

**Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church
(KUMPC)**

206 Cowlitz Way
Kelso, WA 98626

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

General Goal Statement

Having been created by God, all persons are of inestimable worth regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, cognitive capacity or psycho-social development. A primary goal of our fellowship is to insure that our children, youth and vulnerable adults are protected from physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

As a covenanted Christian community of faith, it is the objective of Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church (KUMPC) to conduct all child/youth/vulnerable adult related events in ways that promote the safety and spiritual growth of all who participate in church activities. This includes all volunteer workers.

We, Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian church (KUMPC) hereby establish the following guidelines and procedures in order to prevent ANY abuse at church sponsored activities:

1. Provide orientation and training for all persons working with children/youth/vulnerable adults regarding prevention, recognition and reporting of abuse whether that abuse is observed by a leader or participant.
2. Screen volunteer and paid leaders for all church programs involving children/youth/vulnerable adults.
3. Implement the procedures and guidelines outlined on the following pages for reporting ANY abuse that might occur in programs that involve children/youth/vulnerable adults.

Approved By: Church Council
Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church
August 28, 2017

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SAFE CHURCH POLICY

I. YOUTH AND CHILDREN ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

A. General Safety Requirements

1. Guardians shall be given advance notice and full information regarding any church-related activities or meetings to which their children are invited and will include:
 - a. Medical permission forms which shall accompany the adult coordinator of the event and have a waiver of liability in favor of the church.
 - b. All leaders, participants, and guardians/guardians of participants at a church event shall sign a church event covenant.
2. All water sports require the presence of a lifeguard and shall conform to American Camping Association guidelines. All water sports also require the presence of a lookout to assist the lifeguard as someone who watches to make sure that there are no signs of distress or inappropriate behavior in the water.
3. Any activity that has a risk factor to it requires the presence of an experienced and/or certified guide or instructor. For example, swimming, river rafting, rock climbing, challenge course, or other risk-related activities. Participation in these activities shall also be properly insured with a certificate of liability. If the activity is contracted to an outside party, then the contractor shall also be properly insured with a certificate of liability insurance providing a minimum of one million dollars liability coverage limits.
4. If any special equipment is used that requires special instruction, the instructions for its use will be posted and followed. Participants will also be instructed verbally in the use of the equipment.
5. Medical permission forms are required from all youth/children (and possibly adults) participating in church events. These forms shall accompany the adult coordinator of the event or meeting and shall include a waiver of liability. In the case of an accident that requires medical attention, the

person who is responsible for the event or the meeting will use all means possible to contact the parent, guardian, or emergency contact while ensuring that the youth/children/adult receive the proper care.

6. There shall be a first aid kit on the premises at all church events and accompanying a qualified adult on all overnight events. That first aid kit shall include disposable vinyl gloves, assorted gauze and bandages, antiseptic/alcohol wipes, adhesive tape, antibiotic ointment, cold compress, soft splints, triangle bandages, and scissors.
7. Any overnight event may have, at the least, first aid staff 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 is also responsible for reporting all incidences to the Safety Advocate or pastor.
8. For all overnight events that primarily target minors, all medicine, including supplements, will be given to the first aid staff at the beginning of the event, and it will then be distributed as appropriate by first aid staff. An on-going log of all medications dispensed and treatments administered will also be kept.
9. All participants in an event will consistently remain in groups of three or more. All minors will have an adult leader present.
10. If anyone notices unrecognized people at an event, the event or meeting coordinator shall be informed as soon as possible.

B. Driving Regulations

1. Drivers during an event or on event business shall:
 - a. Be 25 or older with a minimum of (5) years driving experience.
 - b. Possess a valid driver’s license and appropriate insurance.
 - c. Drive a legally licensed and insured vehicle.
 - d. Driver authorizations are to be reviewed every two years.
2. Youth are discouraged from driving themselves to events. If, due to extenuating circumstances, a youth needs to drive to an event outside the church:
 - a. Keys for the automobile will be held by the event leader during the event.

- b. They shall carry written permission to drive to the event from his/her guardians.
- c. There shall be no “in and out” privileges for youth/children.

C. Overnight Events

1. Boys and girls may not sleep in the same room unless there is no other option as a result of shortages of chaperones or because of the nature of the space. If they are in the same room and there is a divider available, it shall be used to separate the genders. If there is no divider available, boys and girls shall be at least three feet apart from each other.
2. There shall be at least one adult of the same gender in the sleeping quarters; two adults are required for each gender if less than three youth/children are present.
3. At overnight events, a minimum of eight consecutive hours of sleep shall be scheduled per night. These hours begin with lights out and quiet time and end at least one-half hour prior to breakfast.

D. Safety Advocates

1. Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church of Kelso, Washington shall have a designated Safety Advocate, laity or clergy, paid or volunteer, whose job it is to see that national background clearances are made for all volunteers. (Staff Parish Relations Committee is responsible for checking references and backgrounds for all paid staff.) This person will keep the background checks in a safe, locked space while running the check. After the check has been completed, sensitive information (i.e., social security number, birthdate, driver’s license number) on the form will be stamped with a security stamp blocking it from being viewed. The form will then be saved as a PDF document and saved to File Explorer on the office computer under the folder entitled Background Ministry Safe Checks. The form will then be shredded. Documents on the office computer are saved to the cloud and can be retrieved if needed.

The Safety Advocate is also assigned the responsibility of developing, overseeing, and reviewing the training of all staff and volunteers. This training may include the following subject areas:

- a. Appropriate boundary guidelines
- b. Types of abuse, the relationship between imbalances of power and abuse
- c. Causes and indicators of abuse

- d. Reporting procedures
 - e. What to do when you suspect or discover child abuse
 - f. Understanding the victim and the abuser
 - g. Working with abuse victims
 - h. Church youth/children event policies
 - i. Media reporting policies
2. This Safety Advocate is responsible for communicating and maintaining church guidelines relating to abuse at every church event involving youth/children, informing youth/children of these church policies, serving as the resource person on these issues, and assisting the participants of the event in understanding appropriate boundaries and appropriate guidelines concerning issues of touch, etc. Youth/children shall be encouraged to report to this person in cases of abuse, but it shall be made clear that all staff members are capable of receiving reports of abuse. This person will be introduced to the event participants during the opening of the event and their role will be made clear.
 3. The Safety Advocate is responsible for carefully documenting all aspects of an abuse incident on the General Form for Reporting a Safe Sanctuaries Violation. This report shall be forwarded immediately to the pastor, District Superintendent, and Conference Office, and to any other group who may need to know.
 4. If a person reports that they have been abused in another setting, the Safety Advocate shall consult with the event leaders or other oversight staff and they shall make a determination of who should be informed; which may include the local pastor, the District Superintendent, CPS, law enforcement, etc.

E. Guidelines for Screening Paid and Volunteer Staff

1. All leaders shall pre-register for an event at least 72 hours prior to that event except under extenuating circumstances. The registration shall include:
 - a. National Background Check consent form
 - b. Pastoral reference (suggested for new volunteers)
 - c. Event covenant
 - d. Medical waiver/history

2. On a regular basis, the Safety Advocate shall:
 - a. Review the above forms.
 - b. The pastoral reference is an informal inquiry into the maturity and appropriateness of the volunteer for the ministry they are applying with. All background checks shall be kept strictly confidential.
 - c. Check with conference resources for prior reviews.
 - d. Ensure that the adult fits the appropriate age requirements.
 - e. Ensure that at least the minimum standards of supervision as outlined in the Code of Behavior (Section II) are followed.

3. Approval for adults to serve as paid staff is at the discretion of the SPRC and to serve as volunteer staff is at the discretion of the church. A criminal conviction for a sexual offense disqualifies an applicant from working with youth/children. Other automatic disqualifiers usually are conviction for incest, rape, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, domestic violence to the other guardian and physical abuse.

II. CODE OF BEHAVIOR

A. Rules of General Supervision for Adults Working with Youth/Children

1. Adults engaged in church-related events or activities with youth/children present should never engage in sexually suggestive behavior or inappropriate touching.
2. Any sexual or sexually suggestive behavior by an adult toward any fellow worker or event participant at a church event where an imbalance of power exists between the acting adult and the other person constitutes an abuse of power. Consent is not a defense to an abuse of power.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance, physical or verbal demand, or sexually suggestive behavior that is perceived as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Prohibited behavior includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual or coercive overtones, including:

- a. 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;
- b. 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 youth/children:
 - a. Touching should always be initiated by the youth/child. The adult should respond to the child’s need for comfort and encouragement and not base touching on their own emotional needs. Appropriate touching by an adult involves holding hands as part of a group activity, touching only the head or shoulders, and/or a side-on hug of the shoulders.
 - b. Touching between an adult and a youth/child shall only occur in the presence of other adults.
 - c. A youth’s or child’s 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/child, either touching or verbal, may have been perceived as inappropriate, that adult shall report the behavior to the leader in charge or the Safety Advocate.
5. All adults shall avoid being alone, one-on-one, with youth/children unless parental permission has been given in writing previously. Interaction with youth/children shall 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 shall be observed:
 - a. If an adult or leader is alone with youth/children, two or more youth/children shall be present with the adult or leader.
 - b. If interactions are being conducted in a classroom and there is only one adult available, there shall be a roamer on premises and the classroom door shall remain open.
 - c. When private consultation is needed between a youth/child and an adult, another adult shall be informed of the activity and of the location in which the activity is taking place. The monitoring adult shall strive to ensure that the consultation takes place in a public space within sight of others but not necessarily within hearing range.

6. Adults shall respect the privacy of youth/children when changing clothing or showering to the extent safety allows. Adults will not be nude in front of children/youth.
7. Youth/children shall be supervised at all times by at least one adult who is at least four years older than the oldest youth/child who is attending the event as a participant.
8. When only two adults are required for supervision, the second adult shall not be related in any way.
9. There shall be one adult for every six youth/children with junior high events and one adult for every eight youth/children with senior high events. Ratios for ninth graders will be the ratios of the dominant age group at the event.
10. Ratio: The following ratios will be in place for age-level church events.
 - a. Younger Children (preschool & under) 1 adult to four children
 - b. Children (Kindergarten-Grade 5) 1 adult to six children
 - c. Jr. High (Grade 6-Grade 8) 1 adult to six youth
 - d. Sr. High (Grade 9-Grade 12) 1 adult to eight youth
 - e. Ratios for eighth or ninth graders will be the ratio of the prevalent age group at the event.
11. Those adults who participate in an event shall initiate no personal interaction with youth/children via email or otherwise, apart from simply informational communication, without informing the guardian.
12. At least 50% of adults at an event where junior high are present shall be at least 21 or older.
13. Anyone not registered for an event or activity is required to check in and out with the event director.
14. There will be absolutely no drinking of alcohol or use of illegal drugs at or during any church-related activities or events. Any drinking of alcohol, un-prescribed controlled substance or use of illicit or illegal drugs will lead to immediate suspension and removal from the event.
15. Possession of firearms is forbidden.
16. All adults working with youth/children shall abide by all laws and regulations applicable to the location of the event.

B. Rules of General Supervision for ‘Interactive’ Youth and Young Adult Events

There are occasions when it is important and desirable for youth and young adults to meet jointly and to have opportunities for interaction. In these instances, the Youth and Children Event Guidelines remain the primary guidelines for the event and apply to all the ages participating in the event with the following amendments:

1. Whenever youth and young adults are together as participants at events, there shall always be more youth than young adults in situations of isolation from the larger group.
2. Young adults shall enter into the same covenant as youth participants. Any distinctions should be clearly and publicly stated.
3. The 25-year old driver limit set in the youth event policy section does not apply if all passengers are young adults.
4. In/out privileges for young adults are at the discretion of the event coordinator.
5. At overnight events, youth and young adults may not sleep in the same quarters.
6. Adults may not serve jointly as chaperones to the event and participants at the event.
7. The standard ratios that apply to youth also apply to youth at interactive events. These ratios apply only to participating youth, not young adults. At least 25% of adults at a mixed event where both youth and young adults are present shall be at least 25 or older.
8. All young adult participants shall submit a background check prior to the event. We will allow former attendants to attend one time.

III. RESPONSES TO CODE INFRACTIONS AT AN ACTIVITY OR EVENT

A. Responding to Behaviors that Hinder Our Mission

In addition to the behaviors that are described above, there are other behaviors that may hinder the mission and purpose of our church or church group.

Examples of these incidents include a chaperone who continually undermines program objectives or an event planner who neglects staff training or health and safety concerns, etc. When serious concerns arise:

1. The event coordinator or leader shall encourage the person raising the concern to talk directly with 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 shall meet with the two individuals to seek resolution.
3. If a mutually agreed-upon resolution is not possible, then the event coordinator/leader shall have the authority to prescribe a resolution.
4. Anonymous complaints or evaluations shall be considered unverifiable and, therefore, will have no foundation for being officially addressed.
5. Persons whose behavior hinders the mission and goals of the ministry 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 Safety Advocate, pastor, Staff Parish Relations Committee, or person assigned to oversee this leader.

B. Responding to Allegations of Abuse

1. All reports of abuse shall be treated with utmost seriousness and confidentiality.
2. The highest priority shall be placed on securing the safety of the victim. In no case shall the accused be confronted until the safety of the victim is secured.
3. The person who receives the report of abuse shall immediately share this information with the Safety Advocate or with the event coordinator who shall then:

- a. Carefully document all aspects of the incident using the General Form for Reporting a Safe Sanctuaries Violation.
 - b. Forward the report immediately to the Pastor
4. The person who first hears the allegation of abuse, in partnership with the Safety Advocate, is responsible for reporting to the Child Protective Services or to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
 5. The Safety Advocate will notify the guardians when and if it is clear that it is safe to do so.
 6. Any volunteer or hired staff person accused of abuse shall be immediately relieved of duties related to this or any other church event involving youth or children and 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 Safety Advocate has completed a review. This applies whether or not the alleged act of abuse occurred during a church-related event.

C. Responding to Illegal Behavior

Any volunteer or hired staff person accused of felonious activity shall be immediately relieved of duties related to this or any other church-sponsored event and shall 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. If the felonious activity was not committed during a church-related event, then the Safety Advocate along with the pastor or leader shall have discretion as to whether immediate or remedial action is required. The accused may not return to duties until the church leadership has completed a review.

IV. CHURCH RESPONSES TO CODE INFRACTIONS

- A. The church staff person relating to the program area is responsible for carefully documenting all aspects of the incident.
- B. Whether or not the alleged act occurred during a church-related event, the church staff person shall jointly review the incident with the Conference insurance liaison to determine whether any additional actions are required. They shall also report the incident to appropriate parties (i.e. civil authorities,

the Conference insurance company, the chancellor, etc.). All information concerning the incident shall be held in strict confidence by all parties involved.

- C. If the incident is put under investigation by appropriate civil authorities, the investigation will be monitored by the church staff relating to the program and the Safety Advocate until there is an outcome.
- D. If there is no civil investigation or once the investigation by civil authorities is completed, the Safety Advocate and Conference insurance liaison shall jointly investigate the incident to determine whether any further actions are needed.
- E. The Safety Advocate 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 shall be present (e.g. a local pastor, district superintendent, etc.).
- F. After conducting a thorough investigation, the Safety Advocate shall report the findings to the accused. If they determine that the person has committed an act of abuse, engaged in an illegal activity or a behavior which hindered the church's mission, the final goal of this process is to establish a future covenant with the offender that regulates their behavior at all levels of involvement with the Church. This covenant shall include both an agreed-upon record of what offending actions were committed and agreed-upon solutions about what should be done in the future.
- G. If no covenant is established, the accused shall remain suspended from working with youth/children at the church until mediation is complete. The accused may pick one mediator and the coordinator another mediator. These two mediators will then pick a third mediator and these three people, 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.
- H. The covenant that governs participation in church-related youth events shall clearly state that failure to abide by the provisions of the investigative process shall result in permanent suspension from working with youth/children at the church.
- I. All documentation relating to the incident will be confidentially filed in the church office.
- J. A list will be maintained in conjunction with the background checks at the church office of those who may not participate in church-related events

involving youth/children. The purpose of this list is to screen those who are requesting to work with youth/children. The church is not under obligation to report the reason for placement on the list with anyone other than the accused.

- K. If a person is under some form of suspension 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/children, that person shall be permanently suspended from working with youth/children at the church.
- L. The Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries shall be informed of all investigations or allegations of abuse. All public communication shall be coordinated by the Bishop’s Office or the Director of Connectional Ministries.

V. RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS INVOLVING PHYSICAL ACCIDENTS

- A. The Safety Advocate is responsible for carefully documenting all aspects of the incident.
- B. The Safety Advocate shall make contacts as needed with the Conference insurance company, the chancellor, the director of the council.