

## **UPUCC Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention**

### ***Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment***

As a community of Christian faith, Umstead Park UCC is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with Umstead Park UCC should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention of the church to take action to prevent behavior that is contrary to this policy and, when necessary, take appropriate steps to detect and halt any such behavior that may have occurred.

Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment of parishioners or others by anyone engaged in ministry on behalf of Umstead Park UCC is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation. Any UPUCC volunteer with any history of sexual criminal conduct will not participate in activities with youth and children.

This policy pertains to all UPUCC volunteers with children and youth. A separate policy will be created that applies to UPUCC employees and contractors.

### ***Requirements for Child and Youth Ministry***

Umstead Park UCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love.

In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministry to the church.

1. All persons who will be placed in a position of authority concerning the children and youth of the congregation, including ministers, employees, teachers, chaperones, drivers, or any other volunteer working with children will be subject to a criminal background check.
2. We expect that those who volunteer to work with youth and children will have been members of Umstead Park UCC for at least six months or, if not members, regularly and frequently associated with Umstead Park UCC for at least six months (as determined by the Minister and Director of Children).
3. All volunteers who regularly work with children and youth will complete and submit disclosure document attached hereto as Exhibit A. These forms will be given to and filed by the UPUCC Ministerial Staff and stored in a locked cabinet in a secure location. Criminal background check information will also be stored in this cabinet. Only the Minister and Director of Children will have a key.
4. The Minister and Director of Children, after reviewing the disclosure documents and results of the criminal background check, will determine if the volunteer should be allowed to participate in activities with youth and children. Any volunteer who is denied the privilege of participating in activities with youth and children may appeal the decision of the Minister and Director of Children

5. All volunteers and employees who regularly work with children and youth will receive orientation regarding safe church policy and procedures. This is the responsibility of the Minister and Director of Children.
6. A log of who has received training and when they received it will be maintained by the Minister and Director of Children.
7. The Minister and Director of Children will receive training on the process for requesting and interpreting the results of a criminal background check.
8. It is the policy of this church to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for youth activities. In situations where participants are not readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two authorized unrelated adults (age 18 or older) present with children. Youth over the age of 14 or a person who is developmentally not an adult may assist an unrelated adult in supervising children and youth activities; however, such assistance does not alter the requirement that at least two unrelated, authorized adults be present. In this context, "related" means people who currently live together in the same dwelling. An exception will be made for the Nursery, which is completely visible through a large glass window. Nursery care during worship service on Sunday mornings can be provided by two related, authorized adults or any authorized adult and a youth over the age of 14.
9. It is the policy of this church to enable adequate supervision and safeguards for youth activities through good building design. All classrooms will have windows to an interior hallway that enable visibility of the entire room. These windows may be placed in the doorway to the room. No room used for children or youth activities will be lockable.
10. Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for each and every activity off the church property, and any overnight activities. The signed consent forms will be collected and kept on file by the Minister and Director of Children.
11. Any concern with the execution of the UPUCC Safe Church policy should be brought to the attention of the Minister and Director of Children and/or the UPUCC Moderator.
12. Any requests for exceptions to the provisions of this policy for special cases should be brought to the attention of the Minister and Director of Children and/or the UPUCC Moderator. They may then bring a request to change this document or make an exception to the UPUCC Council for review and approval. All changes or exceptions should be reviewed and approved by the congregation at the next scheduled congregational meeting.

## ***Definitions***

**Sexual Exploitation:** involves practices by which a person, usually an adult, achieves sexual gratification, financial gain or advancement through the abuse or exploitation of a child's sexuality by abrogating that child's human right to dignity, equality, autonomy, and physical and mental well-being. It reflects a continuum of abuse that includes child sexual abuse, child sexual assault and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

**Sexual Harassment:** intimidation, bullying or coercion of a sexual nature, or the unwelcome or inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favors. It includes the following:

- behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination
- unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

**Response Team:** The Minister and Director of Children, and the Moderator will constitute the UPUCC Response Team in hearing complaints under this policy. The Response Team will be familiar with the terms of this policy, as well as the established procedures of the church for dealing with a complaint. If any member of the Response Team is the subject of a complaint or chooses to recuse themselves for other reasons, the Moderator Elect will take their place on the Response Team.

## ***Guidelines for Handling Complaints of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment***

### **I. General**

- A. The Response Team will ensure that, pursuant to the UPUCC covenant, all parties in a complaint will be ministered to appropriately.
- B. The Response Team may seek the advice of the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Eastern NC Association of the UCC, legal counsel, law enforcement, other agencies, or independent experts in performing its functions.
- C. The Response Team will undergo annual training by a UCC sanctioned organization on how to handle and investigate a complaint.
- D. The Response Team will maintain appropriate confidentiality of all information pertaining to a complaint.
- E. A written summary of the Response Team's proceedings in such cases will be maintained by the Response Team and kept in a locked, confidential file.
- F. If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Response Team, he or she has the right to appeal to the chairman of the UPUCC Pastoral Relations Committee. The subject of any such appeal shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this policy were followed. The matter will not be reconsidered on the merits and the decision of the Pastoral Relations Committee will be the final resolution of the matter. If the Pastoral Relations Committee determines that the procedures of this policy were not followed, it will refer the matter back to the Response Team to complete the processing of the complaint in accordance with these guidelines.

### **II. Child Abuse**

Apart from any legal requirements, the Umstead Park UCC will make a report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Wake County Department of Social Services, if at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any person who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to a member of the UPUCC Response Team so that the church may take appropriate action in a timely manner.

# Exhibit A

## Umstead Park UCC

### Children and Youth Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form

This form should be completed and signed by all volunteers who work with children and youth and renewed on a regular basis. It will supply the information needed to conduct a criminal background check and verify eligibility to work with UPUCC children and youth as a volunteer.

Please read the form carefully and fully as you complete it. If you have any questions or concerns about this form, please see either the Minister or Director of Children. Thank you.

NAME: LAST FIRST MIDDLE

ADDRESS: STREET CITY/STATE ZIP CODE

DAYTIME PHONE EVENING PHONE EMAIL

Drivers License # Drivers License State

Social Security Number Date of Birth

I have been a member of this church since \_\_\_\_\_

I have been a participant in this church since \_\_\_\_\_

**With respect to my driving record, I have not had my license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance.**

True False

**I have never been convicted of, been adjudicated, nor pled guilty or no-contest to, a crime.**

True False

*If false, please briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the date and place of conviction and the legal disposition of the case. The church will not deny a position to any applicant solely because the person has been convicted of a crime. The church, however, may consider the nature, date and circumstances of the offense, as well as whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position applied for.*

**No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or**

**misconduct; physical abuse; or child abuse; has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired.**

**True**

**False**

*If false, give a short explanation of the lawsuit. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the lawsuit; where the lawsuit was filed; and the precise disposition of the lawsuit.)*

**I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; or child abuse.**

**True**

**False**

*If false, give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination; name, address, and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor; and nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)*

**Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?**

**Yes**

**No**

*If yes, please provide a brief explanation. Or, if you would be more comfortable discussing this with the Minister of Children and Youth, please request that here.*

The covenants between persons seeking authorized volunteer positions in the church require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of my application.

Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize Umstead Park UCC and/or its agents to conduct a criminal background check. I understand that Umstead Park UCC will share with me information it has gathered about me in response to this application, if I request it to do so.

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of the Umstead Park UCC Safe Church Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(PRINT NAME & SIGN) DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(PRINT NAME & SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN FOR APPLICANTS UNDER 18) DATE**