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# SAFE CHURCH POLICIES

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St. Mark Presbyterian Church



ST. MARK  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PC(USA) › BALLWIN, MO

SEEK. DISCOVER. SHARE.

POLICIES FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS  
ADOPTED BY THE SESSION AUGUST 17, 2020

# SAFE CHURCH POLICIES

## Policies for Protecting Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults

### St. Mark Presbyterian Church

#### Section One: Theological and Scriptural understanding

Jesus teaches us, “whomever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Additionally, we recall that throughout scripture, God’s people are called to offer compassion, concern, and shelter to children, widows, and other vulnerable persons. As a congregation, we place value on the presence and participation of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. By adopting these policies, we acknowledge the importance of protecting all persons from abuse and exploitation. As Presbyterians, we commit ourselves to fulfilling our baptismal vows to love and nurture all persons in the way of faith and acknowledge that both scripture and the confessions of our church call us to join God in responsibly caring for creation.

#### Section Two: General Guidelines

St. Mark Presbyterian Church believes it is called by God to provide and maintain a safe, nurturing environment for all children, youth under the age of 18, and vulnerable adults while in its care during any church service or event. The basic principles guiding this policy are applied to church clergy, employees, volunteers and persons participating in church activities or acting in the name of the church. A commitment to child, youth and vulnerable adult protection includes preventing the following types of inappropriate conduct:

- 1) **Physical Abuse**, including any unwanted touch, any physical contact intended to coerce or do harm, any hitting or touching in anger.
- 2) **Emotional/Verbal Abuse**, including insults, name calling, belittling remarks, unfavorable comparisons with other children or youth, shaming, deliberately causing fear, or using speech to hurt.
- 3) **Spiritual Abuse**, including using Scripture or church authority to coerce, control or shame; using threats about condemnation from God or making threats about God withholding love to control behavior.
- 4) **Sexual Abuse**, which is defined as any sexual contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults in a leader's charge, including inappropriate touching, sexual advances or propositioning all which are criminal offenses under Missouri law.
- 5) **Neglect**, a deficit in meeting children, youth, or vulnerable adults’ basic needs such as adequate supervision, health care, clothing, or housing, as well as other physical, emotional, social, educational, and safety needs.

## Section Three: Safe Practices Resolutions

- 1) **Child/Youth/Vulnerable adult Workers shall:**
  - a. Respond to Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults with respect and consideration and treat all of them equally, regardless of race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service or veteran status or religious affiliation;
  - b. Act as a positive role model for Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity;
  - c. Maintain appropriate boundaries when in positions of power with Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults;
  - d. Do not give money or gifts to Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults, except within the context of a group gift given to all participants in the celebration of special events or recognitions.
- 2) **The 'Two Adult Rule' as stated here:** Activities shall be conducted within sight/supervision of two or more non-related adult staff/volunteer persons, one of which has a nationwide background check and is at least four years older than the oldest youth being supervised. The adult/child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10 (two staff/volunteers and no more than 10 children). The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17 (two staff/volunteers and no more than 17 youth). An adult at least 18 years old.
- 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) **Providing care for Minors overnight:** Adults should never share sleeping quarters with Minors. The exception to this rule is for the occasional legal caregiver/child situation or parent/child situation. If a Minor requires a caregiver/parent, written permission must be given and kept on record from the Minor's parent/legal guardian.
- 5) **Providing care for Minors outside the U.S.:** There are times when St. Mark Presbyterian Church may offer care for Minors at a meeting, conference or event to be held outside the United States (ex. Missions trip or conference). St. Mark will take all appropriate actions to comply with this Policy to the extent they can be complied with, considering the venue of the meeting, the resources and facilities available, and the laws of the country of the venue. Exceptions should be discussed and addressed with leadership and legal advisors.
- 6) **Participation of new members/participants:** Persons who have not been either a member or an active participant in the congregation for **less than six months** should not be allowed to be a "Recurring" volunteer with children and youth. (this time restraint is also at the discretion of the St. Mark Session)
- 7) **Retaining documents:** The church office shall maintain signed copies of the commitment form and volunteer application and nationwide background checks in a secure and confidential manner on the church premises.

- 8) **Screening procedures:** Screening procedures for employees and volunteers are described below in Section Four: Screening Policy.
- 9) **Training:** Employees of the church and recurring volunteers who have leadership responsibilities regarding children, youth or vulnerable adults will undergo annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse.
- 10) **First aid and CPR:** All paid employees working directly with Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults will be given the opportunity for training in first aid and CPR.
- 11) **Transportation:** All adult drivers at child/youth events must have proper licensure and insurance on file in the St. Mark office. 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 nationwide criminal background checks on their drivers. \*Two people are required when transporting minors by bus or while using a personal vehicle. In each instance, it is required to have at least one person with nationwide background check in the transporting vehicle. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).
- 12) **Forms:** The legal guardians of each minor must provide a yearly updated emergency medical form to be filed in the church office (available on St. Mark website). The emergency medical form should include all contacts for legal guardians and 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. No verbal consent will be accepted. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing council must be released by the signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian as well as the minor. A copy of all such forms must also accompany any event and be onsite at that event wherever children, youth, or vulnerable adults are present.

#### **Section Four: Applications, Training, and Background Checks:**

St. Mark Presbyterian Church recognizes its responsibility and legal liability for accepting volunteers and employees who are safe to work with children and youth.

No person may act as or be engaged as a Child/Youth Worker if that person has been found guilty of an offense, in local, state or federal court or in an ecclesiastical proceeding, that includes actions that fall under definitions or prohibitions set forth in this Policy.

The following screening policy will be observed:

## A. Church employees

- 1) **Employment Application** – employees must complete an application form, or in the case of a teaching elder (minister of the Word), shall submit a current Personal Information Form (PIF) attested by the Pastor's Presbytery. The Presbytery conducts background checks on all potential minister members.
- 2) **Reference Check** – New employees must submit names of three personal references. The appointed Personnel Committee, Director and/or the Pastor will check references; these will be recorded and maintained by the church.
- 3) **Nationwide Background Checks** – checks will be run on each staff member and renewed every two years. \*
- 4) **Annual Safe Church Training** – employees must complete the online training videos to be renewed every year. The St. Mark Church office will receive electronic notification and issue a certificate of completion for each trainee.

## B. Church volunteers:

- 1) **Volunteer Application** – All persons volunteering in either a children's or youth ministry event or program must complete an application form.
- 2) **Reference Check** – Those persons who have not been either a member or a volunteer of the church for at least five years must provide three references. The reference should highlight how the applicant interacts with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Either the Pastor, Director or a designated member of Personnel or Session will check references; reference reports are retained by the church office.
- 3) **Nationwide Background Checks** – Volunteers who are involved with the church's ongoing and recurring ministry to children or youth events shall undergo a nationwide background check renewed every two years. The Pastoral staff approve mentors for confirmation.
  - a) "Recurring" volunteer – a person having ongoing interaction with children or youth and vulnerable adults including Sunday School and Youth Fellowship.
  - b) "Non-recurring" volunteer – a person who has limited involvement with children, youth and vulnerable adults and is always in the company of another member who has undergone a thorough and approved nationwide background check. (For example, a Vacation Bible School volunteer would complete an application but if their involvement with the program were limited would not be required to undergo a Nationwide screening.)
- 4) **Annual Safe Church Training** – Recurring volunteers must complete the online training videos to be renewed every year. The St. Mark Church office will receive electronic notification and issue a certificate of completion for each trainee.

\*indicates St. Mark insurance requirements

# Checklist for applications, training, and background checks

## I. Applications, training, and background checks

- An applicant for either a paid or volunteer position shall submit an application; this application will be retained by the church office.
- The appointed Personnel Committee, Director and/or the Pastor will check references (non-family member). An example would be in the case of Mother's Day Out employees, by the Mother's Day Out director. (Members who have been part of the church for five years or longer will not be required to submit references for volunteer positions.)
- Applicant will sign the Safe Practices Covenant form and be given a copy of these policies and procedures. The covenant form will be retained by the church office.
- Employees and volunteers who are mandated reporters will be advised of their obligations.
- Staff and recurring volunteers with children and youth will undergo nationwide criminal background checks and will have these nationwide background checks renewed every two years. Reports shall be retained by the church.
- Copies acknowledging compliance of these procedures will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
- Concerns raised by background checks or reference checks will be noted and discussed with the employee or volunteer. This confidential conversation will be conducted by the pastor and/or an individual with experience in child welfare as designated by the Session.
- Staff and lead volunteers whose position involves interacting with children and youth and will undergo annual basic training in recognizing, reporting, and preventing child abuse. The Session will review the content and will ensure that those responsible for training use materials that are accurate, current, and factual. The most recent "Guidelines for Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect" published by the Missouri Children's Division provides guidance in developing appropriate training materials. [https://dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines\\_can\\_reports.pdf](https://dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines_can_reports.pdf)
- Mandatory training will be provided by St. Mark Presbyterian Church and will cover the Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Safe Church Policy
  - State law concerning definitions of abuse and reporting
  - Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult ratios, transportation, and use of technology
  - Mandatory criminal background checks and the security of those files
  - Explanation of the importance of the application and screening processes
  - Overnight care as well as care for Minors outside of the U.S.
- Online training will cover Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention, and a detailed Plan of Reporting. These will include:
  - What constitutes Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and neglect
  - How to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
  - Procedures for Reporting

## **Section Five: Social Media**

The number of social networking sites and tools is exploding –Texting, Facebook, Zoom, Twitter, Instagram, Tic Toc, etc. Social Media is considered a tool and resource for ministry, and as such should not be used to abuse, bully, or intimidate others.

St. Mark Presbyterian Church staff and volunteers are to use best practices as outlined by the General Assembly and other entities of the church concerning social media. It is strongly advised that adults do not "friend" or post content about children or youth under age 18 using personal social media accounts.

### **The following guidelines for social media use by employees and volunteers shall apply:**

- 1) As social media continues to evolve, church officers, staff and volunteers will seek to employ current best practices upholding the spirit of these policies and the ethical standards of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- 2) Any contact between volunteers and youth should be transparent. If a group Facebook page is set up as a closed group, transparency might include the group leader sharing the administrator username/password with the pastor. Setting up closed groups or "secret" groups/virtual meetings with minors is not a good practice. Parents should have the option to participate in any youth ministry related social media. The "two-person" rule must still apply with virtual gatherings when children or youth are involved.
- 3) Staff and/or volunteer should receive parental consent before any communication via text or inclusion of a youth on a Facebook page, Zoom, or whenever video conferencing media is initiated.
- 4) Content that violates child/youth/vulnerable adults' privacy, such as disclosing academic information, information about health, or personal information like phone numbers, home addresses or personal email addresses, should not be posted.
- 5) Things that have a personal, romantic or sexual nature are not appropriate and will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the Safe Church Policy and Procedures. Social media postings which include sexually oriented materials, pornography, obscene language or profanity shall not be permitted.

## Section Six: Procedures for Reporting Abuse

### Mandated reporters

According to the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (G-4.0302) all pastors, elders, and deacons are required to report to ecclesiastical and civil authorities the knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.” (Note: “Privileged communication” is not defined in the Book of Order.)

Missouri statute 210.115.1 RS Mo, a mandated reporter includes ministers and other persons charged with the responsibility for the care of children, youth, or vulnerable adults. (See appendix for complete list of mandated reporters). Missouri law also requires that all nurses, doctors, health professionals, educators and childcare workers or other persons responsible for the care of children will immediately report child abuse when they have reasonable cause. In the case of non-mandated individuals, the suspected child abuse should be reported to the pastor. If the person making the initial report is a childcare worker believes that a case of child abuse has been overlooked or ignored and has gone unreported, that person should contact the appropriate state authorities.

**Note:** All reports of suspected child abuse must be reported to the Missouri Children’s Division child abuse hotline (1-800-392-3738). Contacting the police **does not** satisfy mandated reporting requirements.

### Reporting suspected child abuse by an adult at a church related activity

- 1) The Pastor, Staff, Session and Deacons will be guided by the policies contained in this document and the church’s sexual misconduct procedures, in addition to state law, and the policies of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- 2) Any volunteer who either makes the observation of suspected child abuse or who receives information from a participant describing suspected child abuse by an adult should contact the pastor immediately. The suspected incident should not be discussed with anyone else.
- 3) The pastor will begin a written report on the incident. If immediate harm is suspected, the Pastor will notify the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline (1- 800-392-3738).
- 4) The report collected by the Pastor (or other designated individual) shall include sufficient details that record the nature of the incident, the persons involved, including the names and ages of all children; the names of any witnesses who may have observed the incident, and other details needed to make a report to the children’s division. A copy of the report shall be retained by the church and submitted to the presbytery.
- 5) The church should not assume the role of investigator. If there is **any** reasonable doubt, treat the case as suspected child abuse take the following action and document accordingly.
  - a) Isolate the accused adult immediately;

- b) report the suspected abuse to appropriate state authorities;
  - c) document and follow all instructions of state authorities;
  - d) advise the Clerk of Session;
  - e) advise the person making the initial report that state authorities have been notified;
  - f) notify the child's parent or guardian as instructed by state authorities.
  - g) Notify the church's insurance company that an allegation has been received.
- 6) Volunteers and staff should observe strict confidentiality regarding the suspected child abuse, even after it has been reported to state authorities. Therefore, care should be taken not to discuss the incident with anyone except when absolutely necessary.
  - 7) A full report must be submitted as soon as possible to the Presbytery Leader or stated clerk of the Presbytery and/or the church's insurance company, but in no event later than two weeks from the initial report of suspected child abuse. A summary of the report shall be provided to the Session; the full report shall be retained by the church indefinitely.

### **Reporting disclosure of suspected child abuse which happened prior to the church event by caretaker, relative, authority person, or other adult.**

- 1) Any volunteers who receive information describing suspected child abuse that may have happened away from the church event shall contact the pastor immediately. The suspected incident should not be discussed with anyone else.
- 2) The Pastor will begin a written report on the incident. Either the Presbytery leader of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy or stated Clerk may be contacted to help resolve any questions.
- 3) Report suspected child abuse to the appropriate state authorities. Neither volunteers nor Staff should undertake an investigation. Note: contacting the police does not satisfy mandated reporting requirements.
- 4) Volunteers and Staff should observe strict confidentiality regarding the suspected child abuse, even after it has been reported to state authorities. Therefore, care should be taken not to discuss the incident with participants or other event Staff, except when absolutely necessary.
- 5) A full report must be submitted as soon as possible to the Presbytery and/or insurance company, but in no event later than two weeks from the initial report.

### **Reporting and handling peer-to-peer misconduct at a church event.**

- 1) Any volunteer or Staff members who observes peer-to-peer misconduct at a church event or who receives information from a participant describing such peer-to-peer misconduct should report it to the pastor immediately. The suspected incident should not be discussed with anyone else.
- 2) The Pastor will begin a written report on the incident.
- 3) If the peer-to-peer misconduct does not involve sexual contact, initial inquiry should be made by the Pastor to determine whether the report or claim of misconduct is

serious and credible and, if so, what actions should be taken. The following procedure will usually be appropriate:

- a) Take a statement from the offended child, being careful to listen to the child's own words and not to ask leading questions. The pastor should have one other adult present, who may be the person making the initial report, if that person would put the child at ease. The Pastor should be careful to listen to the child's own words and not to ask any leading questions.
  - b) Talk separately to the child accused of the misconduct. Do not ask any leading questions.
  - c) Talk separately with any witnesses to the misconduct. Again, do not ask any leading questions.
  - d) If the report or claim does not involve misconduct that physically harmed or seriously threatened to harm anyone, you will need to decide on disciplinary action, if any, which might include counseling, notification of the parents, or expulsion from the event. Document all contacts. Either the Presbytery Leader or stated Clerk may be contacted to help resolve any questions.
  - e) If the report or claim does involve misconduct that physically harmed or seriously threatened to harm another person, isolate the accused child immediately and report the incident to appropriate state authorities; document and follow all instructions of state authorities. Otherwise, notify the parents or guardians of both the offended child and the accused child.
  - f) Staff should observe reasonable confidentiality regarding any incidents of misconduct reported to state authorities. Therefore, care should be taken not to discuss the incident except when absolutely necessary
  - g) A full report must be submitted as soon as possible to the Presbytery and/or insurance company, but in no event later than two weeks from the initial report of suspected abuse.
- 4) If the peer-to-peer misconduct does involve sexual contact, initial inquiry should be made by the Pastor to determine whether the report or claim of misconduct is serious and credible and, if so, what actions should be taken. The following procedure will usually be appropriate:
- a) Talk to each child separately, being careful to listen to their own words and not to ask leading questions. The Pastor should have one other adult present, who may be the person making the initial report, if that person would put the child at ease. The Pastor should be careful to listen to the child's own words and not to ask any leading questions.
  - b) If there are witnesses, talk separately with them. Again, do not ask any leading questions.
  - c) Determine whether the sexual contact resulted from the use of force, coercion, threats, or violence, or whether one child is so much older that the younger child either felt coercion or did not understand what was happening. The Presbytery may be contacted to help resolve any questions.
  - d) If the sexual contact did not result from the use of force, coercion, threats, or violence, then follow the steps set forth above for handling cases of

peer-to-peer misconduct that do not involve physical harm or the threat of physical harm by one child against another.

- e) If the sexual contact did result from the use of force, coercion, threats, or violence, or age disparity, follow the steps set forth above for reporting to state authorities' cases of peer-to-peer misconduct that involve physical harm or the threat of physical harm by one child against another.
- f) A full report must be submitted as soon as possible to the Presbytery and/or insurance company, but in no event later than two weeks from the initial report of suspected child abuse.

**IMMUNITY/PENALTIES (Section 210.135 RS Mo)** The law provides immunity from civil or criminal liability to those who are required to make reports with CD, any law enforcement agency, or the juvenile office in the completion of an investigation/family assessment. Immunity is provided regardless of the outcome of the investigation/family assessment; however, it does not apply if a person intentionally files a false report. Failure to report is a Class A misdemeanor for a person who is required under the law to report. Filing a false report is also a Class A.

## Procedures and Checklist for Reporting

Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, The Rev. Dr. Craig Howard, Presbytery Leader, 314-772-2395.  
The Rev. Dave Burgess, Pastor of St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 636-394-2233.

**Reporting Abuse: In Missouri, report abuse to the child abuse/neglect  
hotline number (1-800-392-3738, or TTD at 1-800-669-8689**

**The following information, if available, should be provided when making a report:**

- The name, address, present whereabouts, sex, race, and birth date or estimated age of the reported child or children and of any other children in the household;
- The name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of the child's parent(s), or other person(s) responsible for the child's care;
- The name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of the person(s) alleged to be responsible for the abuse or neglect, if different from the parent(s);
- Directions to the home, if available, when the child's address is general delivery, rural route, or only a town, and any other means of locating the family;
- Parents'/alleged perpetrators' place of employment and work hours, if known;
- The full nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or neglect, and any indication of prior injuries, including the reason for suspecting the child may be subjected to conditions resulting in abuse or neglect;
- Any event that precipitated the report; adverse reactions to the child(ren);
- An assessment of the risk of further harm to the child and, if a risk exists, whether it is imminent;
- If the information was provided by a third party, or if there were witnesses, the identity of that person(s); and the circumstances under which the reporter first became aware of the child's alleged injuries, abuse or neglect; and the action taken, if any, to treat, shelter, or assist the child;
- Present location of the child;
- Whether the subjects of the report are aware a report is being made;
- The name, address, work and home telephone numbers, profession, and relationship to the child of the reporter.
- When was the child last seen by the reporter; and whether other children are in the home?

## APPENDIX 1: Definitions

The following list of definitions are intended for use in this policy and were adapted from the Presbyterian Church (USA) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

([http://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/docs/pcusa\\_cpp.doc](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/docs/pcusa_cpp.doc), accessed 8/21/2017)

For specific applications of Missouri law, please consult the update “Guidelines for Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect” published by the Missouri Department of Social Services.

### **The following age descriptions shall be used:**

**Child:** defined as a person between the ages of 0–11.

**Youth:** defined as a person between the ages of 12–17.

**Minor:** defined as any child or youth 0–17 years-old.

**Vulnerable Adult:** defined as any person 18 years old or older. See definition below.

**Child abuse:** As defined by Missouri state law, abuse is “any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child’s care, custody, and control, except that discipline including spanking, administered in a reasonable manner, shall not be construed to be abuse.”

**Child neglect:** As defined by Missouri state law, neglect is “Failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody, and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the child’s well-being.”

**Employee:** Any paid or contracted employee of St Mark.

**Mandated reporter:** Defined by Missouri law as “any physician, medical examiner, coroner, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, resident, intern, nurse, hospital or clinic personnel that are engaged in the examination, care, treatment or research of persons, and any other health practitioner, psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, day care center worker or other child-care worker, juvenile officer, probation or parole officer, jail or detention center personnel, teacher, principal or other school official, minister as provided by section 352.400, RS Mo, peace officer or law enforcement official, or **other person with the responsibility for the care of children**. Section 210.109.3, RS Mo, states mandated reporters may not make child abuse/neglect (CA/N) reports anonymously provided the reporter is informed that reporter information will be held as confidential.”

**Misuse of technology:** The use of technology that results in the harassing or abusing of a child/youth. This includes using technology to send suggestive message and images to a child or youth. Adults should not have any technological contact with a child or youth that is not either preapproved by the child/youth’s legal guardian with a signed waiver, or the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church website or other social media program. (For more information and guidelines see Section Five: Social Media)

**Person responsible for the care & control of a child:** According to Missouri law, this includes but is not limited to parents, guardians, other members of the child’s household exercising supervision over a child for any part of a 24-hour day. It also includes any adult based on the relationship to the parents of the child or members of the child’s household/family who has access to the child.

**Reasonable cause:** Defined as “any reason to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the division in accordance with the provisions of sections 210.109 to 210.183, RS Mo. Reasonable cause to suspect means a standard of reasonable suspicion, rather than conclusive proof. When a person is required to report in an official capacity as a staff member of a school facility, the person in charge shall be notified. That person in charge becomes responsible for immediately making or causing a report to be made. This is not meant to relieve anyone of their responsibility from making a report. A report may also be made to any law enforcement agency or juvenile office, although this does not take the place of making a report to CD. Section 210.109.3, RS Mo, states mandated reporters may not make child abuse/neglect (CA/N) reports anonymously provided the reporter is informed that reporter information will be held as confidential.”

**Recurring Volunteer:** A “recurring volunteer” is involved in ongoing, regular contact with children or youth. These are volunteers involved in “recurring” activities such as Sunday School or Mid-week student activities throughout the year. These recurring volunteers are required to have a nationwide background check renewed every two years but are not required to provide references if they are a long-time standing member or attendee of St. Mark (6 months or longer). If you are a recurring volunteer and have been a part of St. Mark church for less than 6 months, you will need a nationwide background check and will need to provide an application with references.

**Non-recurring Volunteer:** A “non-recurring volunteer” is a person whose involvement with children is much more limited. These are volunteers involved in Vacation Bible School or one-time events. Non-recurring volunteers are not required to have a background check but would need to provide an application with references.

**Sexual Abuse:** In the Book of Order, sexual abuse is defined as, “Sexual abuse of another person is 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).

**Spiritual Abuse:** Spiritual abuse is the use of faith, belief, or religious practice in a way that coerces, controls, or damages another person in a way that is not directed to their wellbeing. It can take many forms, including coercing a person to participate in an activity which they do not wish to participate; using faith or a church office to exploit another person’s financial situation; coercing a person to reconcile with someone who may cause them harm; using threats, dictating basic decisions, and denying another person the right to make basic choices about their safety. For more information, see <http://www.marydemuth.com/spiritual-abuse-10-ways-to-spot-it/>.

**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.

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## Appendix 2:

### Safe Practices Covenant

The following forms (Safe Practices Covenant, Volunteer Application, Waiver and Consent) shall be considered part of these policies and will be signed by all employees and volunteers. Please provide a current photo with your application.

- 1) St. Mark Presbyterian Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth and vulnerable adults who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church.
- 2) As a volunteer or employee working with children, youth or vulnerable adults in this church, I agree to observe and abide by this Safe Practices Policy, to observe the "Two Adult Rule," and to report promptly abusive or inappropriate behavior to the child abuse hotline and pastor.
- 3) I have read and received a copy of this application and the St. Mark Safe Church Policies.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Appendix 3:

## Volunteer Application Form – St. Mark Presbyterian Church

(Please fill out completely, sign & return with attached photo)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone/\_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone/\_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: (if employed) \_\_\_\_\_

Previous volunteer experience: \_\_\_\_\_

When did you begin participating in this congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid driver's license? \_\_restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have vehicle liability insurance? \_\_\_\_

References: (for those who have not been a participant in this congregation for at least 5 years:

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone/Evening phone

Relationship to the applicant \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone/\_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the applicant \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone/\_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the applicant \_\_\_\_\_

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## Waiver and Consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify that the information I have provided on this volunteer application is true and correct. I authorize St. Mark Presbyterian Church to verify the information I have provided on this application by conducting a criminal background check and contacting the references given. I authorize the references listed in this application to give you the information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the volunteer position I have applied for.

I have read this waiver and the entire application and am fully aware of its contents.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

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