid/limit using devices (laptops, cell phones, etc.) that distract from interactions with those being served.

9. **Mandatory Reporting of Evidence of Abuse or Neglect**

- a. The policies and procedures created for this protocol are important for the protection of Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults and must be followed. We can all help each other to make sure Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults enjoy the safest environment possible.
- b. We must also understand that there are legal obligations to notify civil authorities (i.e. law enforcement and/or the Forsyth County Department of Social Services) of evidence of abuse or neglect, whether those harms arose from within or from outside the church.
- c. North Carolina law requires an individual to report suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult to the Department of Social Services. Any person who knowingly or wantonly fails to make a report or who knowingly or wantonly interferes with another person from making such a report is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- d. An individual shall report verbal, emotional, or spiritual abuse to a Pastoral or Program Staff member.
- e. If a member of the Pastoral Staff has cause to suspect that a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult is being abused or neglected, they shall follow the requirements of this policy, the Book of Order, and N.C. law. If a Church Employee, Nursery Staff, or Volunteer has cause to suspect that a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult is being abused or neglected on church grounds by anyone, they **MUST** report this to the Forsyth County Department of Social Services. This report to DSS is required by North Carolina law (Appendix 1) and must take priority over the report to the staff of the church.
- f. The individual who observes or first receives information about the incident is to personally secure the safety of the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult. The Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult should not be left alone while the report is being made.
- g. As soon as the report has been made to DSS the observing individual, Nursery Staff, or Volunteer is to report the incident to the supervising member of the Pastoral and/or Program Staff **AND** the Pastor.
- h. Church Employees, Nursery Staff, or Volunteers observing suspected abuse or neglect of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult are strongly encouraged to contact DSS first, prior to making a report to Pastoral or Program Staff. Individuals who would not otherwise report to DSS may notify Pastoral or Program Staff prior to reporting to DSS.
- i. No one, including Pastoral, Program, Nursery Staff, Church Employees, or Volunteers shall interfere with the legal obligation of the observing individual to report to DSS or attempt to alter the report in any way materially. The individual shall not allow anyone, including Pastoral, Program, Nursery Staff, Church Employees, or other Volunteers, to materially alter the report in any way.

- j. After DSS and the Pastoral and/or Program Staff have been notified of the incident, the person observing the suspected abuse or neglect must complete the Incident Report Form found at the end of this policy. (Attachment 2)

The Hotline number for the
Forsyth County Department of Social Services is **336-703-3800**.
(Note: 911 can also be called to reach DSS)

- k. Once a report is made to DSS, to a supervising Pastoral and/or Program Staff, and the Pastor, two members of the Pastoral and/or Program Staff **MUST** confirm that the person observing the suspected abuse or neglect has contacted DSS and reported the incident. If not, they must either collect the information and report to DSS or direct the observing member of Program Staff or Volunteer to contact DSS.

10. Responding to Policy Violations

For purposes of responding to allegations of abuse and neglect of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult, this policy incorporates by reference the procedures set forth in Highland Presbyterian Church Sexual Misconduct Policy (2018), substituting the word "neglect" or "child abuse" where appropriate.

Highland Presbyterian Church
Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
Volunteer Application and Background Check Consent Form

Thank you for volunteering for activities and events at Highland! It is only through our dedicated volunteers and staff that many of the activities involving Youth and Children are possible. To help protect the safety of all involved, please complete and sign the following form:

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Email _____

Driver's license number: _____ State _____

Social Security Number: _____ (required for background check)

Date of birth _____

Occupation _____ Employer _____

Are you a member of Highland Presbyterian Church? _____ If so, year joined _____

If not, or if you have been a member for less than six months, please list previous church membership:

Church name _____ City _____ State _____

Pastor's name: _____ How long were you a member there? _____

As a volunteer in Children and/or Youth ministries at Highland Presbyterian Church (HPC); or as a staff person who works with Children and/or Youth, I affirm my commitment to support HPC as a welcoming environment for Children and Youth. I recognize that HPC has adopted the above 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 initials that:

_____ I have never been the subject of any investigation, complaint, civil claim, or legal or church-related action involving a reported instance of sexual, emotional, or physical 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, emotional, or physical abuse.

_____ I have never been convicted of a criminal offense involving the possession, use, manufacture, or sale of drugs, or involving a sexually related crime.

_____ I have never been convicted of a criminal offense (other than minor traffic citations)

_____ I have never been denied an opportunity to supervise Children and/or Youth activities for any reason.

_____ I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Highland Presbyterian Church Child and Youth Protection Policy and have received a copy for my personal reference. I will refrain from any inappropriate conduct in the performance of my service on behalf of Highland Presbyterian Church. I understand that any violation of this Policy or misrepresentation of information that I have provided may result in termination of volunteer or employment opportunities with Children or Youth.

_____ I have participated in the required training for Highland Presbyterian Church's Child and Youth Protection Policy. (Date of completion _____)

Background Check Authorization

_____ I authorize a background check to verify the information I have provided. I understand that a record of information obtained will be kept in a confidential file by the church.

_____ I sign this release as my own free act in exchange for the opportunity to serve as a Highland Presbyterian Church volunteer or staff member. This authorization shall be valid in original, faxed, electronic, or copied form.

If you cannot make one or more of the above certifications, please provide a separate written description (in a form acceptable to the church) of any such investigation, complaint, conviction, or other legal action.

Signature

Date

**Highland Presbyterian Church
Incident Report Form for Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

(Please print all information.)

Date of incident: _____

Time of incident: _____

Name of child/youth involved: _____

(A separate form should be completed for each child involved in order to keep the information confidential.)

Address of child/youth: _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Phone Number of Parent/Guardian: _____

Location of incident: _____

Name of person(s) who witnesses incident:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Please describe in detail the incident: (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

Additional relevant information:

Name of person completing this form (Print)

Signature of person completing the form

Date

This form should be returned to the Director of Christian Education or Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults as soon as possible after the incident. Then it should be filed with the Office Manager.

Date of completion of investigation _____

HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Confirmation of Report to Forsyth County Department of Social Services Form
(Please print or type all information.)

(All persons initially completing or supplementing this report should list their name and the date immediately following the information they record on this report.)

FORSYTH COUNTY DSS REPORTING LINE 336-703-2287

Date of Report: _____

Person(s) making the report: _____

Name of DSS employee receiving the report: _____

Date of incident: _____ Time of incident: _____

Name of child/youth involved: _____

(A separate form should be completed for each child involved to keep the information confidential.)

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Address of parent/guardian: _____

Phone Number of parent/guardian: _____

Location of incident: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the incident:

Name (Print): _____

Phone: _____

Name (Print): _____

Phone: _____

Name (Print): _____

Phone: _____

For all information requested below, attach additional pages as necessary.

Describe in detail the report given to DSS:

Describe the response of DSS to the initial report, i.e. action to be taken:

Describe any additional information received from witnesses or other sources after the initial report to DSS. This information should be conveyed promptly to DSS.

Describe all additional contacts with DSS, including the name of the person making contact, the person contacted, the date and any information received or provided.

Describe all contacts with the parent(s) or guardian of the child, including the name of the person making the contact, the date of contact, the information provided, and any pertinent responses by the parent/guardian.

Signature of Clerk of Session

Date

**Highland Presbyterian Church
Child and Youth Protection Policy
Youth Volunteer Covenant For 6th - 12th Grade Youth**

I understand that, in my serving role, I am representing Highland Presbyterian Church. I agree to conduct myself in a manner reflecting the mission of our church. I understand that as a Youth Volunteer, I am a vital part of a ministry team and that therefore, the Adult leaders must be able to count on me. I understand the importance of contacting the Pastoral and/or Program Staff or Volunteer coordinator who recruited me if I will not be able to serve. I understand that leaders need to know at least two days prior to my serving time that I will be absent unless my absence is due to illness or an unexpected event; then I will make this contact as soon as possible. I understand that as I serve, I am expected to treat others as I would wish to be treated myself. This includes leaders, parents, Children, and other Youth volunteers. When new or difficult circumstances arise, I will ask myself, "How would I want to be treated in this situation?" I understand that the Adults present are there to assist me if I need help in discerning the appropriate way to proceed. I am committed to seeking their assistance. I understand that if at any time my conduct becomes less than what is expected of me, I may be given a verbal warning with instructions on how to conduct myself, a written warning, parental notification, and/or, if necessary, dismissal from the activity. I have read and understand Highland's Child and Youth Protection Policy. I understand the expectations listed above and am committed to doing my best to fulfill all of these expectations.

Volunteer Signature

Print Name

Today's Date

Birth Date

Cell Phone Number

Email

I understand the commitment detailed above, which Highland Presbyterian Church expects of my son/daughter. I accept the responsibility of helping to keep him/her accountable in fulfilling these expectations.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**Highland Presbyterian Church
Volunteer Covenant Statement**

(To be signed by Adults and/or Youth volunteering with Children and/or Youth.)

The congregation of Highland Presbyterian Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all Children, Youth, and Adults who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a sanctuary for all who would enter and as a place in which people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

In keeping with the covenant of baptism, we have committed ourselves and our resources to the nurturing of our Children and Youth. We understand that Children and Youth cannot grow in faith and in wisdom when they are frightened, distrustful, or anxious. They cannot learn to love and trust God when those who represent God to them are unloving and untrustworthy. We promise our Children and Youth that we will provide the structure, education, and policies that will keep them safe from harm and abuse. In that context, we will screen Volunteers, train them, and ask that they abide by the policies of our church. We will make sure that Volunteers working with our Children and/or Youth will have been members of or associated with this church for at least six months.

As a volunteer working with Children and/or Youth in this congregation, I agree to read, observe and abide by the Highland Presbyterian Child and Youth Protection Policy regarding working in ministries with Children and/or Youth. I understand that failure to abide by the Policy may result in my not being able to participate in Children and/or Youth ministries. I further understand that Highland Presbyterian Church may conduct a thorough investigation into my background using all available methods of investigation, including a criminal background check and a check of any available offender registries. I understand that these investigative procedures are not directed at me personally but are procedures designed to protect our Children and Youth and the Volunteers who work with them.

Name of Volunteer (Print) _____

Signature of Volunteer _____ **Date** _____

**Highland Presbyterian Church
Safe Driver Form**

In the interest of safety for the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of Highland Presbyterian Church, our Pastoral and Program staff and Volunteers abide by the following principles regarding transporting minors.

Drivers are to follow the Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy when transporting Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults.

Drivers are to transport children and youth using the utmost care and safety.

Drivers are to follow all city and state laws regarding driving and transportation safety.

Drivers are to provide a copy of a valid driver's license and proof of auto insurance.

Drivers are to sign this Safe Driver Form.

I hereby certify that I do not have any outstanding charges of DUI or DWI, nor have I been convicted of any such charges over the last 10 years.

I hereby certify that I am presently not under the influence of alcohol, recreational drugs, or prescription drugs that could impair my ability to drive a vehicle.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

**Volunteer Driver Qualification Form and Agreement
for Use of Personally Owned Vehicles**

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____ Years of Driving Experience: _____

Driver's License Number and State: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Insurance Carrier: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Liability Policy Limit - Bodily Injury: _____ Property Damage: _____

Or Combined Single Limit: _____

1. Are all licensed vehicles you own covered by insurance as required by law? Yes No
2. Have you ever been denied a driver's license or had one suspended or revoked? Yes No
3. Have you had any moving traffic violations or accidents in the past three years? Yes No
If the answer to questions 2 or 3 is YES, please explain. Give dates and details of violations and accidents on the back of this form.

I AGREE to the following as a condition of being permitted to act as a Volunteer Driver:

1. The vehicle owner's insurance is the primary liability insurance coverage in the event of an accident.
2. The owner of the vehicle which I am driving is responsible for keeping the vehicle in safe working order.
3. The owner of the vehicle which is responsible for all damage to the owned vehicle however caused.
4. The owner of the vehicle shall maintain liability insurance in the amount of at least: Bodily Injury- \$50,000 per person and \$100,000 per accident or \$200,000 combined single limit Property Damage- \$25,000 per accident
5. The church's insurance shall apply in excess of the vehicle owner's liability insurance limits in the event the primary limits are exhausted, and only to the extent the church is legally obligated to pay damages.
6. I will not receive or initiate phone calls while operating a vehicle for church activities, including receiving or initiating text messages.
7. I will indemnify and hold the church harmless from liabilities and damage resulting from my operation of a motor vehicle not owned by the church. The church will indemnify and hold harmless the volunteer driver for liabilities and damages resulting from acts or negligence of the church.

I hereby AFFIRM that the information I have given is stated truthfully and that I shall abide by the terms of the church's Vehicle Use Policy. Attach a copy of your Driver's License and current Insurance ID Card.

Driver's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPROVED: _____ Date: _____ Expiration: _____

**Highland Presbyterian Church
Parental/Guardian Consent Form for Photo/Video Use**

I hereby give Highland Presbyterian Church (henceforth known and “the church”) permission to publish in print, electronic, or video format the likeness or image of my child or audio recordings of my child. I release all claims against the church with respect to copyright ownership and publication including any claim for compensation related to the use of the materials. Images, video, and audio recordings of my child taken or recorded after the date below by the church can be used in print, broadcasting, and other forms of advertising; brochures, newsletters, and other church publications; on the church website, in audiovisual presentations; and in other activities to promote the church and inform the public about the church. These photos, videos or other images or recordings may be used by the church without payment or fees, royalties, or other remuneration.

Minor’s Name

Your Name (Parent or Guardian, Please Print)

Your Signature

Date

*(*Note: this form is valid for one year from the date signed.)*

General Guidelines:

It is recommended that a release be obtained when photographing or videoing a minor (under 18). A parent or guardian’s signatures are required; signatures of minors are not sufficient. When images are published, the church will take cautionary steps to provide minimum identifying information and will not use specific names, street or mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, or phone numbers.

HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Agreement for Non-Affiliated Groups Utilizing Church
Facilities

As a supervising member/leader of _____ (name of group), I am responsible for the activities of the members of _____ (name of group) while using the facilities of Highland Presbyterian Church. I have received and read a copy of Highland's Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. I agree to abide by the guidelines and procedures outlined in the Policy and to share this policy with participants of this group. I also understand that Highland Presbyterian Church will not perform background checks, personal, and/or professional reference checks, or provide training to the leaders/supervisors of _____ (name of group.)

I further understand that failure to abide by the Policy may result in the termination of _____ (name of group) use of Highland Presbyterian Church's facilities on a temporary or permanent basis.

Leader/Supervisor (Print)

Signature of Leader/Supervisor

Date
