

# WINDSOR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH POLICY

## Child Safe Practices

### Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to create a safe environment, free of abuse of any kind, in which our youth, along with adults, may learn about and worship God.

### Introduction:

Windsor Presbyterian Church welcomes children and teens in all aspects of our life together, from worship to community events to education. We want them to find a warm and safe sanctuary in the center of our congregation. We offer formal and informal opportunities for our youth to learn about God's love for them, and how they can become a part of God's work in the world. We strive to put into place the following practices.

### Practices:

**Two Adults.** At least two adults, preferably unrelated, must be present at all times during any church-related or sponsored activity involving youth, including but not limited to Sunday School classes. This practice applies to both on- and offsite events.

Open Door Counseling between a qualified Teaching Elder and a youth is the exception to the above. During such counseling, a second adult will be present in the building, aware that the counseling is happening, and within hearing distance louder than a normal conversation. Doors will be clearly left open.

**Six Months' Association.** Any volunteer interested in working with youth must have been in regular attendance at Windsor Presbyterian Church for a minimum of six months.

**Five-Year Age Gap.** Anyone supervising children or teens must be at least five years older than the child/teen being supervised. E.g., a 20-year old college student may not serve as a volunteer with high school students who are fifteen years of age or older. Volunteers who are under the age of 21 are welcomed within the guidelines of this Practice, but do not count toward the mandatory Two Adults Practice.

**Parents-Only in the Restroom.** If a child requires supervision in the restroom, or requires diapers changed, the parent/guardian will be contacted to supervise the child. Non-parental adults may stand outside the room, but may not assist unless authorized by the parent/guardian.

**No Use of Alcohol, Illegal Drugs or Tobacco around Children.** Smoking is not permitted during programs offered to children or teens, in order to avoid the effects of second-hand smoke. Use of illegal drugs or drinking alcohol preceding or during a class or other scheduled interaction with children and teens is not permitted.

### Child Safe Policy Reporting Requirement:

Any member of the church shall report the knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when 1) such information is gained outside of a legitimately confidential communication; 2) s/he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law; or 3) s/he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse. Such a report may be done by immediately contacting the Pastor or Clerk of Session of Windsor Presbyterian Church. That person will immediately contact appropriate civil legal authorities, such as the Town of Windsor Police Department, and the Presbytery of the Redwoods. If the Pastor or Clerk of Session is involved in the abuse or potential abuse,

the church member should contact the Mission Presbyter/Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Redwoods at (707) 224-5407 for guidance.

### **Youth Program Leadership Training:**

Windsor Presbyterian Church is grateful to its volunteers for helping our children and teens grow in faith. As such, WPC strives to ensure that volunteers have the tools they need to carry out the programs for which they are volunteering, including the information needed to provide a safe environment. Paid and volunteer workers with regular and frequent contact with children are required to attend an orientation session to go over this policy; appropriate steps to take to report an incident of abuse; and a directory of resources for incidents of sexual misconduct. The breadth and leadership of such training is left to the discretion of the Teaching Elder, the Session, and the Christian Education Ruling Elder, and is intended to evolve as WPC's youth-centered programs change and grow.

### **Congregation Policy Review:**

A copy of this policy will be included in the Church's annual report, and attention will be drawn to it during the annual meeting. A public copy of this policy will be displayed on the bulletin board.

### **Addendum to Child Safety Policy – August 2013**

#### **Windsor Presbyterian Church**

On an annual basis, the CE Elder shall request each parent or guardian complete a basic information form. This form will include contact information, mailing address as well as any allergies, physical or emotional limitations and food preferences.

On occasion during the Sunday school hour, adult volunteers and children leave the Windsor Presbyterian Church campus for special field trips. On those occasions there will always be one adult for every three children.

When these occasions occur, the Christian Education Elder will:

Notify the parent/guardian at least 24 hours in advance with location and details of the trip. Notification will be via email unless the parent/guardian has specifically requested phone communication.

Request that the parent/guardian complete a written permission form prior to the trip, which will be taken on the trip in case of emergency.

Introduce her/himself to any visiting family that morning and explain what is occurring and if their child wishes to join the field trip, ask parent/guardian to complete a permission slip.

No child shall be permitted to leave campus unless a written permission is on file.

These forms shall be kept on file in the Sunday School room and in the Church Office.