

Christian Discipleship Ministry Team (CDMT)**Risk Management Policy**
(Approved by the Session August 2007)

The following Risk Management Policy (RMP) addressed recommendations and procedures related to the administration of the children and youth ministry programs at Chapel by the Lake. The primary purpose of this RMP is to ensure, to the extent reasonably possible, the safety and well being of the young people placed in our care. Secondly, this RMP seeks to preserve the spiritual, financial, and psychological health of the congregation by minimizing the risk that this church might be seen by the larger community as having failed to take reasonable steps to adequately protect these same young people. Recognizing that it is impossible to eliminate all risk, this RMP represents a balance of views obtained from all of those currently involved in these ministries.

Recommendation #1: Maintain Attendance Records

A complete attendance record shall be completed for each Sunday School class and youth group function sponsored by the Chapel. This record shall include the date, time, and place of the class meeting as well as the first and last names of all persons in attendance (including all adults present).

IMPACTS: If adopted, it is our intent to provide attendance sheets for all Sunday School classes and regularly scheduled youth meetings that already contain the names of all children and youth who have previously registered. Teachers or leaders would then simply check off the names of those in attendance and add any new kids at the bottom of the list. A master registration list would be maintained by the church secretary, updated as necessary, and a new attendance sheet produced for each class/meeting on a weekly basis. We may want to consider purchasing any of several different software applications that are specifically designed for this purpose. A locking file cabinet in the church office should be used to store the attendance forms, child registration forms, and the application information discussed in recommendation #2.

Recommendation #2: Initiate a Teacher/Leader/Assistant Application Process

Anyone who desires to work in children and youth ministries must apply in writing and their application must be approved by the Christian Discipleship Ministry Team (CDMT) and forwarded to the Session prior to their leading or engaging in any unsupervised activities or events directly sponsored by Chapel by the Lake. All persons who apply and are authorized to serve in these ministries serve at the pleasure and under the direction of the CDMT and the session. Any person's authorization to serve in these ministries may be withdrawn at any time. [NOTE: This application process is not intended nor can it be reasonably expected to include other organizations which may use the Chapel's facilities on either a regular or occasional basis. (i.e., Auke Bay Co-op Preschool, Scouts, Alaska Teen Institute, etc.)]

- A. Written Application** – all applicants will be required to complete and sign a confidential written application giving basic personal information such as name,

address, phone number, employer, personal references, other churches previously attended, descriptions of previous ministry experience, etc. Said application shall also include a basic statement of faith as well as agreement by the applicant to abide by the polity of the church. The applicant must acknowledge that they serve under the authority of the Session and/or its designated representatives and that they agree to abide by the “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (Please see attached Addendum).

B. Basic Qualifications: All applicants must be members in good standing of Chapel by the Lake, or, at a minimum, must have been previously baptized in another church and have professed their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior (see statement of faith referred to above). Applicants must have a knowledge of Scripture, the Christian faith, and Reformed theology that is to commensurate with the knowledge required for the position **for which they are applying**. Applicants must have a desire to continue their own “Christian Education” and a willingness to attend Chapel sponsored teacher/leader training events as they are offered. Furthermore, as Christian role models and witnesses of the faith to our children and youth, applicants must conduct their lives in a manner that is faithful to the Gospel and consistent with their public ministry.

C. Background Checks: - All adult applicants must give permission to the staff, CDMT, or any person designated by them to conduct background checks and to do additional reference checks such as contacting personal references, churches previously attended, and employers. Persons who have been convicted of any violent crime, or crime against or involving a minor, regardless of its nature, shall not be authorized to serve in the Chapel’s children and youth ministries.

Recommendation #3: Require Supervision Standards

For all Chapel sponsored CDMT events occurring both on and off Chapel property:

A: Adult-to-Child Ratios – The following ratios represent the minimum number of adults per the specified number of children or youth that shall be observed at all Chapel sponsored CDMT events”

Infants: 1 adult to 3 children

Toddlers: 1 adult to 5 children

Preschool: 1 adult to 5 children

Elementary: 1 adult to 7 children

Middle & High School: 1 adult to 7 youth

B: Team Teaching – Whenever possible (i.e., when adequate numbers of volunteers are available) teaching teams shall be employed at every grade level. The primary objective of this policy is to have two adults in each classroom at all times. Teachers who do not have a team partner or who find they must teach a class alone should minimize periods of

time alone with individual students. If a student must be counseled or talked to before or after class, it is best to have another adult or parent present.

C: Releasing Children – Children from the nursery to second grade (i.e., those classes on the first floor of the education wing) shall be held in class and not released until they are picked up by a parent or guardian.

D: Restroom Procedures – Children who are not normally released from class (i.e., third grade and below) without a parent or guardian should not be sent to the restroom alone. Kindergarteners and children in older grades (up to the release age) should be sent in pairs. Preschoolers and toddlers will likely require some assistance with their clothing and cleanup. Restroom and stall doors should be left open and two adults, if possible, should be involved- one assisting the child as necessary and the other monitoring from outside. It is recommended that care givers in the toddler room bring children over to the preschool room to use the toilet. Men and teens should not be tasked with assisting children who need help using the toilet.

E: Diaper Changing – Chapel volunteer care givers will not change diapers. Most children are left in the nursery for no more than sixty to seventy-five minutes and the need for diaper changes by volunteer staff are a relatively rare occurrence on any Sunday morning. In addition to avoiding the sanitation and health risks, parents can be easily summoned using the electronic pager system relieving us completely of the need to carry out this task.

F: Playground Supervision – Unsupervised use of the playground during Sunday morning services or at any other Chapel function is to be discouraged. If used during the designated Sunday School hour by any given class, the same guidelines regarding the ratio of adults to children, releasing children, and restroom procedures shall apply.

G: Special Event Planning- Any Chapel-sponsored event which is aimed directly at or predominantly involves children and youth must be approved in advance by the CDMT or the Session, or either Pastor, and must meet the following requirements:

1. One adult must be designated as the event coordinator. This individual will be responsible for ensuring the event is carried out in accordance with the “event-plan” and the guidelines listed below.
2. The event coordinator as well as any other adult “leaders” shall have previously applied and met the requirements to work with children and youth ministries.
3. A written event plan shall be prepared which includes:
 - a. The names of the event coordinator and all other adult “leaders”;
 - b. An estimate of the number and ages of kids who will likely attend;
 - c. A description of the event including the time, date, and place to be held, its duration, and the activity/activities that will be carried out;
 - d. A brief description of the purpose of the event in furthering the Chapel’s ministry goals;

- e. A description of any transportation requirements, if applicable, and how these requirements shall be met.
4. Copies of Student Medical Emergency Release Forms (S.M.E.R.F.s) shall be obtained for any events occurring off of the church premises, or for overnight events.
5. Mixed male and female overnight events or lock-ins shall include male and female adult chaperones according to the ratios listed in Recommendation #3 and at least one chaperone of each gender for smaller mixed groups.

Recommendation #4: Implement Emergency Procedures

Fire Protection – Fire evacuation drills shall be conducted each school year during the primary Sunday School hour (one in September and one in January). Fire escape routes and emergency medical response plans shall be posted in each Sunday School room. Small multipurpose fire extinguishers shall be mounted by the doors in each room.

First Aid – First aid kits (containing no medicines) shall be in the Smith Hall kitchen area, the Sunday School office, the Usher’s closet near the entrance to the Sanctuary, and all of the Sunday School classrooms. Universal precautions shall be taken against blood-borne diseases.

Recommendation #5: Ensure Facility Safety

A responsible adult volunteer should be present in or near the Sunday School office to monitor traffic in and out of the education wing during the Sunday School hour.

All cleaning supplies and/or poisonous substances shall be stored in a locked closet or childproof cabinet.

Addendum A

II. B. Standards for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**Life Together in the Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for
Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

43.0015

As an employee or volunteer in an entity, governing body, or congregation associated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), I will commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

43.0016

I will conduct my life in a manner that will support the ministry of my workplace. Therefore I will:

1. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
2. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern;
3. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my position, my commitments to a family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
4. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs; and
5. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech.

II

43.0017

I will conduct myself at my workplace in a manner that will support its ministry. Therefore I will:

1. Honor relationships within the workplace and observe appropriate boundaries;
2. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my position;
3. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my work;
4. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the workplace for any personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;

5. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
6. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
7. Claim only those qualifications actually obtained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
8. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria;
9. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and, upon leaving a position, speak and act in ways that support the work of my successor;
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
11. Accept the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable;
12. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
13. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues; and
14. Cooperate with persons of other faith traditions.