



Presbytery of Genesee Valley

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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

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A. PRINCIPLES

Adult retrospective studies show that 1 in 4 women girls and 1 in 136 men boys were are sexually abused before the age of 18 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 202206).

Only about 75% of sexual abuse is perpetrated by a stranger. (Snyder, 2000).

Approximately 60% of those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse never tell anyone.

We believe that fundamentally, we cannot serve God and disrespect or endanger children. We proclaim that God created all life and following God must lead us to protect the vulnerable among us, particularly children. We also want our Presbytery to be a place where children are able to grow in their faith and thrive, and parents are supported with safe, high-quality childcare at our Presbytery's events.

We also believe that many churches are already setting high standards of quality programming for children, from nursery care to teenage mission trips. This policy seeks to make explicit standards of care which are already present and ensure that these standards are maintained at all Presbytery events with children. This policy also requires that any concerns of maltreatment will be treated seriously and given the consideration they deserve.

We hope that this policy will help to truly protect the children in our care and encourage individual churches to provide the same high standard of safety in their own ministry contexts.

B. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to:

- Make clear the safe and appropriate practices for adults leading activities with children on behalf of the Presbytery
- Safeguard children participating in Presbytery of Genesee Valley sponsored or co-sponsored activities against any maltreatment
- Obtain justice in the event of any maltreatment
- Explain clearly to parents, guardians, and church leaders the steps taken for children's safety during *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* events
- Reinforce the bonds of fiduciary trust between Presbytery leaders and the children they care for and educate
- Comply with the Book of Order provision G-3.0106 which mandates each council adopt and implement a child safety policy, and with G-4.0302 regarding Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-mandated reporting of abuse
- Exercise wise and prudent risk management and fulfill our fiduciary responsibility as stewards of the Presbytery as a not-for-profit corporation under New York State law

C. GLOSSARY

accidental injury – is an unintentional injury/wound requiring the administration of first aid and/or treatment by a licensed medical provider, e.g., cut, allergenic insect sting, broken bone, or burn.

child – refers to any person under the age of 18.

childcare provider – refers to any person who provides childcare during a *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* event such as a meeting or educational event.

corporal punishment – is the use of physical force (including spanking) which results in a child being hit or struck by a person who is not the child's parent or guardian and is in a position of authority or responsibility at a *presbytery-sponsored* event.

employee – refers to individuals who are hired or called by the Presbytery to work for salary or wages.

maltreatment – refers to an act, or failure to act (neglect) which:

- creates a substantial risk of imminent physical, mental, or emotional injury or harm
- causes physical, mental, or emotional injury or harm
- endangers the welfare of a child
- constitutes sexual abuse of a child

organizer – refers to any person who plans a *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* activity or event which includes children, whether as an employee or volunteer; although these people might not directly come into contact with children, they are responsible for ensuring that all *supervisors* who lead Presbytery activities or events involving children are aware of and abide by this policy.

presbytery-sponsored – refers to any activity, program or event involving children which is planned, organized and/or conducted by the Presbytery or any of its officers, staff members, committees, or boards.

presbytery co-sponsored – refers to any activity, program or event involving children in which the Presbytery or any of its officers, staff members, committees, or boards participates in the planning, organization and/or conduct of such activity, program or event with another entity; **this policy does not apply to any activity, program or event, including Neighborhood activities, for which the Presbytery provides only publicity or funding.**

supervisor – refers to any person who is leading a *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* activity or event involving children, whether an employee or volunteer; a *supervisor* is responsible for the health, safety, education, and wellbeing of the children participating in the activity or attending the event.

volunteer – refers to any person who provides services to the Presbytery and receives no remuneration or monetary benefits; volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on Presbytery boards, committees, and other groups.

D. SCOPE

1. This policy applies only to events, activities, or programs involving children which are *sponsored or co-sponsored* by the Presbytery and in which the Presbytery is operating *in loco parentis*.
2. The Presbytery of Genesee Valley will not provide care for children under the age of five. In instances in which children under the age of five need care during a *presbytery-sponsored* event, the Presbytery will reimburse parents/guardians up to \$15 an hour to cover the cost of those services.
3. This policy applies to: people who plan, organize, or lead any *presbytery-sponsored or co-sponsored* event in which the Presbytery is operating *in loco parentis*; *supervisors and childcare providers* at the events; parents whose children are being supervised by others at *presbytery-sponsored* events, activities, or programs; staff of the Presbytery (*accidental or volunteers*); and members of the Presbytery.
4. In the case of activities, events, or programs in which the Presbytery is *operating in loco parentis* the Presbytery (or its applicable officer, staff member committee or board) shall advise the other organization or group of this policy, and that the Presbytery will require, as a condition of its co-sponsorship, that this policy be observed, except to the extent that the other organization or group may have a similar policy which is more restrictive or which is designed to address the specific or unique circumstances of the location in which such activity, event, or program is conducted.
5. This policy shall be reviewed by the Big Picture Team every three years, with any needed revisions recommended to Presbytery.

E. CODE OF CONDUCT

All *volunteers* and *employees* at any Presbytery child or youth events and activities must also abide by a code of conduct that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors, including but not restricted to:

1. Display of sexual affection toward a child.
2. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
3. Discussion of sexual encounters and personal information.
4. Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with children or vulnerable adults.
5. Using or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, tobacco/vape product, cannabis or any illegal drug in the presence of children.
6. Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
7. Asking children to keep secrets.
8. Staring at or commenting on children’s bodies.
9. Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children.
10. Working one-on-one with children in a private setting.

F. PRACTICES

The following practices are measures to be applied to ensure child safety and eliminate opportunities for maltreatment of children during *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* events.

1. At no point shall an adult be alone with an unrelated child, including during transportation in a vehicle or using the bathroom. Ways to permit confidentiality and privacy without sacrificing safety are listed in item 6 of this section.
2. At no point shall any child be alone with another child, including using the bathroom. Using the “Rule of Three” is a recommended practice.
3. A minimum of two *childcare providers* (one may be a *supervisor* or event *organizer*) must be present at all events. At least one *childcare provider* present must be at least 5 years older than the oldest participant and a minimum of 18 years of age.
4. The Presbytery of Genesee Valley will adhere to ratios recommended by the New York State Department of Health: for children 5-8 years of age, there shall be one adult caregiver for every eight children. There shall be at least one adult caregiver for every 10 children aged 9-17.
5. The *supervisor* is responsible for communicating to parents and guardians of the location in which their children will be supervised.
6. All indoor activity rooms or areas must have doors with windows or Dutch doors; alternately, doors must be left open. Anyone passing an activity room must be able to see into the room at all times.
7. Confidential discussions with minors shall be conducted with open doors or a door with a clear window, at times when other adults will be nearby and aware.
8. *Supervisors* and *childcare providers* are responsible for ensuring that appropriate safety precautions are followed during activities (helmets during a bike ride, gloves during construction service project, etc.). This includes adherence to state or local laws.
9. If medication could or will be needed during a *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* event, *supervisors* are responsible for ensuring that parents/guardians complete the Medical Information and Medication Forms (see Attachments C and D). *Supervisors* will dispense medication as directed according to the Medication Form. *Supervisors* will keep any medication provided by parents in a safe place inaccessible to other children. If any medication is considered a controlled substance, the medication must be locked at all times. Medical Information and Medication Forms (Attachments C and D) shall be accessible to *supervisors* and *childcare providers* during the event and shall be destroyed afterward. *Supervisors* and *childcare providers* are strongly encouraged to have current certification in CPR and First Aid Training, and Medication Administration, Narcan training, and Boundary Awareness Training.
10. No children will possess, or have access to, cannabis, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vape products, or weapons. In the event of non-compliance, the offending child may be sent home at their family’s expense.
11. One-to-one online contact or text messaging between children and the adults who supervise them should be avoided to the greatest extent possible. Youth leaders shall utilize group texting apps (like WhatsApp, Remind, Signal) and send group emails. A parent, guardian, or other leader shall be copied into every email, text message, or other message that a child receives.
12. Technology will not be used to bully others or view or send explicit violent, sexual, or obscene material, either by children, youth, *supervisors*, or *childcare providers*. In the event of non-compliance, the offending child may be sent home at their family’s expense.
13. Any act of maltreatment of a child entrusted to the care of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, whether it is committed by an adult or minor, is strictly prohibited.
14. A first aid kit must be accessible to *supervisors* or *childcare providers* at all times.

15. No photographs of anyone under the age of 18 shall be taken and/or published by the Presbytery without written permission from parents.
16. Any act of *corporal punishment* as a means to discipline, correct, or control a child entrusted to our care is strictly prohibited.
17. Any *childcare provider* at a *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* event must provide written documentation of background check that includes a DMV search (if the provider will be driving children), conducted within the past year by Praesidium, Inc. (praesidium.com) or an organization recommended by the PC(USA).
18. If transportation during a *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* program, event, or activity is provided, the event *organizer* shall take appropriate steps to ensure that the vehicle operators are at least 21 years of age and have valid drivers' licenses, and that the vehicles have valid registrations and insurance. All vehicle operators must comply with all traffic laws, including use of cell phones while driving. All vehicle operators should also be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs.
19. This policy and the supplemental "Child Safety Resources" document shall be distributed by the event *organizer* to all people who plan and lead such events, including *supervisors* and *childcare providers*. Acknowledgement of receipt shall be required (see Attachment B, "Acknowledgement of Receipt") for parents/guardians, *supervisors*, and *childcare providers*. Acknowledgement forms will be kept digitally by the Presbytery for three years after the event and then destroyed.
20. Before the Presbytery commits to co-sponsoring an event involving children with another organization or group, the event *organizer* shall obtain a completed and signed copy of "Co-Sponsor's Agreement to Observe PGV Child Safety Policy" (Attachment E) as a condition of the Presbytery's co-sponsorship.

G. INTERVENTION PROCEDURES

The following procedures require the response of any *supervisors*, *childcare providers*, or event *organizers* upon discovery, or receipt of either a verbal report or a written allegation, of any *accidental injury* to or *maltreatment* of children.

In the event of any accidental injury

1. Emergency medical treatment shall be administered as needed, in the determination of a *supervisor* or *childcare provider*.
2. *Childcare providers* shall immediately notify a *supervisor*.
3. The *supervisor* shall immediately notify the child's parents or guardians of any case of injury requiring medical treatment.
4. The *supervisor* shall immediately notify the event *organizer* of any case of injury requiring medical treatment.

In the event of any maltreatment

1. If a *supervisor*, *childcare provider*, or event *organizer* discovers or has a reasonable concern that a child may be in danger or abused in another context, they shall contact the NY State Child Abuse Hotline (see Attachment A, "Resources for Reporting Maltreatment of Children").

2. If there is a reasonable concern that a child was maltreated during a *presbytery-sponsored* or *co-sponsored* event, activity, or program, whether by an adult or another child, the following shall apply:
 - a. Emergency medical treatment shall be administered as needed, in the determination of a *supervisor* or *childcare provider*.
 - b. *Childcare providers* shall immediately notify a *supervisor*.
 - c. The *supervisor* shall immediately notify the child's parents or guardians of any case of *maltreatment*.
 - d. The *supervisor* or event *organizer* if present shall notify the NY State Child Abuse Hotline immediately (see Attachment A, "Resources for Reporting Maltreatment of Children").
 - e. The *supervisor* shall immediately notify the event *organizer* of any case of *maltreatment*.

Violation of Policy by a Supervisor or Childcare Provider

1. If any items in the "Practices" section of this policy are violated by *supervisors* or *childcare providers*, they may be sent home immediately at their own cost and replacements may be found as needed. Parents of children at the event will be notified of the change immediately.

Violation of Policy by a Child

1. If any items in the "Practices" section of this policy are violated by a child, they may be sent home immediately at their own cost.

Post-event action after accidental injury or an allegation of maltreatment of children

1. The *supervisor* of an event shall submit a written report to event *organizers* after any allegation of *maltreatment* or *accidental injury*. In the instance of any submission of written information involving a minor, the person who receives the report shall promptly inform the Presbytery Leader and/or Stated Clerk, the Presbytery insurance carrier, and the chair of Trustees of the Presbytery. Disclosure to civil authorities is required if there is an allegation that an illegal action (such as child abuse or neglect) has occurred (see Attachment A, "Resources for Reporting Maltreatment of Children").
2. The Presbytery Leader and/or Stated Clerk will disclose in writing to an affected congregation's pastor the basic facts following receipt of a written report regarding an allegation of *maltreatment* of children. Disclosure will be truthful, recognize concerns for confidentiality, and respect formal investigations.

Attachment A

Resources for Reporting Maltreatment of Children

In the case of a reasonable concern that a child may have been maltreated, harmed, or is in danger, immediately call the NY State Child Abuse Hotline at **1-800-342-3720** (24 hours/day, 7 days/week).

If you are uncertain about calling the civil authorities, you may review the situation with trained human services providers at a resource below (information was updated 08/28/17).

1. During standard business hours, Monday-Friday, if your concern regards a child in:

Monroe County	Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, or Wyoming Counties	Ontario County
Bivona Child Advocacy Center 585-935-7800 Rochester	Justice for Children Child Advocacy Center 585-344-8576 Batavia, Albion & Warsaw	Child Advocacy Center of the Finger Lakes 585-394-2573 Canandaigua

2. 24 hours/day & 7 days/week, if your concern regards a child in:

Livingston, Monroe, or Ontario Counties	Genesee or Orleans Counties	Genesee, Orleans, or Wyoming Counties
Lifeline (Finger Lakes Region) 211 or 585-275-5151	Care and Crisis Helpline 1-844-345-4440 585-344-4440 (based at YWCA, Batavia)	2-1-1 WNY 211 or 1-888-696-9211 (based at Olmsted Center for Sight, Buffalo)

3. 24 hours/day & 7 days/week, for any congregation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Abuse Prevention Helpline 1-866-607-7233 (SAFE) Staffed by Praesidium, Inc. (based in Arlington, Texas)	For information regarding the Abuse Prevention Helpline and other services available to PC(U.S.A.) congregations: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Is-Your-Church-Safe-Brochure.pdf
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Attachment B**Acknowledgment of Receipt**

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley's Child Safety Policy, and the Child Safety Resources document. I have read the policy, understand its meaning, and agree to conduct myself in accordance with the policy. I authorize the obtaining of emergency medical treatment as required.

Signature	Printed Name	Date
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Relationship to Presbytery: Parent
 Event Supervisor
 Event Organizer
 Childcare Provider

Phone Number	Email
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Name of Event, Activity, or Program	Date of Event
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Child's Name (if applicable)

- No photographs of my child may be published by the Presbytery.
- My child may be transported in a vehicle during this presbytery-sponsored or co-sponsored event, activity, or program. The vehicle and driver will comply with practices detailed in this policy.

Please complete, sign, and return to Event Organizer care of:

*Presbytery of Genesee Valley
 1049 Wegman Rd.
 Rochester, NY 14624
 communications@pbygenva.org*

Attachment C

Medication Form

Name of child: _____

Medications (including dosages) provided by parent.

*Note: all medications shall be in their original packaging.

Circumstances in which medication should be administered:

Directions for administering medication (puffs/use, taken with food, etc.):

Is this medication considered a controlled substance? _____

Does this medication require any special storage (e.g., temperature-controlled environment)?

Is your child able to administer their own medication? _____

Do you want to be contacted if this medication is used? _____

I agree that event Supervisors and/or Child Care Providers may administer this medication to my child in the manner described above.

Signature **Printed Name** **Date**

Attachment D

Medical Information Form
(for overnights or activities outside of the Presbytery's boundaries)

Participant Information

Name _____

Primary Physician _____ Phone _____

Dentist _____ Phone _____

Special Medical Conditions _____

Date of last tetanus shot _____

Ongoing medications (name and times/circumstances administered)

Allergies (medicine, food, insects, etc.)

Health Insurance Company _____

Policy Number _____

Other information that you would like for us to know:

Emergency Contact Information

Parent 1 Name _____

Home Phone Number _____ Work Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

Parent 2 Name _____

Home Phone Number _____ Work Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

Other Emergency Contact Name _____

Relationship to Youth _____

Home Phone Number _____ Work Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

Attachment E**Co-Sponsor's Agreement to Observe PGV Child Safety Policy**

I hereby acknowledge that, as an authorized representative of _____
 _____ (*name of organization or group**), I received a copy of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley's Child Safety Policy, and the Child Safety Resources document, as of the date indicated below. I have read the policy, understand its meaning and intent, and understand and acknowledge that the observance of this policy is a condition of the co-sponsorship by the Presbytery of the activity, program or event as identified below, and agree that such policy will be observed, except to the extent that this organization or group uses a similar policy containing practices which are better suited for achieving the Presbytery's purpose. If our organization or group's policy will be used, I have attached a copy to this form, and indicated which of our specific portions will apply.

Signature

Name

Name of Organization or Group*

Date

Name of Activity, Program or Event

Phone Number

Email

*[*includes individual churches, presbyteries and synods, or other independent religious, charitable, educational or not-for-profit organization or group.]*