

Redmond United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuary Policy – Working with Youth and Children
Revised November 2006

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I. Purpose & Policy Revising/Updating

a. Purpose of Safe Sanctuary Policy with Abuse Definitions

The RUMC's purpose for this policy is to claim the congregation's commitment to the safety and spiritual growth of all children, youth, and adults. The congregation will do everything in its power to see that no physical, emotional, or sexual abuse occurs within church programming and that abuse issues that any participating child/youth brings with him/her are handled in their best interests. We will follow the law in an attempt to be just and do right.

To abuse is to misuse or mistreat something or someone.

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual contact or interaction between a child, youth, or developmentally disabled/adult dependent person, by any person responsible for their care or instruction, is abusive. Force, threats, bribery, and misrepresenting right and wrong are some of the ways this crime is perpetrated. Even if a child, out of ignorance, innocence, or fear, does not resist, it is still abuse. The person in authority **always** is responsible for avoiding sexual contact, even when the child, youth, or developmentally disabled/adult dependent person attempts to initiate the contact.

Physical Abuse: To hurt or injure by maltreatment.

Verbal & Emotional Abuse: To assail with contemptuous, coarse, or insulting words. Force, threats, bribery, and misrepresenting right and wrong can also be a part of this abuse.

Sexual Harassment: Any unwanted sexual advance, physical or verbal demand, or sexually suggestive behavior which is perceived as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive.

b. Revising or Updating the Policy

1. The Church Council of RUMC has the authority to revise and update these policies every two years, minimally, or at the request of leadership or the Policy Coordinator.
2. Church policies may be waived occasionally for exceptional circumstances. The goal of RUMC is to promote safety while maintaining practical flexibility in children and youth ministry. Waiving of policies will be authorized by the Policy Coordinator/supervisor or Pastor and in consultation with the program staff person in charge.
3. This policy may be modified or withdrawn by RUMC's Church Council at any time. These policies are not intended to create an implied or express contract with any person. They are not intended to create a legally enforceable or binding promise or misrepresentation.

II. Children and Youth Guidelines

a. General Requirements

1. Parents/Guardians will be given notice and full information regarding any special church-related activities or meetings for their youth or child.
2. RUMC must be insured for abuse, risk, and facility hazards.
3. Any activity that has a risk factor to it requires the presence of an experienced and/or certified guide or instructor. These activities must also be properly insured with a certificate of liability; contractor to be insured for a minimum of one million dollars, if contracted to an outside party.
4. Participants will be properly instructed as to the use of any special equipment verbally and the instructions shall be posted.
5. Medical forms are required for all participants in any special church events. These forms shall be carried by the adult coordinator/person in charge at the event along with a liability waiver. A covenant form will also accompany these forms to all activities. In case of an emergency or accident, the parents, guardian, or emergency

contact will be contacted using all possible means, while ensuring that the youth/child receive the proper care.

6. A first aid kit will be present at all church events and overnight events. The kits should be checked every six months to up-date supplies. Supplies should include: disposable gloves, gauze and bandages, antiseptic/alcohol wipes, adhesive tape, antibiotic ointment, cold compress, soft splints, scissors, and a CPR barrier.
7. Any overnight event shall have a person, staff or volunteer, certified in first aid and CPR who can administer minor first aid, dispense medicine as needed, and who are capable of determining whether additional medical attention is necessary. This person will report all incidences to the pastor and/or Policy Supervisor.
8. A log of all medicines shall be kept by the first aid person and distributed by that person. Therefore, during events, if medication is necessary for a minor, it is to be given to the first aid person at the beginning of the event.
9. Groups of three or more shall be maintained during all church events. All minors will have an adult leader present.
10. The event leader shall be informed promptly if any unrecognized or unfamiliar persons are noticed at an event.

b. Driving Requirements

1. Only those 21 and older may drive to church events. The driver of passengers must be at least 25 years of age and have a valid drivers license. Whenever possible, 2 unrelated adults are preferred in each car with passengers.
2. Drivers will keep driver's license and insurance copied and on file with the Event Leader. The driver's record shall conform to any standards that are required by the church's insurance company. Vehicles used shall meet all legal requirements.
3. Transportation to events at the church is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
4. Youth are discouraged from driving themselves and others to events other than those at the church. If circumstances require a youth to drive to an event, his/her keys will be held by the event leader during the event.
5. Any youth driving to an outside event shall carry written permission to drive to the event from his/her parents/guardians. Any "passenger" is required to have a permission slip signed by his/her own parents/guardians, in order to ride with the youth.
6. Youth and children are requested to participate fully at an event by coming and staying for an events entirety. Exceptions to this shall be made by event leaders in advance.

c. Overnight Event Requirements

1. Boys and girls are to sleep in separate rooms unless no other options are available due to chaperone shortages or space. A divider shall be used when available. Boys and girls shall be separated by chaperones when possible if a divider is not available.
2. There will be at least one adult representing the gender in the sleeping quarters.
3. A minimum number of consecutive hours of sleep shall be scheduled per night at overnight events:
 - a. K-6th grade – 8 hours
 - b. 7th-9th grade – 7 hours (for Jr. High event)
 - c. 9th -12th grade – 6-7 hours (for Sr. High event)These hours start with lights out/quiet time and end at least half an hour before breakfast.

d. Supervisor or DSO (Designated Safety Officer) Presence

1. RUMC will have a Policy Supervisor whose job it is to see that State Patrol background clearances are made for all volunteers. The Staff Parish Relations Committee is responsible for checking references and backgrounds for all paid staff. The background checks will be kept by this individual in a safe, locked space. The Supervisor is assigned the responsibility of developing, overseeing, and reviewing the training of all staff and volunteers. This training may include the following subject areas:
 - Appropriate boundary guidelines
 - Types of abuse, the relationship between imbalances of power and abuse
 - Causes and indications of abuse
 - Reporting procedures
 - What to do when you suspect or discover child abuse
 - Understanding the victim and the abuser
 - Working with abuse victims
 - Conference event policies
 - Media reporting policies
2. The Policy Supervisor is required to be a Conference Designated Safety Officer (DSO) and be trained bi-annually.
3. The Policy Supervisor is responsible for serving as the resource person on these issues, for receiving reports of guideline misuse or reports of abuse, and for seeing that all persons who need to know of abuses are informed.
4. The Policy Supervisor is responsible for documenting all incidents and accusations. Confirmed incidents shall be reported directly to the Pastor, CPS, law enforcement, District Superintendent, and Conference Office, and to any other group who may need to know. Alleged incidents shall be reported to the Pastor, who shall, with the DSO, seek confirmation regarding the incident, and then follow procedure as described above or consult the alleged abuser and abused.
5. Non-church related abuse reported by an individual shall be handled by the Policy Supervisor and other event leaders present. They will determine who shall be informed. In cases with minors, parents should be informed first, unless reported as the abusers. Following the parents being informed, the Pastor, CPS, law enforcement, District Superintendent, and Conference Office should be informed.

e. Screening of Paid and Volunteer Staff

1. All adults should pre-register for an event (i.e. camp, conference retreats, CONVO, etc.) at least 30 days prior to the event, except under extenuating circumstances. The registration will include the screening questions for the Washington State Patrol Criminal History Check.
2. Any adult or youth ages 16-18 years, who works with children or youth (or is in direct contact with them) of RUMC, should complete a Washington State Patrol Criminal History Check.
3. Applicants for a staff position, residing in Washington less than three years should provide three reference checks from a previous church, school, or employer who are not related to the applicant. Copies of these documents should be filed with the Policy Supervisor.
4. Prior to the beginning of a new year, the Policy Supervisor should review the background checks and make sure they are complete and valid for all volunteers involved in the programs. SPR should review and make sure paid staff background checks are valid and complete. As new people join, background checks need to be completed.

5. Any criminal conviction for a sexual offense disqualifies an applicant from working with youth and children of RUMC. Other disqualifications are convictions for incest, rape, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, domestic violence, and physical abuse. Any person who was abused as a child, who wishes to work with youth or children of RUMC, should discuss their ability to do so with the pastor and know what the boundaries are.

III. Prevention (Code of Behavior)

a. General Behavior for Adults Working with Children and Youth

1. The highest standards of Christian maturity must be reflected by the adults working with RUMC children and youth. These adults must also foster trust at all times and be above reproach. Adults engaged in church-related events or activities with the youth and/or children present should never engage in sexually suggestive behavior or inappropriate touching.
2. Any sexual or sexually suggestive behavior by an adult toward any volunteer or fellow worker or event participant at a church event constitutes an abuse of power. Consent is not a defense to an abuse of power.
 - a. Please see the definition of Sexual Harassment in I.a. as it pertains to this. Prohibited behavior includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual or coercive overtones, including:
 - i. Sexually suggestive or coercive communication of any kind such as obscene letters, notes or invitations, comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, sexual propositions;
 - ii. Any bullying or intimidation act whether it is physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse, visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, sexually suggestive gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines; or verbal threats, name-calling, or any unwanted gesture.
3. The following guidelines for touching are to be carefully followed by anyone working with RUMC children or youth:
 - a. Touching should always be initiated by the youth or child. The adult should respond based on the child or youth's need for comfort and encouragement, not his/her own emotional needs. Appropriate touching by an adult involves holding hands as part of a group activity; touching only of the head or shoulders, and/or a side-on hug of the shoulders.
 - b. Touching between an adult and a child or youth should occur only in the presence of other adults.
 - c. A preference not to be touched should be respected by adults and others. This includes youth to youth and child to child.
4. Anytime an adult thinks that their own or another adult's behavior towards a youth or child, either touching or verbal, may have been perceived as inappropriate, that adult should report the behavior to the leader in charge or the Policy Supervisor.
5. All adults should avoid being alone, one-on-one, with children or youth unless parental permission has been given in writing previously. Interaction with youth and/or children should be conducted within the sight/supervision of at least one other

adult. In cases where it is impossible to avoid direct, one-on-one interactions, the following guidelines should be observed:

- a. If an adult or leader is alone with children or youth, two or more children or youth should be present with the adult or leader.
 - b. If interactions are being conducted in a classroom and there is only one adult available, there should be another person on premises and the classroom door will remain open.
 - c. When private consultation is needed between a youth/child and an adult, another adult will be informed of the activity and of the location in which the activity is taking place. The monitoring adult should strive to ensure that the consultation takes place in a public space within sight of others but not necessarily within hearing range.
6. Adults should respect the privacy of youth/children when changing clothing or showering to the extent safety, necessity, and practicality allow.
 7. Youth/children should be supervised at all times by at least two adults who are a minimum of at least four years older than the oldest youth/child who is attending the event as a participant. All volunteers, helpers, leaders, assistants, etc. must also be a minimum of at least four years older than the oldest youth/child who is attending the event as a participant. Exceptions can be made in special cases after discussion with the Pastor or the DSO.
 8. In situations where three adults are required for supervision, the attempt should be made to get them from more than one family.
 9. There should be a minimum adult to child/youth ration:
 - a. Birth - 3 yrs.: 1 adult for every 4 babies/toddlers
 - b. 4 yrs. – Kindergarten: 1 adult for every 5 children
 - c. Grades 1-4: 1 adult for every 6 children
 - d. Grades 5-8: 1 adult for every 7 children
 - e. Grades 9-12: 1 adult for every 8 children

** It is recommended that at least 2 adults attend every event no matter the ratio.

** It is also recommended that an adult for each gender is present if the event involves more than one gender.

** An adult should not host an event with less than 2 children/youth present.
 10. Mission trips should require different ratios.
 - a. Local/state trips: 1 adult for every 5 youth
 - b. National trips (& Canada): 1 adult for every 4 youth
 - c. World-wide trips: 1 adult for every 3 youth
 11. At least 50% of adults at an event where Jr. High are present should be at least 21 years of age or older. Exceptions may be made after consulting with the DSO and the Pastor.
 12. Anyone not registered for an event or activity is required to check in and out with the event director.
 13. There will be absolutely no drinking of alcohol or use of illegal drugs at or during any church-related event or activity. Any drinking of alcohol or use of illegal drugs will lead to immediate removal from the event. If a person is using alcohol/illegal drugs at an event, appropriate contacts will be made.
 14. Possession of firearms, fireworks, and knives is forbidden.
 15. All adults working with youth/children shall abide by all laws and regulations applicable to the location of the event.

b. Behavior of Children and Youth

1. Prior to any overnight or longer activity or event, youth/children and chaperones, leaders, volunteers, etc. will be required to sign and abide by a covenant defining appropriate behavior.

IV. Response to Incidents

a. General Response

Other behaviors that hinder the mission and purpose of RUMC may arise. Examples of such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Volunteers, leaders, chaperones, etc. who undermine the program objectives
- Event planner, leader, etc. who neglects staff training or health and safety concerns

When such behaviors arise:

1. The event coordinator or leader should encourage the person raising the concern to talk directly to the person whose behavior is considered detrimental.
2. If the person raising the concern is unwilling or unable to talk directly on their own with the person in question, or if the initial conversation is unproductive, then the event coordinator or leader should meet with the two individuals to seek resolution.
3. If a mutually agreed-upon resolution is not possible, then the event coordinator/leader has the authority to resolve the matter appropriately.
4. Anonymous complaints or evaluations should be considered unverifiable, and, therefore, will have no foundation for being officially addressed.
5. Persons whose behavior hinders the mission and goals of RUMC or whose negative behavior is repetitive, may face review of their participation in leadership for that behavior by the person or group to whom they are accountable.
6. If the person who is perceived to be hindering the mission is the event coordinator/leader, then the person who is raising the concern may report to the Policy Supervisor, Pastor, SPR Committee, or person assigned to oversee this leader.
7. The church has the obligation to inform the Annual Conference of all persons whose behavior they deem to be inappropriate for working with youth and children. The Conference should maintain a list of these people in conjunction with the State Patrol forms. The purpose of this list is to screen those who are requesting to work with youth and children. The church or Conference is not under obligation to report the reason for placement on the list with anyone other than the accused.

b. Response to Physical Accidents

1. The person who witnesses the accident should report all information to the first aid staff or leader at the event or activity. The first aid staff should fill out the Accident Report Form, report the incident to the leaders of the event, and notify the parents/guardians.
2. The first aid staff and /or event leader is responsible for carefully documenting all aspects of the incident using the Accident Report Form. This report should be recorded in the log and forwarded immediately to the Policy Supervisor of the church or staff person assigned to oversee this group.
3. The event leader should make contact with the DSO who will follow through, as needed, with the Pastor and with the Conference Office regarding the insurance company. The DSO will determine if further investigation is necessary or additional follow-up.

c. Response to Abuse Allegations

1. All reports of abuse should be treated with utmost seriousness and confidentiality.
2. The highest priority should be placed on securing the safety of the victim. The accused should not be confronted until the safety of the victim is secured.
3. The person who receives the report of abuse should immediately share the information with the event coordinator/leader unless the person suspected of abuse is the event leader, then the report should be made to the Policy Supervisor, pastor, or the authorities. The event coordinator/leader or Policy Supervisor is responsible for filling

out the Abuse Incident Report Form and for reporting the incident to the key leaders of the event or pastor or authorities.

4. The Policy Supervisor is responsible for carefully documenting all aspects of the incident using the Abuse Incident Report Form. This report will be forwarded immediately to the pastor.
5. The person who first hears the allegation of abuse, along with the Policy Supervisor, is responsible for reporting to the Child Protective Services or to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
6. The Policy Supervisor will notify the parents when and if it is clear that it is safe to do so.
7. Any volunteer or hired staff person accused of abuse will be immediately relieved of duties related to this or any other church event or activity involving youth and children, and will be isolated from further contact with participants, guests, and others who may be negatively impacted by the individual's presence until the review process is completed. The individual accused of abuse may not return to these types of duties until the Policy Supervisor has completed a review. This applies whether or not the alleged act of abuse occurred during a church-related event.
8. Whether or not the alleged act occurred during a church-related event, the leader and Policy Supervisor should jointly review the incident to determine whether any additional actions are required. They should also report the incident to appropriate parties (i.e. civil authorities, the Conference insurance company, the chancellor, etc.). All information concerning the incident should be held in strict confidence by all parties involved.
9. If the incident is put under legal investigation by appropriate civil authorities, the investigation will be monitored by the Policy Supervisor and church officials until there is an outcome. All investigation will be the responsibility of civil authorities.
10. If there is no civil investigation or once the investigation by civil authorities is completed, the Policy Supervisor and/or leaders should jointly review the incident to determine whether any further actions are needed.
11. The Policy Supervisor is responsible for contacting the accused and informing the accused of the nature of the process. The purpose of this meeting is not to interrogate the accused but to discuss the accusation. During meetings with the accused, one other mutually agreed-upon witness should be present (e.g., local pastor, district superintendent, the other coordinator, etc.).
12. After conducting a thorough review, the appropriate person from the appropriate agency, whether it is the local pastor, DSO, a Conference Office official, or a legal official from a given agency, shall report the findings to the accused. If it is determined that the person has committed the act of abuse, the final goal of this process is to establish a future covenant with the offender that regulates his or her behavior at all levels of involvement with the church. This covenant should include both an agreed-upon record of what offending actions were committed and agreed-upon solutions about what should be done in the future.
13. If no covenant is established, the accused should remain removed from working with youth and children in the church until mediation is complete.
14. If no covenant is established, the accused may pick one mediator and the coordinator may pick another mediator. The two mediators will then pick a third mediator, and the three persons, combined with the accused and the coordinator will come to a decision. The mutually agreed-upon mediator will serve as the facilitator for this group.
15. The covenant that governs participation in church-related youth and child events should clearly state that failure to abide by the provisions of the covenant process will result in permanent removal from working with the youth and children in the church.

16. All documentation relating to the incident should be confidentially filed in the Policy Supervisor's locked files.
17. A list should be maintained in conjunction with the State Patrol forms at the local church and Conference office of those who may not participate in related events involving youth and children. The purpose of this list is to screen those who are requesting to work with youth and children of RUMC. The church or Conference is not under obligation to report the reason for placement on the list with anyone other than the accused.
18. If a person is under some form of removal due to violation of any of these policies/guidelines and fails to report the same to a local church when initiating a desire to work with youth and children, that person should be permanently removed from working with the youth and children at all UMC events.
19. The church's obligations to respond to allegations of abuse go beyond the State's requirements. Response to others:
 1. To the victim – take the allegations very seriously, respect the victim's privacy, provide sympathetic concern, no blaming the victim, absolutely no implication that the victim was in any way responsible for causing the abuse.
 2. To the Annual Conference – notify PNW Conference authorities (District Superintendent, Bishop) as soon as allegations are received; keep them aware of congregation's actions; notify insurance agent.
 3. To the media – one person must be designated as spokesperson in advance and have a well thought-out, previously written-out response.
 4. To the accused abuser – acknowledge that the person is of sacred worth. Remove the accused abuser from position as a worker with youth and children until allegations are fully investigated and resolved.

d. Response to Illegal Behavior

Any volunteer or hired staff person accused of criminal activity should be immediately relieved of duties related to this or any other church-sponsored event and shall be isolated from the further contact with participants, guests, and others who may be negatively impacted by the individual's presence until the review process is completed. If the criminal activity was not committed during a church-related event, then the Policy Supervisor along with the pastor or leader has discretion as to whether immediate or remedial action is required following the same procedures as listed above (see III.c.1-19). The individual accused of felonious activity may not return to duties until the church leadership has completed a review.

e. Not Reportable Incidents of Behavior

An incident that is not reportable abuse may still require remedial action. The pastor and SPR are responsible for holding the staff and volunteers accountable for their actions. Grace and mercy are extended in the context of repentance, accountability, and justice. It is important that a thorough review is completed and the victim and accused abuser are both involved in the final decisions. If the victim believes the situation was abuse, an official report may be made to civil authorities. The SPR and District Superintendent will then be contacted.