

SAFE BOUNDARIES POLICY

First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha

(as adapted from the Safe Boundaries Policy of the Presbytery of Chicago, as revised November 19, 2011)

This policy has been designed to ensure that all are welcome and feel safe, just as Christ encouraged us when he said, “Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” [Matthew 25:40] The ethical and responsible conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the church because through these representatives an understanding of God and the gospel’s good news is conveyed. “Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world” (*Book of Order*, G-2.0104a).

The primary purpose of this policy is to ensure that all are, and feel, welcome and safe. Christ calls us to welcome the stranger and to care for those who are vulnerable. We strive, with the guidance of this policy, to do exactly that.

The basic principles guiding this policy are as follows:

- A. Sexual misconduct is a violation of the rule that those who are called to leadership roles in the church are equally called upon to exercise integrity, sensitivity, and caring in a trust relationship. Sexual misconduct breaks the covenant to act in the best interests of those whom the church serves.
- B. Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. If the person being served initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is the responsibility of the person providing service to maintain the appropriate role and prohibit a sexual relationship.
- C. Sexual misconduct is often perpetrated against persons who are less able to protect themselves, including children. It is antithetical to the gospel call to work as God’s servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world, and violates the mandate to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.
- D. Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are vulnerable to more than the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse by adults or peers. Physical and emotional abuse or neglect are also grievous violations of the scriptural command to “Tend the flock of God that is in your charge.” The church must be safe for children before it can offer *shalom* to all persons entrusted to its care.

I. APPLICABILITY

A. Scope: Except as otherwise expressly provided, this policy governs all activities, proceedings, meetings, camps, retreats, worship services and other functions of any kind carried on by First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha or on church property. Safe boundary

policies, or the like, must be provided by user groups to the Session for the church's files, and updated policies must be provided once approved by the issuing body.

B. Persons governed by policy: This policy governs all staff and volunteers, including ruling elders and deacons, who are employed by or whose tasks afford them authority and power over others in any activity or function carried on by First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha. This policy also governs teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders.

C. Other Policies and Procedures: This policy is to be interpreted and applied consistently with any and all other applicable policies of the Presbytery of Milwaukee, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and state, federal, and local law.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Accused. The person against whom an accusation of sexual misconduct or abuse or neglect is being made.

B. Accuser. The person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct or abuse or neglect by a person covered by this policy. The accuser may or may not be the victim of the alleged sexual misconduct, child abuse or neglect.

C. Activity. A program or event sponsored by or under control of First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha.

D. Child. Any person under the age of eighteen years.

E. Church Property. Property owned or controlled by First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha.

F. Emotional Abuse. Unusually harsh, offensive or insensitive conduct toward another person that causes or is likely to cause emotional distress. Examples can include criticism, badgering, bullying, teasing, ridicule, rejection, humiliation, blame or unfavorable comparisons with other children or adults.

G. Mandated Reporter. Any person required by law to report to the appropriate state agency all suspected incidents of abuse or neglect that come to his or her attention. Under most state child protection statutes, mandated reporters are professionals who may work with children in the course of their professional duties. Teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders are mandated reporters under the laws of most states, including Wisconsin. The *Book of Order* further classifies teaching and ruling elders, deacons and certified Christian educators as mandated reporters for both child abuse and abuse of vulnerable adults.

H. Misuse of Technology. The use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, or emotionally abusing any child, including texting or e-mailing suggestive messages and images to persons. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church

property. If pornography includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by the church, or within the context of ministry.

I. Neglect. The failure of a parent or responsible caretaker to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or other basic necessities to a child or vulnerable adult.

J. Parent. A parent or legal guardian of a child who is participating in an activity.

K. Physical Abuse. Any act that results in non-accidental injury to another or involves harmful, potentially harmful or offensive touching of another. It may involve physical violence in which the perpetrator is out of control and may include corporal punishment or hazing.

L. First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha or First Presbyterian Church. A church within the Presbytery of Milwaukee, part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

M. Response. The action taken by the appropriate First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha staff or entity when a report of sexual misconduct or abuse or neglect is received. It may include inquiry into facts and circumstances, or possible disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, or removal from office and/or membership.

N. Sexual Abuse. Any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to:

1. any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or
2. any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

O. Sexual Harassment. Conduct that includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, tormenting based on gender, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In particular, sexual harassment occurs if:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or of his or her participation in First Presbyterian Church activities;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is the basis for employment decisions or other First Presbyterian Church-related decisions affecting that individual;
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or participation in First Presbyterian Church activities by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment;
4. such conduct, regardless of its intention, is objected to by the person at whom it is directed; or
5. such conduct includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact such as the following:

- a. written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, emails, text messages or invitations;
- b. verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes or sexual propositions;
- c. physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault or sexual coercion; and
- d. visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

P. Sexual Misconduct. Any sexual abuse of children or adults and/or any sexual harassment.

Q. Staff Member or Employee. A person employed by or contracted with First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha.

R. User Groups. Any group that participates in any activity or event sponsored by First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha or that utilizes church property.

S. Victim. A person who has allegedly suffered an act of sexual misconduct or physical or emotional abuse, or, a child or vulnerable adult who has allegedly suffered neglect.

T. Volunteer. A person who provides services for the church and/or its entities and receives no benefit or remuneration. Volunteers include, but are not limited to, persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups.

III. CHILD SAFETY

A. Premise. Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem in our society and, unfortunately, within the Christian community. Abuse and neglect often occur in settings where children completely trust adults -- homes, schools, camps, athletic and park programs, retreats and the church. As people entrusted with the lives of children, we believe that we have a profound moral and legal obligation to reduce the possibility of abuse and neglect from happening to the children who participate in activities of First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha. The goal is to help make church activities a safer place for our children by instituting policies and procedures that guard against abuse and neglect. This policy is designed to:

1. Safeguard children and youth from abuse.
2. Provide assurance to families that their children are safe and secure at church activities.
3. Assure proper reporting when there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred.

B. Child Safety Standards

1. **Two-deep leadership.** At least two non-related adults are required to provide leadership for all trips and outings. Appropriate adult leadership must be present for all

overnight activities; coed overnight activities require male and female leadership, both of whom must be unrelated adults, and must have completed all required training and screening. User groups are responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities in which they are involved and for all activities on church property.

- 2. Adult-Child Ratios.** In addition to having a minimum of two adult leaders when children are present, the following ratios of adults to children will be maintained:

<u>Youth Age</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Overnight Events</u>	<u>Day Events</u>
4-5 years	1	5 children (1:5)	6 children (1:6)
6-8 years	1	6 children (1:6)	8 children (1:8)
9-14 years	1	8 children (1:8)	10 children (1:10)
15-18 years	1	10 children (1:10)	10 children (1:10)

- 3. Two-Years-Older.** All staff and other leadership must be at least 24 months older than the oldest child participating in the activity.
- 4. No one-on-one meeting.** One-on-one meetings between an adult and a child are not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as pastoral counseling, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.
- 5. Separate accommodations.** When engaged in overnight activities, adult supervision is required in the sleeping accommodations and the adult – child ratio as stated in paragraph III.B.2. above will be followed. Separate shower and bathroom facilities must be available for males and females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers. Likewise, children and adults must shower at different times.
- 6. Respect of privacy.** Adults must respect the privacy of children in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations. Respect for privacy includes wearing proper clothing. For example, skinny-dipping or revealing bathing suits are not appropriate.
- 7. Alcohol, tobacco, and controlled substances.** The use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances shall not be permitted by any person at any time during church activities or on property owned by First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha. This rule applies regardless of the presence of children. Further, adults shall support the attitude that they, as well as children, are better off without tobacco in any form. Therefore the use of tobacco by adults shall not be permitted in the presence of children. The use of tobacco by children shall not be permitted at any time.
- 8. Cameras, imaging, and digital devices.** While most persons use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade the privacy of

individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants. Any transmission of sexually explicit photographs or videos electronically and any “sexting” by cell phones is prohibited. No photos of children will be used for publicity without the express written permission of a parent / guardian.

9. **No secret organizations.** First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha does not recognize secret organizations. All aspects of church-sponsored activities are to be open to observation by parents and adults.
10. **Hazing prohibited.** Hazing and initiations are prohibited and shall not be included as part of any activity.
11. **Bullying prohibited.** Verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited.
12. **Constructive discipline.** Discipline used in church events shall be constructive and reflect Christian values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
13. **Environmental Safety.** Church events shall be conducted so as to minimize the risk of accidental injury. Adult leaders should familiarize themselves with basic first aid, as well as applicable safety standards for food handling, aquatic activities, other outdoor environmental hazards such as poisonous plants and lightning, as well as possible indoor hazards such as electric wires and cleaning substances. Necessary protective gear, such as helmets, life jackets, and sturdy shoes shall be provided.
14. **User Group responsibilities.** Adult leaders of user groups are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and for interceding when necessary. Parents of youth participants who misbehave shall be informed and appropriate disciplinary measures shall be taken. User groups are responsible for complying with a Safe Boundaries Policy, to be provided to the Session, and which must be at least as stringent as the policy of First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha.

IV. PREVENTION

A. Screening.

1. **Reference checks.** All persons governed by this policy shall list three personal references on the Reference, Disclosure and Consent Form attached as Appendix A. References will be checked using the Reference Check Form attached as Appendix B.
2. **Background checks.** Criminal background checks and sex offender reviews will be performed on all staff and volunteers. Other background checks, such as motor vehicle record reports and credit reports, will be performed as needed and appropriate for duties to be performed. Appendix A contains a consent to background checks. All staff

and volunteers shall provide such additional information and shall give such additional consents as may be necessary from time to time to carry out the purposes of this policy.

- 3. Transportation.** All persons providing transportation must provide a copy of their drivers' license and a copy of their insurance card to the person in charge of the activity. Any professional transportation provider should be bonded and provide proof of insurance.
- 4. Volunteer congregation members.** Prior to their participation in any Church event or activity, background checks on a volunteer congregation member shall be performed by a staff member or ruling elder of the congregation as described in paragraph IV.A.2. above. Session shall also ensure that adequate personal references are secured in accordance with paragraph IV.A.1. above. As a minimum standard, volunteer congregation members shall be known to the congregation for at least one year.
- 5. Recordkeeping.** The staff person for this policy shall keep the reference checks and the background checks on the persons for whom they have responsibility. The staff person for this policy shall have copies of all reference checks, background checks and all Reference, Disclosure and Consent Forms. All records shall be strictly confidential and may be shared only on a need-to-know basis.

B. Education and Training.

- 1. Distribution of policy.** First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha shall provide a copy of this policy to all persons who are governed by it, and those persons will sign the Receipt and Acknowledgment Form attached as Appendix E. The staff person for this policy shall retain the original Receipt and Acknowledgment Forms. First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha shall also furnish copies of the policy to others on request and shall post a copy of this policy in its website.
- 2. Training Workshops**
 - a. Persons governed by this policy are required to attend training within the year they first become subject to this policy. Training will be offered at the beginning of each school year.
 - b. The Administrative Assistant, with the assistance of the staff person for this policy, shall keep records of attendance at training events. The staff person for this policy shall report to the Session those persons who have attended the required training, and those who have not.

V. RESPONSE TO INCIDENT

A. Immediate Safety. When a person governed by this policy becomes aware of alleged violations of this policy he or she will first determine if there are safety issues. If there is an immediate danger to any person, all necessary steps shall be taken to insure the person's safety. These may include calling for medical assistance or reporting the incident to the police.

B. Reporting the Incident.

- 1. Initial Report to Head of Staff.** A person having knowledge of suspected sexual misconduct or any other form of abuse or neglect shall report the incident immediately to the Head of Staff and to the person in charge of the activity. If the Head of Staff is not available, the initial report is made to the person in charge of the activity, who will inform the Head of Staff as soon as possible. If the alleged behavior involves possible criminal activity, the Head of Staff or the person in charge of the activity shall notify the police or, if the alleged behavior involves possible abuse or neglect of a child, the reporting procedure in paragraph V.B.2. shall be followed. For purposes of this section V, if the Head of Staff is the accused or is unavailable to act, references to the Head of Staff shall be deemed to refer to the Clerk of Session or, if the Clerk of Session is the accused or unavailable to act, to the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry.
- 2. Report to Child Abuse Hotline.** The Head of Staff will determine if there is reasonable cause to believe that a child participating in a Church activity is an abused or neglected child. If such reasonable cause exists, the Head of Staff will immediately call the applicable state or county Child Abuse Hotline. (In Waukesha County, call 262-548-7212 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays or call 211 after hours.) The oral report shall be followed by a written report on the applicable state reporting form. If the civil authorities determine that the incident should be investigated, they will normally contact the police. (See Appendix D for information on child abuse hotlines and mandated reporters.)
- 3. Notification of Parent or Guardian.** If the victim of the alleged abuse is a child, as soon as practicable after receiving the initial report of the incident, the Head of Staff shall inform the child's parent or guardian of the incident. If the parent or guardian is suspected of abusing the child, the Head of Staff will cooperate with civil authorities regarding notification.
- 4. Additional Mandated Reporters.** In many states, certain mandated reporters must report directly to the appropriate authorities even if the Head of Staff also makes a report. Staff and volunteers who are not mandated reporters may also report an incident to the appropriate civil authorities if they have reasonable cause to suspect that child abuse or neglect may have occurred. (See Appendix D for more information.)
- 5. Additional reports.** If reasonable cause exists to believe that sexual misconduct may have occurred, the Head of Staff shall make the following additional reports:
 - a. If the accused is a staff member of First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha, the incident shall be reported to the Session.
 - b. If the accused is a teaching elder who is a member of the Presbytery of Milwaukee, a commissioned ruling elder serving under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Milwaukee, a certified Christian educator, a certified associate Christian educator or a teaching elder serving in a validated ministry within the bounds of the Presbytery of Milwaukee, the incident shall be reported to the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and the Committee on Ministry.

- c. If the accused is a ministerial inquirer or candidate, the incident shall be reported to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
 - d. If the accused is a staff person of another governing body or a volunteer with another governing body the incident shall be reported to the other governing body.
 - e. If the accused is a clergy member of another denomination, the incident shall be reported to the appropriate authorities of the denomination having jurisdiction over that person.
 - f. The Head of Staff shall also report the incident to the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships of the Presbytery of Milwaukee.
 - g. If reasonable cause exists to believe that sexual misconduct may have occurred, the accused person must be removed from being around children for the safety of the child.
- 6. Incident report form.** Within 48 hours after the incident, each person with knowledge of the incident shall complete a First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha Incident Report Form and deliver the form to the Head of Staff. (See Appendix C.)
- C. Suspension/Administrative Leave.** After receiving the initial report, the Head of Staff shall determine whether the alleged abuser's employment or volunteer service should be suspended or restricted pending further investigation of the incident. If the accused is a teaching elder, the procedures set forth in the Presbytery's Administrative Leave Policy as then in force shall be followed. If the accused is a staff member, he or she may be temporarily suspended or his or her activities restricted, with pay, pursuant to the Personnel Policy of First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha.
- D. Investigation.** The person or persons making the initial report to the Head of Staff shall not conduct an investigation of the incident, but shall take all necessary steps to insure the immediate safety of the alleged victim. Any further investigation shall be conducted by the investigating committee in accordance with the Rules of Discipline, by the Presbytery of Milwaukee's insurance carrier, or by the civil authorities. The Head of Staff, in conjunction with the Stated Clerk, shall determine to what extent the incident needs to be further investigated separately by the Presbytery of Milwaukee for its own purposes or to provide adequate information to another governing body that may have an interest. Any such separate investigation by the Presbytery of Milwaukee shall be performed at the direction of and under the supervision of the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships.
- E. Pastoral care and professional counseling.** The Head of Staff shall report any alleged incident of sexual misconduct to the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships. The Committee on Ministry shall recommend pastoral care as needed for the alleged victim, those reporting the incident, the accused, others affected by the allegations, and their respective families. Educational resources and care for congregations affected by the alleged incident shall also be coordinated and provided by the Presbytery of Milwaukee. If the victim, the accused or another affected person desires professional counseling, but is unable to afford it, the Committee on Ministry will recommend resources to the Church to

provide professional counseling for the person for a reasonable time up to a maximum of one year, to be paid for by the Presbytery of Milwaukee.

- F. Confidentiality.** Because the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty, care will be taken to protect confidentiality. While the incident is being investigated, all persons with knowledge of the incident shall maintain strict confidentiality and shall share information with others only as requested or permitted by the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships or as required by mandated reporting laws. The Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and the investigating committee, if any, shall be in exclusive possession of all reports and other written materials pertaining to the incident. No other person shall keep copies of reports or other records concerning the incident without authorization from the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships. The Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships shall share information with the Stated Clerk, the Committee on Ministry, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and others on a strict need-to-know basis. All third party requests for information shall be referred to the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships.

APPENDIX A
REFERENCE, DISCLOSURE, AND CONSENT FORM

1. Name: _____ Date of birth: _____
Address: _____
Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____ Cell phone: _____
Occupation: _____ Employer: _____
Student? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, name of school and major: _____
Previous volunteer experience: _____

2. Name of local congregation: _____

3. Please give three references, at least two of whom are not related to you.

a. Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____

b. Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____

c. Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____

4. Please answer the following questions. Attach additional sheets if you need more space.

a. Have you ever been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to, a crime? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, please provide details.

b. Has any civil lawsuit against you alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual misconduct, physical abuse, child abuse, or financial misconduct ever been filed? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please provide details and describe resolution of the lawsuit.

c. Have you ever terminated your employment, professional credentials or service in a volunteer position, or had your employment, professional credentials or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated, for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual misconduct, physical abuse, child abuse or financial misconduct? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please provide details.

d. Do you have a valid driver license? Yes ___ No ___

e. Have you ever had your driver license suspended or revoked due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please provide details.

5. Certification and Consent

I certify that the foregoing information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha to conduct a background check on me and to verify all statements made on this form, and I hereby release First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha, and its employees and agents from all liability in connection therewith.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Social Security Number: ___ - ___ - _____

APPENDIX B
REFERENCE CHECK FORM

Reference check for: _____

Name of reference: _____

Reference address: _____

Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

1. What is your relationship to this person? How long have you known this person?

2. How would you describe this person's character?

3. How would you describe this person's ability to work with others?

4. What are this person's positive characteristics?

5. Does this person have any negative characteristics?

6. Do you have any knowledge that this person has ever been arrested for any reason? If so, please describe.

7. Do you have any knowledge that this person has ever been accused of sexual misconduct?

8. Please list any other comments you would like to make.

Reference inquiry completed by:

Print: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

All responses will be kept confidential and shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know.

**APPENDIX C
INCIDENT REPORT FORM
Please print.**

Date: _____

1. REPORTER INFORMATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

2. ALLEGED VICTIM INFORMATION (if different from reporter)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

3. ACCUSED

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

4. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

Please describe the incident(s) of sexual misconduct, including date, time, and location of each incident, as able.

5. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

If medical assistance or first aid was provided at the scene, please describe the assistance given and the medical disposition (taken to hospital, etc.).

6. OTHERS HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE INCIDENT

Please list the name, address, and phone number of each person who may have information related to or pertinent to the incident. Please provide e-mail and cell phone if available.

- a. Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____
- b. Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____
- c. Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____

7. OTHER INFORMATION

Please give any additional information that may be helpful.

If you need more room to answer any questions, please attach additional sheets.

Return this form to the Head of Staff OR the person in charge of the activity.

APPENDIX D

Child Abuse Hotline

Child Protection Statutes

Most states have child protection statutes that provide for reporting incidents of child abuse or neglect. The Wisconsin statute is outlined in Chapter 48, Children's Code and is supported by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Division of Safety and Permanence.

Mandated Reporters

Under Wisconsin's child abuse reporting law, mandatory reporters are typically people who interact with children in their professional capacities. A mandatory reporter generally must report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately if he or she has reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected or has been threatened with abuse or neglect that will occur.

List of Mandatory Reporters

The following professionals are mandatory reporters under Wisconsin law:

- Physicians.
- Coroners.
- Medical examiners.
- Nurses.
- Dentists.
- Chiropractors.
- Optometrists.
- Acupuncturists.
- Medical and mental health professionals not otherwise specified.
- Social workers.
- Marriage and family therapists.
- Professional counselors.
- Public assistance workers, including financial and employment planners under the Wisconsin Works (W2) program.
- School teachers.
- School administrators.
- School counselors.
- School employees not otherwise specified.
- Mediators provided through family court services offices.
- Child care workers in child care centers, group homes, or residential care centers for children and youth.
- Child care providers.
- Alcohol or other drug abuse counselors.
- Members of the treatment staff employed by or working under contract with a county agency or a residential care center for children and youth.
- Physical therapists.

- Physical therapists’ assistants.
- Occupational therapists.
- Dietitians.
- Speech-language pathologists.
- Audiologists.
- Emergency medical technicians.
- First responders.
- Police and law enforcement officers.
- Court-appointed special advocates.
- Members of the clergy, except under the circumstances described below.

[s. 48.981 (2), Stats.]

Special Reporting Requirements Applicable to Clergy

The child abuse reporting law places special reporting requirements on members of the clergy. Specifically, in addition to reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a child seen directly by a clergy member in the course of his or her professional duties, a clergy member generally must report suspected abuse or neglect if the clergy member has reasonable cause, based on observations made or information received, to suspect that a member of the clergy has sexually abused a child or threatened a child with sexual abuse in violation of specified state laws. [s. 48.981 (2) (bm) 2., Stats.] In this context, “member of the clergy” means the spiritual adviser of any religion, whether the adviser is termed priest, rabbi, minister of the gospel, pastor, reverend, or any other official designation, or a member of a religious order, including brothers, ministers, monks, nuns, priests, rabbis, and sisters. [s. 48.981 (1) (cx), Stats.]

*taken directly from Part II – Wisconsin’s Child Abuse Reporting Law

Child Abuse Hotline

A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect is required to immediately report or cause a report to be made to the county department of social or human services, sheriff, or the local police. To locate the appropriate county human/social service agency to report: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/CPS/cpswimap.HTM>

In most cases, the reporting requirement will be satisfied if the Head of Staff makes the report, but if the Head of Staff fails to report, the mandated reporter must nevertheless make the report if he or she has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect may have occurred.

Reports of alleged child abuse or neglect should be made to the county where the child or the child’s family resides. [<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/Children/CPS/cpswimap.htm?ref=hp>]

In Waukesha County, the Department of Health and Human Services:
office hours: 262-548-7212
after hours: 262-547-3388

APPENDIX E
RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I have received the Safe Boundaries Policy of First Presbyterian Church, acknowledge its contents, and agree to abide by its standards.

Print: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____