

Kirk in the Hills

Children and Youth Safety Policy

Purpose

Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church is a spiritual, caring community committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment for children and youth to grow and develop in their faith. All adult teachers and leaders with substantial, reoccurring contact with children and youth through the youth ministries (including, but not limited to the Christian Education and Music Departments, Confirmation program and the mid-high and senior high groups) (“Approved Leaders”) and staff who participate in these ministries are practicing their baptismal vows to nurture our children and youth in the Christian faith. To assure that these efforts are achieved in a safe and wholesome environment, the Kirk believes that all Approved Leaders and staff must fully commit themselves to the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of children and youth placed under their care. To that end, all Approved Leaders and staff will adhere to the procedures set forth in this Kirk in the Hills Children and Youth Safety Policy.

Requirements

- Every volunteer wishing to become an Approved Leader will be known to Kirk staff for a period of at least six months before he or she will be considered for approval.
- Every Approved Leader and staff member must read the Children and Youth Safety Policy and acknowledge understanding and agreement by signing the last page.
- Every Approved Leader and each staff member must agree to permit the Kirk to conduct a criminal background screening and to provide information necessary to complete such a check. Any record of criminal sexual behavior will be grounds for non-acceptance or dismissal of the applicant or volunteer. Criminal background screenings will be conducted on an annual basis.

- Every Approved Leader and staff member will report immediately any behavior which seems inappropriate or abusive. The report should be made to the pastoral advisor, staff supervision or appropriate Kirk leader.
- In the event of an allegation of inappropriate or abusive conduct, an ad hoc committee, led by the pastor, Head of Staff, including a representative of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, and others to be designated by the pastor, will be established to conduct a review of the matter.

Initial Reporting of Suspicious Activity

- Process will be as discrete and confidential as possible.
- In Michigan, as well as other states, people who either work with or volunteer with children are considered to be Mandated Reporters. This designation includes ministers, Music and choir directors, Sunday school teachers and other church volunteers having direct contact with children. Mandated reporters can be charged with a criminal offense if they are discovered to be in possession of knowledge of abuse or criminal contact and do not report this to the proper authorities.
- In the interest of fairness, any allegations will be reduced to writing as soon as possible.

Procedures

Approved Leaders and staff who have complied with the Kirk Children and Youth Safety Policy shall be permitted to interact with children and youth involved in Kirk activities. Volunteers for those activities who are not designated as Approved Leaders or staff may participate in children and youth activities only where an Approved Leader or staff member is also present directing the activity.

On-Site Procedures

- Each classroom must contain at least one Approved Leader.
- The Kirk will follow the “Rule of Three” – there will be at least three persons in each classroom or other area. This could be two adults and one child or one adult with two children. Under no circumstance shall one child be left alone with one adult for more than a few minutes.
- An Approved Leader must be present as a hall monitor during Church School hours.
- Wherever possible, pre-K children will use the bathroom accompanied or monitored by an Approved Leader.

Off-Site Procedures

- Only Approved Leaders shall participate in Kirk children and youth activities.
- For overnight activities, males and females shall be segregated during sleeping times.
- For overnight activities, there will be two male Approved Leaders and two female Approved Leaders.

Kirk in the Hills

Children and Youth Safety Policy

CONFIDENTIAL

Last Name

First Name

M.I.

Date of Birth

Drivers License #

Social Security #

Please answer the following questions:

- Have you ever been convicted or, or plead guilty or no contest to, a crime involving children or youth? If so, please explain.
- Have you ever been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to, any crime involving fraud or dishonesty? If so, please explain.
- Are you currently under investigation for a crime involving children or youth?
Yes _____ No _____
- Have you read, and do you understand and agree to abide by the Kirk's Children and Youth Safety Policy?
Yes _____ No _____

I have read and understand this policy. I further agree to conduct myself and programs for Kirk children and youth with the best interests of the children and youth as my top priority. I agree that if there is any report of alleged child abuse or neglect against me, then I will refrain from all activity with children and youth until the Kirk determines if further action will be taken.

Signature

Date