**Purpose:** To establish the protocols and guidelines for the KCFS Junior Firefighter Program.

**Scope:**  KCFS Junior Firefighter Advisors, KCFS Junior Firefighters, KCFS Chief officers

The need for well-trained and highly-motivated volunteer firefighters, rescue, and EMS personnel throughout America’s communities has never been greater. Over 70% of the fire and rescue personnel who protect our nation are volunteers. Yet, statistics show that while fire and rescue departments' call volume is steadily increasing, the number of volunteers is decreasing. Retention and Recruitment of new members has never been more challenging. In response to the challenge of recruiting volunteers, the Kershaw County Fire Service has initiated a Junior Firefighter to involve youth in the fire service. Upon successful completion of the program Junior members may be offered a volunteer assignment with KCFS.

1. **Section 1: Overview**
   1. Program participation by Junior members shall be in compliance with state and federal child labor laws, including but not limited to the Future Volunteer Firefighters Act (S.C. Code 41-21-110) and federal child labor requirements.
   2. Junior members shall be separated into two groups
      1. Group 1: Minors that are 16 and 17 years of age
      2. Group 2: Minors that are 14 and 15 years of age
   3. Junior members are currently eligible for membership in The SC State Firefighters’ Associations as regular members with full benefits. Eligibility for association memberships are determined by the association and not Kershaw County Fire Service.
   4. The Kershaw County Fire Service shall take necessary precautions to ensure adequate supervision for junior members.
   5. The Kershaw County Fire Service shall make sure that Junior Firefighters are covered under the worker’s compensation insurance as well as the department’s added insurance policy through the State Firefighters Association.
2. **Section 2 : General Restrictions**
   1. The following guidelines will be used to restrict the activities of Junior Firefighters. When not specifically listed or discussed, all activities shall be limited to those considered non-emergency.
      1. Junior Firefighters shall not be substituted for trained personnel.
      2. Junior Firefighters shall be equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment to accomplish the tasks they are assigned.
      3. Junior Members who ride any Kershaw County Fire Service apparatus shall be seated and must wear a seat belt.
      4. At no time will a Junior Firefighter drive any department vehicles.
      5. Junior Firefighters shall not enter or perform ventilation procedures on a burning structure.
      6. Junior Firefighters shall not use any tools or gloves on energized electrical equipment
      7. During events, Junior Firefighters shall be clearly marked in order to easily identify them from a distance. This will be accomplished by issuing the junior members with fire helmets marked with orange tetrahedrons and front shields that read Junior Firefighter.
3. **Section 3 : Guidelines for Junior Firefighters**
   1. **Minors who are 16 and 17 MAY:**
      1. Ride as a passenger in the cab of a fire truck or in a rescue vehicle. The Junior membershall be seated with his/her seat belt securely fastened.
      2. Attend and take part in supervised training to include SC Fire Academy coursesfound on the approved course list jointly developed by the SC Fire Academy andthe SC State Firefighters’ Association, and local training events as supervised andapproved by the Fire Chief.
      3. Participate in department functions within the rehabilitation area of an emergencyscene. This could include setting up the engine or light truck, assisting in watersupply efforts, handling of wood and other technical rescue materials, and othersupport functions, which do not expose the junior member to hazardous areas oratmospheres.
      4. Pick up hoses or other materials and clean up at the emergency scene after it hasbeen declared safe by the Incident Commander.
      5. Enter a structure only when accompanied by an adult responder once the structurehas been determined safe by the Incident Commander and not consideredimmediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH).
      6. Perform search and rescue activities, other than structural firefighting, high level,or in other areas considered dangerous or IDLH.
      7. Operate a fire pump or equipment located outside the danger zone at thedirections of the Incident Commander.
      8. Use pressurized hose lines, if properly trained, under the direction of an IncidentCommander and out of the danger area.
   2. **Minors who are 16 and 17 MAY NOT:**
      1. Perform fire suppression involving structures, vehicles, or wildland fires per federal child labor guidelines 29 CFR 570.54
      2. Perform high level, confined space, collapse rescue, or any rescue operation that places them in danger or areas of IDLH.
      3. Drive fire department or rescue vehicles
      4. Perform firefighting “overhaul” activities (except when the structure has been declared safe by the Incident Commander and then only with an adult firefighter).
      5. Respond to a Hazardous Materials event (except for support functions within the “cold zone”)
      6. Participate or assist in any extrication activities at the scene of an accident or emergency (except in the capacity of a support function).
      7. Participate in any activities at the scene of an accident or emergency where fire or hazardous materials are involved, unless they are performing support functions from outside the danger area.
      8. Participate in actual “ice rescue” activities, but may provide assistance within any designated rehabilitation area or as a support member on dry land only.
      9. Direct traffic at the scene of a fire or other emergency
      10. Train on departmental equipment or remove equipment for an apparatus unless under the supervision of an adult supervisor, instructor, or adult advisor designated by the department.
      11. Youth under the age of 18 years of age who are enrolled in school in Grade 12 or below may not respond to calls or be at any Kershaw County Fire Station between 23:00 (11:00PM) and 05:00 (5:00AM) when there is school for the youth the next day. Sixteen and Seventeen (16 and 17) year old youths may get the hour restriction waived upon written permission from the parent/guardian and from the youth’s school principal/designee.
      12. Youth under the age of 18 years of age who are enrolled in school in Grade 12 or below may not respond, in a non-emergency mode, to calls during school hours and may not leave school to respond to a call.
      13. May not stand on any fire apparatus at any time it is in motion.
      14. Junior Firefighters MAY NOT be at any Kershaw County fire station without supervision of an adult supervisor, instructor, or adult advisor designated by the department.
   3. **Guidelines for Minors age 14 and 15 Years of Age:**
      1. In addition to those restrictions listed for 16 and 17 year olds, the following are additional restrictions for minors aged 14 and 15 years old.
      2. **Minors who are 14 and 15 years of age and younger MAY NOT:**
         1. Perform any hazardous duties at the fire station
         2. Take the seat of a certified firefighter on the apparatus, or ride in the cab of the fire apparatus responding to an emergency scene.
         3. Stand on any fire apparatus at any time it is in motion.
         4. Respond to an emergency scene in their personal vehicle (POV)
4. **Section 4: Guidelines for Personal Vehicle Response (POV)**
   1. Junior Firefighters under the age of 16 may not respond to an emergency scene in their personal vehicle (POV)
   2. Junior Firefighters shall not install emergency lighting or sound producing devices in/ on their vehicle.
   3. Junior Firefighters sixteen (16) years of age or above may respond to incidents POV with the exception of incidents on the interstate. They are to park their POV out of the way of the incident. At no time shall Junior Firefighters respond to medical first responder calls
   4. Junior Firefighters must obey all local and state traffic laws.
   5. POV responses may be suspended until reinstated by the Fire Chief for any or all Junior members anytime the Fire Chief deems it advisable to do so.
5. **Section 5: Guidelines for Junior Firefighter Advisors**
   1. Any Explorer / Junior Firefighter Advisor must be a current and active member of the Kershaw County Fire Service
   2. There will be two types of advisors: Station Advisors and Lead Advisors
      1. The Station Advisor will be responsible for the immediate supervision of the youth.
      2. The Lead Advisor will be responsible for keeping up with paperwork and equipment issuing.
   3. Male and female firefighters will be encouraged to serve as advisors to facilitate the full participation of both male and female junior members.
   4. Advisors are responsible for taking all necessary training that the program may require.
   5. An Advisor is an unpaid, volunteer position. Paid staff or volunteer firefighters may volunteer for the position of Advisor.
   6. The KCFS Fire Chief must approve a member to become an Advisor.
6. **Section 6: Rank Structure**
   1. The KCFS Junior Firefighter Program will follow the following chain of command:
      1. 1.Fire Chief
      2. 2.Deputy Fire Chief
      3. 3.Battalion Chief
      4. 4.Lead Advisor
      5. 5.Station Advisor
      6. 6.Explorer
   2. Both Junior Firefighters and Advisors must follow this chain of command.
7. **Section 7: Membership**
   1. Any youth seeking membership in the Kershaw County Fire Service Junior Firefighter Program must complete all necessary application paperwork.
   2. After paperwork is completed, it will be sent to the Lead Advisor who will ensure all paperwork is correct.
   3. After paperwork is verified with the Lead Advisor, the Fire Chief will make the final approval of the new Junior Firefighter.
   4. Once the Fire Chief has approved the new Junior Firefighter, the Station advisor will be advised of the new member.
8. **Section 8: Equipment**
   1. The Kershaw County Fire Service Lead Advisor will ensure that Junior Firefighters receive all necessary equipment.
   2. Any equipment that is issued out to a Junior Firefighter must be documented and the junior member must sign an equipment form when equipment is issued and given back to the department.
   3. All Junior Firefighters shall be issued equipment that will identify them as an Junior Firefighter.
   4. Junior Firefighters are not guaranteed to receive “in-date” gear because they are not able to perform interior firefighter duties.
9. **Section 9: Disciplinary** 
   1. Failure to follow any of the guidelines will result in disciplinary action up to including termination from the program.
   2. The Lead Advisor will have the authority to reprimand the Junior Firefighter unless the Lead Advisor feels like it is a greater issue that needs to be forwarded to the Battalion Chief or Fire Chief.
   3. No Junior Firefighter will engage in gossip or spreading unfounded rumors.
   4. No Junior Firefighter will threaten bodily harm to any member of the department.
   5. No Junior Firefighter shall use alcohol or tobacco products at the fire department or during KCFS events or responses.
   6. No Junior Firefighter will abuse or cause damage to property of the department or members of the department,
   7. No Junior Firefighter will remove property of the department from the station without proper authorization from the Station Advisor.
   8. No Junior Firefighter will discriminate against anyone based on his / her race, sex, age, color, national origin or religion.
   9. No Junior Firefighter shall falsify records or make misleading statements with the intent to deceive, or counterfeit any department records, books, papers, documents or computer software.
   10. No Junior Firefighter shall violate the chain of command, except that issues with a member of the chain of command may be taken up the chain to the next level.
   11. No Junior Firefighter shall post on social media or elsewhere publicize anything that occurs on an emergency incident.
   12. No Junior Firefighter shall be a party to any activity, which would tend to disrupt the department morale or bring discredit to the department or any member of the department.
   13. No Junior Firefighter shall engage in, or be part of, any sexual misconduct or any sexual act while on department property or apparatus, or during any KCFS event or response.
   14. Information about the business affairs of the station or department shall be furnished to the public only with authorization of the Fire Chief.
   15. No Junior Firefighter shall, on or off duty, use the badge, prestige of the department or his/her position within the department for the purpose of personal gain.
   16. No Junior Firefighter shall directly solicit the influence of any person that could elevate his/her position within the department.
   17. No Junior Firefighter shall disobey any lawful order issued by a superior officer unless in cases of life safety, nor shall any Junior Firefighter speak disrespectfully of or to any member of the department.
   18. No Junior Firefighter shall use his / her position in a disrespectful manner toward subordinates.
   19. No Junior Firefighter shall wear KCFS identifying apparel in non- KCFS settings, including but not limited to Adult Stores, Bars, or locations in which drug paraphernalia may be purchased unless the individual is representing the department in an on duty capacity. Nor will any individual consume alcohol or illicit substances while wearing KCFS identifying apparel.
   20. No Junior Firefighter shall wear any inappropriate clothes on fire ground, at the station or any fire department activity.
   21. The Kershaw County Fire Chief has the authority to make the final decision on any action taken within the department.
   22. The Kershaw County Fire Chief has the right to dismiss any junior from the program.
   23. Explorers of the Kershaw County Fire Service will be required to maintain a “C” average in academic classes. Explorers will be required to show their report card at the end of a quarter or 9 weeks.
       1. Anything below a “C” average will result in the junior member being placed in academic probation for 4 weeks. (Until Midterms come out)
       2. If the Junior member has not improved on their academics they will be suspended from the program for 9 weeks or until the grade has improved to meet the minimum “C” Average.
       3. The foregoing notwithstanding, the Chief may dismiss a Junior member from service at any time, with or without reason or cause.
10. **Section 10: Identifying Junior Members**
    1. Junior members will be issued a specific uniform that will identify them as a Junior member.
       1. This uniform will consist of a specific shirt that is clearly marked with KCFS Junior Firefighter and is distinct in color from regular member’s uniforms. Anytime a Junior member is participating in a fire department function, this uniform will be worn.
    2. PPE issued to the Junior member will be specific to differentiate the difference between a regular member (Those above age 18) and an Explorer (Those under the age of 18)
       1. This PPE will not be altered and may consist of the following:
          1. Markings or wording on the PPE to show Junior Firefighter
          2. Orange Tetrahedrons on the helmet
          3. Orange leather front
          4. A Different colored helmet/ Different Style helmet all with orange markings.
          5. Any Junior member found altering this identification will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal from the program.