

## PRESBYTERY OF BALTIMORE INTERIM CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matthew 19:14) Jesus welcomed children and charged those who care for them to remove stumbling blocks from their paths. (Matthew 18: 5-6)

The Presbytery of Baltimore believes that it is called by God to help its congregations, pastors, and related organizations to provide a safe, nurturing environment for all children, to prevent the abuse of children while in their care, and to ensure prompt reporting of suspected abuse or neglect.

Although Baltimore Presbytery rarely has children within its direct care, it is dedicated to ensuring compliance with applicable laws and provisions of the Book of Order, and to providing information, examples, guidelines, resources, and referrals to its congregations, pastors, and related organizations. Toward that end, Baltimore Presbytery will:

- Provide guidelines for and make available models of child protection policies for use by congregations and related organizations in drafting their own policies;
- Support congregations, pastors, and related organizations by sharing information about available resources and training opportunities;
- Require that any organization that uses Presbytery facilities and expects to have children in attendance have and follow its own appropriate general child protection policy or a child protection plan for the specific event;
- Require that any agency of the Presbytery (“a subdivision that reports directly to the presbytery,” Manual of POB, 1.5.1) and works with children or includes them in any program have an appropriate child protection policy, approved by the Presbytery Cabinet;
- Require that all teaching elder members who work with or are in regular contact with children, whether paid or as volunteers, take Healthy Boundaries or comparable training approved by the Sexual Misconduct Response Team every three years;
- Require that all teaching elder members comply with the mandatory reporting requirements of their local civil law jurisdiction and the Book of Order. Failure to comply may form the basis for discipline of the teaching elder under the Rules of Discipline set forth in the Book of Order.
- Adhere to the provisions of the Policy and Procedures for Child Care in Baltimore Presbytery adopted November 10, 2018.

- The values and procedures of current Child Protection Policy of the Presbytery of Baltimore are rooted in the tenets set forth in the **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures**. That policy statement may serve as a guide for further interpretation of the present document and should be consulted if questions or situations arise not specifically covered by the present statement.