

**PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY
PMV POLICY AND PRACTICE**

(Note: Whenever the term “minister of the Word and Sacrament” is used in this Policy and Practice, it is deemed to be identical to the equivalent term “teaching elder” when that term is used in the Book of Order.)

**ARTICLE I
OFFICERS**

Section 1.01: Moderator

The Moderator shall serve for a term of one year. The authority and duties of the Moderator are set forth in *G-3.0104*, and shall include those of presiding officers outlined in the most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the presbytery. If the Moderator is unable to serve, the Moderator may appoint either the Vice-Moderator or a past Moderator of the presbytery to preside at that meeting. (Added 5/12/2020)

The Moderator shall plan worship services at stated meetings of the presbytery during the year of service, and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the presbytery.

Section 1.02: Vice-Moderator

The Vice-Moderator shall serve for a term of one year and will ordinarily be nominated for Moderator the following year. The Vice-Moderator shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Moderator and by the presbytery.

Section 1.03: Leadership Council Chair

The Leadership Council Chair shall preside over the meetings of the Leadership Council.

Section 1.04: Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk is the chief ecclesiastical officer of the presbytery in accordance with *G-3.0104*, which states:

Each council shall elect a clerk who shall record the transactions of the council, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, maintain any required registers, preserve its records, and furnish extracts from them when required by another council of the church. Such extracts, verified by the clerk, shall be evidence in any council of the church....The clerk of a presbytery, a synod, and the General Assembly shall be called stated clerk, shall be elected by the council for a definite term as it may determine, and must be a ruling elder or minister of the Word and Sacrament.

The Stated Clerk of the presbytery normally shall be elected at a May meeting of the presbytery for a term of three years and may be reelected for an indefinite number of terms.

1. The Stated Clerk shall serve as parliamentarian of the presbytery and assist the Leadership Council in making all necessary arrangements for each meeting of the presbytery, including the preparation of a docket, registration, maintenance of accurate minutes, compilation of floor papers, and proper notification of all meetings with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, ruling elder and Certified Christian Educator members of the presbytery, and ruling elder commissioners.
2. The Stated Clerk shall maintain the Standing Rules and Manual of Operations under the direction of the Council.
3. The Stated Clerk shall act as the Secretary of the Corporation.
4. The Stated Clerk shall oversee the work of the Recording Clerk and presbytery historian.
5. The Stated Clerk shall perform other duties as directed by the presbytery or by the Leadership Council.

The Stated Clerk shall receive compensation for services in an amount set by the presbytery and shall be responsible to the presbytery through the Leadership Council and Staff Support committee.

Section 1.05: Recording Clerk

The Recording Clerk normally shall be concurrently elected with the Stated Clerk for a term of three years and may be reelected for an indefinite number of terms. The Recording Clerk shall serve as assistant to the Stated Clerk and may perform the latter's duties whenever the Stated Clerk is unable to act.

The Recording Clerk shall be assigned the specific task of taking such notes as may be necessary to provide information from which the Stated Clerk can prepare the minutes of the presbytery meetings.

(End of Article I)

ARTICLE II STAFF

Section 2.01: General

The staff of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley shall have the responsibility to assist the presbytery, its congregations, committees, and members in the work of promoting the

mission of the Church of Jesus Christ in and through the presbytery and other cooperative ministries of denominational, ecumenical, and interfaith agencies.

Section 2.02: Position Descriptions

Detailed position descriptions shall be maintained up-to-date by the Staff Support Committee according to changing needs and shall be available at all times in the files of the presbytery.

Section 2.03: Personnel Files

Staff personnel files, both written and electronic, shall be considered confidential and available to the Executive Presbyter and members of the Staff Support Committee. Written files shall be stored at the presbytery office.

Section 2.04: Executive Presbyter

The Executive Presbyter shall be the chief administrative and executive officer of the presbytery, and shall supervise the presbytery staff. The Executive Presbyter shall be a minister of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elder elected by the presbytery for a term of five years and may be reelected for an indefinite number of terms. The Executive Presbyter shall receive compensation in an amount set by the presbytery.

The Executive Presbyter shall assist the presbytery in the implementation of strategy and program, providing staff services as necessary. The Executive Presbyter shall be responsible to the presbytery through the Leadership Council and Staff Support Committee.

Section 2.05: Presbytery Support Staff

Presbytery support staff shall consist of those positions necessary to execute the administrative and support work of the presbytery. Such positions shall be authorized by the Leadership Council in consultation with the Staff Support Committee, and shall carry with them compensation as set by the presbytery.

(End of Article II)

ARTICLE III STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 3.01: General

The Leadership Council shall create standing committees to execute the various functions necessary to carry out the mission and ministry of the presbytery, in accordance with *G-3.0109* of the *Book of Order* which states:

Councils may designate by their own rule such committees and commissions as they deem necessary and helpful for the accomplishment of the mission of the church, and may create such structures jointly with other councils, in consultation with the next higher council. In appointing such committees and commissions councils shall be mindful of the principles of unity in diversity consistent with the provisions of this Constitution (F-1.0403, G-3.0103).

Section 3.02: Committees of the Presbytery

The standing committees of the presbytery shall be:

1. Committee on Ministry
2. Committee on Preparation for Ministry
3. Nominations Committee
4. Network Support and Grants Committee
5. Presbytery Trustees
6. Representation and Diversity Committee (*amended May 14, 2019*)
7. Staff Support Committee

Section 3.03: Policy and Practice

Each standing committee shall develop its own *Policy and Practice* manual. In this context, *Policy* shall refer to those parts of the committee's work which require authorization from the presbytery, and therefore will be understood to be an extension of presbytery policy. Changes to such policy shall require the consent of the presbytery.

Section 3.04: Participation

Each standing committee shall be comprised, insofar as possible, of an equal number of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders, who shall be nominated by the Nominations Committee and elected by the presbytery in accordance with *F-1.0403 and G-3.0103 of the Book of Order*. When necessary to facilitate the committees' effective work and in light of available candidates to be elected, the Leadership Council, at the request of the Nominations Committee, may grant a temporary exemption, for a period not to exceed one year, from the requirement for an equal number of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders to be nominated and elected to a particular standing committee. Any such exemption shall be reported to the presbytery at the next stated meeting. (*Amended February 6, 2019*)

1. Each committee shall be empowered to appoint additional persons to their elected number as dictated by their special workload or the need for some particular talent or expertise. Such persons shall have no vote.
2. A member of any committee needing to resign for good cause shall notify the chair of the particular committee who will then make a written request for replacement. This statement shall be filed with the Stated Clerk who shall forward the request to the Nominations Committee.

3. Each committee is responsible for encouraging full participation of its members. Should a member of a committee fail to attend or participate in the work of the committee, the committee may, after conferring with the member, make a written request for replacement, which shall include the reason for requesting the replacement and the nature of the discussion with the member to be replaced. The request shall be filed with the Stated Clerk who shall forward it to the Nominations Committee, which may recommend to presbytery that the position of the nonparticipating member be declared vacant and nominate a person to fulfill the unexpired term.

Section 3.05: Officers

Each standing committee shall have a chair or co-chairs, nominated by the Nominations Committee and elected by the presbytery, and any other officers that may be specified in the specific committee's Policy and Practice. (*Amended November 2024*)

Section 3.06: Meetings

Each standing committee shall meet on a regular schedule which shall be determined by its own action. All standing committees shall meet a minimum of four (4) times per year.

1. Quorums for all meeting of standing committees shall be stated in each committee's *Policy and Practice*.
2. Meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer and shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except when it is in contradiction to the *Book of Order*.
3. A standing committee meeting with no quorum present may take actions conditional upon the subsequent ratification by a majority of the whole committee.
4. A standing committee may meet electronically in a "real-time" voice or visual teleconference provided that:
 - a. A quorum is present
 - b. Voting for all actions is by individual poll, rather than simultaneous voice vote
 - c. Provisions of Section 3.04 (1) and (2) are followed [*Stated Clerk's note: the reference in this subsection is obscure and an effort is being made to find what provision it is meant to incorporate. Committees are well-advised to refer to pages 97-99 of RONR for additional required procedures for electronic meetings*].

5. A standing committee may also call a special meeting to consider actions that are time specific. When it is not possible or practical to meet either in person or electronically, a committee may take action via electronic or email polling. Each of the following conditions shall apply:
 - a. A specific return time for responses must be clearly stated.
 - b. All members of a standing committee (except those on leaves of absence) must return responses by the specified return time.
 - c. All votes *must* be in the affirmative.
 - d. The committee shall ratify and record this action at the next regular meeting.

Section 3.07: Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry shall serve as pastor, counselor, and advisor to ministers of the Word and Sacrament and congregations, in accordance with *G-3.0307* which states:

Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors [also known as commissioned ruling elders]), and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.

The Executive Presbyter shall provide staff support for the Committee on Ministry. The Committee on Ministry shall be directly responsible to the presbytery.

Section 3.08: Committee on Preparation for Ministry

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall support, guide and assist inquirers and candidates for the ordered ministry of minister of the Word and Sacrament (*G-2.0501*) in accordance with *G-3.0307* which states:

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture and oversee the process of preparing to become a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

In addition, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall support, guide and assist individuals seeking service as certified Christian educators (*G-2.1103*), and help individuals discern their sense of call to ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Executive Presbyter shall provide staff support for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall be directly responsible to the presbytery.

Section 3.09: Nominations

The Nominations Committee shall make nominations for all required presbytery elections and shall develop and maintain a process encouraging good stewardship of presbytery leadership resources.

The Stated Clerk shall provide staff support for the Nominations Committee. The Nominations committee shall be directly responsible to the presbytery.

Section 3.10: Network Support and Grants

The Network Support and Grants Committee shall oversee and administer the designated networks of the presbytery, monitor the process for compliance of continuing denominational grants received by entities within the presbytery, and allocate presbytery network funds and grants.

The Executive Presbyter shall provide staff support for the Network Support and Grants Committee. The Network Support and Grants Committee shall be responsible to the presbytery through the Leadership Council.

Section 3.11: Presbytery Trustees

The Presbytery Trustees shall assist the Leadership Council in preparing the operating and mission budgets for the approval of the presbytery and to serve as the Trustees of the corporation in accordance with *G-4.0101*.

The Executive Presbyter shall provide staff support for the Presbytery Trustees. The Presbytery Trustees shall be responsible to the presbytery through the Leadership Council.

Section 3.12: Representation and Diversity

The Representation and Diversity Committee shall advise the presbytery with respect to the membership of the presbytery itself, its committees, councils, and commissions, to assure the implementation of the church's commitment to *full expression of the rich diversity of the church in membership and inclusiveness and full participation and access to representation in decision making and employment practices*.

The Stated Clerk shall provide staff support for the Representation and Diversity Committee. The Representation and Diversity Committee shall be responsible to the presbytery through the Leadership Council.

Section 3.13: Staff Support

The Staff Support Committee shall review and evaluate the professional presbytery staff, monitor the evaluation of presbytery support staff, and provide counsel for the Executive Presbyter.

The Executive Presbyter shall provide staff support for the Staff Support Committee. The Staff Support Committee shall be responsible to the presbytery through the Leadership Council.

Section 3.14: Permanent Judicial Commission

The Permanent Judicial Commission shall assist and enable the presbytery in the proper exercise of church discipline, and to fulfill the constitutional requirements for such a commission, in accordance with *Chapter V* of the *Rules of Discipline*.

The Stated Clerk shall provide staff support for the Permanent Judicial Commission.

(End of Article III)

ARTICLE IV COVENANTAL AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

[Stated Clerk's Note: As of September 2020 this entire Article is under review by the Leadership Council. No current legal effect should be assumed from the earlier provisions in this Article unless the presbytery confirms and/or updates its relationship with these entities by revisions to this Article.]

Section 4.01: Covenantal Relationships

The Presbytery of Miami Valley may establish covenantal relationships with agencies and organizations which relate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the presbytery, and its member churches. Such covenants shall affirm mutual support and goals; attest to a visible relationship with the presbytery; and endorse the work in ministry within the presbytery's bounds. Such covenants shall permit the use of the name *Presbytery of the Miami Valley* by the outside organization or agency.

Covenants for this purpose are understood to be continuing and do not need renewal but may be ended at any time by action of either party.

Section 4.02: Self Development of People

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley shall establish a covenantal relationship with the local committee of *Self Development of People*, which is a ministry supported by the *One Great Hour of Sharing* offering from the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The local committee

shall conform to the requirements of Self Development of People with respect to composition, organization, and certification.

The local committee of *Self Development of People* shall relate to the presbytery through the Leadership Council, and shall self-certify to the Leadership Council that all requirements for the establishment and continuance have been fulfilled.

Section 4.03: Presbyterian Women

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley shall establish a covenantal relationship with *Presbyterian Women of the Miami Valley*, the local chapter of *Presbyterian Women*, an independent organization within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Presbyterian Women of the Miami Valley shall relate to the presbytery through the Leadership Council.

Section 4.04: Kirkmont Center, Inc.

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley shall establish a covenantal relationship with *Kirkmont Center, Inc.* which is an independent organization directing the program and ministry, and managing the facilities, of Kirkmont Center, a property owned by the presbytery.

1. The presbytery shall have six (6) members of the Board of Trustees of Kirkmont Center, Inc.; who shall be elected by the presbytery.
2. The Executive Presbyter and a representative from the Leadership Council, chosen by the council from its members, shall serve as board members without vote.

Section 4.05 Other Relationships

Through members of particular churches, the Presbytery of the Miami Valley may have representation in organizations and agencies with connections to, and recognition by, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that conduct ministries of witness, service, and nurture, such as *Black Presbyterian Caucus*, *Korean Presbyterian Caucus*, and *Hispanic Presbyterian Caucus*. With permission of the Leadership Council, local chapters of such organizations may use the name of the *Presbytery of the Miami Valley*.

The organizations shall relate to the presbytery through the Leadership Council.

(End of Article IV)

ARTICLE V COMMISSIONS

Section 5.01 General

G-3.0109b: Administrative commissions are designated to consider and conclude matters not involving ecclesiastical judicial process, except that in the discharge of their assigned responsibilities they may discover and report to the designating council matters that may require judicial action by the council.

Section 5.02 Membership

Administrative commissions shall be composed of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. When a commission consists of an odd number of persons, the additional member may be either a minister of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elder. In no case shall two ruling elders from the same congregation serve on an administrative commission.

Each administrative commission shall have a chairperson and a clerk, each of whom shall be designated by the appointing or electing body or elected by the commission from its members.

Section 5.03 Quorum

A quorum for an administrative commission shall consist of the majority of its members.

Section 5.04 Administrative Commissions to Ordain and/or Install

Administrative commissions to ordain and/or install shall consist of a *minimum* of three persons, one of whom shall be the Moderator of the presbytery, who shall also be the chairperson of the commission. The Moderator of the presbytery, if unable to serve, may appoint instead either the Vice-Moderator or a past Moderator, who shall also serve as chairperson.

The balance of members of an administrative commission to ordain and/or install shall be selected by the candidate or elect. In addition, ministers of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elders from outside the bounds of the presbytery who participate in the service may be seated as corresponding members with voice but without vote.

The Committee on Ministry shall approve the formation of an administrative commission to ordain and/or install.

Section 5.05 Administrative Commissions for Other Functions

The following functions may be entrusted to an administrative commission:

1. Developing immigrant fellowships, organizing new congregations, merging congregations, or forming union or federated congregations (*G-5.05*)
2. Visiting particular councils (sessions) and congregations over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein (*G-3.0109b5*)
3. With specific authorization from the presbytery, an administrative commission may be empowered to dissolve a pastoral relationship (*G-2.0901, G-2.0904*)

Administrative commissions shall be formed for the purposes of these functions by action of the presbytery and shall consist of at least five persons appointed by the moderator of presbytery, or elected by the presbytery.

The administrative commission may seat ministers of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elders from outside the bounds of the presbytery as corresponding members with voice but without vote.

(End of Article V)

ARTICLE VI PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Section 6.01 Statement of Purpose

We believe that Scripture and our faith in Jesus Christ call us to standards of responsible conduct in all of life, including sexual behavior. Human sexuality is an integral part of who we are as persons. However, it can become the basis for oppression, where trust relationships are breached and persons are abused. Sexual misconduct is a violation not only of the principles set forth in Scripture, but also of the ministerial employment and professional relationship, and as such is never permissible.

Section 6.02 Prohibition of Sexual Misconduct

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley forbids all forms of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual malfeasance.

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley will not tolerate sexual misconduct, including but not limited to sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual malfeasance by its ministers of the

Word and Sacrament, pastors, church professionals, or any person carrying out the programs of the Presbytery. Presbytery will impose just and stringent consequences in proven cases of sexual misconduct as provided by the Rules of Discipline, the Standards of Ethical Conduct of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the policies of the Presbytery.

This policy is intended to apply to and govern the conduct of ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are members of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; commissioned ruling elders serving at the direction of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; Certified Christian Educators serving within the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; inquirers; candidates; and Christian educators in process to be certified; employees, officers and agents of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; and any other persons working for the presbytery in connection with any of its programs, ministries, organizations or activities.

Church members fall under the jurisdiction and care of their individual sessions.

(Amended November 2024)

In addition to proceedings under the Rules of Discipline and this or other policies of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, employees of the presbytery working in any of its programs, ministries, organizations or activities who engage in sexual misconduct shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of their employment.

Non-Presbyterian employees and volunteers working for the presbytery are not subject to disciplinary proceedings under the Rules of Discipline, but in all other respects are covered by this policy.

Whenever an allegation of sexual misconduct under this policy is received about a member of a church of the presbytery, then in addition to the other procedures called for by this policy in response to such complaints, the Pastor of the member's church will be notified of the complaint. Any session may choose to request referral of a case to presbytery (D-7.0401). *(Amended November 2024)*

Section 6.03 Definitions of Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct is a comprehensive term that includes but is not limited to sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual malfeasance.

1. Sexual Abuse:

Includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Any sexual acts or sexual contact by coercion, force, violence, intimidation; or any sexual act or contact that may be prohibited by the laws of the State of Ohio; or,
- b. Any contact or interaction between a minor or a vulnerable adult as defined by the laws of the State of Ohio and an adult when the minor or vulnerable adult is being used for the sexual gratification of the adult person or of a third person.

Sexual abuse may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior including, but not limited to, physical contact, sexually provocative communications as defined below, and any form of sexual relationship between a minor or a vulnerable adult and an adult is always considered forced whether or not the behavior is consented to by the minor or the vulnerable adult.

2. Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is defined by law in the employment context as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when one or more of the following occur:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

3. Sexual Malfeasance:

Sexual malfeasance occurs whenever a person in a position of trust engages in a sexual act or sexual contact with another person to whom he or she owes a professional responsibility of care and trust. Such abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Physical sexual contact and sexual relationships between individuals within a pastoral, ministerial, ecclesial, employment or other relationship within the context of church life. Such contact and such relationships are not acceptable even when consensual, and regardless of whether pastoral care is involved. The inherent imbalance of power between ministers and lay people or staff undermines the validity of such consent.
- b. Sexually provocative communications in any form including, but not limited to:
 - sexually oriented jokes or humor;
 - sexually demeaning comments;
 - verbal or non-verbal suggestions of sexual involvement or sexual activity;
 - questions or comments about sexual behavior;
 - unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact;
 - graphic or degrading comments about an individual's physical appearance;
 - express or implied sexual advances or propositions;
 - displays or use of sexually suggestive materials, objects or pictures;
 - repeated requests for social engagements after an individual refuses.

Section 6.04 Prevention

1. This policy shall be distributed to all ministers of the Word and Sacrament, certified Christian educators, commissioned ruling elders, employees, volunteers, and entities of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. All inquirers, candidates, Christian Educators in certification process, Certified Christian educators, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, volunteers, and employees of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley are required to read and agree to abide by the terms of this policy. A signed acknowledgement and agreement to abide by the policy will be kept in the appropriate file. (*Amended November 2024*)
2. In addition, all ministers of the Word and Sacrament seeking new calls within the Presbytery of the Miami Valley shall complete the Personal Discernment Profile (PDP) currently being distributed by the Call Referral Services of the PC (USA), including Part IV, Sexual Misconduct Information, or its successor form. (*Amended November 2024*)
3. The policy shall be made available to all persons who accuse others of misconduct as well as those accused of misconduct.
4. God has called us to live within a covenant community. Within this covenant community we are summoned to live lives that honor God, one another, and self. Learning to live together with an awareness of healthy boundaries is one concrete way to honor our life in covenant community. To that end, the Presbytery of the Miami Valley (PMV) has required specific individuals to attend a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training according to these requirements.
 - a. Within one year of call or employment, and at least every thirty-six (36) months thereafter, ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are members of the PMV; commissioned ruling elders serving at the direction of the PMV; certified Christian educators serving within the PMV; inquirers, candidates, Christian educators in certification process, employees, officers and agents of the PMV; and any other persons working for the presbytery in connection with any of its programs, ministries, organizations or activities, whether paid or unpaid, are required to attend a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training which the presbytery will provide. The presbytery will provide adequate notice of all such trainings. (*Amended November 2024*)
 - b. The Committee on Ministry shall create a roll of ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and certified Christian educators permanently retired from ministry and no longer engaged in any form of ministry. These persons shall be permanently exempt from the training requirement in (a) above. This list will include all persons known to be too infirm to attend training or conduct ministry. Any minister of the Word and Sacrament or certified Christian educator may ask to be included on this list provided that

they do so in writing and acknowledge that they will no longer engage in any form of ministry. (Amended November 2024)

- c. When the training requirement in (a) above is not met by someone who is not exempt under (b) above, the following process applies for those who do not live into this requirement of our covenant community.
 - i. In January of each year, the Committee on Ministry chair will write a letter to all persons who have failed to attend the required training, noting their noncompliance and including a copy of these rules. Efforts will be made to seek compliance with the requirements as soon as possible. The provisions of (ii) through (x) below will be carried out until the person comes into compliance with these training policies.
 - ii. For ministers of the Word and Sacrament in installed positions: The Committee on Ministry chair will write a letter to the session reporting that the pastor has failed to comply with PMV sexual misconduct prevention training policy and requiring that the letter be included in the session minutes.
 - iii. For those serving in temporary positions: The Committee on Ministry chair will write a letter to the session reporting that the pastor has failed to comply with PMV sexual misconduct prevention training policy and that the pastor's appointment will end in 60 days if training is not completed. The letter shall be included in the session minutes.
 - iv. For those serving in validated ministries outside the church: The Committee on Ministry chair will write a letter to the employing agency reporting that the individual has failed to comply with PMV sexual misconduct prevention training policy and that the ministry's validation will end in 60 days if training is not completed.
 - v. For members-at-large: These persons will be ineligible for ministry within the PMV and their names will be deleted from the pulpit supply list until the required training is completed.
 - vi. For Honorably Retired ministers of the Word and Sacrament active in the life of the presbytery: The names of these persons will be deleted from the pulpit supply list until the required training is completed.
 - vii. For ruling elders on the pulpit supply list: The names of these persons will be deleted from the pulpit supply list until the required training is completed.
 - viii. No minister of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elder who has failed to comply with the sexual misconduct prevention training policy may serve on a presbytery committee until the required training is completed.
 - ix. At the February stated meeting of the presbytery, the Stated Clerk shall publish the names of all ministers of the Word and Sacrament

members of presbytery, certified Christian educators, and commissioned ruling elders who have failed to attend the required training without being granted an exemption.

- x. The Executive Presbyter and the Stated Clerk of this presbytery shall not certify any minister of the Word and Sacrament members of PMV, certified Christian educators, or commissioned ruling elders for service in this or another presbytery, or for posting on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) job search databases, until such training requirements have been fulfilled. (Amended 11/10/18)
5. All minister of the Word and Sacrament members of the presbytery, commissioned ruling elders, certified Christian educators seeking to serve within the presbytery, and staff of presbytery, prior to beginning their duties within the presbytery, or for those who are not serving in an installed or appointed position prior to being received into membership by the presbytery, shall be required to submit to and satisfactorily complete a background investigation as required by the presbytery's criminal background investigation policy.

Section 6.05 Care for Persons Affected by Sexual Misconduct

1. Victims of Sexual Misconduct and Their Families:

The presbytery and Response Taskforce (*Section 6.07*) shall offer pastoral care and support for victims of sexual misconduct, their families, and the congregations of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community and family are frequent injuries suffered by victims of sexual misconduct. It is important for all involved to be sensitive to the pain and need for healing experienced by the alleged victims and their families, and to act by making appropriate pastoral care available.

The extent of the damage will vary from person to person, being influenced by such factors as the degree or severity of abuse, the age and emotional condition of the victim, personality dynamics, and the importance of religious faith to the individuals affected. If the alleged victims and families decline at first, help will continue to be available from the presbytery and the Response Taskforce.

2. Congregation or Employing Entity:

The presbytery and Response Taskforce should be aware of the problems a congregation or employing entity may experience resulting from allegations of sexual misconduct by a minister, employee, or volunteer. The allegations may polarize the congregation or organization, damage morale, and create serious internal problems. Efforts should be made to recognize and identify any problems or damage done to the congregation or organization and seek to provide appropriate pastoral care or other needed assistance.

3. Accused and her or his Family:

The presbytery and Response Taskforce will offer pastoral care for the accused and the immediate family of the accused, and may recommend further treatment, when deemed appropriate. If the accused is under presbytery authority, the selection and approval of treatment, who shall receive it, its monitoring, and its financing is under the supervision of the Executive Presbyter and Committee on Ministry chair or a person designated by them.

4. Non-Victim Accusers

The non-victim accuser may be an adult bringing a complaint on behalf of another adult who has been an alleged victim of sexual misconduct.

The non-victim accuser may also be the parent, guardian, or other advocate for a child who has been the alleged victim of sexual misconduct. Known or suspected physical, sexual, or emotional offenses involving children are to be reported to appropriate law enforcement and child welfare authorities immediately.

Section 6.06 Process for Reporting Sexual Misconduct

1. Initial Report

When a person believes that he or she has been the victim of sexual misconduct perpetrated by a minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; a commissioned ruling elder serving at the direction of Presbytery of the Miami Valley; a certified Christian educator serving within Presbytery of the Miami Valley; an employee, officer or agent of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; or any other persons working for the presbytery in connection with any of its programs, ministries, organizations or activities, the incident should first be reported to the Moderator of the Presbytery, Executive Presbyter, the chair of the Committee on Ministry (COM), or the Stated Clerk of the presbytery. These individuals shall contact each other after learning of an incident and shall proceed immediately to notify the Response Taskforce coordinator who shall then contact the alleged victim to determine what further action is necessary. Upon receiving a report the Moderator of the presbytery, Executive Presbyter, the chair of the Committee on Ministry, or the Stated Clerk of the presbytery may draft her or his own written complaint regardless of whether the alleged victim chooses to draft a complaint.

At any point when an accuser submits a written allegation to the Stated Clerk, the disciplinary procedures outlined in Chapter 7 of the Church Discipline in the Book of Order will control the response of the presbytery. (*Amended November 2024*)

2. Filing for a Child

In the case of alleged sexual misconduct toward a child, a parent or adult acting on behalf of the child may contact either the Executive Presbyter or chair of COM who shall then contact the civil authorities immediately. The Executive Presbyter or COM chair shall determine if judicial action is appropriate and/or if the Response Taskforce shall be utilized.

3. Third Party Information

If a third party has information relevant to an incident of alleged sexual misconduct, either the Executive Presbyter or COM chair should be contacted. If a minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; a commissioned ruling elder serving at the direction of Presbytery of the Miami Valley; a certified Christian educator serving within Presbytery of the Miami Valley; an employee, officer or agent of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley; or any other persons working for the presbytery in connection with any of its programs, ministries, organizations or activities possesses or believes that she or he possesses information that may be relevant to an incident of alleged sexual misconduct, either the Executive Presbyter or COM chair must be contacted and that information must be shared with those individuals and any other individual, commission, or committee that they may designate. The Executive Presbyter or COM chair will then determine whether to contact the victim.

Section 6.07 Response Taskforce

1. Goals

- a. The Response Taskforce will be available to work with all parties concerned in an allegation of sexual misconduct.
- b. The Response Taskforce will lead an ongoing preventative program of continuing education for staff, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, certified Christian educators, commissioned ruling elders, and congregations in the presbytery.

2. Members

- a. The Response Taskforce shall be a taskforce of COM made up of nine persons appointed by COM in three (3) classes of three (3) years each.
- b. The Response Taskforce shall include persons experienced in related legal, pastoral counseling, pastoral care, conflict resolution, insurance risk management, personnel management, and educational issues.

3. Meetings

- a. The whole Response Taskforce shall meet at appropriate intervals for its own continued learning, group support, and planning for educational events.
- b. Other meetings may be called by the co-chairs at their discretion for dealing with special matters that need to be addressed.

4. Refinement of policy and procedures

This policy document cannot detail all the procedures needed by the Response Taskforce in addressing different kinds of cases. Therefore, the Response Taskforce shall annually evaluate the presbytery's policy and procedures and recommend needed changes to COM for approval.

5. Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

When arranging to meet with the accuser or the accused, the accuser/alleged victim should be invited to bring a counselor, friend, or advocate to provide support.

6. Responding to the Accuser/Alleged Victim and Family

- a. The Response Taskforce chairs will determine which two Taskforce members will have a first meeting with the accuser. The Response Taskforce members' role is to help clarify options for accusers/alleged victims so they may decide for themselves what they will choose to do.
- b. After the initial meeting with the accuser, the whole Response Taskforce may be convened to discuss the most appropriate response. Additional Taskforce members may be assigned for follow-up with the accuser/alleged victim until the matter is resolved.
- c. The accuser/alleged victim may choose not to submit a written complaint but instead to pursue some alternative method of mediation or resolution. In this situation, the Response Taskforce members assigned to the case may, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter and COM chair, work with the accuser/alleged victim, the accused, and other significant parties involved toward resolution.

7. Responding to the Accused and Family

The Response Taskforce through its co-chairs shall consult with COM chair and the Executive Presbyter to determine what support and resources should be offered to the accused. At a minimum, COM chair and Executive Presbyter will inform the accused in writing of the accusations being made and offer to arrange

for one or more person(s) to provide support, as well as make available to the accused a list of counseling if requested. If the accuser files a written complaint with the Stated Clerk, this could be the extent of the services provided. If no written complaint is filed, the Response Taskforce would take the lead in working with both the accuser/alleged victim and the accused to achieve a compassionate and just resolution of the matter.

8. Responding to the Congregation

When a congregation is involved, the Response Taskforce in consultation with COM chair and the Executive Presbyter shall determine when and if it will be helpful to offer the congregation support and/or services. When appropriate, members of the Response Taskforce may be called upon to meet with the session to advise the congregation on the kind of support and resources that are available and to help the session plan a response to the situation.

9. Education

- a. The Response Taskforce shall be responsible for planning the sexual misconduct prevention training required for its member presbytery staff and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, certified Christian educators, and commissioned ruling elders, paid and unpaid.
- b. The Response Taskforce shall encourage the congregations of the presbytery to adopt sexual misconduct policies and shall provide education and support to help them do so.
- c. As part of its educational mission, the Response Taskforce shall develop materials that may be used in congregations to inform members about the presbytery's sexual misconduct policy and procedures. This information shall include contact names and numbers for the Executive Presbyter, Stated Clerk, and Response Taskforce members.
- d. The Response Taskforce will be available as resource persons who may, at the request of COM and the Executive Presbyter, consult with sessions who are dealing with a sexual misconduct complaint filed by one church member against another.

10. Record Keeping

The Response Taskforce shall keep careful records of its proceedings, including minutes, reports, and correspondence. All official reports and communications relating to a particular case of sexual misconduct shall be forwarded to the Executive Presbyter when the matter is resolved. These confidential files will be securely stored in a manner consistent with applicable law. Members of the Response Taskforce shall keep no separate or duplicate records of material.

11. Time Limits

From the time a person notifies the Executive Presbyter or COM chair of an allegation of sexual misconduct, no longer than seven (7) days should elapse until the accuser and the Response Taskforce hold an initial meeting.

From the date of the initial meeting of the Response Taskforce and the accuser, no longer than twenty-one (21) days should elapse until the Response Taskforce makes a recommendation for the disposition of the allegation.

The entire process, from the presentation of an allegation to a recommended disposition, should take no longer than twenty-eight (28) days.

Section 6.08 Administrative Process

Following an accusation of misconduct against a staff member of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley or a member of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley serving a church or agency, the Response Taskforce or COM shall consult with the accuser, the accused, and the involved session or board of oversight to ascertain whether the investigation would be aided by the accused being advised to take an administrative leave. The Committee on Ministry or Response Taskforce may also request that an Administrative Commission be appointed to deal with the discord caused by the alleged misconduct.

COM will maintain a list of interim or supply pastors trained in responding to congregations where abuse or allegations of abuse have occurred. COM will also work closely with the session to recognize and deal with the denial and anger that typically accompany abuse allegations.

Section 6.09 Disciplinary Process

All written allegations of sexual misconduct filed with the Stated Clerk will be investigated through the appropriate process as outlined in the Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In cases in which misconduct is alleged against a minister of the Word and Sacrament member of presbytery, certified Christian educators, members of the presbytery staff and commissioned ruling elders serving under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, the disciplinary process as provided in the *Rules of Discipline* will be followed. In cases involving employees, the provision of the personnel policy will be followed. For employees who are members of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, both personnel policy provisions and the disciplinary process will apply. For volunteers who are working with the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, they may be removed from their volunteer positions if deemed necessary.

(End of Article VI)

ARTICLE VII
ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
(Added 02/09/2013)

Section 7.01 Statement of Purpose

God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to share with Christ in establishing God's just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world. God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ is the ground of justice and peace. The church in worship proclaims, receives, and enacts reconciliation in Jesus Christ and commits itself to strive for justice and peace in its own life and in the world.

(Former Book of Order, W-7.4001; see now W-5.0204)

The church is called by Christ to be an agent of reconciliation. Individuals bringing allegations or accusations under cloaks of anonymity work directly against this call, because reconciliation, when concerned with others, can never be a unilateral action.

Anonymity precludes seeking redress or agreement, but rather fosters division as it allows neither substantiation nor attribution. Without these, there cannot be any sense of procedural integrity, the absence of which is an affront to our polity.

Section 7.02 Scope

The Presbytery of Miami Valley does not consider information of any kind that is offered anonymously. This includes telephone calls, emails and letters. This does not mean that conversations or communications are not private nor does it mean that information, where necessary, is not kept in confidence. This policy concerns information for which there is no verifiable attribution.

1. Telephone Communications:
 - a. Calls from unidentified persons will either not be passed through or will be disconnected.
 - b. Unidentified voice-mail messages will be deleted.
2. Mail
 - a. All mail bearing no return address will be opened by the Office Manager of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley.
 - b. The Office Manager will briefly scan the contents to determine if indeed the suspicion of anonymity is correct.
 - c. Letters determined to be anonymous will be shredded immediately.

Section 7.03 Exceptions

This policy does not apply to information received in which or for which there is sufficient factual evidence to warrant further action.

Section 7.04 Application

This policy extends to all Committees, Commissions, Networks, Task Forces and Work Groups within the presbytery.

(End of Article VII)

ARTICLE VIII CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

(Added 11/12/16)

Section 8.01 Statement of Purpose

As Scripture tells us, “Children are a heritage from the Lord” (*Psalm 127:3*). The covenant of baptism unites all Christians in a commitment to care for and nurture our children. Recognizing that nurturing and protecting children and young people is paramount, the Presbytery of the Miami Valley (“the presbytery”) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the practices in this directive, the presbytery affirms our goal to protect the children and youth in our care from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior, while at the same time protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Section 8.02 Applicability

This policy applies to meetings, events or activities that are explicitly sponsored or financially underwritten by the presbytery and that include or involve children under the age of 18, either as the focus of the event or in a separate child care setting for an adult event. Hereafter in this policy these meetings, events or activities are known as “Event(s).”

They include:

1. Stated or Called Meetings of the presbytery.
2. Presbytery ordination and installation services and other presbytery-led or sponsored worship services.
3. Presbytery-led or sponsored workshops, training or education events for children or youth, or for adults when separate child care is provided.
4. Presbytery-led or sponsored youth events irrespective of location; chaperoning of participants in the PC (USA) Youth Triennium; the presbytery spring youth retreat; and similar events.

Section 8.03 Exclusions

1. Events at which children or youth are present but are constantly under the sole supervision and care of their own parents or legal guardians.
2. Youth events, worship services, education or training events, or meetings at specific churches or groups of churches that do not involve explicit presbytery sponsorship or funding. Those events and meetings are instead covered by the churches' Child Protection Policies (*Book of Order G-3.0106*, which requires councils to develop Child Protection Policies applicable to their activities). Promotion of such events on the presbytery's web site or through other means does not in itself constitute presbytery sponsorship.

Section 8.04 Authority and Notification

The Designated Official (“the D.O.”) of the presbytery is appointed by the Leadership Council to oversee implementation of this policy. The name and contact information for the D.O is posted on the presbytery web site. The D.O. is tasked with ensuring this policy is adhered to, but also in certain cases with making the policy workable and effective in situations when strict compliance is impossible.

Organizers of events and activities that include children or youth under the age of 18 are responsible for proactively, in advance, notifying the D.O. with key information about the event using Form A or its equivalent. Form A, “Event Form—Child and Youth Protection Policy Applicability,” is available on the presbytery web site (www.miamipresbytery.org) under the Clerk's Corner, or from the D.O. The D.O. will then identify which of these events or activities are subject to this policy and advise organizers what actions are necessary to carry out this policy. The D.O. will document those actions for each Event.

Section 8.05 Standards of Conduct

No harmful or diminishing behavior towards children or youth (including physical, emotional, sexual harm or abuse) is tolerated at presbytery Events. Paid or volunteer leaders shall not touch or interact with children or youth in any way that is sexually stimulating, emotionally demeaning, or exploitative. Common expressions of affection and affirmation (hugs and pats on the back) or physical care (diaper changes or first aid) are appropriate in this or any community of caring Christians. Staff and volunteers must be careful that physical expressions of affection are not excessive or imposed upon another individual. A specific list of prohibited and allowed behaviors is included in Section 8.10 of this policy.

Section 8.06 Rule of Three and Other Leader Ratios

Paid and volunteer leaders working with children and youth are tasked with guarding the physical and emotional safety of those in their care and to be aware of signs indicating neglect of the child's well-being. Situations in which one unrelated adult and one child/youth are alone should be avoided, and are always subject to the standards in Section 8.10, Prohibited Acts. Whenever practical, at least three people (two adults and one child/youth or if necessary one adult and two children/youth) should be present.

1. The normal practice is to have at least two adult leaders/chaperones present for any activity and such additional adult volunteers as are required to provide adequate supervision and care appropriate to the number of children participating. Normally those leaders will be at least three years older than the oldest child or youth supervised. If it is impractical to have more than one adult constantly present, the Event Organizer is responsible for arranging for another adult to check in periodically on the child care setting to ensure appropriate protection standards are being maintained.
2. Staff and volunteers shall transport children and youth in groups rather than alone. In ordinary circumstances, an unaccompanied adult should not drive a single child in connection with a presbytery Event without the permission of the child's parent or guardian.

Variations from the policies above should be discussed with and approved by the Presbytery's D.O. in advance.

Section 8.07 Authorization and Training of Child Care Personnel

1. **Authorization through church:** When a Presbyterian church hosts an Event within the bounds of presbytery, and that church has in place and has implemented a Child (and Youth) Protection Policy adopted by its session, that church's policy will apply to the Event unless the terms of this Presbytery policy are more specific or comprehensive, in which case the presbytery policy will govern. Employees or volunteers who have been authorized, following a formal background check or other approved review process under the church's policy, to work with children and/or youth in the hosting church are normally approved to serve at Events occurring in that church. In that case, the hosting church will submit to the D.O. a completed Form B for each such employee or volunteer who will serve, and provide each employee and volunteer with a copy of the applicable Child (and Youth) Protection Policy. Form B, "Child/Youth Worker Certification Form," is available on the presbytery web site (www.miamipresbytery.org) under the Clerk's Corner, or from the D.O.
2. **Additional checks:** The D.O. will require additional background checks, at the presbytery's expense, in specific cases when the presbytery Child and Youth Protection Policy differs from the hosting church's and so is applicable to the Event, or whenever the D.O. determines that a presbytery-initiated check is advisable. The checks are provided by the Insurance Board (the presbytery's property and liability insurance provider) or other provider authorized by the presbytery. Among the types of checks the D.O. may require are:
 - a. A basic check that includes a multi-state criminal background check and a national sex offender registry check.
 - b. A motor vehicle records check when applicable to the duties of the individual.

The person to be considered will authorize the additional checks by signing Form C, “Background Check Authorization Form,” available on the presbytery web site (www.miamipresbytery.org) in the Clerk’s Corner or from the D.O.

Where a criminal record exists, the D.O. will consider such factors as the seriousness of the crime; statutes that may legally disqualify the person from working with minors; the length of time since the last offense; any pattern of criminal activity; and activities the applicant has been involved in since the offense(s) occurred. Crimes that are barriers to volunteer work with children are: violent crimes; sexual assault; sexual abuse or neglect of a child; and drug offenses or driving offenses (depending upon position requirements). Convictions, not arrests, are grounds for disqualification.

3. **Training:** The D.O. may require or encourage any employee or volunteer working with children or youth at an Event to receive training in advance using materials provided by the *Armatas* abuse prevention training resources of the Insurance Board or other provider authorized by the presbytery. A list of required or optional trainings is in Section 8.12 of this policy.
4. **Supplemental policies:** The Presbyterian Youth Connection Network of the presbytery may adopt standard policies related to child and youth protection that will be applicable to Events they sponsor or financially underwrite. The presbytery’s Leadership Council will review and approve such policies both prior to their taking effect and at any subsequent times when the Network proposes substantive changes in those policies.

Section 8.08 Reporting

Any observation or personal knowledge of any violations of this policy at or in connection with an Event must be immediately reported to the person in charge of the Event, the presbytery’s Executive Presbyter, the presbytery’s Stated Clerk, the presbytery’s Designated Official, and/or the presbytery Moderator after the safety of the child, children, or youth is assured. Further processes will be in accord with those in Article VI of the Presbytery’s PMV Policy and Practice Manual, related to sexual misconduct.

Section 8.09 Dissemination

This policy will be displayed on the presbytery web site and be provided annually to churches, sessions, pastors and Christian educators participating in the Presbytery, and to new pastors as they arrive in the Presbytery. There will be annual training on child and youth protection at a presbytery meeting or other presbytery-wide gathering.

Section 8.10 Prohibited Acts

The following acts are prohibited by this policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any presbytery Event. Any observation or personal knowledge of such violations must be immediately reported to the person in charge of the Event, the presbytery's Executive Presbyter, the presbytery's Stated Clerk, the presbytery's Designated Official (D.O.), and/or the presbytery Moderator after the safety of the child, children, or youth is assured.

Staff or volunteers caring for or supervising children or youth at presbytery Events are prohibited from engaging in the following behaviors at all times:

1. Display affection toward a child in privacy.
2. Use profanity or tell off-color jokes.
3. Discuss sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involve children in the staff or volunteer's personal problems or issues.
4. Date or become romantically involved with children.
5. Use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
6. Possess obscene or sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on property during a presbytery Event.
7. Have secrets with children.
8. Stare at or comment on children's bodies.
9. Engage in inappropriate electronic communication with children under care during or after an Event, including texts, instant messages, email, or use of social networking sites, or engage in inappropriate taking or sharing of photographs.
10. Work one-on-one with children in a private setting.
11. Abuse children in any way including (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain
 - b. Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse
 - c. Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, engage in sexually oriented conversations, or interact with children or youth in any way that is sexually stimulating, emotionally demeaning, or exploitative
 - d. Sexual activity: engage in sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a child, or permit sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between an older child and a younger child
 - e. Mental or emotional abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly
 - f. Neglect: withhold food, water, or shelter, or fail to provide adequate supervision
 - g. Permit children to engage in the following: Hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, games of Truth or Dare, ridicule or humiliation, or sexual activity
 - h. Manipulate or exploit a child in any way.
 - i. Carry any type of weapon on property where a presbytery Event is occurring.

Section 8.11 Interactions

Some forms of personal interaction with children during presbytery-sponsored events are certainly appropriate, but they must be within boundaries that protect children and those caring for them. Here are some examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors:

1. **Approval and Affection:** In providing approval or affection, the following guidelines apply:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs • Pats on the shoulder or back • Handshakes • High-fives and hand slapping • Verbal praise • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Arms around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) <p>These may be inappropriate if unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated area • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Allowing a child to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg • Any type of massage given by or to a child • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer • Compliments relating to physique or body development • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

2. **Verbal Interactions:** The manner of speaking with children establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming • Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children • Derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family
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3. **One-on-one interactions:** Because most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a child, private one-on-one meetings with a child are prohibited unless absolutely necessary. When so permitted, the following guidelines shall apply:
- a. When meeting one-on-one with a child, always do so in a public place in full view of others.
 - b. Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.
 - c. If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
 - d. Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a child and them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)
 - e. Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any other interactions that might be misinterpreted.

To the extent that any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one shall seek to be under the supervision of others while meeting privately with a child.

Section 8.12 Required, Encouraged and Optional Training

The Designated Official (D.O.) in the presbytery may require or encourage any employee or volunteer working with children or youth at an Event to engage in training provided by the *Armatus* abuse prevention training resources of the Insurance Board, or by another provider approved by the presbytery. The following are examples of these trainings:

1. **Required Trainings** (an exemption may be granted if the individual demonstrates that they have received the same or similar training within a reasonable time period):
 - a. All volunteer adult advisors for each Presbyterian Youth Triennium (PYT).
 - 1) How to Keep Your Camp Safe
 - 2) Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter Requirements and Best Practices

- b. All volunteer Presbyterian Youth Connection (PYC) Network adult advisors, with refresher trainings every two years.
 - 1) How to Keep Your Camp Safe or How to Keep Your Church Safe
 - 2) Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter Requirements and Best Practices
 - c. Volunteers for other overnight events in which the PMV (not an individual church) pays for all or a portion of the volunteer's registration fee.
 - 1) How to Keep Your Camp Safe
 - 2) Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter Requirements and Best Practices
- 2. Encouraged Trainings:**
- a. All volunteer adult advisors for Annual Spring Youth Retreat.
 - 1) How to Keep Your Camp Safe
 - 2) Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter Requirements and Best Practices
 - b. Volunteers who watch children at presbytery Events such as presbytery meetings.
 - 1) How to Keep Your Camp Safe
 - 2) Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter Requirements and Best Practices
- 3. Optional Trainings:**
- Volunteer adult advisors who participate in presbytery Events may request and if appropriate be offered the option to take additional trainings through the *Armatus* resources that they or the D.O. feels will be relevant or helpful.

Section 8.13 Forms

The forms on the following pages were those in place at the time of the initial adoption of this policy. As subsidiary documents they may be altered from time to time without formal action of the presbytery. To obtain the current version of these forms, please contact the presbytery office.

Form A

**Presbytery of the Miami Valley
Event Form—Child and Youth Protection Policy Applicability**

Event name and description:

Sponsoring committee, ministry or task force:

Date(s) and time:

Transportation arrangements plan (if applicable):

Facility and arrangements (describe for all activities, including child care rooms and location, play areas, sleeping accommodations and restrooms):

Overview of program activities (for example, what will you do to enhance the faith experience of the children/youth under your care?):

Leadership plan, including responsibilities and names of all adult leaders and chaperones:

Contact Person for this Event

Name:

E-Mail:

Phone:

****Please submit the completed event form to the presbytery's Designated Official for approval at least six weeks prior to the event and before advertising the event and/or**

recruiting volunteers and participants.

Form B

**Presbytery of the Miami Valley
Child and Youth Protection Policy
Child/Youth Worker Certification Form**

(Please print or type)

Name:

Address:

Phone: _____

Presbytery Event:

_____ The person listed above has successfully passed the congregation's or the presbytery's background check for volunteers or staff working with children and/or youth.

_____ The person listed above has successfully passed the congregation's or the presbytery's motor vehicle check (if applicable to the duties expected at the Event).

_____ The person listed above has certified that he or she has NOT previously renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as the accused in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as a minister of the Word and Sacrament, pursuant to G-2.0509 of the Book of Order.

Congregation _____

Presbytery _____

Signature of Staff Member or Ruling Elder Responsible for Background Checks:

_____ Date

**Please submit the completed form to the presbytery's Designated Official at least three weeks prior to the Event.

Form C
Presbytery of the Miami Valley
Child and Youth Protection Policy
Background Check Authorization Form

(Please print or type)

Full Legal Name (please print clearly):

Other Names you commonly use:

Address:

Phone: _____

Driver's license number (for motor vehicle check only):

Presbytery Event:

By signing below, I hereby authorize the Presbytery of the Miami Valley (“the presbytery”), at their expense, to conduct one or more background checks on me at their discretion using companies the presbytery deems acceptable. The background checks may include either or both of the following:

_____ A basic check that includes a multi-state criminal background check and a national sex offender registry check.

_____ A motor vehicle records check when applicable to the duties I would undertake for this Event.

I understand that my successful completion of these checks is required before I may undertake the duties with children or youth for the Event listed above.

Signature of Volunteer or Employee:

Date _____

**Please submit the completed form to the presbytery's Designated Official at least three weeks prior to the Event.

(End of Article VIII)

**ARTICLE IX
ELECTRONIC MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY**

Section 9.01 Requirements for Electronic Meetings of Presbytery

It is the policy of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley that stated and special meetings will normally occur in a specified physical location and that only presbyters physically present and registered at that location may vote. Information relevant to such meetings may be provided by people not physically present through written, electronic or other formats. However, in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Leadership Council, the presbytery may meet in stated or special meetings without a central physical location and instead using audioconference or videoconference technology that is reasonably available to significant numbers of presbyters. Such technology shall be chosen to ensure that there are adequate methods for:

1. A roll to be created and the presence of a quorum to be determined and certified;
2. A presbyter to raise a point of order about the presence of a quorum;
3. Those participating to engage in simultaneous aural communication for discussion and debate;
4. A presbyter or a person granted voice at the meeting to be able to seek recognition to speak and obtain the floor;
5. Motions, amendments, dissents and protests to be offered in writing during the meeting;
6. Votes to be taken and verified.

In packets issued prior to each electronic meeting, and at the commencement of each such meeting, the Stated Clerk shall explain the way presbyters may connect to the meeting using the approved technology, and the processes that will be used to comply with the above requirements and those in Section 4.03 of the Presbytery Bylaws. The Leadership Council may adopt additional Practice provisions to carry out this electronic meeting Policy.

(End of Article IX)

(End of Presbytery of the Miami Valley Policy and Practice)