

Presbytery of Des Moines

Abuse Prevention Policy

The Presbytery of Des Moines is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, volunteers, and paid staff who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the presbytery. The following policy statement reflects our presbytery's commitment to preserving this presbytery as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would participate and in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others. The Presbytery of Des Moines adopts the following policy to actively resist and constructively prevent the abuse of children and youth in any of its forms whether verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, ritual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect.

Screening

Beginning with the adoption of this policy every person working for the presbytery – volunteer or paid, clergy or lay – will be required to complete a screening application and a criminal record background check will be conducted by an approved screening service. Reference checks on all paid staff will be conducted prior to employment. This will be true for all persons who work with children and youth on a daily or overnight basis. Churches hosting presbytery events which provide child care will be requested to provide screened child care providers for those events or the presbytery will cover the child care expense for the family of the participant with a provider of their choice.

A secondary process for occasional volunteers will be as follows. They shall have been a member of the Presbyterian Church in The Presbytery of Des Moines for at least six months. Ordinarily those working with children and youth shall be at least five years older than the children and/or youth they are charged to attend. Under no circumstances are those under eighteen years of age to be the lone and/or primary care-givers for children and/or youth.

Supervision/Training

No fewer than two adults shall be present at all children and youth activities sponsored by the presbytery. In situations when an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child the staff person or volunteer will obtain consent of the child's parent or guardian before going out alone with that child or spending time with the child in an unsupervised situation.

In addition, the presbytery will provide at least annually an orientation on Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church and/or training to identify symptoms of child abuse and/or the state laws governing the reporting of child abuse.

Approved November 2019