

## **Children and Youth Protection Policy**

*“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 10:13-16*

### **Policy Purpose**

Bath Presbyterian Church is committed to providing a church environment that is a safe place for children and youth and that will protect them from any abuse when they are involved in church related activities. Bath adopts these policies and procedures not only to maximize safety and prevent child abuse from occurring within its church community, but also to guide and protect volunteers from unwarranted allegations of child abuse.

For purposes of this policy the term child/children/youth includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

### **Supervision of Children**

- 1) Children and youth must be supervised by at least two, unrelated adult leaders whenever possible. If such is not possible, children and youth must be supervised by at least one adult and positioned so that other adults are able to both see & hear them.
- 2) The Child/Youth Permission form must be filled out for all children participating in Sunday School, Nursery; or any other church event in which a church member (other than the child's parent/guardian) is responsible for the care of the child. This form includes allergies/medical information, parental contact information and various permissions the parent/guardian is entrusting the church regarding their child. Parental permission must be obtained to take children outside of the church building through a Child\Youth Permission form.
- 3) Individuals working with children will have background checks on file.
- 4) Profanity, inappropriate jokes and media, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or youth are prohibited.

Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- Neglect – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

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