

**Amended and Restated  
Independent Presbyterian Church  
Child and Youth Protection Policy  
Effective as of May 17, 2022, as amended**

This Amended and Restated Child and Youth Protection Policy (the “Policy”) of Independent Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Alabama (“IPC”), approved by the Session of IPC on May 17, 2022, supersedes and replaces IPC’s Child and Youth Protection Policy that was approved by Session, effective as of December 31, 2017. This Policy was modified in October 2022 to reflect organizational changes and in May 2023 to include a definition for Youth Intern and related modifications.

This Policy contains the theological and legal foundations, relevant definitions, and policies and procedures related to the prevention, response, and reporting of child and youth abuse and neglect.

## **I. POLICY APPLICATION STATEMENT**

It is the policy of IPC that its church members, church officers, employees, contractors, and volunteers maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children and youth.

This Policy applies to all programs, activities, and events sponsored by IPC that involve children and youth. We seek to provide a safe environment in which opportunities for abuse are minimized through the proper enlistment, training, and supervision of individuals working with children and youth.

When third party groups sponsor activities at IPC or any of its properties, the child/youth protection policies of the outside group or third party, not this Policy, shall apply. Examples of outside groups include the Boy Scouts, STAIR of Birmingham, and outside groups who use or rent the Children’s Fresh Air Farm.

## **II. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION**

IPC’s Child and Youth Protection Policy is based on the following theological principles:

**A.** Children and youth are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” The Church is to be a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.

**B.** Any type of abuse involving children or youth has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ’s healing and hope for community and individuals, not an entity that brings harm and hurt.

**C.** The Book of Order states, “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life,” and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church’s care, including children and youth (*Book of Order* W-3.0403).

**D.** Children and youth are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the grace and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his

arms and blesses them. The Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ's love, in the same way taking up all children and youth into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environments in which to grow in every way.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**A. Book of Order** - Part II of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2019/2023), as it may be amended from time to time.

**B. Child (also 'youth')** - a person under 18 years of age (AL Code § 26-14-1).

**C. Child abuse** - harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare. Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation.

Sexual abuse includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion or any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children as those acts are defined by Alabama law.

Sexual exploitation includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes.

The above definitions are found in AL Code § 26-14-1 (2021).

**D. Child/Youth Worker** – A term that includes both Staff and Volunteers, as defined below. Youth Volunteers and Youth Interns, as defined below, are not included in this definition.

**E. Designated Program Director ("DPD")** – The Staff member who is primarily responsible on an ongoing basis for the IPC sponsored program, activity, or event, including the Director of Children's Ministries, the Director of Youth Ministries, the Director of Family Ministries, the Director of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, the Director of the IPC Day School, and the Director of the Children's Fresh Air Farm. When a DPD is not able to be present or reachable for a program, event, or activity, or on leave or vacation, they must designate another member of Staff to act as DPD, and communicate such designation in writing to all affected Staff and Volunteers.

**F. National Background Check** - A review by a professional background check firm which shall include, at a minimum, a Social Security trace, a State of Alabama criminal check, and a national (multi-jurisdictional) criminal check provided that the national (multi-jurisdictional) criminal check also includes a sex offender registry check. Applicants who may reasonably be expected to transport children or youth by vehicle shall also complete a motor vehicle record ("MVR") check.

**G. Neglect** - Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, supervision, clothing, or shelter (AL Code § 26-14-1).

**H. Policy Compliance Team** – The Policy Compliance Team is composed of the Associate Pastor-Faith Formation, the Director of Operations, the DPDs, and at least one attorney who serves on the Safe Church Advisory Committee. This team monitors compliance with the Policy and addresses Policy-related issues and concerns.

**I. Safe Church Advisory Committee** - The Safe Church Advisory Committee is comprised of three or more members of IPC appointed by the Session and one member of the Human Resources Ministry Team appointed by that Team. The members should include one or more lawyers and one or more health/mental health care professionals who are trained to advise Staff and respond to allegations and reports of child abuse or neglect. The Committee operates as independent committee under the Human Resources Ministry Team.

**J. Staff** (also ‘Employees’) - A person employed and paid by IPC (including college interns (whether paid or unpaid)) who works or assists in any capacity with children at IPC sponsored programs, activities, or events. All ordained ministers of IPC are considered Staff.

**K. Volunteer** - A person aged 19 or older who works or assists in any capacity with children or youth at IPC sponsored programs, activities, or events but is not paid by IPC or a third party for such service.

**L. Youth Intern** – A person who is under the age of 19 and who serves as an intern (paid or unpaid) and works or assists in any capacity with children or youth at IPC sponsored programs, activities, or events. Youth Interns will be allowed to work in children’s or youth ministry in a support function, but not in a supervisory role.

**L. Youth Volunteer** – A volunteer who is under the age of 19 or who is 19 or older and a member of IPC’s youth group. Youth Volunteers will be allowed to volunteer in children’s ministry in a support function, but not in a supervisory role.

#### **IV. LEGAL AND CHURCH REQUIREMENTS**

IPC will abide by the provisions of the **Alabama Mandatory Reporting Law for Child Abuse and Neglect** (AL Code §§ 26-14-1 – 26-14-13). While only certain organizations and professionals (including, but not limited to ministers, teachers, physicians, social workers, mental health professionals, and day care workers) are named as mandatory reporters under this law, **IPC and all Child/Youth Workers are required to report incidents of child abuse and neglect in the manner outlined in this Policy.**

The **Book of Order** requires ministers of the Word and Sacrament, ruling elders, commissioned ruling elders, deacons, and certified Christian educators to report allegations of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate civil and ecclesiastical authorities, subject to certain confidentiality provisions, and sets forth procedures for investigating allegations and disciplining those who are found to have committed abuse (Book of Order, G-4.0302; Rules of Discipline).

#### **V. SCREENING AND SELECTION PROCEDURES**

All Child/Youth Workers must comply with the screening and selection policies described below:

**A. Staff** - All Staff are required to undergo a National Background Check, as defined in this policy. If there is a background check on file that meets the definition of National Background Check, a new background check need not be repeated until three years after the date of the background check on file. Staff members who will drive children in their own cars or IPC vehicles must undergo an MVR check every three years.

**B. Volunteers** - All Volunteers are required to (1) complete an IPC volunteer application form; (2) sign a consent to a background check; (3) complete an interview with an IPC staff member; (4) undergo a National Background Check; and (5) undergo an MVR check if the Volunteer will drive

children.

If there is a background check for a Volunteer on file at IPC that meets the definition of National Background Check, a new background check need not be repeated until three years after the date of the background check on file. Volunteers who will drive children in their own cars or IPC vehicles must undergo an MVR check every three years.

**C. Youth Volunteers** -Youth Volunteers are not required to undergo a National Background Check. However, they must complete an application and certify that they have not been convicted of the offenses listed in F, below. The application must include the recommendation of the Pastor or an Associate Pastor and a signed statement of the youth's parent/guardian that they know of no reason that the minor should not be allowed to work with other minors.

For certain events requiring a large number of Youth Volunteers who are working alongside Staff and Volunteers in an open space, the requirement for completing a volunteer application and related documentation will be waived. Examples of these types of events include the Advent Workshop, annual IPC festivals, and art activities at Bibletimes Marketplace.

**D. Youth Interns** – Youth Interns are not required to undergo a National Background Check. However, they must complete an application and certify that they have not been convicted of any of the offences listed in F. below. The application must include a signed statement of the youth's parent/guardian that they know of no reason that the minor should not be allowed to work with other minors.

**E. Church Related Organizations** – Child/Youth Workers who serve as leaders, assistants, or chaperones at child/youth activities or events sponsored by the General Assembly, the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, or the Camp at Living Rivers, must comply with any additional screening procedures required by such entities.

**F. Screening Results** - No person may serve as a Child/Youth Worker who has been convicted of or pled guilty to certain misdemeanors or felonies, including, but not limited to, violent crimes, crimes of moral turpitude, sexual assault or misconduct, sexual or other abuse or neglect of a child, pornography, drug offenses or dangerous driving offenses.

The results of any background check that indicate a crime or misdemeanor or other issue of concern must be reviewed by the Policy Compliance Team before a decision is made concerning the eligibility of the individual to serve as a Child/Youth Worker. The Safe Church Advisory Committee may also be consulted. Any Child/Youth Worker who is denied a position or assignment based on his/her National Background Check or application will be advised of the action and given an opportunity to dispute the results, in accordance with the requirements of applicable federal or state law.

**G. Other Eligibility Criteria** – All Volunteers must have been a member of IPC, or a regular attendee, for a minimum of six months. Only with the approval of the Associate Pastor – Faith Formation and the Pastor may a person who does not meet this requirement serve as a Volunteer.

Even if a Volunteer meets all the above requirements, the Policy Compliance Team may exercise discretion to determine that a person is, or is no longer, a good fit for the position and will privately communicate this to the individual.

**H. Confidentiality of Records** - IPC shall maintain all Child/Youth Worker and Youth Volunteer applications, results of background and MVR checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

**I. Agreement to Abide by Policy and Training** - All Child/Youth Workers must sign an acknowledgement that they have read and will abide by this Policy and participate in training on this Policy prior to working with children and at least annually.

**J. Screening of Third Parties** - If a bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted for an IPC sponsored event involving youth or children, the company hired must sign a certificate affirming that criminal background and MVR checks (meeting the requirements of this Policy) have been completed on all drivers of its vehicles and such certificate shall be renewed at least annually. If an outside speaker, consultant, or other third party is engaged to be a part of an event covered by this Policy, the person must submit to a National Background Check.

## **VI. MANDATORY RULES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**All incidents and reports of non-compliance with the rules set forth in Paragraphs A. through I. of this Section VI (including non-compliance due to an emergency) shall be reported within 24 hours to the Policy Compliance Team, and any report of an alleged violation of Paragraph J. of this Section VI. shall be reported immediately to the Safe Church Advisory Committee.**

**A. Four-year Rule** - All Child/Youth Workers must be at least four years older than the oldest member of the group they are leading/supervising, provided, however, that exceptions may be made for Staff whose position requires them to serve as a leader.

**B. Two-Adult Rule** - Two non-related and non-cohabiting adults (who have been screened as Child Care Workers) shall be required to be present to supervise children and youth during church-sponsored activities and in each vehicle in which children or youth are present, except in emergency situations, and except as provided below. Related and/or cohabiting adults are considered one adult for purposes of this policy.

For purposes of the two-adult rule, an “emergency situation” is one that (i) is outside of the control of IPC, and (ii) may threaten the well-being and security of a child. In this event, the DPD or other Staff member onsite may waive the two-adult rule, provided that reasonable efforts to comply with the rule have been exhausted.

When the two-adult rule is not feasible in a room in which events or activities are taking place, floaters may be utilized, provided they meet the screening requirements applicable to Child/Youth Workers and maintain immediate access to all rooms for which they are responsible.

With respect to vehicles, when the two-adult rule is not feasible, caravans or multiple vehicles with only one adult per vehicle may be used, provided the drivers always remain in sight of each other and start and stop travel simultaneously. In this situation, there must be at least two children or youth in each vehicle.

Offsite meetings and activities (and related transportation) arranged by a covenant partner and a confirmand’s parent during IPC’s annual confirmation program will not be subject to the two-adult rule, provided that a confirmand’s parent or guardian has consented to the assignment of the covenant partner and the covenant partner has been screened as a Child/Youth Worker. Because transportation for such

off-site meetings is not arranged by the Staff, the provisions of Section VI G. will not apply. All other provisions of this Policy shall apply.

The IPC Day School and the Summer Learning Program (like other academic school programs) are not required to have two adults in each classroom. These programs must comply with the supervisory ratios applicable to pre-schools and elementary schools, as noted below, and to all other provisions of this Policy.

**C. Minimum Age Rule** - Child/Youth Workers must be at least eighteen (18) years old. Youth Interns and Youth Volunteers will be allowed to serve in a support role (not a supervisory one), subject to meeting the provisions of Section V. C. and D. of this Policy.

**D. Supervisory Ratios** - The following are recommended guidelines for the ratio of Child/Youth Workers to children:

- For children ages 0-1, the ratio is 2:8
- For children ages 2-5, the ratio is 2:10
- For children ages 6-12, the ratio is 2:12
- For youth ages 13-18, the ratio is 2:16.

The IPC Day School and the Summer Learning Program follow State of Alabama guidelines on ratios.

**E. Windows/Doors** - When Child/Youth Workers and children or youth are in a room, the door must remain open unless there is a view window. Child/Youth Workers must not be alone with a child without being visible to those in the immediate area.

**F. One-on-One Counseling** - Counseling by Staff with one youth/child is sometimes necessary and appropriate, but care must be taken to ensure that the environment is acceptable and visible to other adults. If meeting in a room or office, the door must be left open. The Staff counselor must inform another Staff member about where and with whom they are meeting.

**G. Transportation** - Any activities that involve church-provided or arranged transportation of minors must adhere to this provision and to any related IPC Employee Handbook provision. Child/Youth Workers who drive children or youth must sign a certificate agreeing to comply with the following requirements:

- No child may be transported without the consent of their parent or guardian.
- The driver must have a valid driver's license.
- The driver must have auto insurance coverage in the amount recommended by IPC's insurer.
- The vehicle to be used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger.
- No child under the age of 13 may sit in the front seat of any vehicle.
- All drivers transporting minors must be at least 25 years old (unless the driver is a Staff member who is at least 21).
- The two-adult rule described in Section VI. B. of this Policy applies.
- If a driver is using their own vehicle and an accident occurs, their personal insurance for certain claims will be primary.

No minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).

**H. Out-of-Town and Overnight Activities** – A parent or guardian must sign a written consent form for each out-of-town or overnight event or activity. They must also complete a medical release form that may be kept on file for the period of one year and will be considered valid for that year.

For overnight events, there must be at least one male and one female chaperone, depending on the gender mix of the participating group. Adults and children or youth must have separate sleeping areas. In no event may an adult sleep with a child. The exception to this rule is for the occasional legal caregiver/child or the parent/child situation. Children or youth and adults must maintain different showering and grooming hours at events in which bathrooms and shower rooms are shared in housing.

**I. Social Media** - Photos, video, or comments of a child or youth can be used only for IPC-sponsored printed, video, web-based, social media, or other publicity materials and only with the signed consent of the parent or guardian. All Child/Youth Workers must abide by IPC's guidelines regarding the use of social media and electronic communications attached to this Policy as Appendix A.

**J. Prohibited Behaviors** - All Child/Youth Workers, Youth Interns, and Youth Volunteers must also abide by a code of conduct that recognizes appropriate boundaries and prohibits, among other inappropriate behaviors, the following:

1. Display of sexual or romantic affection toward a child.
2. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
3. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around children.
4. Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with children.
5. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or any substance (including prescription drugs) which may impair the physical or cognitive abilities of a Child/Youth Worker to care for children or youth.
6. Allowing a child or youth to consume alcohol or other prohibited substances.
7. Tobacco use in any form, including vapor or e-cigarettes, in the presence of a child or youth.
8. Possessing, creating, or sharing inappropriate, obscene, sexually oriented, or pornographic images or materials (including print, non-print media and digital communications).
9. Having secrets with youth/children.
10. Staring at or commenting on children's bodies.
11. Engaging in inappropriate electronic communications with children.
12. Giving gifts to individual children without prior knowledge of the parent(s) and/or approval by the DPD.
13. Working one-on-one with children in a private setting.
14. Abusing or neglecting a child in any way, including (but not limited to) the following: (a) physical abuse (hit, spank, slap, shake, or unnecessary restraint); (b) verbal abuse (degrade, threaten, curse); (c) sexual abuse (inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations); (d) mental abuse (shame, humiliate, or act cruelly); or (e) neglect (withhold food, water, shelter, or medical treatment).
15. Participating in, encouraging, or allowing demeaning and belittling behaviors or language

involving or directed toward children, including, but not limited to, insensitive or inappropriate comments or behavior related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender.

16. Permitting children or youth to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

Any Child/Youth Worker, Youth Intern or Youth Volunteer who witnesses or experiences any of the above behaviors must report such conduct **immediately** to the DPD or other member of Staff at the activity, program, or event who shall in turn immediately inform the Safe Church Advisory Committee.

## **VII. REPORTING ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

**A. Internal Reporting and Initial Response** - A Volunteer who suspects child abuse or neglect or receives information from any person who suspects or alleges child abuse or neglect must **immediately** report the incident to a member of IPC's Staff who is not implicated in the allegation, including the Pastor, the Associate Pastor - Faith Formation, the Director of Operations, or any DPD. It is not sufficient to leave a phone or email message. It is critical that the Volunteer speak directly to one of these Staff members.

A Staff member who suspects child abuse or neglect or receives information from any person who suspects or alleges child abuse or neglect must immediately contact the Pastor and members of the Safe Church Advisory Committee via phone and email.

The Safe Church Advisory Committee will make any required report of alleged child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities, as described in paragraph B. below.

If the alleged child abuse or neglect occurs during an activity, program or event, the Staff member(s) on site should

- Notify the parent or guardian of the victim (unless a parent/guardian is the suspected perpetrator).
- Care for the child and ensure that any immediate aid for the child has been rendered or arranged.
- Relieve the accused of his or her duties and/or remove the accused from the event or activity until an investigation is complete.
- Treat the accused with dignity and not pre-judge the situation.
- Treat the situation confidentially.
- Complete an incident report but leave the investigation to professionals.
- Report or assist in reporting the incident to DHR and/or law enforcement.

If a person who reports suspected child abuse or neglect to one of the individuals or committee listed above is not satisfied with the response, they should report directly to the Department of Human Resources or law enforcement, as described under paragraph B. below.

Any person bringing a report of abuse or cooperating in an investigation will **not** be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged for such actions.

**B. Reporting Requirements Under Alabama Law** - The Alabama statute on the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse/neglect requires certain listed entities and persons called "mandatory reporters" to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the authorities. Reporting suspected abuse or neglect to a supervisor or other person does not relieve a mandatory reporter from reporting the incident directly to authorities. Failure to do so subjects a mandatory reporter to criminal liability. The law also encourages the voluntary reporting of



suspected child abuse or neglect by entities or individuals who are not mandatory reporters. **IPC's policy is to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Alabama Department of Human Resources and/or local law enforcement in all cases, whether a report is mandated or permissive.**

The Alabama law provides that clergy are mandatory reporters. IPC's ordained ministers must report to authorities known or suspected abuse or neglect unless such information was received in a confidential, privileged communication, as defined under Alabama law. Ministers are also subject to the provisions of G-4.0301 and 4.0302 of the *Book of Order* that require the reporting to authorities of confidential or privileged communications relating to suspected or known child abuse in certain circumstances.

**Nothing in this policy shall be considered a restraint of an individual's statutory obligation to report directly to authorities. Furthermore, no person shall be prevented from directly reporting an incident on the basis that they are not a "mandatory reporter".**

**C. Communications with Media** - All communications with media about alleged child abuse or neglect must be referred to the Safe Church Advisory Committee who will consult with the Pastor and IPC's Director of Communications in developing a communications plan.

**D. Role of Safe Church Advisory Committee** - In addition to its responsibilities as set forth in Appendix B to this Policy, the Safe Church Advisory Committee, in consultation with IPC's outside counsel, shall have the following responsibilities in response to allegations of child/youth abuse or neglect covered by this Policy:

- Make any required report to DHR and/or law enforcement.
- Notify IPC's insurance company.
- Advise the reporter and/or others concerning any immediate documentation that must be obtained.
- In consultation with the Pastor, determine the appropriate spokesperson for communications with the media.
- Initiate an investigation in accordance with advice of counsel.
- Provide or arrange for counseling for the principal parties involved (reporter, possible victim(s), accused, family members).
- Take actions appropriate to resolve the matter including, but not limited to, making recommendations for prevention as well as response.

## **VIII. POLICY VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this Policy will result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment, in the case of Staff or Youth Interns; and termination of authority to work with children through church programs, in the case of Staff, Volunteers, Youth Volunteers, and Youth Interns.

## **IX. ADMINISTRATION**

This Policy shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of this Policy and Appendix B hereto which sets forth the roles of all who provide leadership under this Policy.

**APPENDIX A – INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY  
SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

**Communicating with Youth**

Social networking sites and electronic communication can enhance communication and faith sharing, and deepen relationships, provided that they are used appropriately.

The following guidelines seek to apply principles of healthy boundaries and safe church to the virtual world of digital networking and communication. These guidelines apply to all IPC Staff and Volunteers, as defined in the Policy. These guidelines cover communications with youth (seventh through twelfth graders) who participate in IPC sponsored events or activities. It is never appropriate to communicate with children (first through sixth graders) through social media or electronic messages.

All communications with youth and children are subject to the terms of IPC's Child and Youth Protection Policy.

**Social Media** – While we encourage the use of IPC social media pages to stay up to date on youth activities and accomplishments, we ask our Staff and Volunteers not to access a youth's individual social media pages or to use social media to send messages to youth other than through formal IPC media pages.

**IPC Ministry Social Media Pages** – It is acceptable to “like” or make appropriate comments on posts or photos of IPC's youth on IPC-sponsored social media pages, such as Facebook and Instagram. Frequent and/or lengthy comments about an individual youth may make the youth feel uncomfortable. All Staff, including administrators of IPC's social media pages, should consider the content and nature of any post on IPC sponsored media sites. Such posts (including “likes”) may be perceived as the voice of the church.

**Individual Social Media Pages** – IPC staff and Volunteers should not submit ‘friend’ requests to youth via their personal social media accounts, accept friend requests from youth, or send messages via social media to youth. Social media sites such as *Snapchat* where messages appear only momentarily should never be used to communicate with youth. If a Staff member or Volunteer accepted a friend request from a youth as permitted under IPC's Child and Youth Protection Policy in effect prior to this Policy, they are not required to “unfriend” the youth, provided that all other provisions of these guidelines are followed.

**Groups** - For the sake of their own privacy and the well-being of youth participants, IPC Staff and Volunteers should not add or invite youth to join any groups, events, pages, chat rooms, etc. that are not solely dedicated to activities directly related to IPC's children or youth ministries or activities. Any IPC-related group or group message must contain at least two adults who are Staff or Volunteers.

**Abuse and Neglect** - Material on any site (church-affiliated or not) that raises suspicion that a child or youth has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited must be reported immediately to the Associate Pastor – Faith Formation and Pastor.

**Emails and Texts** – Electronic communications with youth should be by text or email, not phone call. The best practice is to include at least one other adult or multiple youth in the text message or email. In general, emails and texts should be limited to the hours of 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM. There may be an urgent situation in which a Staff member feels that they must contact or respond immediately to a youth outside of these hours or call a youth's cell phone. In this situation, the Director of Youth Ministries or Associate Pastor – Faith Formation must be informed within 24 hours.

**Virtual Meetings** – Youth may be invited to attend a virtual meeting via video conference (on platforms such as zoom or skype) when meeting in person is not possible or practical. The youth's parent or guardian must be advised of the meeting in advance and given the opportunity to observe. The two-adult rule, as described in the Policy, applies to virtual meetings and any breakout room or other virtual meeting space.

**APPENDIX B TO INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY  
ADMINISTRATION**

The following individuals or groups have the administrative responsibilities listed below, in addition to any other duties listed in the IPC Child and Youth Protection Policy:

**A. Director of Operations** – The Director of Operations of IPC has the following responsibilities under the Policy:

1. **National Background Checks** - Obtain, update, and store (a.) National Background Checks for Staff and Volunteers, and (b.) National Background Checks for third parties, as described in Section V.J. of this Policy.
2. **MVRs and Certificates** – Obtain, update, and store (a.) MVRs and the certification required by Section VI. G. of this Policy for Child/Youth Workers who will drive children or youth in a private or IPC owned vehicle; and (b.) the certification required to be signed by third party transportation firms pursuant to Section V.J of this Policy.
3. **Reports.** Create reports accessible to all DPDs and Staff that list Child/Youth Workers for whom National Background Checks and MVRs have been obtained and the dates of the most recent checks.
4. **Compliance** - Stay abreast of the applicable laws and regulations to ensure that IPC's processes relating to National Background Checks and MVRs, including consents, disclosures, confidentiality, and proper storage comply with such laws and regulations.
5. **Report Findings** - Report any adverse finding from a National Background Check or MVR on a Child/Youth Worker or third party to the Policy Compliance Team before any decision is made or communicated regarding the finding.
6. **Annual Presbytery Certificate** - Prepare the annual certification regarding IPC's compliance with the Presbytery's Child and Youth Protection Policy.
7. **Insurance** – Work with IPC's Executive Director of Finance and appropriate Session Committees to ensure that IPC maintains appropriate insurance coverage relating to this Policy.

**B. Designated Program Directors** –The DPDs are responsible for ensuring that all requirements of the Policy are met with respect to the program, activity, or event under their leadership, including but not limited to, the following:

1. **Eligibility** – Review all Volunteer, Youth Volunteer, and Youth Intern applications to work in the DPD's program or event and conduct an interview with each applicant. Ensure that all Child/Youth Workers in DPD's program or event are on the list of screened and approved individuals, and that each has received a copy of the Policy and signed a statement that they will abide by the Policy. Notify the Director of Operations to conduct a National Background Check or MVR (if applicable) for each Child/Youth Worker who is

not on the list of screened individuals or whose National Background Check or MVR needs to be updated.

2. **Training** - Conduct initial orientation and training for all Child/Youth Workers, Youth Volunteers, and Youth Interns who will participate in their events and programs, ensure that training is provided at least annually, and document all training.
3. **Compliance** - Monitor compliance with this Policy for each program, activity or event under their leadership; take appropriate immediate corrective action; and report any incident of non-compliance in the manner required by this Policy.
4. **Forms** - Ensure that all required contact, medical, and permission forms for participants in their programs or events are on file and accessible to all Staff with a need for the information.

**C. Associate Pastor – Faith Formation** – The Associate Pastor – Faith Formation has the following responsibilities under the Policy:

1. **Compliance** – Serve as the Chair of the Policy Compliance Team. Create and communicate email groups to facilitate reports to the Policy Compliance Team and the Safe Church Advisory Committee. Make periodic reports to the Human Resources and Safe Church Advisory Committees.
2. **Training** - Develop and implement a plan to provide orientation and training for new Child/Youth Workers and periodic training (at least annually) for all Child/Youth Workers and others who have responsibility under this Policy.
3. **Forms and Reports** – Oversee the creation and revision of all forms and reports required by this Policy and create a work-flow process to facilitate compliance. Distribute a list of the DPDs, Policy Compliance Team, and Safe Church Advisory Committee (including contact information) to all Staff and Volunteers; update on a timely basis.
4. **Reporting and Review**–Report to the Policy Compliance Team all reports or personal observation of non-compliance with any supervisory rule in Article VI. A. through I. and report alleged violations of any prohibited behavior rule in Article VI. J. to the Safe Church Advisory Committee. Implement the agreed upon corrective or disciplinary action. Report any significant incident of Staff non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy to the Human Resources Ministry Team.

**Immediately** report incidents of alleged child abuse or neglect in the manner required by Article VII.

**D. Policy Compliance Team** - The Policy Compliance Team has the following responsibilities under the Policy:

1. Create processes, procedures, and reports to monitor compliance with the Policy.
2. Review all incidents and reports of non-compliance and all Policy-related concerns and

questions that are raised by Staff, Volunteers, parents, or others.

3. Refer all matters of significant concern to the Safe Church Advisory Committee.

**E. Human Resources Ministry Team**

1. **Policy** - Periodically review IPC's Child and Youth Protection Policy, and in consultation with the Safe Church Advisory Committee, approve amendments thereto. Communicate any substantive changes in the Policy to Session.
2. **Safe Church Advisory Committee** - Recommend to Session the members of the Safe Church Advisory Committee and meet at least annually with the Committee. Consult with the Safe Church Advisory Committee on any allegations of child abuse or neglect.
3. **Staff** – Review any significant incident of Staff non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy and recommend corrective or disciplinary action.
4. **Book of Order** – Review any allegations of child abuse or neglect involving a teaching elder, ruling elder, deacon, or certified Christian educator, and take any action required by the Presbytery and the Book of Order.
5. **Compliance** - Request the Associate Pastor – Faith Formation and Pastor to report on a periodic basis (at least annually) to the HR Ministry Team regarding Policy compliance.

**F. Safe Church Advisory Committee** – In addition to its responsibilities under Section VII of this Policy, the Safe Church Advisory Committee shall have the following duties:

1. **Training** – Conduct or engage legal expert (s) to train the Safe Church Advisory Committee and Policy Compliance Team on the best practices for protecting children and youth, recognizing signs of child abuse or neglect, and the Alabama laws, regulations, and procedures for reporting and responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect.
2. **Compliance** - Meet periodically (at least annually) to review reports from the Associate Pastor – Faith Formation and the Pastor concerning compliance with the Policy and recommend changes to the Policy, procedures, or training.
3. **HR Ministry Team** – Meet at least annually with the HR Ministry Team and consult the Team on reports of alleged child abuse or neglect.