

White Memorial Presbyterian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy

White Memorial Presbyterian Church condemns the sexual abuse of children and youth. The Church has established the following policy in an attempt to minimize the risks of such conduct with respect to the children and youth participating in the Church's programs, and in an attempt to protect Church staff, volunteers, children and youth participating in the Church's programs.

A. Definitions

"Adult" as used herein shall mean any person who is 18 years or older, and if a volunteer, is at least five (5) years older than the oldest child or youth in the group.

"Church" as used herein shall mean White Memorial Presbyterian Church.

"Campus" as used herein shall mean the property owned by the Church and vehicles used in transporting children and youth to and from Church sponsored events.

"Policy" as used herein shall mean the White Memorial Presbyterian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy.

B. Screening and Training

Screening of all Church staff members and certain Adult volunteers working with youth is required to make the Church aware of potential issues prior to any activities with children and youth. Training will be provided annually to educate Church staff members and all volunteers with children and youth.

Following the hiring by the Church of new staff and the approval by Church staff of certain volunteers working with youth, the screening will be accomplished as follows:

1. The Church will perform a background check on all paid Church staff members, all Adult volunteers who work with youth for overnight activities, all PYC advisors and all confirmation committee members. For exigent circumstances, the background check for Adult volunteers working with youth for overnight activities may be waived in the discretion of the Executive Director.
2. The background check will be accomplished every 6 years for so long as a person works as a paid Church staff member or volunteers with youth in the capacity described in this section.
3. The background checks will be reviewed by the Executive Director.

4. A background check showing an arrest for any activity of a sexual nature and convictions within the prior 5 years for any assault or substance abuse would warrant further consideration by the Executive Director.

The Church shall provide a copy of the Policy and shall conduct training on the Policy to all paid staff members and all volunteers with children and youth annually. All Church staff members and volunteers with children and youth shall make an affirmation of the Policy annually.

C. Adult Supervision

The Church's requirements for Adult supervision on and off Campus have the goal of providing a safe physical environment for children and youth. The Church appreciates volunteers of many ages working with children and youth and will permit volunteers to assist in appropriate situations once the following policies are met.

1. Each room set aside for children and youth on Campus shall have a door with a window in it or a half door. The top half of all half doors shall remain open. On and off Campus, doors to rooms without windows shall remain open.
2. An individual Adult shall not be in charge of children or youth, nor may related Adults be the only Adults in charge of children or youth, however the following does not violate this policy:
 - a. On Campus and during the church school hour on Sunday mornings, if a designated Adult supervisor moves in and out of the classrooms and monitors the hallways.
 - b. One-on-One mentoring or consultation between a child and Adult with the knowledge of a Church staff member.
 - c. When an emergency or other situation (for example: bathroom breaks or calming a distraught child) requires one Adult to be alone with children or youth and another Adult on the same floor or in the near vicinity is notified before and after that time period.
 - d. Carpooling to and from Church events with the consent of the parent or guardian of the child or youth.

D. Reporting

1. All reports of suspected sexual abuse of children or youth associated with the Church shall promptly be made directly to the Executive Director. (In the event that the report concerns the Executive Director, the report shall be made directly to the Head of Staff.) In accordance with the requirements of the law and as far as practicable, such reports shall be treated as confidential.

a. In the event of a report concerning a staff member, the Executive Director shall confer with the Chair of the Personnel Committee and may request the assistance of a Church staff member with regard to the steps to be taken concerning further investigation, if any, further reporting, or interim or final disposition.

b. In the event of a report concerning a volunteer, the Executive Director shall confer with the Chair of Faith Formation and may request the assistance of a Church staff member with regard to the steps to be taken concerning further investigation, if any, further reporting, or interim or final disposition.

Policy approved by the Session of White Memorial Presbyterian Church on November 13, 2011

WHITE MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Print Name Here: _____

AFFIRMATION

As a volunteer in children and youth ministries; or as a staff person who works with children and youth, I affirm my commitment to support White Memorial Presbyterian Church (WMPC) as a safe place for children and youth. I recognize that WMPC has adopted the above Safe Sanctuary Policy. I have read and understand the policy, support it, and agree to abide by it. I affirm that I will do my part in providing a nurturing Christian environment in which our children and youth can develop in faith and in trust.

_____ I certify by my signature that I have not to my knowledge been the subject of any investigation, complaint or legal or church related action involving a reported instance of sexual abuse of children or youth, and I have never been refused, resigned from or been asked to resign from a position for reasons related to such sexual abuse.

_____ I am unable to make the certification above. I offer, instead, the description of an investigation, complaint or legal or church related action involving me for reasons related to sexual abuse of children or youth on the back side (addendum) of this affirmation.

DATE: _____

SIGNED: _____

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Please complete and return this form to the Administrative Assistant for Faith Formation in Room W316, in the Witherspoon Administration Building..

