

## Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Concord MA

### **Child Protection Policy**

Governing the screening and training of Redeemer Clergy, Staff, and Volunteers  
and their interactions with the children of our church

Approved by the Session of Redeemer Church: January 10, 2013

#### **1. Rationale:**

*Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3, ESV).*

There are many occasions in the ministry of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (“Redeemer”) when children, teens or members of a vulnerable population (collectively “Children”)<sup>1</sup> are under the care and supervision of church employees or volunteers. The purpose of this Policy is to establish an environment that maximizes the safety and protection of these Children. Redeemer recognizes that God has entrusted these Children to our care and gives its highest priority to minimizing potential abuse, either on church property or at church-sponsored events. Redeemer also recognizes the tremendous dedication of the many people who work tirelessly for the kingdom of Jesus Christ by serving these lambs God has placed in our care. Redeemer seeks to protect these valuable workers against false accusations.

To this end, the session of Redeemer Presbyterian Church has approved the following policy to take seriously the shepherding needs of our church, protect the good name of our staff and volunteers, and comply with the laws of the Commonwealth wherein we live and worship. Redeemer is subject to Massachusetts laws regarding the protection of children. Redeemer recognizes that the welfare of children in its care is paramount and will make every effort to hinder the abuse of children by utilizing preventative measures including the screening, training, and supervision of staff and all volunteers. This Policy does not constitute a contract between the church and any party. It is a statement of guidelines and commitment which Redeemer will seek to follow. The policy is subject to revision at any time by the session of Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

#### **2. Screening:**

- 2.1 Prior to applying for any staff or volunteer position involving Children, the applicant must be a member in good standing of Redeemer for a period of at least 6 months. Any exception to this rule must be made by a majority vote of the Session.
- 2.2 A copy of the Child Protection Policy will be shared with all prospective staff and volunteers.
- 2.3 All clergy, staff, and volunteers working with children will be required to consent to a criminal background check. This check will be administered through the Massachusetts CORI system and in accordance with the principles laid out below in section **4, Administration.**

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Children” will be used interchangeably with the phrase “child, teen, or member of a vulnerable population” throughout this document and is always meant to capture the singular and plural of the such individuals.

### **3. Training:**

- 3.1 In addition to initial background checks, all clergy, staff, and volunteers to children will yearly be required to complete child abuse and neglect awareness training. The training shall consist of completion of a government-administered online course available for Massachusetts Mandated Reporters. Each clergy, staff, and volunteer will be responsible for the completing the training, and will present proof of completion to the assistant pastor to be kept in a locked file at the church office.
- 3.2 No minor shall ever be left alone with only one adult staff/volunteer at any church-sponsored activity.
  - 3.2.1 The only exception to the above shall be religious or personal counseling conducted by trained and licensed clergy, and only with the express consent of the minor's parent/guardian.

### **4. Administration:**

- 4.1 Redeemer Presbyterian Church is registered under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 6, § 172 to receive CORI for the purpose of screening current and otherwise qualified prospective employees, subcontractors, volunteers, license applicants, current licensees, and applicants for the rental or lease of housing.
- 4.2 The obtaining and screening of CORI shall be carried out in accordance with Redeemer's *Criminal Offender Record Information Policy*, a brief summary of which is below (note that the process outlined below is for reference only, and all final questions concerning the policy should be directed to the policy itself, on file at the church office.):
  - 4.2.1 The Church shall maintain a list of individuals authorized to have access to CORI. The list shall include, but not be limited to, pastors and Church staff with the responsibility for hiring, screening volunteer applicants and for submitting requests for CORI. The list shall be updated every six (6) months, as necessary.
  - 4.2.2 The Church shall keep a record of all current church staff and volunteers involved in ministry to minors, including but not limited to: nursery workers, Sunday school teachers, and youth ministry volunteers.
  - 4.2.3 Any individual wishing to work or volunteer with minors in the church shall complete a "Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Acknowledgment Form." This form shall be kept on file with an individual's CORI report, once obtained.
  - 4.2.4 Information obtained from a CORI report shall be subject to review by the individuals authorized to have access to it, as outlined in 4.2.1, for the purpose of staff and volunteer review. Information obtained shall not immediately be grounds for dismissal from volunteer or staff position, but will be weighed in accord with the policies outlined in the *Criminal Offender Record Information Policy*, section 11.

4.2.5 The Church shall store paper files containing CORI separately from personnel and other files in a locked and secure location. CORI that is stored electronically shall be password protected and encrypted. CORI that is stored electronically also shall not be stored via means of “public cloud storage.”