

APPENDIX I
WESTWOOD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CHILDREN/YOUTH
PROTECTION POLICY
CONDUCT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This code of conduct is intended for the mutual protection of the staff, volunteers, children, youth, and congregation of Westwood First Presbyterian Church. It is to protect the children and youth of our church and to safeguard those who work with them from false accusations of misconduct.

As listed in the following policy, volunteers are teachers, advisors, scout leaders, tutors, or nursery workers. A staff member is anyone employed by Westwood First Presbyterian Church on a salary or hourly basis.

Westwood First Presbyterian Church "activities" include those sponsored by the Westwood First Presbyterian Church such as nursery care/child care, Boy Scouts, Sunday School, private music lessons or coaching, choirs and related activities, youth groups, mission projects (on site and off site), evening children's programs. Not included are activities sponsored by outside agencies using our facilities by permission, such as the Red Cross and Beech Acres.

1. Staff/volunteers shall use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism. Staff/volunteers will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environment that minimize need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), is only administered in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing, with a copy to parent/guardian.
2. Staff/volunteers shall not leave a child unsupervised while the child is attending an organized WFPC program.
3. Staff or volunteers shall not be alone with a child in a room or location where they cannot be observed by others.
4. Staff/volunteers should conduct or supervise private activities such as diapering and toileting of toddlers so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff/volunteers shall not physically, verbally, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect children. Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and will be cause of immediate dismissal.
6. Any marks that indicate the possibility that a child or youth has been abused will be

documented and immediately reported to a pastor or accountable staff member.

All teaching elders, ruling elders, deacons, certified Christian educators, staff and volunteers shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities 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 of the *Book of Order*, (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.

7. Staff/volunteers will not touch children inappropriately or in ways that make children feel uncomfortable.
8. Staff/volunteers will portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
9. Staff/volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection in the presence of children, parents, and staff.
10. In the performance of their job as staff or volunteers they will abide by the standards of conduct set forth in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Presbytery of Cincinnati.
11. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours or volunteer activities is prohibited.
12. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or youth during group activities is prohibited.
13. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.
14. Staff/volunteers must be physically and psychologically able to perform their duties.
15. When staff/volunteers intentionally meet with children and youth they know through WFPC programs outside the hours of group activities, another paid staff member or a parent should know prior to the occasion. Such meetings must be in a public place or satisfy criteria #3.
16. Staff/Volunteers may not transport children/youth in their private vehicles if the driver is under twenty-one.
17. Staff/volunteers may not date youth program participants of any age.
18. Staff/volunteers may not engage in inappropriate or unprofessional communication with children/youth through the Internet or other electronic means, including but not limited to text messaging, email, websites or online journals. Electronic communication will be

consistent with the staff member or volunteer's Christian witness and adhere to the standards of conduct of WFPC. Staff/volunteers receiving inappropriate electronic communication from a youth program participant will not respond and will report that communication to a pastor or accountable staff member. (See Personal Website Policies and Guidelines.)

19. Staff/volunteers are required to read and sign all WFPC policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse.
20. This policy shall be available to the congregation in the Church Office upon request and in the Church Library.

The Session, at the recommendation of the Christian Education and Personnel Committees of Westwood First adopted a policy to protect the children and youth of our church and to safeguard those who work with them from false accusations of misconduct. The attached policy is for the safety and well-being of our members and necessitates a written response from all of those in our congregation who work with children and youth.

None of the policies of the church regarding conduct with youth or adults can be taken lightly. They are of the utmost importance. As you can imagine, an incident of misconduct is devastating to the victim and quickly spreads to include larger circles of hurt and disillusioned members of the church family.

After you have read the documents, please call a staff member or a member of the Personnel Committee or Christian Education Committee if you have any concerns or questions. Then, when you feel you understand the policies and their importance, please sign the blue sheet and return it to the church office. We will keep a current list of all volunteers and record and file the forms as they are returned. Until we add to or change the documents, this blue statement will be satisfactory for the liability concerns of our insurers.

If at any future time you feel the need to discuss the policies or these issues with a pastor or a member of a Presbytery Response Team, please call the Presbytery Office at 221-4850.

Thank you for your continued faithfulness with the children and young people who attend our church programs. We could not minister to these children effectively without your help.

Volunteers and staff of Westwood First,

At the recommendation of the Pastor, Personnel and Christian Education Committees of Westwood First requests a written acknowledgment of your awareness of these important policies. You are a busy person. One of the reasons you are busy is because you have devoted some of your time to working in our Sunday School, Boy Scouts, Nursery, Children's Choirs, tutoring program or Youth Groups. Because you have shared your time with our children and youth, we know you are concerned about their welfare as well. We hope this means you will understand why we have to take measures to have signed statements from each of our volunteers that indicate their good intentions as well as their past history.

Please take focused time to read the enclosed documents: "The Children's/Youth Protection Policy" was adopted on October 2, 1996 by the Christian Education Committee.

Other formerly circulated documents available include: "Reporting Child Abuse (at) Westwood First Presbyterian Church" was adopted in 1991. You may have read it when it was circulated in the Fall of 1993.

"Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct" (The Presbytery of Cincinnati - May 12, 1994) was adopted by our Session on October 11, 1995. It applies to our co-pastors, employees, volunteers, teachers and advisors. None of these are easy reading, but they are of the utmost importance. As you can imagine, an incident of sexual misconduct is devastating to the victim and quickly spreads to include larger circles of hurt and disillusioned members of the church family. That is why these policies are so important.

After you have read the documents, please call a pastor, or a member of the Administration and Personnel Committee or Christian Education Committee if you have any concerns or questions. Then, when you feel you understand the policies and their importance, please sign the blue sheet and return it to the church office. We will keep a current list of all volunteers and record and file the forms as they are returned. Until we add to or change the documents, this blue statement will be satisfactory for the liability concerns of our insurers. We would like to have them all returned to the church office as soon as possible.

If at any time you feel the need to discuss the policies or these issues with a pastor or a member of a Presbytery Response Team, please call a pastor or the Presbytery Office at 221-4850. Thank you for your continued faithfulness with the children and young people who attend our church programs. We could not minister to these children effectively without your help.

Sincerely,

Your Pastor
Christian Education committee
Administration and Personnel committee

I have read *Reporting Child Abuse (at) Westwood First Presbyterian Church, the Children's/ Youth Protection Policy* and "*Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct*" (The Presbytery of Cincinnati - May 12, 1994) which was adopted by our Session on October 11,.

I understand that as an adult working with youth or children at Westwood First Presbyterian Church these policies apply to my conduct.

I certify that:

- (A) no civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained or is pending against me for sexual misconduct;
- (B) I have never resigned or been terminated from a paid or volunteer position for reasons related to sexual misconduct.
- (C) I agree to abide by the church's guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected instances of sexual/physical abuse by volunteer/paid staff to a Co-Pastor or Presbytery authority. I agree to report any disclosure of abuse which a child, youth, or vulnerable adult may have made while in my care. I understand that such reporting is both a covenantal and ethical responsibility, and may be mandated by law.

_____ date
(name) (signature)

name (printed)

filed by _____ on _____
staff member date

If you are unable to make the above certification, you may instead provide a description of the complaint, termination or the outcome of the situation and any explanatory comments you care to add in the space below or on the back of this sheet.

I hereby authorize Westwood First Presbyterian Church to inquire concerning any civil or criminal records, or any judicial or ecclesiastical proceedings involving me as a defendant in cases of misconduct. By means of this release, I also authorize my previous employer or any law enforcement agencies or judicial authorities to release any and all requested information relevant to misconduct to the Co-Pastors of Westwood First Presbyterian Church.

_____ date
name