

# Presbytery of the James

## Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

Approved by POJ February 21, 2026

It is the policy of the Presbytery of the James that all employees, ministers, educators, non-member employees and/or contractors, and volunteers of congregations, councils, and entities of the church are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy applies to all Presbytery of the James sponsored activities and/or affiliated activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

### DEFINITIONS

The following is a comprehensive list of definitions of terms and their intended use in this policy. For purposes of this policy:

**Child:** A child is a person between the ages of 0–11.

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

**Minor:** A minor is any child or youth.

**Child/youth/vulnerable adult/Vulnerable Adult Worker:** Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at Presbytery sponsored events or activities involving children, youth and/or vulnerable adults.

**Vulnerable Adult:** Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

**Vulnerable Adult Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

**Child/youth/vulnerable adult Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a child or youth.

**Sexual Abuse:** As defined in the Book of Order, D-7.0901, Sexual abuse is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position. Sexual abuse is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is therefore always an offense for the purpose of discipline.

**Misuse of technology:** The use of technology that results in the harassing or abuse of a child/youth/vulnerable adult. This includes using technology to send or share suggestive messages and images to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Please see POJ Social Media Policy Appendix 1

## **Healthy Boundaries Training:**

Healthy Boundaries training is mandatory in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The workshops or training equip all clergy, presbytery leaders and presbytery volunteers to recognize healthy boundaries in ministry relationships. Leaders must understand the role of power and vulnerability to create and maintain healthy boundaries and choose healthy self-care strategies. In compliance with BoO G-3.0106, the Presbytery of the James adopted this policy to address the requirement for boundary training for all its members. This policy outlines the mechanisms for training and accountability with respect to boundary violations.

## **Mandated Reporters**

In the state of VA, Mandated reporters are mentioned as belonging to 20 different categories. Two of them apply directly to the Presbytery of the James. They are:

1. Any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children.
2. Any minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or duly accredited practitioner of any religious organization or denomination usually referred to as a church, unless the information supporting the suspicion of child abuse or neglect is required by the doctrine of the religious organization or denomination to be kept in a confidential manner or would be if offered as evidence in court.

These two categories cover all the leaders, advisors, staff, and volunteers that may be engaged in a Presbytery of the James event making them all mandated reporters who could be charged with a misdemeanor and a \$500 fine should they not report suspected abuse.

## **On-call Attorney:**

An attorney designated by the Trustees to answer or handle emergency legal questions.

## **SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**

The following is required for every child/youth/vulnerable adult/vulnerable adult worker, whether a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer:

1. The POJ Stated Clerk must receive, via email or mail, completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the policy has been read. The application should include a minimum of two references.
2. All child/youth/vulnerable adult workers must be at least eighteen years old and four years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.
3. The applicant must consent to a criminal background check prior to the event and be compliant with the presbytery's insurance company and if needed, paid for by the event committee. These checks may be copies of checks run by their congregations

or work place and should be within three years for standard background checks and within five years for fingerprint background checks.

4. All child/youth/vulnerable adult workers, paid, contracted, or volunteer, must read and sign this Protection Policy prior to the POJ event. These signed documents will be scanned and kept on file at the presbytery office.
5. No person may serve as a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker who has a conviction on his/her/their/their record of certain felonies or misdemeanors, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
  - Criminal homicide;
  - Aggravated assault;
  - Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
  - Sexual abuse;
  - Sexual assault;
  - Injury to a youth;
  - Incest;
  - Indecency with a youth;
  - Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a youth;
  - Possession or promotion of child pornography;
  - The sale, distribution, or display of pornographic materials to a minor;
  - Abandonment or endangerment of a youth;
  - Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
  - Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a youth;
  - Any crime that involves sexual misconduct or sexual abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a minor;
  - Any crime that involves misuse of technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
  - Any crime that involves the use of force, such as assault or endangerment;
  - Any crime that involves abduction or kidnapping;
  - Any crime that involves drinking and driving, such as driving while intoxicated within the last 10 years.

In addition, if the presbytery or a local congregation is or becomes aware that a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker has a conviction or pending charge for one of the aforementioned crimes or any related crime, the child/youth/vulnerable adult worker shall automatically be ineligible to attend/participate in a child/youth/vulnerable adult event in any capacity.

6. Whenever the presbytery organizes an event for minors that invites minors from local congregations who will be supervised by child/youth/vulnerable adult workers, the sponsoring entity of the presbytery shall:
  - a. Provide guidance to the congregations that are sending child/youth/vulnerable adult workers about best practices for securing child/youth/vulnerable adult workers and eligibility requirements.
  - b. Provide guidance to the congregations that are sending child/youth/vulnerable adult workers concerning the requirement that the

congregation perform and pay for background checks for potential child/youth/vulnerable adult workers and how to evaluate the background check for offenses that would disqualify a person from being a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker with minors.

- c. Provide guidance to congregations on when to perform the background checks and with what background check provider.
- d. The Stated Clerk will be the designated recipient of copies of these background checks and be trained to:
  - i. To review every background check received.
  - ii. To identify criminal convictions on background checks that should disqualify a person from being a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker;
  - iii. To notify the event sponsor if the Stated Clerk believes the council/committee has erred in selecting a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker whose background check indicates that the person should not act as a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker;
  - iv. Report to the sponsor of the event of each potentially disqualifying background check and any other related concerns so that a decision can be made to inform the council/committee that the person whose background check is in question is not eligible to attend the event as a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

The presbytery shall maintain all child/youth/vulnerable adult worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

## **REPORTING**

The sponsoring entity of the presbytery will publicize the procedure for reporting any prohibited actions and have copies available at all times in a public place at the event. Anyone suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of abuse may report such violation to any leader of the presbytery sponsored event. Any child, youth, or vulnerable adult who suspects or has knowledge of any type of abuse is invited to share the knowledge with any adult leader of the presbytery sponsored event. Anyone who has knowledge of or suspicion of child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse should be made aware that state law requires the immediate reporting of such abuse to the civil authorities. Any adult leader should report such violation to the Stated Clerk. All leaders, advisors, staff, and volunteers that may be engaged in a Presbytery of the James event are mandated reporters

## **REPORTING PROCESS**

1. Make sure the alleged victim is in a safe place with two unrelated adults to supervise.
2. Report possible criminal activity to civil authorities. It is now a police matter and all investigations will be their responsibility.
3. Report to the event leader that an incident has been reported. The event leader will immediately notify the parents/guardians of the alleged victim.
4. Remove individual accused from contact with other event participants.
5. Fill out the Presbytery of the James incident reports.
6. Report to the Stated Clerk and or Lead Presbyter and give them the filled-out Incident Reports.

## **MANDATORY EVENT RULES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

The sponsoring entity of the presbytery shall ensure that the following measures are in place and that the following actions are taken for each event or activity involving children and youth:

1. Two-adult rule: Two non-related adults must always be present in groups of children and youth. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible. All child and youth workers and volunteers must be a minimum of 18 years of age and four years older than the age group they lead or supervise.
2. Ratios: The adult-to-child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10. The adult-to-youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17. There shall also be one adult of each gender when there are one or more minors of each gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios or gender diversity be compromised.
3. View Windows and Open Doors: When minors and adult workers or volunteers are in a room, if the door is closed, the door must have a view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door must remain open at all times.
4. Adult workers/caregivers should respect the privacy of the children to whom they provide care. (See POJ Social Media Policy Appendix 1)
5. Age-appropriate training to children and youth should be provided regarding behavior that should be reported to the caregiver or leader of the event.
6. Transportation: All adult drivers at child/youth/vulnerable adult events must have proper license and insurance on file with the organizing council. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. No minor under eighty-five pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers transporting minors and vulnerable adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs. If a charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks on their drivers. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 2 in this section. If in a caravan, this rule may be amended to have only 1 adult in each vehicle; however, whenever one vehicle stops, all vehicles stop. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).
7. Forms: The legal guardians of each minor must provide the appropriate information and medical forms for each activity/event. The information form should include all contacts for legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the minor's health insurance card. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for any off

campus events. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing council must be released by a signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian as well as the minor. All such forms must be stored at the event site, in a secure place with restricted access. (Appendix 2)

8. Each event/activity must ensure that rules are gone over with all participants at each event/activity. These rules shall include but are not limited to a code of conduct (Appendix 3) specific to the event/activity, as well as a list prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity. The code of conduct and prohibited and expected behaviors list should be given in written form to each participant and legal guardians, as well as discussed thoroughly at the beginning of the event/activity.
9. All volunteers and employees at any presbytery entity sponsored events must also abide by a code of conduct (Appendix 4) that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors. Some of these prohibited behaviors include but are not restricted to:
  - a. Display of sexual affection toward a child.
  - b. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
  - c. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involving children in personal problems or issues.
  - d. Dating or becoming "romantically" involved with children (under the age of eighteen).
  - e. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
  - f. Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
  - g. Having secrets with youth/children.
  - h. Staring at or commenting on children's bodies.
  - i. Engaging in prohibited electronic communication with children.
  - j. Working one-on-one with children in a private setting.
  - k. Abusing youth/children in anyway, 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.
    - Permit children or youth to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA – ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

General Social Media Policy - No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the presbytery and its entities shall create or use a media site (Web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the Presbytery of the James without the explicit written permission of the sponsoring council, presbytery, or event leadership.

## **Social Media Communications**

Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of Presbytery of the James entity programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with children and youth. Persons having social media privileges on behalf of the Presbytery entity shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from children or youth underage as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by underage children is a violation of the code of conduct.

If a child or youth reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

When using social media to communicate with children or youth, the authorized administrator shall inform parents/guardians of each child or youth that the latter is communicating with the person via social media, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

## **Social Networking Code of Conduct**

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children or youth.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide children, youth, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children’s and youth interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children and youth how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized administrator shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children or youth and parents/guardians.

## **SIGNING OF POLICY AND APPLICATION TO SERVE**

Each adult engaged in the leadership of a Presbytery of the James entity event shall acknowledge receipt of the Presbytery of the James Child/youth/vulnerable adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures by signing an application to be employed, volunteer, or supervise. (Appendix 5) In addition, each person engaged in the leadership of a Presbytery of the James entity event shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this policy.

## **PCUSA CHILD, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION**

The Presbytery of the James will follow, to the extent possible, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/youth/vulnerable adult/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures (Revisions Approved by the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation May 20, 2021)

### **POLICY RATIONALE**

The implementation and documentation of a Child/youth/vulnerable adult/Vulnerable Protection Policy strives to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.
- Any type of abuse involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ’s healing and hope for community and individuals, not an entity that brings harm and hurt.
- The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and his or her family when abuse and neglect occurs. The Church is unable to do the full work of Christ, due to the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm that can be perpetrated that woefully hinders God’s call on the Church.
- The Book of Order states, “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life,” and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church’s care, including children, youth, and vulnerable adults (Book of Order W-2.3013).
- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So also the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ’s love, in the same way taking up all children, youth, and vulnerable adults into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environment in which to grow in every way.

**Presbytery of the James Background Check Requests**

Please mail to 3218 Chamberlayne Ave., Richmond, VA 23227

OR email to statedclerk@presbyteryofthejames.org

Questions – call 804-262-2074

Background Screening Consent and Information Form Applicant must complete all information and sign and date form. Only those over 18 years old may submit a request – legal restrictions for minors stops all requests below this age.

Full Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Background check requested for (select all that apply):

Pulpit Supply (in person)          Local Church (staff or volunteer)          Conference Activity

Other names used including maiden names: \_\_\_\_\_

Social security number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: Street \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Include any other addresses for the past 10 years and how long at each address:

Former address \_\_\_\_\_

Former address \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all states of residence since turning age 18:

\_\_\_\_\_

Reference: (Someone who knows you and has observed you working with young people.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am a member of the following church:

\_\_\_\_\_

I have been a member of this church since: \_\_\_\_\_

I have never been convicted of nor pled guilty or no contest to a crime. (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated, misdemeanor convictions for which probation was completed and the case was dismissed and minor traffic offenses)

True    Not True

If not true, on a separate sheet, please briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the date and place of conviction and the legal disposition of the case.

I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials or service in a volunteer position nor had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated or reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct. True Not True

If not true, on a separate sheet, give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination; name, address, phone number of employer or volunteer supervisor; nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)

I have a valid drivers' license. True Not True

With respect to my driving record, I have not had my license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance. True Not True

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?

Yes No

If yes, please provide a brief explanation:

The covenants between persons seeking employment or authorized volunteer positions in the Presbytery of the James require honesty, integrity and truthfulness for the health of the presbytery. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate. Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees and volunteers and the organization they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize the Presbytery of the James and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding my character and qualifications, including all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background, character and qualifications. To encourage such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses, comments and statements.

The Presbytery of the James employment and authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the sharing of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise both the position I am seeking to fill and program I am seeking to participate in. To that end, I authorize the POJ and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these purposes. I understand that the Presbytery of the James will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of the Presbytery of the James Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy. I understand my signature below is legally binding and will be kept on file. I grant permission to the Presbytery of the James staff to complete a Sex Offender Registry check, basic criminal background check, contact a designated reference and interview me so I may serve in the role for which I have applied.

I authorize (THE PRINCIPAL) and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, credit history, adult criminal or police records, and motor vehicle records including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information which may be material to my qualifications for service now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my service with them.

I release the Presbytery of the James and THE PRINCIPAL and its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESBYTERY OF THE JAMES INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Date and time of incident:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reporter:

\_\_\_\_\_

Primary phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Work # \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of persons involved incident:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident (including City, State and Country):

\_\_\_\_\_

Quote the first words verbatim of the child, youth or vulnerable adult making the accusation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the behavior and appearance of the person making the accusation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the behavior and appearance of anyone else making the accusation or involved in the incident:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe what exactly happened as reported to you:

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Were there any witnesses? Yes: No:

1<sup>st</sup> Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>rd</sup> Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

4<sup>th</sup> Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

What actions did you take?

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Has the incident been resolved? \_\_\_\_\_

How so? \_\_\_\_\_

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Person(s) this report was given to:

1<sup>st</sup> Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>rd</sup> Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person submitting report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: --- \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA—ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **General Social Media Policy**

No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the General Assembly and its Entities shall create or use a media site (Web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the Presbytery of the James without the explicit written permission of the Presbytery of the James (POJ), or event leadership. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the Presbytery of the James, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official Presbytery of the James Entity sites/channels when they have been made available by the Entity of the POJ. These may include Web pages, Facebook, e-mail, and similar means.

#### **Social Media Communications**

Persons who create public pages on behalf of POJ programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of the POJ Entity shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from Minors and Vulnerable Adults as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by Minors and Vulnerable Adults is a violation of the code of conduct.

If a Minors and Vulnerable Adults reveal abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

When using Facebook to communicate with Minors and Vulnerable Adults, the authorized minister shall inform parents/guardians of each Minor and Vulnerable Adult that the latter is communicating with the person via Facebook, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

#### **Social Networking Code of Conduct**

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide Minors and Vulnerable Adults, and their parents and guardians with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.

- Encourage parents and guardians to play a role in monitoring their minor's and Vulnerable Adult's interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind Minors and Vulnerable Adults how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.
- At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to Minors and Vulnerable Adults and parents/guardians.

## **Misuse of Technology**

No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the POJ and its Entities shall misuse technology in the following ways:

- Using technology to send suggestive messages and/or images to a Minor or Vulnerable Adult.
- Having contacts by Misuse of Technology to contact a Minor or Vulnerable Adult that is not pre-approved by the Minor's or Vulnerable Adult's legal guardian with a signed waiver, unless the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church or Entity website or church or Entity social media program.
- To view pornography or sites (ex. dating websites) which include pornography or naked bodies on the premises of a POJ Entity event, activity or meeting, no matter where it is held or by which Entity it is organized.

## **Virtual Meeting Code of Conduct**

Child/Youth workers, ministers, employees, contractors, or volunteers ("Adults") of the POJ or its Entities must follow any virtual meeting policies or protocols of the POJ and these protocols when planning and conducting a virtual meeting on virtual meeting platforms (ex. Zoom, Skype) with one or more Minors:

- Adults should seek permission of the parent or guardian who has legal custody of a minor before inviting the Minor to participate in a virtual meeting. Such permission can be sought in any hard copy or electronic registration forms but must be a separate and clear section seeking permission of the parent or guardian. The option to observe the virtual meeting (without visual or verbal participation) should be made available upon request to parent or guardian. The permission section of the registration form shall provide the parent or guardian with information (name, contact information, including telephone/text) on how to report concerns, issues or to make reports of inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse by an Adult or any participant that occurs before, during or after a virtual meeting.
- Adults and meeting organizers should advise a parent or guardian who has legal custody of a Minor of the following so that the parent or guardian is aware of it when giving permission for the Minor to participate in the meeting: (1) that a meeting will be recorded; and (2) that images, video or audio may be used from the recording in media reports or on POJ or other websites.

- No Adult is permitted to meet one-on-one or one Adult with a group of Minors either in a virtual meeting space or a breakout room. There must be at least two (2) Adults in any virtual meetings or breakout room or other virtual meeting space.
- All Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings shall dress appropriately for the meeting. No meeting participants shall wear inappropriate (that is, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic - “Inappropriate”) clothing or clothing that displays Inappropriate or offensive (that is, sexually demeaning or suggestive, pornographic, voyeuristic, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, intimidating, threatening, profane or abusive – “Offensive”) messages.
- No Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings are permitted to make displays of Inappropriate or Offensive messages by putting a sign or note in front of the camera in some form or fashion.
- Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings should be considerate and not carry the phone or device they are using to participate in the meeting into private areas of their meeting space, such as bathrooms, with any camera or microphone on and the meeting is in progress.
- No Adults or Minors are permitted to use the chat function, the name section, or any other feature of a virtual platform for Inappropriate or Offensive purposes during a virtual meeting, including, but not limited to:
  - Displaying Inappropriate photographs or images, such as pornography or photographs of anyone who is naked or inappropriately attired.
  - Displaying Offensive or Inappropriate messages.
  - Providing links to Offensive and Inappropriate websites or platforms.
  - Bullying, discriminating against or harassing anyone based upon their race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, or religious affiliation.
- No Adult is permitted to use the private chat function of a virtual meeting platform to communicate privately with one or more Minors except when the privacy or dignity of the Minor requires it. If a private chat is necessary, it must be recorded and must copy another Adult. Otherwise, all chat communications must be done openly so that all participants, including the other Adults, parents or guardians in the virtual meeting can see the chat communications. This should be announced at the start of every virtual meeting. (Exceptions: if the Adult is designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse).
- If a Minor attempts to contact an Adult using the private chat function, the Adult should not respond. If an Adult attempts to contact a Minor using the private chat function, the Minor should not respond. (Exception: unless the Minor is contacting the Adult designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse or that Adult is contacting a Minor who made a report.)
- No Adult is permitted to use other means of communication (such as texting or email) to communicate privately with one or more Minors before, during or after a virtual meeting. No Minor is permitted to use other means of communication (such as texting or email) to communicate privately with one or more Adults before, during

or after a virtual meeting. (Exception: if the Minor made a report to the Adult and the Adult is designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse).

- Adults and meeting organizers shall provide Minors with information (name, contact information, including telephone/text) on how to report concerns, issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse by an Adult or any participant that occurs before, during or after a virtual meeting. Adults and meeting organizers are responsible to make mandatory reports of sexual misconduct or abuse as required by the Book of Order (G-4.0302) and under local, state, and federal law.

## Appendix 2

### Event Release Form

#### Presbytery of the James

From time to time, photographs, videos, direct quotes, and/or audio clips may be taken of youth and adults attending Presbytery of the James events or participating in Presbytery-sponsored programs and activities. The Presbytery of the James requests the right to use all such photos, videos, print material and/or audio clips taken from youth and adults involved in these programs and activities. They may be used for a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, publications, promotional brochures, promotions or showcase of programs on our web sites, showcase of activities in local and/or national newspapers or programming, and other similar lawful purposes.

By signing this form, I consent and give permission to allow the Presbytery of the James the unlimited right to use photos, videos, direct quotes, and/or audio clips that they have of me participating in Presbytery programs or events. I agree to give up my rights with regards to Presbytery of the James photos, videos, direct quotes, and/or audio clips of me. Further, by signing this consent and release form, I acknowledge that I understand and agree to the above request and conditions. I sign this form freely and without inducement.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Name of participant \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Address of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number and emergency contact numbers:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please give any medical/physical information which might limit or prevent the participant's full involvement in these events and/or would help us to work more effectively with your youth:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY STATEMENTS:**

Prescriptions: Is this participant taking any prescribed medication? Yes No

If so, what and what is it for? Please be specific in drug name and dosages.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of these events that all prescribed medications must be kept and dispensed by the adult leaders of the event.

I agree to have the adult leaders keep and dispense my child's medication while at these events.

Emergency treatment: If there should be an emergency which requires medical attention and I am unable to be reached, I hereby authorize the physician chosen by the Adult Youth leader to hospitalize, secure treatment and other injection, anesthesia, x-ray, or surgery for my child named above.

**Signature of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Insurance of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Group Number/ ID Number  
\_\_\_\_\_

(If possible, please attach a photocopy of the front and back of your insurance card.)

**Appendix 3**

**PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH EVENT COVENANT**

For Youth, Adult

Advisors, and parents or participants this covenant is for both the **YOUTH and ADULTS** who attend presbytery youth events such as retreats, rally days, mission trips, youth conferences, as representatives of the Presbytery of the James, etc. **Seeking the guide of the Holy Spirit, while at a Presbytery of the James youth event, I covenant to . . .**

**R:** Refrain from consuming alcohol, using illegal drugs or smoking, and refrain from driving any vehicle for the duration of the event.

**E:** Enjoy the time of rest and renewal.

**S:** Seek to hear God’s claim on my life through the opportunities provided.

**P:** Participate to the best of my ability in all planned activities.

**E:** Expect to encounter God.

**C:** Care for others by being a good steward of the resources provided over the course of the event including, but not limited to the food prepared, supplies provided, and persons leading the event.

**T:** Treat the facilities with reverence.

**F:** Friendship - Take time to meet one new friend.

**U:** Understanding, be considerate of one another, seek to hear others.

**L:** Lights out. Abide by the lights out policy of the event and be in my room or cabin by that time.

Participant’s Name (Please Print) Participant’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian’s Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Church Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **POLICIES VANDALISM AND PROPERTY DAMAGE**

Any person who damages or destroys property will be responsible for the cost of replacement and repair.

**SMOKING** All POJ events are SMOKE-FREE

**DISRUPTING EVENT ACTIVITIES** A great deal of time, effort, prayer, and money go into preparing a youth event. Disruptive behavior during assemblies, workshops or worship times, or other planned activities makes it hard for everyone to get the most out of the time that we have together. Participants can expect 2 warnings about this from any adult leader. Anyone who continues to disrupt will not be invited to the next event and may be dismissed from the current event in addition to having the opportunity to explain their actions to their parents, guardians, and / or pastor.

**PERSONAL BELONGINGS** You are responsible for your own belongings. Do not bring any items that are of great value to you.

**ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS** Any youth or adult found in possession of illegal substances will be dismissed from the event and may be subject to arrest.

**DRIVING** Vehicles driven to the event should be parked and locked. They should neither be driven nor visited during the event, except in an emergency. Upon leaving the event, drivers must obey all speed limits and must carry passengers only inside vehicles.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Presbytery of the James**

#### **Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct Form**

The Presbytery of the James is committed to providing a safe environment for minors and vulnerable adults within all activities and ministries of the presbytery. All the faithful cooperate in taking every reasonable action to ensure the safety of anyone under their care. The following policies are in effect whenever adults are acting as employees and/or volunteers of presbytery (“Church representatives”).

#### **I WILL:**

- I will treat everyone with respect, courtesy, and consideration, performing my work in a manner consistent with the mission of the PCUSA and the Presbytery of the James.
- I will remember that any minors or vulnerable adults are entrusted into my care; I am not their peer or buddy. Recognizing that Church representatives must always be aware of their own vulnerability, as well as the vulnerability of any minor or vulnerable adult with whom they may be working, I will always use a team approach to activities.
- I will avoid situations where I am alone with a minor or vulnerable adult. I understand that at least two supervising adults should be present when there is only one minor or vulnerable adult, and at least two participants should be present when there is only one supervisory adult.
- I will ensure that any one-on-one meetings with a minor or vulnerable adult are held in a public area or in a visible area such as in an office with an interior window or an open door so that another person can be present outside the room as a witness.
- I will use positive reinforcement rather than criticism and condemnation when working with minors or vulnerable adults.
- I will maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with the individuals with whom I work. I understand that any touch must be age-appropriate and based on the need of the minor or vulnerable adult, not the supervisory adult.
- I will always report any suspected abuse according to Virginia law. I understand that the failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is punishable by law.
- I will cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse.
- I will be available and visible during the entire event(s), take part in enforcing the rules, and take control of any situation those in my care are unable to handle.
- I will treat property with care. If someone from the group breaks something, I will tell the program director/event leader/presbyter. Each church will take full responsibility for any damage done by their members at a program site.
- I will keep cell phones/pagers off or in silent/vibrate mode to keep from disrupting or distracting from activities, especially during worship and prayer.
- I will behave in a way that respects the rights of all. I will be cooperative and do those things that promote a good reputation for the program, school, parish, and/or diocese.

- If I become aware of anyone violating this Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct, I will take responsibility to report that violation to the appropriate level of supervisor or to the presbytery so the issue can be addressed and minors can be kept safe.

## **I WILL NOT:**

- I will not maintain inappropriate relationships/friendships with a minor or vulnerable adult. I will not have exclusive relationships with a minor or vulnerable adult. If I become aware of a minor/vulnerable adult desiring such a relationship, I will ask for assistance from the supervisor or pastor and exercise extra caution.
- I will not use, possess, or be under the influence of, any alcoholic beverage or any illegal drugs when working with minors or vulnerable adults. In addition, I will not inappropriately use any legal drug or mood-altering substance in this setting.
- I will not have a weapon in my possession while acting as a Church representative. (Exception: Active law enforcement officers who are required by law to carry a weapon. —Those individuals must guarantee that weapon is secured at all times from access by any other person.)
- I will not provide, or allow any minor to use, any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, or illegal drugs. Neither will I provide anything prohibited by law to anyone in my care. Medications of any kind may be administered to minors only with written parental/guardian permission.
- I will not have any sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials on Church property or in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults. Such materials include, but are not limited to: magazines, videos, films, recordings, computer software, computer games, or printed material. I will not engage with minors or vulnerable adults in topics of conversation or discussion, vocabulary or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could not reasonably be used in the presence of parents or a responsible adult. I will not engage in sexually oriented conversations with anyone except in the context of sharing the Church's teaching on human sexuality.
- I will not accept expensive gifts from Minors or their parent/guardian without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator. Neither will I give expensive gifts to minors without prior written approval from the parent/guardian and the pastor or administrator. Small gifts or privileges are not to be given to minors without the presumed knowledge and permission of a parent/guardian.
- I will never speak to minors or vulnerable adults in a way that is or could be construed by an observer as derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- I will never touch anyone in my care in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- I will not use physical discipline for the behavior management of minors or vulnerable adults. No form of physical discipline is acceptable, including physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior, except as may be needed to restrain them from inflicting harm on themselves or others.
- I will avoid posing any health risk to others (e.g. fevers or other contagious situations).
- I will not, as a Church representative, provide shared or private overnight accommodations for individual minors with the exception of blood relatives. This

includes, but is not limited to, accommodations in any Church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place where there is no other adult supervision present.

As a(n) employee/volunteer of the Church, I promise to strictly follow the rules in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the minors and/or vulnerable adults of our presbytery. I understand that any illegal behavior may involve legal authorities. I understand that any serious violation of this Code of Conduct may result in my termination of employment, removal as a volunteer, and/or dismissal from a program, and/or financial and physical responsibility for transportation home (in the case of an off-site event).

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby consent to the use of a photograph of me for the purpose of publication.

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

## Appendix 5

### Volunteer Agreement and Release from Liability Presbytery of the James

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In signing this form, I understand and agree to the following terms and conditions related to my volunteer service with the Presbytery of the James:

- I recognize that, as a volunteer, I represent the above organization to the public. I accept responsibility for this status and will conduct myself accordingly.
- I understand that the “Healthy Boundaries Policy” of the Presbytery of the James applies to me and I certify that I have completed the required training as of this date:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I understand that in the course of my service, I may learn certain facts about volunteers, participants, and donors which are of a highly personal and confidential nature. Examples of such information are medical diagnosis and treatment, phone numbers and addresses, finances, personal relationships, etc. I understand that all such information, including the identity of the individual, must be treated with total confidentiality (including on social media postings) and must remain confidential even after my service ends. Please initial here: \_\_\_\_\_
- I agree to abide by the child/youth/vulnerable adult protection policies of the Presbytery of the James. I understand that the limits of confidentiality, however, include that I must immediately report to the appropriate leadership any knowledge or involvement in regard to child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse and the intentions to do harm to another person or to one’s self. Please initial here: \_\_\_\_\_
- I am aware that as a volunteer, I expose myself to potential hazards which include but are not limited to: kitchen accidents, cuts, burns, back injury from lifting, car accidents, property damage or injury to others in car accidents, falls, etc. I am voluntarily participating in this service with the knowledge of the potential hazards involved and hereby agree to accept any and all risks of injury. Please initial here: \_\_\_\_\_
- I agree that my assignees, heirs, distributes, guardians, and other legal representatives will not make a claim against, or sue for injury or damage resulting from the negligence or other acts, howsoever caused, by any employee, agent, or volunteer contractor of the organization as a result of my participation as a volunteer. I hereby release the Presbytery of the James from all actions, claims, or demands that I, my assignees, heirs, guardians and legal representatives now have or may hereafter have for injury resulting from my participation as a volunteer. Please initial here: \_\_\_\_\_
- If my volunteer service includes driving an automobile, I acknowledge that I have both a valid driver’s license and automobile liability insurance policy as required by state law. I agree to maintain my license and insurance in good standing for my tenure as a volunteer for the organization. I am knowledgeable of and agree to abide by local and state traffic laws. I agree not to drive while under the influence of alcohol and/or other intoxicating substances. Please initial here: \_\_\_\_\_

- I agree to bring any problems or conflicts that are beyond the scope of my volunteer service or ability, to the immediate attention of the appropriate leadership. Please initial here: \_\_\_\_\_
- As a volunteer, I understand that my services can be discontinued at any time for any reason.

This understanding will remain in effect throughout my continuous service as a volunteer. Should I not serve as a volunteer for more than one year, a new agreement will need to be completed. Please initial here \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_