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VI. POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION AND REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

Adopted 10.17.11

1.0 BIBLICAL FOUNDATION AND PURPOSE

1.1 To express God's love of children and provide for their personal wholeness, the Session-Board of Trustees of Knox Presbyterian Church seeks to prevent child abuse of any form to our children and youth and to be in ministry to families where abuse may occur. We share the following Biblical understandings upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand. Jesus teaches us very explicitly that children have both the right and the key to God's kingdom.

"Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." - Mark 10:14-15

1.2 Our goal in response to the Biblical mandate and societal needs is to maintain a safe, secure, loving place where children may grow and where their caregivers, teachers, and leaders, both paid and volunteer, minister appropriately to their needs. As a church, it is our religious, moral, and ethical obligation to take every possible step to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect of children. In addition, as a provider of day care and educational programs at all levels, the Church incurs certain legal obligations under Ohio law with respect to

Extracted from policy manual, Knox Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

reporting of suspected abuse or neglect of children.

2.0 REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Known or reasonably suspected child abuse will be reported immediately to the Clerk of Session and/or the Pastor-Head of Staff. That staff member will, in turn, inform the Pastor-Head of Staff, who will inform the Church Educator and others with a reasonable need to know the information. The staff member who is informed of suspected abuse or neglect and/or the reporting person will document in writing specific details of the situation on a documentation form which will be provided and kept by the staff person. Any step in this procedure may be bypassed when the accusation involves the minister or staff person to whom the report should be made.

3.0 PREVENTION OF ABUSE WITHIN THE CHURCH

3.1 In an effort to create the safest possible environment within our church, several abuse prevention measures will be utilized. These measures include limited screening of volunteers for past child abuse convictions or expungements, provision of regular training on child abuse issues to volunteer staff members, use of team teaching and chaperoning, standards for appropriate classroom discipline, and open classrooms. Hiring and performance standards for paid staff will be set by the Session Personnel Committee.

3.2 Volunteer Staff Screening

Knox welcomes and appreciates every person's desire to serve in the life of the Church. In order to better protect the safety and well-being of our children and youth, Knox Church, at its own expense, will conduct, as thoroughly as feasible, prior criminal record background checks for all those who wish to serve as volunteers working with minors. Candidates for those positions will be advised of this policy in advance and must be willing to provide information and assistance as necessary to complete the background checks (including the signing of any appropriate releases). Any person who has been arrested for any offense that could be harmful to children will be disqualified from serving as a volunteer working with minors. Examples of such offenses would be those involving violence, substance abuse, or child abuse, endangerment or neglect.

Similarly, anyone with a history of arrests for reckless driving or driving under the influence will not be permitted to act as a driver for any children or youth. Drivers otherwise must be or have whatever age and other qualifications are required for coverage under the Church's insurance policy.

To protect the privacy of candidates, only the Director of Youth and Young Adults, Director of Christian Education, Pastor (or the Associate Pastor, in the absence or incapacity of the Pastor) will have access to, and will be permitted to review background information.

The Pastor (or the Associate Pastor, in the absence or incapacity of the Pastor) in his or her discretion may recommend any exceptions to the application of this policy, subject to discussion with and the agreement of the Christian Education Director and at least one member of the Personnel Committee.

Prior to beginning active service as a volunteer working with minors (more than two times per 12-month period for non-overnight activities, all chaperons for overnight events involving minors, and all volunteers providing transportation to minors) such individuals (age 14 years old and above) will be screened and selected utilizing the following methods:

- A standard volunteer application (to include items such as: contact information, availability, interest areas, references, Social Security Number, Driver's License Number, self-disclosure information regarding arrests or DUIs, emergency contact information, etc.) completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks (which may include fingerprinting) prior to, and at any time during, active service as a volunteer working with minors. The application also includes acknowledgment that the applicant has received and read these policies.
- Criminal records check in any state where the applicant has resided, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
- Sexual offender registry check in any state where the applicant has resided.
- Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person may be transporting children or youth.
- References from at least two people who are not immediate family of the applicant and who have reason to know about his/her experience with children and youth.
- Anyone who has had a child abuse conviction or expungement, as well as anyone refusing to sign the statement, will not be permitted to work with children or youth. Although the Session-Board of Trustees recognizes that this policy may exclude someone who could safely work with children, we believe we must err on the side of the children's safety.

3.3 Employee Background Checks

In the interest of the well-being and safety of all members, all employees will consent to a background check at the time of hire. The cost of this employment requirement will be borne by the church.

The results of all background checks [with the exception of called pastors] will be reviewed by the Supervisor in consultation with the Pastor-Head of Staff. Background checks for candidates for the position of Called Pastor shall be done and reviewed by the Pastor Nominating Committee and the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

If the results of background checks require any action, those actions will be discussed with the Personnel Committee of the Session.

Extracted from policy manual, Knox Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

4251 This policy also applies to all current employees and called Pastors as of January 17th, 2012.

4252 3.4 Volunteer Staff Training

4253 3.4.1 First year volunteers working with minors will also be required to attend one training session related to
4254 the church's child abuse policy during the course of their first year of service. These training sessions will be
4255 offered by the church, conducted by clergy or members of the Christian Education Committee, and held at
4256 various times throughout the school year. In addition to the training sessions discussed above, more in-depth
4257 educational offerings covering a broad range of child abuse issues will be offered at least biennially for any
4258 interested persons. Specialists in the particular area to be addressed will be retained by the Christian
4259 Education Committee to conduct these sessions. Attendance at these sessions will be voluntary. Those
4260 volunteering at Vacation Bible School at Knox Presbyterian Church will be required to read the policy and sign
4261 the acknowledgement form prior to the start of Vacation Bible School. Any volunteer failing to do so will be
4262 contacted by the Church Educator. Anyone refusing to read the policy and sign the form after being contacted
4263 will not be permitted to teach. When Vacation Bible School is held at other churches, only teachers from the
4264 Knox Presbyterian Church congregation will be asked to comply with this policy. Leaders of community groups
4265 of community groups of children or youth who use the church facilities will be required to read the policy and
4266 sign this acknowledgement form. Church facilities will not be available to groups whose leaders refuse to read
4267 and sign the policy.

4268 3.3.2 The obligation to consent to a background check extends to all volunteers (including both teenagers
4269 beginning at age 14 years old, and adults) on the church list who work with minors 2 or more times within a 12
4270 month period, even those with irregular or very limited teaching or care responsibilities such as occasional
4271 substitute teachers, summer replacement teachers, and volunteers with Vacation Bible School.

4272 3.4 Team Teaching and Chaperoning

4273 Our goal is to assign volunteers in teams of two or more adults per Sunday school hour to every class of
4274 children or youth. Concerted effort will be made to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteers to permit such team
4275 teaching. For classrooms where it proves impractical to assign two teachers, the teacher is required to leave
4276 the door open unless the children are too young and are impossible to keep in the classroom without closing
4277 the door. In any event, the teacher must leave the door window unblocked unless two adults are in the
4278 classroom. Further, the Sunday School Superintendent will make rounds involving random visits to
4279 classrooms throughout the hour, with a special focus on single teacher classrooms. Other church sponsored
4280 or community groups of children or youth who meet at the church should have two or more leaders present
4281 whenever possible. When the group includes both boys and girls, both male and female leaders should be
4282 present. If the group stays overnight at the church, or if a church-sponsored group leaves the premises, two or
4283 more leaders must be present, and no fewer than two adults must be present in any room where adults and
4284 children are sleeping.

4285 3.5 Classroom Discipline

4286 All teachers and workers will utilize the following discipline measures. If a child is behaving inappropriately,
4287 the teacher or worker will tell the child specifically what he or she is doing that is not acceptable and state what
4288 the expected behavior is, e.g., "We do not throw the blocks. We use blocks for building." If this measure is
4289 ineffective, the child will be guided to another activity. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be
4290 placed at a table to work alone away from the other students. If the child's disruptive behavior continues after
4291 these steps have been taken, the child's parents may be called to pick up the child, or the child may be taken
4292 to an empty classroom or office and left under the supervision of a staff member or member of the Christian
4293 Education Committee. No physical punishment or verbal abuse, such as ridicule, is to be used at any time. If
4294 isolating the child within the classroom or removal of the child from the room becomes necessary, the situation
4295 will be discussed with the child's parents or guardian as soon as possible.

4296 3.6 Open Classrooms

4297 Classrooms or child care rooms may be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents, or other volunteer
4298 church workers, such as members of the Christian Education Committee. Brief observations of child care
4299 rooms and classrooms of children or youth are conducted by the Church Educator during the Sunday School
4300 hours.

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4302 **ARTICLE VII THE KNOX MEMORIAL CHAPEL**
4303 **AND COLUMBARIUM**

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4305 The Columbarium of Knox Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati, Ohio (the Church) has been established to provide
4306 an area in the Church building for the inurnment of the remains of deceased members of the Church and their
4307 families. These rules are designed to assure that the procedure to be followed in inurnments are reverent and
4308 orderly and to specify the privileges and conditions in connection with the use of the Columbarium.

4309 **1.0 SUPERVISION OF THE COLUMBARIUM**

4310 The Session-Board of Trustees shall at all times have full control of the Columbarium. The day-to-day
4311 operation of the Columbarium shall be managed under this policy by the Church Office Administrator with