

The Presbytery of Tres Rios
Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
Approved June 10, 2016
Revised October 24, 2025

General Purpose Statement

Tres Rios Presbytery seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and other vulnerable persons who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children and other vulnerable persons of Tres Rios Presbytery from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term vulnerable adults include those individuals 18 and over without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent. The term “worker” includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children or vulnerable adults. The term “volunteer” means anyone involved in a day care or school, in overnight activities, counseling, or in one-on-one mentoring involving minors and/or vulnerable adults.

Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children and vulnerable adults participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) **Six Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors or vulnerable adults until she/he has been involved with Tres Rios Presbytery for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children or vulnerable adults.

b) **Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children or vulnerable adults must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children/vulnerable adults, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the presbytery office.

c) **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, an interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d) **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children or vulnerable adults, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children or vulnerable adults in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at the presbytery office.

e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and volunteers as defined above.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing Tres Rios Presbytery to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children/vulnerable adults.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children or vulnerable adults will be determined by the Pastoral Team on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children/vulnerable adults and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children/vulnerable adults. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the presbytery office.

Policy for Volunteers and Paid Staff

1. As often as practicable, two adults will be assigned to supervise or lead all activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
2. No person will serve as a teacher or volunteer leader of children, youth, or vulnerable adult activities until an information form is submitted and security background checks have been completed.
3. As often as practicable, all teenage workers or volunteers will be supervised by adults.
4. No fewer than two leaders will be required for all trips and outings.
5. To ensure an adequate level of adult leadership, sponsors for retreats must be at least 21 years of age. Ordinarily, sponsors should be 25 years of age.
6. To ensure an adequate level of supervision, each group must have one adult sponsor for every six youth/vulnerable adults. Also, each group must have sponsors for both male and female youth/vulnerable adults, regardless of how many youth/vulnerable adults in the group. (i.e. if your group has three girls and two boys for the total of five campers, you must have at least two sponsors, one male and one female.) In the event that you do not have the required number of sponsors, it may be possible to combine with another group, as long as arrangements are made before the retreat.
7. Private, one-on-one contact between an adult and a child under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult, and between minors is not permitted. If a personal conference between an adult and child or vulnerable adult is required, the meeting shall take place in view of other teachers or volunteers.
8. Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members or vulnerable adults in situations such as changing clothes or taking showers on church trips and retreats. Adults should intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. They should also protect their own privacy in similar situations.
9. On trips and presbytery outings, adults are not permitted to sleep in the same bed with youth or a vulnerable adult, other than their own child.
10. Appropriate clothing for children, youth, and vulnerable adults and leaders, as determined by the Event Leader, is required for all activities.
11. Discipline used in activities should be constructive and reflect Christian values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
12. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any activity.
13. Written parental or guardian permission is required for all overnight outings and trips.

Two Adult Rule

In so much as possible, it is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children or vulnerable adults are being supervised during our programs, activities, and travel to and from events. Some youth or vulnerable adult classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors or vulnerable adults to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child or vulnerable adult that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child or vulnerable adult 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 or a vulnerable adult 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 or vulnerable adult of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare or vulnerable adult workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children or vulnerable adults under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children or vulnerable adults at this Tres Rios Presbytery event becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Event Director for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this Tres Rios Presbytery or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child or vulnerable adult will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children or vulnerable adults, pending an investigation, and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and the Tres Rios Presbytery will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Tres Rios Presbytery will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. Event Director will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
8. The Presbytery of Tres Rios Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures shall be enforced.

You Also May Want to Consider the Following Provisions Regarding Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For children below third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a “child check” for the child similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the “child check” in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the “child check,” the Event Director will be contacted. The Event Director will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Tres Rios Presbytery. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours;
- Green or yellow runny nose;
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day. This policy also applies to vulnerable adults.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of Tres Rios Presbytery not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Event Director to develop a plan of action. This policy also applies to vulnerable adults.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Tres Rios Presbytery not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children, youth or vulnerable adults. Workers should consult with the Event Director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers (minimum of 2) should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom

door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For presbytery youth retreats, when at all possible, one adult should accompany youth to the restroom or have two youth go together.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class. This policy also applies to vulnerable adults

Accidental Injuries to Children, Youth , or Vulnerable Adults

In the event that a child, youth or vulnerable adult is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child, youth or vulnerable adult has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

Tres Rios Presbytery will provide training on this child and vulnerable adult protection policy to all new childcare or vulnerable adult workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

PCUSA PROTECTION POLICY

The values and procedures of this policy 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.

**PRESBYTERY OF TRES RIOS
CHILD, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF POLICY

As an employee or volunteer working with children/youth, or vulnerable adults under the auspices of the Presbytery of Tres Rios, I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with this policy, including all abuse prevention training required.

Please Print _____ Name _____ Date _____

_____ Program

_____ Church

_____ Signature

**Please return this form to the Presbytery of Tres Rios
twright@tresrios.org
1201 W. Wall, Midland, TX 79701**

PERMISSION/MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION/LIABILITY RELEASE FORM

PARTICIPANT'S
NAME: _____ **Sex:** _____ **Date of Birth:** ____ / ____ / ____

To Parent or Guardian: This permission form must be filled out completely and returned to your child/youth/vulnerable adult sponsor in order for your child to attend activities with Tres Rios Presbytery. No child will be permitted without this form, completed and signed.

I, _____ (please print), the Parent/Guardian of the above-named participant, do hereby release Tres Rios Presbytery and/or the Sponsors of the trip and/or function from any and all liability in the event of sickness or injury during the duration of the event. I further understand and acknowledge that certain activities such as horseback riding, swimming, and hiking have an increased risk of injury.

I certify that my child /youth/vulnerable adult is in good health and can participate in all normal activities of the group.

I understand that my child will leave from _____ (location) ON _____ (day), _____ (date), will travel to _____, spend _____ nights return to the above location by _____ (time) ON _____ (day), _____ (date).

In conjunction herewith, I grant to Tres Rios Presbytery and/or the Sponsors of the trip, or each of them, the power to authorize any and all medical treatment deemed necessary for my child /youth/vulnerable adult to include but not be limited to the authorization by said Sponsor(s) to the physician of his/her choice for any treatment necessary, to any hospitalization deemed necessary, and the power to authorize any procedures necessary to the care of said child/ youth/vulnerable adult to include, but not be limited to any surgical and/or anesthesia procedures. I authorize for a doctor to be called and/or other medical services to be provided, at my expense, should an emergency arise.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

MEDICAL INFORMATION

MEDICAL CONDITION(S) (is chronic conditions, for example, sinus, kidney problems, asthma, diabetes, etc):
continue on reverse if needed

MEDICATIONS TAKEN

ALLERGIES (list any foods, insect bites, medicines, etc.) continue on reverse if needed

FAMILY PHYSICIAN: _____ PHONE: _____

MEDICAL INSURANCE: _____ POLICY NUMBER: _____

INSURANCE PHONE: _____ HOLDER'S NAME: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

PARENT OR GUARDIAN NAME: _____ BEST CONTACT PHONE #: _____ ALTERNATE PHONE # _____
PARENT OR GUARDIAN NAME: _____ BEST CONTACT PHONE #: _____ ALTERNATE PHONE # _____

ADDRESS: _____

In case or emergency, and the child /youth/vulnerable adult parent/guardian(s) cannot be reached,

CONTACT: _____, PHONE: _____

Please return this form to the Presbytery of Tres Rios
twright@tresrios.org
1201 W. Wall, Midland, TX 79701

Background Check Authorization

By my signature below, I authorize The Presbytery of Tres Rios or its agent to obtain information from a consumer reporting agency which will include, but not be restricted to:

- SSN Verification
- Identity Verification
- Address History (10 years)
- 50 State Criminality Search
- 50 State Sex Offender Registry Search
- 50 State Terrorist Database
- Motor Vehicle Records check for serious traffic infractions

I understand that this report will be used for the purpose of evaluating me for employment by a Congregation of Tres Rios Presbytery.

I understand that this report will be kept under lock and key in a file at the office of The Presbytery of Tres Rios.

I understand that results of this report will not be released to anyone without written authorization by me.

I understand that I have a right to request disclosure of the nature and scope of the report.

Please PRINT all information and Sign in BLUE INK

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Last Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ First Name: _____

Former Name: _____

Last Home Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Date of Birth (Month/Day/Year): ____ / ____ / ____ Phone _____

Social Security Number: ____ - ____ - _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State: _____

Church/Ministry: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Minor Participation Authorization and Consent to Emergency Medical Treatment Form

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Age of youth: _____ Birth date: _____ Grade: _____

I, the undersigned, certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of _____ (hereafter the "minor child/youth/vulnerable adult").

I hereby give my consent to have my minor child participate in the following activity of Tres Rios Presbytery: _____ (hereafter "the activity") on or about _____, 20__.

I recognize that there are risks involved in participating in this activity and hereby assume all risk of injury, harm, damage, or death to my minor child/ youth/vulnerable adult in connection with his/her participation in this activity.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, I release Tres Rios Presbytery, its trustees, officers, directors, employees, agents and representatives from any injury, harm, damage or death which may occur to my minor child/ youth/vulnerable adult while participating in the activity and agree to save and hold harmless Tres Rios Presbytery, its trustees, officers, directors, employees, agents and representatives from any claims arising out of my minor child/ youth/vulnerable adult participation in the activity.

Further, being the parent or legal guardian of the minor child/ youth/vulnerable adult, I do consent to any medical, surgical, x-ray, anesthetic, or dental treatment that may be deemed necessary for my minor child /youth/vulnerable adult. I understand that efforts will be made to contact me prior to treatment but, in the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I give permission to the activity leader to make the decisions necessary for treatment. Should there be no activity leader available, I give permission to the attending physician to treat my minor child/ youth/vulnerable adult. As parent or legal guardian, I understand that I am responsible for the health care decisions of my minor child/ youth/vulnerable adult and agree that my insurance plan is the primary plan to pay for the medical, dental, or hospital care or treatment that is given to my minor child/ youth/vulnerable adult. Any insurance policy of the church or organization sponsoring this event will be used as the secondary coverage.

Executed this ____ day of _____, 20__.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Witness: _____

Witness: _____

**Please return this form to the Presbytery of Tres Rios
twright@tresrios.org
1201 W. Wall, Midland, TX 79701**

Publicity Release

Name of Participant: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____

On occasion Tres Rios Presbytery takes photographs or makes audio or video recordings of children/youth/vulnerable adult and/or adults involved in activities. Such photographs or recordings may be used by staff and participants to remember the activities and participants, and may be used in publications or advertising materials and/or website, to let others know about our ministry. The presbytery may also invite local news organizations to photograph or record events for news reporting or special interest features.

I consent to the use of any such photograph or audio or video recordings of the child/ youth/vulnerable adult names above, or me, if I am participating, to be used, distributed, or displayed as agents of the presbytery deem appropriate.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

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twright@tresrios.org
1201 W. Wall, Midland, TX 79701

Youth Covenant

During each and every youth activity sponsored by Tres Rios Presbytery, participants are required to adhere to these simple steps to enhance the quality of the activity and to build a community characterized by respect, trust, concern, and dignity:

1. I understand the importance of always representing myself and my youth group as ambassadors of the high standards of our faith. I will conduct myself as a representative of my family, church and Christians everywhere. I will lead our group in stellar behavior.
2. I covenant to respect God, respect myself, respect other people, and respect property. I understand that my continued participation in activities depends on my support.
3. I covenant to be responsible to the adults attending on behalf of Tres Rios Presbytery.
4. I covenant to respect those we travel with and the local community by not damaging the bus or any other property.
5. I covenant to respect the privacy of others by not entering into areas assigned to females if I am a male, or areas assigned to males if I am female.
6. I covenant to respect those around me by not engaging in reckless behavior that could cause harm to myself or others.
7. I covenant not to bring fireworks, firearms, illegal drugs, and alcohol or tobacco products.
8. I covenant to abstain from inappropriate sexual behavior toward other participants.

The above agreement has been developed to enhance the quality of the Tres Rios community. Participants accept the responsibilities in this covenant in order to build a community characterized by respect, trust, concern, and dignity.

It is assumed that all participants and their parents/guardians will sign, accept and abide by this covenant. I understand that any failure on my part in abiding by this covenant may result in my being dismissed from the event and returned home at my parent's expense.

Participant Signature

Parent / Guardian Signature

Please return this form to the Presbytery of Tres Rios
twright@tresrios.org
1201 W. Wall, Midland, TX 79701

Incident Report

REASON FOR REPORT _____

DATE OF INCIDENT _____ TIME _____

NAME OF REPORTER _____ TITLE _____

NAME (S) OF CHILD (REN)/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT _____

AGE (S) OF CHILD (REN)/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT _____

QUOTE THE CHILD'S/YOUTH'S/VULNERABLE ADULT'S FIRST WORDS VERBATIM:

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE CHILD'S/YOUTH'S/VULNERABLE ADULT'S DEMEANOR/APPEARANCE:

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED:

WHAT ACTION DID YOU TAKE?

HAS THE INCIDENT BEEN RESOLVED? ___ YES ___ NO EXPLAIN:

NAMES OF WITNESSES:

REPORT SUBMITTED TO: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Time: _____

Volunteer Application

General Information

Full Name: _____ Name you go by: _____
Address: _____ City, State, Zip _____
Email address: _____
Phone: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Social Security Number: _____ Driver's License Number: _____
Employer: _____ Occupation: _____
Which congregation are you a member? _____ How long? _____

Background Information

To understand your call to serve, please respond to the following:

Tell us of your faith journey

Why are you committed to serve in the area of children, youth, or vulnerable adults?

What leadership roles have you held?

Please list any training or education which you deem to be helpful preparation for children, youth or vulnerable adult ministry.

Experience
(Please complete the two sections if applicable)

Please list all church work involving children, youth or vulnerable adults in the past five years

Please list all non-church work involving children, youth or vulnerable adults in the past five years

References (Please list three personal references)

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Contact information: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Contact information: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Contact information: _____