

members, or be leaders of activities. LFPC will gladly accept these people as associates in various activities. As such, they may participate in programs with children but must at all times be under the supervision of an employee or volunteer. Extenuating circumstances may require a deviation from the criteria above. Such a deviation, and necessary supplemental controls, must be approved in advance by the appropriate Commission, who must then notify the Session of their action.

Application Process and Covenant

All persons who wish to be volunteers or associates in any program involving children at LFPC shall read this policy and sign the covenant at the end. A signed copy of the covenant shall be provided to the elders of the Administration and Finance Commission, who shall retain it.

All persons who wish to be volunteers in any program involving children at LFPC shall complete and submit the attached application. They may be accepted as volunteers pending review of the application. Approval of an application shall be withheld only where considered necessary to ensure the protection of the children. Minor volunteers must have a co-signature from a parent.

As a condition of employment, any employee of LFPC will be required to complete the attached application.

A criminal record background check with the State Policy and the Child Protective Services is mandatory prior to the employment of all employees.

A criminal record background check with the State Police and the Child Protective Services will be performed as deemed necessary for volunteers before their applications are approved.

Reporting Procedures for Suspicion of Abuse

It is the policy of LFPC that any person who has suspicion that abuse has occurred shall immediately report such information to one of the following: Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Clerk of the Session. If all of those people are unavailable, the suspicion shall be reported to an elder of the Administration and Finance Commission.

It is LFPC policy to report suspicion of abuse to the appropriate government authority, as required by law. The law requires that any initial suspicion of abuse be reported to the child protective services within 72 hours from the initial determination. By law, reports of abuse are strictly confidential.

The Pastor, Associate Pastor or Clerk of Session shall inform the Session that a suspicion has been made and reported. Those persons involved in the investigation or report shall hold relevant information in strict confidence, subject to such disclosures as are required by church procedures or by law. As appropriate, the Pastor, Associate Pastor or Clerk of Session will also inform the Presbytery.

Little Falls
Presbyterian Church

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington, VA 22207
703-538-5230 littlefallschurch.org

Policy Statement and Purpose

As a caring, Christian community, we at Little Falls Presbyterian Church (LFPC) are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and Christian environment for all children involved in the life of LFPC.

Although we are not aware of any cases where this environment has not been provided at LFPC, we are sadly aware that evil, including abuse of children, does exist in this world. We recognize that neither LFPC nor an other institution or organization can guarantee absolutely that no harm will befall a child entrusted to its care. However, LFPC can, and through this policy does, make every effort to minimize the likelihood of such an occurrence.

This policy also directs that activities involving children and adults be conducted in a manner to minimize vulnerability of the ministry and workers to unwarranted or false allegations.

Accordingly, we state that it is the policy of LFPC that:

- We will treat all children in a loving and caring manner, as our Lord would wish.
- We will make reasonable efforts to ensure that those entrusted with the care of our children are deserving of that trust.
- We will also make reasonable efforts to safeguard the privacy of members, staff, and friends who may be involved in work with children.
- We will comply with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia with regard to reporting suspicion of abuse.
- We will make reasonable efforts to ensure that members, staff, and friends who may be involved in work with children are not put in a position where unwarranted or false charges are made against them.

Definitions

A **child** is a person considered a minor under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. A person who is legally incapacitated is considered a **child** under this policy.

Child Abuse includes:

- **Sexual abuse:** touching or non-touching interaction between a child and another child or between a child and an adult, for the purpose of sexual stimulation. This behavior is always considered forced when the interaction involves a supervising child or adult, whether or not the child victim has consented.
- **Physical abuse:** when a caretaker creates or inflicts, threatens to create or inflict, or allows to be created or inflicted upon such a child a physical injury by other than accidental means, or creates a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily functions.
- **Mental abuse:** when a caretaker creates or inflicts, threatens to create or inflict, or allows to be created or inflicted upon such a child a mental injury by

other than accidental means, or creates substantial risk of impairment of mental functions.

- **Neglect:** when there is the failure to provide food, clothing, shelter or supervision for a child to the extent that the child's health or safety is endangered.

Employee is a comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are hired or called to work for the church for salary or wages.

Volunteer is the term used for those who provide services to LFPC and who receive no monetary remuneration. For purposes of this policy, a volunteer is one who is in charge of an activity involving children or who may work with children without supervision. Volunteers may or may not be members of LFPC.

Associate is a term used for those who work with children at LFPC without monetary remuneration but are not in charge of an activity and work under the supervision of a volunteer or employee. Associates may or may not be members of LFPC.

Program Staff Member is the term for non-ordained employees of LFPC responsible for LFPC's education, music, children and youth programs.

Supervision includes direct observation, control or visual monitoring of activities.

Standards of Conduct

- Employees and volunteers who undertake the special responsibility of working with the children of LFPC shall not violate the trust of the responsibility by engaging in acts of abuse.
- Church teachers, youth advisors, childcare providers, and others working with children shall work in pairs, when practical.
- Where practical, there shall be visual access to rooms in which activities with children are being conducted.
- In general, children involved in an LFPC sponsored activity should be transported in groups rather than alone.
- Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayers), or physical caretaking (changing diapers, toileting, etc.), are appropriate in this community of caring Christians. However, employees, volunteers, and associates shall not touch, interact with, or otherwise communicate with children in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating.
- Those who work with children are also tasked with guarding the physical and emotional safety of the children in their care and with being aware of signs indicating neglect of the children's well-being.

Supervision and Accountability

No person will be accepted as a volunteer until he or she has been actively involved in the life of LFPC for at least 3 months.

For a variety of reasons there are people who wish to be associated with a specific aspect of LFPC but do not wish to be actively involved in the life of the church, become

Little Falls Presbyterian Church

CHILDREN / YOUTH WORK APPLICATION

Volunteers and Employees

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone numbers: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Have you at any time ever engaged in, or been accused of, any act of child molestation, exploitation, or abuse? YES _____ NO _____

If "yes," please explain in detail (attached additional pages if necessary):

APPLICANT VERIFICATION AND RELEASE

I recognize that Little Falls Presbyterian Church is relying on the accuracy of the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all the information that I have provided is completely true and correct.

*I authorize representatives of Little Falls Presbyterian Church (LFPC) to conduct a criminal background investigation and child abuse investigation.

*I voluntarily release LFPC and any such person or entity listed herein by me from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications.

I have carefully read the policy and procedures of LFPC, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth at all times.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of parent (if individual is under age 18): _____

*Not required if individual is under age 18.

Little Falls Presbyterian Church

Name _____

CHILD PROTECTION COVENANT

I **ACCEPT** the responsibility to nurture the Christian faith and well-being of the children and youth of Little Falls Presbyterian Church and to care for them as Christ cares for me. "I _____ will tend the flock of God that is in my charge, exercising the oversight...willing, as God would have me do it..."

1 Peter 5:2

I **AGREE** to submit to the authority of the Session of Little Falls Presbyterian Church in all matters of Christian Education.

I **HAVE READ** and **UNDERSTAND** and I **AGREE TO ABIDE BY** the Child Protection Policy and Covenant of the Little Falls Presbyterian Church.

Signature

Date:

Please return this copy to the A&F Commission