



Presbytery of Missouri River Valley

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Greetings Friends in Christ!

We hope and pray your new year is off to a good and faithful start. As you may be aware, our denomination updated some policy requirements to keep up with the changing world.

PMRV is committed to partnering with churches every step of the way to help understand these changes. Change can be overwhelming with determining where to start, therefore a group of pastors and educators are working together to provide resources to all of our churches.

We chose to start with one of the most fundamental calls for all churches, to provide a safe and healthy environment for all of our members. This promotes the opportunity for all people to learn and nurture their relationship with God and their fellow believers. Child and vulnerable adult protection policies are critical to creating safe spaces.

After discussion and training through Project Harmony in Omaha and other training programs designed to create safe spaces, we identified an easy first step; adopting and sharing a *Code of Conduct* with every person who comes in contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults. The purpose of a *Code of Conduct* is to help educate and protect our members, staff, volunteers, children and vulnerable adults. This probably applies to 100% of our churches. Even if you do not currently have an active children's ministry, you probably have vulnerable adults. A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who may need community care services due to mental or physical disability, age, or illness. They are considered vulnerable if they are unable to look after themselves, protect themselves from harm, provide consent, or report abuse.

This *Code of Conduct* can be an easy first tool to use within a congregation to begin implementing the changes required by our denomination.

We are in this together. We do this out of a sense of love and excellence and service.

May this make all of us more aware and caring for vulnerable people and humble about learning. We are blessed to be members of this community and we are all partners in our service to Jesus Christ.

Please let us know what else might be helpful to your church on this journey. Comments and inquiries can be directed to nicole@pmrv.org and she will forward it to the proper person for a response.

Grace and peace,

PMRV Leadership Team

PMRV Child and Vulnerable Adult CODE OF CONDUCT

Supervision and Leadership in Presbytery and church events is for the nurturing of young people in their faith, to provide a safe and healthy environment, to be a positive role model, and to be a kind and supportive mentor.

The physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being are the priority, and all activities will have these goals as the focus of all participants.

The rule of three is in effect at all times, including youth. No adults or young people should be in a one-on-one situation with one youth. This includes in a room, building, or vehicle. If an adult is transporting young people, there must be a minimum of 2 young people in the vehicle. Transportation should only be in a non-smoking vehicle driven by an adult; youth should not be transporting youth unless previously approved by both sets of parents/guardians.

There should be 2 adults present at all events/activities, one of each gender if possible. In larger groups there should be 1 adult present for each group of 8 children (K-6) and 1 adult present for each group of 10 youth (7-12) as well as following the 2-adult minimum rule.

If one-on-one counseling is required, the adult should be visible at all times. If the room does not have a window, the door must remain open. For the youth's privacy they do not need to be visible, but the adult must always be visible.

No adult should ask to follow a young person on any form of social media. If a young person asks to follow an adult, the adult should make sure the parent/guardian is aware and approves. Before allowing a young person to interact on social media, the adult must assure what they post is appropriate for all ages. An adult should never follow a young person on social media that is not transparent or visible. For example, apps like Snapchat or BeReal and similar apps, are not acceptable.

Hugs should be initiated by the young person, never the adult. Fist bumps and high fives are preferred.

Tickling, backrubs and massaging are prohibited. Also, no kissing, including head kissing or cheek-to-cheek air kisses.

When participating in events/activities with children and youth, no participants of any age may use tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs or any other illegal substances.

All adults functioning in church and presbytery events are mandatory reporters. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, the first point of contact in **Nebraska**: 1-800-652-1999 (Child Abuse Hotline) or local law enforcement for **Iowa**: 1-800-362-2178 (Child Abuse Hotline) followed immediately by contacting Head of Staff. If the Head of Staff is involved in the incident, report to the Chair of Personnel. It is not your responsibility to research or obtain details, it is your responsibility to report and let the professionals investigate.

Name _____

Date _____

Adopted by PMRV on 2/13/25