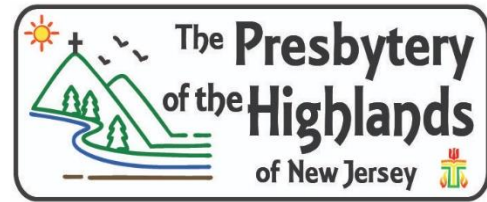


The Presbytery of the Highlands



CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH VULNERABILITIES PROTECTION POLICY

“Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

~ Mark 10:14

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves....”

~Proverbs 31:8

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Policy Purpose

The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey is committed to providing an environment that is a safe place for Children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities (also known as “vulnerable persons”), and that will protect those who may be at risk

due to various factors from any abuse when they are involved in Presbytery-related activities. Highlands Presbytery adopts these policies and procedures not only to maximize safety and prevent abuse against vulnerable persons from occurring within its Presbytery community, but also to guide and protect volunteers and employees from unwarranted allegations of such abuse.

Terms and Definitions

Adults with Vulnerabilities - 18 years or older person without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent; who is unable to make, communicate, or carry out decisions concerning his or her well-being due to physical or mental illness, disability, or deficiency. Such persons retain all their civil and constitutional rights unless some of those rights have been restricted by court action.

Child or Youth – Persons under 18 years old and considered a minor under the law.

Abuse of Child, Youth, or Adult with Vulnerabilities (“vulnerable persons”) - An act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust (even though he or she may not care for the **vulnerable person** on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens harm to a child’s physical or mental health or welfare. Types of abuse may include physical abuse, including physical injury or threat of injury; physical neglect, such as failure to provide necessary care to a child; sexual abuse; mental abuse or neglect; emotional abuse; spiritual abuse; and exploitation for personal benefit. Abuse of children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities includes, but is not limited to:

Neglect of Basic Needs - A form of abuse. Denial of food, water, cleanliness, clothing, and sleep are not appropriate means of discipline.

Physical Abuse - Any physical force applied by an adult or older youth in a position of care or authority to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Physical force (hitting, spanking, shaking, shoving, etc.) is not to be used by leaders in our programs.

Sexual Abuse –

Book of Order (D-7.0901) Sexual abuse is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position. Sexual abuse is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and is therefore always an offense for the purpose of discipline.

Emotional Abuse - Inappropriately belittling, hateful, or angry words and/or actions directed toward vulnerable persons. Discipline by humiliation is also

emotional abuse.

Exploitation: When a person is taken advantage of for personal benefit in either financial or legal means.

Spiritual Abuse- Using religious references to shame or by guilt to motivate a vulnerable person into a particular action or behavior.

Employee – Any person who works for salary or wages at Highlands Presbytery.

Volunteer – Any person not employed by Highlands Presbytery who, at any time during the year, teaches, supervises, or helps with activities involving vulnerable persons, or is in the presence of children, youth, or adults with vulnerabilities.

Leader – An adult designated by Highlands Presbytery or by a sponsoring organization to have responsibility for vulnerable persons. The adult must be a minimum of 18 years of age. Leaders of overnight trips must be at least 21 years of age. It is suggested that leaders be a minimum of four years older than the children or youth they are supervising.

Presbytery Activity or Sponsored Activity - Includes any and all gatherings that arise from any worship, educational, childcare, fellowship, administrative, pastoral, mission or recreational event generated or organized by Highlands Presbytery. Whether within the bounds or outside the bounds of Highlands Presbytery.

Volunteer Ministry – Includes any Presbytery sponsored activity engaged in by a volunteer.

Screening –includes mandatory background checks as specified in a council's policies.

Staff: Background Requirements

Additional terms regarding adults with vulnerabilities may be found in the material following.

Applicants for Employment or Volunteer Opportunities at Highlands Presbytery

Applicants for full-time or part-time paid employment at Highlands Presbytery will be required to provide, complete or undergo the following:

- An Employment Application which will include information regarding past employment and prior convictions for crimes;
- A specific statement that the individual has no prior conviction for abuse or sexual misconduct against any vulnerable persons; and
- A reference check covering, where possible, the two immediate past employers, or personal references unrelated to the applicant if no information can be obtained from past employers.

- Prior to hiring an applicant, Highlands Presbytery will obtain a criminal record report for that individual. Every five years, Highlands Presbytery will perform national criminal database searches and national sex offender registry searches on existing employees, and each employee shall be required to execute any documents that Highlands Presbytery might request for such purpose. Any individual who has lived outside New Jersey in the last five years may be subject to additional county or state court search.
- Upon being hired, each new employee will be required to sign an acknowledgement that he or she has received a copy of the Highlands Presbytery Child, Youth, and Adults with Vulnerabilities Protection Policy, understands it and will comply with its terms.
- Each new employee will be provided orientation and training on child abuse, including its recognition and prevention, as well as on the terms and conditions of this policy.

Any candidate for employment who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of abuse or neglect against vulnerable persons cannot be employed by Highlands Presbytery. Conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from employment: drug-related, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy or abuse of a minor.

Volunteers: Background Requirements

Volunteers working with vulnerable persons for a Presbytery Activity will be required to provide, complete or undergo the following:

- An Volunteer Ministry Application which will include information regarding past employment and prior convictions for crimes;
- A specific statement that the individual has no prior conviction for abuse or sexual misconduct against vulnerable persons; and
- Prior to becoming a volunteer working with vulnerable persons, Highlands Presbytery will obtain a background check for that individual. Every three years, Highlands Presbytery will perform national criminal database searches and national sex offender registry searches on existing volunteers and each volunteer shall be required to execute any documents that Highlands Presbytery might request for such purpose. Any individual who has lived outside New Jersey in the last five years may be subject to additional county or state court search
- Each new volunteer, prior to beginning any volunteer role, will be required to sign an acknowledgement that he or she has received a copy of the Highlands Presbytery Child, Youth, and Adults with Vulnerabilities Protection Policy, understands it, and will comply with its terms.
- Each new volunteer will be provided orientation and training on child

abuse, including its recognition and prevention, as well as on the terms and conditions of this policy.

Any candidate for volunteer service who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding related to an allegation of the abuse or neglect of vulnerable persons MAY not work with vulnerable persons at Highlands Presbytery. Refusal to complete the Volunteer Application process or a conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from volunteer service with vulnerable persons: drug-related activity, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy, or abuse of a minor.

Leaders of other groups that involve children, youth, or adults with vulnerabilities using Highlands Presbytery's facilities or hold events on Presbytery property will also be required to read the Policy and sign the Volunteer Acknowledgement Statement.

Code of Conduct

1. Staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the Highlands Presbytery Child, Youth, and Adults With Vulnerabilities Protection Policy guidelines in all their interactions with children and youth.
2. Staff and volunteers will respect the rights of vulnerable persons not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable or that disregard their right to say no.
3. Staff and volunteers may not discipline vulnerable persons by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
4. Physical restraint is used only in situations necessary to protect the vulnerable person, other participants, or staff from harm.
5. While supervising vulnerable persons participating in Highlands Presbytery programs, staff and volunteers should know where participants are at all times.
6. Restroom supervision: Whenever possible, volunteers will make sure any restroom used is not occupied by any suspicious or unknown individual before allowing vulnerable persons to use the facilities. Always send children in pairs with a volunteer. The staff or volunteer, will stand in the doorway while vulnerable persons are using the restroom. This policy allows for both the person's privacy and protection for the staff or volunteer (not being alone with a vulnerable person). Staff and volunteers shall strongly encourage parents to take vulnerable persons to the restroom whenever possible.
7. Diapering and potty training should be done primarily by paid caregivers. Volunteers may be asked to help in certain situations and should follow posted nursery guidelines when performing diapering.
8. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of vulnerable persons. Any signs of injury or possible abuse of vulnerable persons must be reported according to the Highlands Presbytery Child, Youth, and Adults with Vulnerabilities Protection Policy.

9. Staff and volunteers are discouraged from being alone with vulnerable persons without parental permission.
10. Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers release vulnerable persons to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other individual authorized by the parent or guardian.
11. Consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working or volunteering with vulnerable persons is prohibited.
12. Being impaired by legally prescribed drugs while working or volunteering with vulnerable persons is prohibited.
13. Possessing or using any weapons or firearms while working or volunteering with vulnerable persons is prohibited.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco *in the presence of* vulnerable persons or parents while working or volunteering is prohibited.
15. Profanity, inappropriate jokes and media, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of vulnerable persons or parents are prohibited.
16. Staff and volunteers will be mindful of the content on any portable electronic device, social networking pages, or other electronic media that might be accessible to any vulnerable persons.
17. Staff and volunteer adult and youth leaders shall wear appropriate dress when volunteering with vulnerable persons.
18. Movies used in all Presbytery settings shall meet the voluntary movie rating system guidelines established by the Motion Picture Association of America for age-appropriate content.
19. Staff and volunteers may not date or be romantically involved with program participants or church members who are younger than 18 years of age.
20. Staff and volunteers are required to read, sign, and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and will attend training sessions on the subject.
21. Staff and volunteers are required to report any concerns or suspicions regarding their observations of any individual's interaction with vulnerable persons. Except for concerns related to alleged or potential abuse, which require mandated specific immediate reports (see REPORTING, Appendix A), these concerns may be reported to the individual. If the concerns are not alleviated by a change in the individual's behavior, a second report must be made to the pastor, clerk of session, or Stated Clerk.
22. Leaders will always give parents advance notice and full information regarding the event in which their child, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities will be participating.
23. If it is necessary for an adult to take a vulnerable person home after an event, all staff and volunteers shall abide by safe driving laws when transporting such persons. Driving record history shall be obtained on all youth leaders and volunteers. An effort should be made to contact the family and inform

them of the situation before transporting the vulnerable person.

Please note that training for the care of adults with vulnerabilities is not required by this policy, but it is available and strongly recommended for any persons who work with adults with vulnerabilities. You can find “Sexual Abuse Awareness Training for Vulnerable Adults Programs” through MinistrySafe at <https://ministrysafe.com/training-pva/>

General Procedures

Supervision: *Two-Leader/Open-Door Policy*

Whenever possible, any adult who is present in a Presbytery sponsored activity for child, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities should be accompanied by another adult. Highlands Presbytery employees and volunteers should not, during a Highlands Presbytery program, be alone with a single vulnerable person where they cannot be observed by others.

In order to avoid situations where an individual is alone in a room with a vulnerable person, all such activities should be supervised by at least two adult leaders. Whenever possible, these adults should be unrelated. The presence of two leaders is to protect vulnerable persons against situations in which abuse might occur, and to protect leaders against false allegations of abuse or neglect.

Classrooms, childcare rooms, and any area in which programs for vulnerable persons are taking place may be visited without prior notice by Presbytery staff, parents, or other volunteer church workers. No windows may ever be totally blocked so as to prevent visual observation into the classroom.

In the event that two leaders cannot be present in the room, such that one leader is alone in a room with one or more vulnerable persons, a door or half-door from the room must be left open. The leader should not position himself or herself in the room such that other adults passing in the hallway cannot see him or her.

Ratios

Maintain appropriate adult-to-vulnerable adult ratios for effective supervision. The optimal ratio can depend on the group size, ages, and individual needs, and may be subject to legal requirements, while maintaining the two-leader Rule, meaning two or more responsible adults supervise activities with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

The recommended adult/volunteer-to-child/youth ratio, is 1:6 for elementary age, 1:8 for Middle School and 1:10 for Senior High ages, gender balance is recommended.

Parental/Guardian Consent

Children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities must obtain parental or guardian permission for involvement in Presbytery sponsored activities or programs that involve travel away from the any Presbytery physical facilities.

“Six Month” Rule for Volunteers

A volunteer must be a member of a congregation of Highlands Presbytery, or have regularly attended that congregation, for six months before working with children, youth, or adults with vulnerabilities. This requirement does not apply to paid staff or volunteers involved in activities in which their own children are present. The Administrative and Coordinating Team (ACT) shall have the authority to waive this six-month rule upon request if deemed appropriate.

Policy Review

The provisions of this Policy shall be reviewed annually by the ACT. Any proposed changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of the ACT for its input, if any, prior to such changes being recommended to the Presbytery.

Off-Site Trips & Events

Permission Forms

Parent/Guardian Permission Forms and Medical Consent Forms must be completed prior to all trips. The two-adult rule must be followed throughout the trip with any foreseeable exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities. Under no circumstances may one adult alone take or accompany vulnerable persons on an overnight outing.

Ratios

Maintain appropriate adult-to-vulnerable adult ratios for effective supervision. The optimal ratio can depend on the group size, ages, and individual needs, and may be subject to legal requirements, while maintaining the two-leader Rule, meaning two or more responsible adults supervise activities with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

The required adult to child/youth ratio for chaperones for any ministry with children or youth shall be 1:6 for elementary age, 1:8 for Middle School and 1:10 for Senior High. Gender balance is required.

Rooming Arrangements

- Rooming arrangements should provide for vulnerable persons of the same sex to room together and adults of the same sex to room together.
- When possible, adults' rooms shall be next to the rooms of vulnerable persons and these persons may be checked on during the night.
- Ordinarily, adults should not share rooms with vulnerable persons. An

individual minor may share a room with an individual adult if the two are related (for example, parent/child), or if written permission has been granted prior to the event by a parent or guardian.

- In situations where one large sleeping area is provided, at least one adult of the same sex shall sleep in proximity of vulnerable persons of the same sex.

Medical

- Each vulnerable person, adult volunteer, and staff must submit a completed medical/insurance form. Each minor's forms must have a parent or guardian's signature.
- Whenever possible, all activities with vulnerable persons shall have a staff or volunteer adult leader with current-certification first aid/CPR training.
- Group leaders should have a copy of all medical forms for overnight or off-site events. These forms will be kept on the event site for the duration of the event.
- First Aid supplies will be available on the event site. All workers will be informed of the location of First Aid supplies/equipment and shall have access to information concerning specific medical conditions and concerns of participants.
- A written report will be completed in the case of any accident, medical emergency or injury.

Driving Rules/Travel

- All drivers of Children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities must be over 24. In situations where this is not possible, parent permission shall be obtained before the trip and vehicles shall travel together.
- When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-leader rule still applies unless parental permission is obtained prior to the trip. When several vehicles are taken for an event and two leaders are not available for every vehicle, keeping the other vehicle in sight at regular intervals is an acceptable substitution for the two-leader rule.
- Travel arrangements for off-campus events will be coordinated through the Presbytery.
- All adult drivers of Children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities will be screened through a driving history search. A valid driver's license will be required.
- All vehicles should remain parked throughout the duration of the activity except for transporting Children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities, and obtaining supplies.
- Seat belts will be provided for all passengers.

Outside Groups

All leaders of non-Highlands Presbytery sponsored groups and events that use Highlands Presbytery facilities and supervise vulnerable persons are expected to adhere to these policies. Upon receipt of the policy from Highlands Presbytery, the leaders must review the Child, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities Protection Policy and sign the Outside Group Leaders Release Form to acknowledge their review of it and to confirm their agreement to follow the policy and are expected to conduct their own due diligence in this regard.

Appendix A – Reporting

1. Children and Youth

Reporting: here is information from www.preventchildabuse.nj.org

Report Abuse

Who is responsible for reporting suspected child abuse in New Jersey?

In New Jersey, ANY person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected has a legal responsibility to report it to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). A concerned caller does not need proof to report an allegation of child abuse and can make the report anonymously. Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect according to the law or to comply with the provisions of the law is a disorderly person and subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 or up to six months imprisonment, or both.

How do I report child abuse in New Jersey?

Call New Jersey's Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline at **1-877-NJ ABUSE (652-2873)**
(TTY/TDD use **1-800-835-5510**)

They are available and will respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If a child is in immediate danger, you should call 911.

Do callers have immunity from civil or criminal liability?

Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of child abuse or neglect or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report is immune from any criminal or civil liability as a result of such action. Calls can be placed to the hotline anonymously.

What happens when I call the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline?

The hotline is answered by trained caseworkers who know how to respond to reports of child abuse/neglect. This caseworker may ask you about:

- **Who:** The child and parent/caregiver's name, age and address and the name of the alleged perpetrator and that person's relationship to the child.
- **What:** Type and frequency of alleged abuse/neglect, current or previous injuries to the child and what caused you to become concerned.
- **When:** When the alleged abuse/neglect occurred and when you learned of it.
- **Where:** Where the incident occurred, where the child is now and whether the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.
- **How:** How urgent the need is for intervention and whether there is a likelihood of imminent danger for the child

What happens after I make the call?

When a report indicates that a child may be at risk, the Division of Youth and Family Services will promptly investigate the allegations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report.

What if I tell Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey about my concerns?

While Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey values the health and safety of children — we, like all NJ citizens, are legally required to forward concerns about suspected abuse to the Division of Youth and Family Services. They are the only investigative and protective bodies of the State of NJ responsible for handling them.

We all care about children. We urge you to report any concern about the welfare of a child to DYFS, the legal authorities responsible for investigating suspected situations of abuse. You should call **1-877-NJ-ABUSE** and let them know the details of your concern. They will take the matter seriously and gather information that is in the best interest of the child.

Confidentiality

All communications shall be conducted in as confidential a manner as is compatible with the reporting of an allegation.

Parental Notification

If an incident has occurred on church property during a presbytery-sponsored event, the parents of any minor involved in any allegation of abuse shall be immediately notified.

Potential Responses

Upon any report of potential or alleged child abuse by an employee or volunteer of WJP, any individual accused of such conduct may be temporarily relieved of any duties involving youth or children pending an appropriate investigation.

2. Adults with Vulnerabilities

There are multiple offices within the [Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#) that exist to protect adults against abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Adult Protective Services (APS): <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/a-k/aps/>

Adult Protective Services provides investigations of adults living in the community who have reported experiencing abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. If someone you know is 18 years of age or older, **contact your county APS office to file a referral.**

Toll-Free Number: (855) TELL APS | (855) 835-5277

A vulnerable adult is:

- Age 18 years or older,
- Residing in the community (in a private residence or unlicensed, non-institutional setting),
- Due to physical or mental illness, disability or deficiency, lacks sufficient

- understanding or capacity to make, communicate, or carry out decisions concerning his or her well-being, and
- the subject of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Abuse comes in physical, mental, or sexual forms and can have physical or emotional signs.

Neglect is when a primary caregiver fails to provide adequate assistance that the individual depends on— such as food, clothing, shelter, or necessary medical care.

Self-Neglect is a non purposeful act where an individual fails to meet their own essential physical, psychological, or social needs, which threatens the individual's health, safety, and well-being.

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of the individual for personal benefit in either financial or legal means.

WHO ARE Mandated Reporters? In most states there are “mandatory reporter” statutes applying to persons providing services to seniors or adults with disabilities. Mandatory reporters in New Jersey are: Health care professionals, Law enforcement officers, Firefighters, Paramedics, Emergency medical technicians

APS investigation

An APS investigation is a thorough assessment of a vulnerable adult who is experiencing maltreatment. Within 72 business hours of receipt of a report, a face-to-face meeting with the adult by a trained APS social worker is required. During this meeting the vulnerable adult is interviewed in private. Every effort is made to determine the decision-making ability of the adult. Other individuals or agencies that have knowledge of the situation may also be interviewed. When the investigation is complete a report is submitted to the APS Supervisor who will then consult with the social worker and determine if the adult is the subject of abuse, neglect or exploitation. All information generated by the investigation is confidential

Make sure to provide the following information, but please note that you can make this report anonymously if you so choose:

- The individual's name, address, age/DOB, or other identifying info
- The nature and extent of the suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation
- Description of the situation, any important identifiers of the alleged abuser, or other dangers in their home environment

WHY Should you report? Most seniors and adults with disabilities live independently without assistance. However, some face abuse or neglect by others and need trained professionals to advocate on their behalf. Others may simply be struggling with routine activities and benefit from in-home support services to maintain their health and independence. APS helps by assessing each individual's unique needs, then

developing a service plan to maintain his/her safety, health and independence.

WHAT HAPPENS After I make a report? APS will investigate the suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation, and connect the individual with support services if the individual wishes to receive them. We understand that every adult individual has the right to self-determination; APS cannot force anyone to accept help (except in a limited set of circumstances) if they do not wish to receive it. APS does not have jurisdiction in facilities. We also cannot control whether or not law enforcement opens an investigation. Due to strict confidentiality rules, APS may not be able to provide details of an investigation.

CONFIDENTIALITY All records and communications related reports, evaluations, or services provided are confidential. APS may only share information when directed by court order.

Adults retain all their civil and constitutional rights unless some of those rights have been restricted by court action

WHAT IF I'm not sure? Do you just have a “feeling” about a situation but can't verify the details? APS professionals are trained to help in these situations. Based on your report, the agency will assess the situation and determine how best to respond. Your local APS agency can determine the best course of action in such situations.

Appendix B - Indications of Abuse

1. CHILD and YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

INDICATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

What is an “abused, neglected, or dependent child”?

The definition of an abused, neglected, or dependent child is very broad. It includes any child under eighteen or person over the age of 18 who is without the mental capacity to consent whose parents or other person is responsible for his/her care:

- Inflicts or allows to be inflicted, or creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury not by accident;
- Creates or allows to be created serious emotional damage;
- Uses or allows to be used cruel or grossly inappropriate procedures or devices to modify behavior;
- Neglects or refuses to provide care, supervision, or discipline necessary for her/his health;
- Abandons such child or allows such child to live in an environment injurious to the child's welfare;
- Is unable to provide for care or supervision and lacks an appropriate child care

alternative; or

- Commits or allows to be committed any act of sexual exploitation or any sexual act upon a child in violation of the law.

How can children be at risk in a “safe” place like church?

There may be several reasons children can be at risk even in “safe” places like a church. The following factors may contribute to the risk in a church setting:

- Ready access to children
- Institutional surprise: “We’re good people”
- Many churches have historically failed to prosecute
- Fewer external barriers than other youth-serving organizations
- Challenges coordinating child protection strategies

Potential indicators of sexual abuse

A **combination** or **pattern** of indicators may indicate the possibility of sexual abuse. Potential indicators include:

- Child does not want to go to a certain place or be around a particular person
- Child shows sexual knowledge or behavior beyond that expected for his or her age
- Child is overly affectionate and seems seductive with peers and adults
- Child has recurring genital infections or pain in the genital area
- Child has difficulty in walking or sitting
- Child has torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Child shows reluctance to change clothes
- Child is withdrawn, chronically depressed, or displays infantile behavior
- Child has exceptionally poor peer relationships
- Child is threatened by physical contact
- Child has unexplained money or “gifts”

2. Signs of Neglect Concerning Adults with Vulnerabilities — Adult Protective Services

What is neglect? Neglect is the failure by a primary caregiver to support the physical, emotional and social needs of the individual dependent for care and well-being. Neglect can include failure to provide adequate food, medications or access to health care professionals.

Physical Neglect

Includes failure to attend to an individual's medical, hygienic, nutrition and dietary needs such as: dispensing medications, arranging doctors appointments, changing bandages, bathing, grooming, dressing, or failure to provide ample food to maintain health.

Emotional Neglect

Failure to meet the individual's emotional well-being such as providing adequate opportunities to socialize with friends and family and engage in meaningful activities.

Financial Neglect

Disregarding an individual's financial obligations such as: failure to pay rent, mortgage, insurances, property taxes, assessments, utility bills and other essential services.

What are some risk factors for neglect?

- Failing to provide needed supervision
- Excessive stress or burden on the caregiver
- Lack of resources and support for the caregiver
- Sudden increase in caregiver responsibilities
- Isolation of caregiver and vulnerable adult

What is financial exploitation?

Financial or material exploitation includes the misuse, mishandling or exploitation of property, possessions, or assets of adults. Examples include: using an individual's assets without consent, under false pretense, or through coercion and/or manipulation.

What are the signs of financial exploitation?

- Unusual financial activity (e.g. large bank withdrawal or use of ATMs or credit cards not normally used)
- Missing checks or missing bank statements/records
- Address or names have been changed on accounts
- Purchases made without the individual's knowledge or consent
- Newly authorized signatures on accounts or forged signatures
- Evidence that the person fell victim to a scam
- Missing belongings
- Change to a financial power of attorney
- Change of ownership of bank accounts or the deed to a physical property such as a home

What are some risk factors for financial exploitation?

- Excessive spending or financial donations
- No oversight of finances
- Unaware of technology or modern payment methods
- Cognitive impairment or dementia
- Social isolation

What is self-neglect?

Self-neglect involves older adults or adults with disabilities who cannot meet their own essential physical, psychological or social needs, which threatens their health, safety and well-being. Examples include: failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, and health care for one's own needs.

What are the signs of self-neglect?

- Not following up with health care provider
- Not taking medication as needed
- Doesn't have food, inadequate nutrition
- Lives in unsafe housing conditions such as lack of heat, electricity or running water
- Has poor personal hygiene
- Lacks/won't allow needed care

What are some risk factors for self-neglect?

- Recent widow or loss of loved one
- Worsening medical problems or a physical disability
- Lack of outside contact, isolated from friends and family
- Lack of a caregiver
- Cognitive impairment, dementia

What is physical or sexual abuse?

Physical abuse may include slapping, hitting, beating, bruising or causing someone physical pain, injury or suffering. This also could include confining an adult against his/her will, such as locking someone in a room or using restraints. Sexual Abuse includes physical force, threats, or coercion to facilitate non-consensual touching, fondling, intercourse or other sexual activities. This is particularly true with vulnerable adults who are unable to give consent or comprehend the nature of these actions.

What are the signs of physical or sexual abuse?

- Bruising
- Unexplained bruising
- Strangulation
- Fractures
- Burns
- Bed sores
- Over or under medicating
- Not wearing appropriate clothing for the weather (such as heavy clothing when hot)
- Controlling access to or the movements of an individual

What are some risk factors?*

- Family crisis or family members are suffering from stress
- Domestic issues causing violence or conflict in the home
- Depression, unusual fears or sudden loss of self-confidence
- Noticeable withdrawal and lack of socialization
- Loneliness and isolation

*The presence of warning signs doesn't necessarily mean that the adult is being abused.

Standards of Behavior for Ministry with Vulnerable Adults

From the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh: Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (2024)

All persons who work with vulnerable adults are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that all God's children deserve. Interactions must meet all the requirements outlined above as well as those that follow, and laypersons and ordained ministers working with vulnerable adults shall take particular care (1) not to influence unduly any person to whom they minister, and (2) to accept only token gifts from those to whom they minister. Ministers who receive gifts shall report those gifts in writing to the Bishop, Clergy in Charge, Senior Warden, Supervisor, or Responsible Person (as appropriate) at the earliest possible time.

DO's — All who minister to vulnerable adults shall:

- decline to accept loans or gifts of any kind from those to whom they minister.
- decline to be named as a beneficiary or to act as an administrator or executor in a will executed by anyone to whom they minister.
- inform the Pastor, Clerk of Session, Presbytery Leader, Stated Clerk, Supervisor, or Responsible Person (as appropriate) of anything that causes them concern for the safety or wellbeing of a person to whom they minister.

All who minister to vulnerable adults are encouraged to:

- engage in ongoing spiritual practices, which may include daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship, and Bible study.
- spend time with, and listen carefully to, vulnerable adults, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ.
- maintain healthy boundaries when sharing personal information about themselves or others.

All who minister to vulnerable adults may also offer appropriate physical expressions of care and affection, such as handshakes, pats on the forearm or shoulder, or hand-holding during prayer. However, it is best practice always to assess the willingness of the vulnerable adult before initiating physical contact of any kind and to be sensitive to any indication on their part that the contact causes discomfort or embarrassment either before or after the fact.

DON'Ts — Adults shall not under any circumstances:

- provide vulnerable adults with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;
- arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misused legal drugs when they are responsible for, or ministering to, a vulnerable adult;
- consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs while they are responsible for, or ministering to, a vulnerable adult;
- engage in illegal behavior or permit others to engage in illegal behavior; or
- engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any vulnerable adult

continued

Appendix C - Employee and Volunteer Ministry Application Form

The Presbytery of The Highlands of New Jersey Volunteer Ministry Application Form

This application form is to be completed by all Highlands Presbytery any volunteers desiring a ministry position involving the supervision or custody of **Children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities**. This form will be completed on-line or by paper copy at the onset of ministry and resubmitted every three years. It is being used to help the Presbytery provide a safe and secure environment for those **vulnerable persons** who participate in our programs and use our facilities. This confidential information will be viewed only by those persons designated by the Presbytery as having access to this private information.

Name _____ Date _____
Last First Middle

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____

Occupation _____

Places of Employment _____

How long at this address? _____ If less than five years, give previous addresses/years:

Years _____ Address _____

Years _____ Address _____

VOLUNTEERS

(Name of church) member since _____

List (names and addresses) other churches you attended regularly during the last five years:

What leadership/volunteer experience have you had with **Children, youth, and**

adults with vulnerabilities during the last five years? Be specific. Where possible, include dates and places if not at your current church.

Please list other church ministries in which you were or are involved in the last five years.

Confidential Information - to be used only by those authorized by the Presbytery

Auto Insurance Carrier _____

Do you have any medical training? _____

Are you currently CPR certified? _____

Is there any health-related reason that would keep you from effectively working with or cause any potential

harm to **Children, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities**? ____ If yes, please explain.

Personal References (Two are required. Must be over 18 years of age and not related to you.)

1. Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Relationship _____

2. Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Relationship _____

The questions listed below are necessary in order to help ensure a safe and secure environment for our children and for the protection of our volunteer and/or paid staff. All information is held strictly confidential. Please answer these questions. If you have any concerns regarding the questions, please consult with the Stated Clerk or with the Presbytery Leader. If any one or more of the questions is marked yes, the application will be reviewed by those persons so designated by the Presbytery.

Yes
No

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo contendere (no contest) to traffic violation(s) in the last five years?

If yes, please describe all convictions for the past five years and any conviction resulting in the suspension of your license, whether or not within the past five years. (Add more pages as needed.)

Have you ever been convicted for the possession, use or sale of drugs?

Have you ever been hospitalized or treated for alcohol, substance abuse or mental illness?

Have you been arrested for a criminal offense excluding minor traffic violations?

Have you been arrested or convicted for any sexually related crimes?

Have you ever been denied participation in supervising youth activities?

Have you ever been denied participation in any organization?

Please explain any yes answers. Add more pages as needed

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

The information contained in this application is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references, churches, or other organizations listed in this application to give you any information they may have (including employer's opinions) regarding my character and fitness for working with children or youth and I hereby release all such references, churches, or other organizations from liability for damages of whatever kind or nature that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to follow the Highlands Presbytery Child and Youth Protection Policy and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the

Presbytery. I understand that any violation of this Policy or misrepresentation of information that I have provided may result in termination of employment or

volunteer service with children/youth.

I have no past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect. I authorize that a Criminal and Civil Records Check may be conducted on me and that any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in police files or any criminal or civil file maintained on me, whether national, state, or local, be released to Highlands Presbytery. In so authorizing, I release any law enforcement agencies, Highlands Presbytery or those individuals receiving the results of the check from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

I acknowledge that I have read the Highlands Presbytery Child and Youth Protection Policy and have received a copy for my personal use.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE AS A HIGHLANDS PRESBYTERY EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand. I understand that the personal information will be held confidential by the Presbytery.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Social Security Number (for Background Check use ONLY)
