

## **Safe Conduct Policy United Church of Chapel Hill (UCCH)**

### **A. Creating a Safe Space for all at UCCH**

UCCH is committed to creating and maintaining a worship and work community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation (see Appendix 1 for definitions). Specifically, all persons associated with UCCH should be aware that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. Moreover, the church will take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, will discipline persons who violate this policy. The procedure for handling complaints of sexual exploitation or harassment is included in Appendix 2.

### **B. Conduct of Persons Involved in the Church's Ministries**

All persons engaged in the ministry of United Church of Chapel Hill (including employees, volunteers and elected or appointed leaders) are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in ministering to the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Sexual harassment or sexual exploitation of parishioner(s) or other individual(s) by anyone engaged in the ministry of UCCH is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation. It is the policy of UCCH to encourage those involved in the church's ministry to nurture a safe environment by being attentive to their own psychological, emotional, and spiritual health and understand the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. UCCH policy is also to encourage those engaged in church ministries to be attentive to and report behavior, comments, or other signs of potential concern (see guidelines in Appendix 3). Those persons engaged in providing ministry will complete the safe conduct training appropriate to their responsibilities (see Appendix 4) and/or submit the disclosure form (see Appendix 5). For persons involved in certain ministries, particularly those involved with children and youth, background checks may be administered.

### **C. Children and Youth Protection Policy**

UCCH is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. It is the policy of the church to have more than one supervisor involved with children and youth at all times and to provide appropriate supervision for all youth activities. In order to ensure this, all people applying to be volunteers who work with minors must have been active members for at least six months or one year for non-members, to complete the safe conduct training appropriate to the job for which they are volunteering and/or submit the disclosure form.

### **D. Responsibility for the Safe Conduct Policy Paperwork**

The supervisors of those for whom the disclosure document and safe conduct training are responsible for seeing that documents are distributed, completed, reviewed and filed.

### **E. Resolution of Possible Problems Arising from Responses on the Disclosure Document**

Potential future problems could be indicated by the answers on the disclosure form. When this occurs, the following steps should be followed.

1. As the forms are returned to the responsible person, s/he should check them to see if there is a problem. If there is, they should ask the person to clarify the answer.
2. If the potential problem is not resolved, the responsible person should then meet with their supervisor to discuss the matter and determine whether or not this would bar the individual from serving in that particular capacity.

**F. Resolution of Possible Problems Arising from a Background Check**

1. The Business Manager will receive the background check information. Any discoveries that could indicate potential problems should be discussed with the Senior Pastor(s).
2. If the problem could prevent the person from serving, the Senior Pastor(s) should then ask for clarification and make the determination as to whether the person should or should not serve in that capacity

## Appendix I Definitions

**Sexual exploitation:** sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person engaged in the work of the church takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the person.

**Sexual harassment:** repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation 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 constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- Social media contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene text messages or postings on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or any other form of social media;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church. For example, it is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors

## Appendix 2 Procedures for Handling Complaints

- A. A response team with no fewer than two members, one male and one female, will be established by the UCCH church council each year in preparation for the possibility of hearing complaints under the Safe Conduct Policy. The response team will familiarize itself with the Safe Conduct Policy as well as these procedures for dealing with complaint(s) of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment against any or by employee(s), volunteer(s) or leaders position(s) in UCCH.
- B. Several options may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment:
  1. The complainant's or complainants' representative can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual(s) accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
  2. The complainant(s) may report the incident(s) to the Senior Pastor(s) of the church, in an effort to resolve the matter.
  3. If the previous steps don't resolve the issue, the Senior Pastor(s) may seek additional assistance in resolving the complaint, including but not limited to involving the response team, the Association Minister, United Church of Christ headquarters, or the local Dispute Settlement Center.
  4. If an informal resolution of the complaint(s) does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant(s) may request that the response team institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
    - a. The response team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged exploitation(s) or harassment(s), and from others who may have pertinent information, and present such information to the supervisor and supervisory body (i.e., pastoral relations committee, children's ministries board, board of youth and young adults, music committee, Director of the UCCH pre-school, etc.) of the accused individual(s). At this point the response team will stand ready to gather additional information if requested.
      - i. The supervisory board shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include: Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred and that the accused's supervisor or supervisory board is called upon to take action accordingly. Such action may include one or more of the following:
        - Formal reprimand with defined expectations for changed behavior, including possible public notification;
        - Recommending or requiring a program of growth that may include education and/or counseling;
        - Probation, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
        - Dismissal from employment or volunteer leadership position, and, in extreme cases, affiliation with, or membership in, the church.
      - ii. Finding that no sexual exploitation or harassment occurred.
    - b. If the accused employee or volunteer holds ordained ministerial standing recognized by the United Church of Christ the response team shall inform the appropriate body of the wider Church of the allegation.
    - c. If allegations of possible child abuse are included in the complaint(s), the response team shall notify appropriate secular authorities and UCCH shall cooperate fully in any investigation. A record of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation shall be included in the accused's file
    - d. A written summary of the supervisory board's proceedings in such cases will be maintained in the personnel file to be followed to determine the continuance of the individual(s) in leadership positions in United Church of Chapel Hill.
- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.
- D. Any person bringing a sexual harassment or exploitation complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.
- E. If the complainant(s) or accused person(s) is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the supervisory body, he or she has the right to appeal to the moderator, who shall refer the matter to the Church Council for resolution.

## **Appendix 3 Guidelines for Reporting Concerns about Abuse**

A. UCCH has developed policies and programs for creating a safe environment for all persons to worship, work and learn free from abuse of any kind. Nevertheless, abuse can occur in the home, in school, at the workplace and in other locations away from the church premises. UCCH employees, leaders and volunteers that are involved in the ministries of the church are often in a position to observe changes in behavior, hear comments, be told of fears or have other interactions that raise concerns about abuse at other locations. All persons involved in the ministries of the church should be alert to these concerns and act on any that are raised.

B. When action is indicated, the observer should report the concern(s) to their supervisor as soon as possible. The circumstances that led to the observation and the concerns are often highly sensitive and make conversations with the involved individual(s) difficult. Also, the number of times the involved individual(s) has to repeat the circumstances should be minimized. But if clarification and/or additional information can be obtained by having additional conversations with the involved individuals, they should be held.

C. If the concern can be addressed or resolved by the resources available in the church then that should be the course of action. For concerns about accidents or disease, the Parish Nurse is available. For concerns involving spiritual or emotional issues the Senior Pastor(s) are also available. If it appears that the involved individual(s) have been abused or neglected, reporting to outside authorities is required.

D. Apart from any legal requirements, United Church of Chapel Hill will make a report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Child Protective Services Unit of the Orange County Department of Social Services (Child & Family Services), if at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any Minister of the church 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 the Senior Pastor(s) and Moderator so that the church may take appropriate action in a timely manner. To report the abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child, elderly adult, or person with disabilities in Orange County, NC, call (919) 245-2800.

## Appendix 4 Disclosure Form

### Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form 4/14/04

**Note: You must have been an active member of United Church of Chapel Hill for six months or a participating non-member one year before volunteering with the youth program.**

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

I have been a participating non-member of this church since \_\_\_\_\_

Name

Last                      First                      Middle

Address

City                      State                      Zip Code

Daytime Phone                      Evening Phone

My previous experience in the past five years (paid or volunteer) related to the ministry I am seeking to fill includes: (Attach additional page[s] as necessary.)

Agency Name

Address

City                      State                      Zip Code

Contact Person                      Phone

Agency Name

Address

City                      State                      Zip Code

Contact Person                      Phone

Agency Name

Address

City                      State                      Zip Code

Contact Person                      Phone

## Appendix 4 Disclosure Form Cont.

I have never been found guilty, or pled guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge.

True  Not True

If not true, give a short explanation of the charge. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the charge; where the charge was filed; and the precise disposition of the charge.)

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No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct 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  Not True

If not true, 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.)

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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; child abuse; or financial misconduct.

True  Not True

If not true, 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.)

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### Appendix 4 Disclosure Form Cont.

Do you have a valid driver's license?

True  Not True

State where driver's license issued \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number \_\_\_\_\_

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  Not True

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.

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The covenants between persons seeking employment or sanctioned 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 consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate.

Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees or volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize United Church of Chapel Hill and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement, and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background and character. To encourage such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses, comments, and statements made in good faith and without malice.

United Church of Chapel Hill's hiring and authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the distribution of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise the position I am seeking to fill. To that end, I authorize United Church of Chapel Hill and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these stated purposes. I understand that United Church of Chapel Hill will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

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(Signature)

(Date)

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(Parent's or guardian's signature for applicants under 18)

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## Appendix 4 Disclosure Form Cont.

I certify that the above information is still correct.

Signature	Date
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Appendix 5 Safe Conduct Training Guide

<p><b>Purpose:</b> To ensure safety of all children and youth in our care against abuse through awareness and implementation of prevention practices.</p> <p><b>Timeline for initial implementation:</b> LEVEL 1 - Ongoing.</p> <p><b>LEVEL 2</b> - All lead Sunday School teachers, Children's Choir co-director, and co-chairs of Board of Children's Ministries, Board of Youth Ministry and Music Committee by 9/1/2013. All other Sunday School teachers, Children's and Youth Choir volunteers and Board and Committee members by 1/1/2014.</p> <p><b>LEVEL 3</b> - All volunteers by 8/1/21014. <b>LEVEL 4</b> - All volunteers at least 2 months prior to off-site event.</p> <p><b>Ongoing Implementation:</b> Those who volunteer after initial phase must complete training before volunteer service begins.</p>			
Position Description	Screening Tools	Training	Possible Examples
<p>Note: The examples are for illustration only. Church staff should carefully consider the position descriptions to ensure that volunteers are appropriately screened.</p>			
<p><b>Level 1</b>                      Job takes place in highly public settings under supervision, in large group settings.  <b>DESCRIPTORS:</b>                      1. Highly public                      2. Unrestricted access - staff or adults can enter and observe at any time.                      3. No solitary time with youth or children.                      4. Always with unbroken view of church staff or multiple adults.</p>	<p>+ Staff maintains list of volunteer assistants.</p>	<p>+ During orientation with church staff, discuss UCCH Safe Conduct policy.                      + Attend YMCA's "Stewards of Children" workshop or complete UCCH Insurance Board's "SafeConduct™ Workbench" online training module.                      -OR- Provide documentation of completion of equivalent abuse prevention training from source outside the church, as approved by church staff.                      + Refresher training to be repeated at an interval of no more than 3 years.</p>	<p>Services                      Concerts                      Special large group events                      Intergenerational activities                      Church dinners</p>
<p><b>Level 2</b>                      Job takes place in public spaces under supervision.  <b>DESCRIPTORS:</b>                      1. Highly public                      2. Unrestricted access - staff or adults can enter and observe at any time.                      3. No solitary time with youth or children. Always at least 2 adults present.                      4. Always under indirect supervision of church staff, where ability of church staff to monitor volunteer's interactions with young people is limited by own responsibilities or other factors.</p>	<p>+ Staff maintains list of volunteer assistants.                      + Church staff recruits and interviews volunteer.                      + Volunteer signs Voluntary Disclosure Form.                      + Volunteer provides date of Abuse Prevention Training from sources outside the church, if any.                      + Free background check undertaken.</p>	<p>+ Sunday School teachers                      Children's Choir Volunteers and Accompanist                      Special programs and rehearsals                      Adults accompanying single day field trips</p>	

## Appendix 5 Safe Conduct Training Guide Cont.

<p><b>Level 3</b> Job takes place ON SITE, and involves direct contact with students under limited supervision by church staff. <b>DESCRIPTORS:</b> 1. Public setting at church. 2. Unrestricted access - staff or adults can enter and observe at any time. 3. Could involve solitary time with young person of short duration. 4. May be outside of view of church staff or other adults for brief periods. 5. May involve access to confidential student information.</p>	<p>In addition to Level 2 screening tools, the following tools MAY be required: + Reference checks. + Criminal history checks (recommended for all volunteers if the amount of solitary time with a young person is frequent and/or regular.)</p>	<p>Same as Level 2.</p>	<p>Youth Group Leaders Youth Choir assistants who take sectional rehearsals Youth Choir Accompanist</p>
<p><b>Level 4</b> Job takes place OFF SITE, and involves direct contact with students under limited supervision by church staff. <b>DESCRIPTORS:</b> 1. Off campus trips. 2. Could involve solitary time with young person of prolonged duration. 3. May be outside of view of church staff or other adults for extended periods. 4. May involve access to confidential student information.</p>	<p>In addition to Level 2 screening tools, the following tools WILL be required: + Reference checks. + Criminal history checks IF POSITION INVOLVES DRIVING TO DRIVER: + Volunteer Driver Self-disclosure form with driving history check.</p>	<p>Same as Level 2 with trainings specific to event.</p>	<p>Off campus trips and retreats Overnight trips and retreats Field trip when chaperone shares room with students other than own children.</p>