

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy for Volunteers Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church

Adopted by the Session August 29, 1993
Revised and adopted by the Session November 21, 2006

Sexual misconduct is a serious matter. The church must do all that it can to prevent sexual misconduct on the part of both employees (ordained and lay professional) and volunteer leaders. Much attention has been focused recently on the development of sexual misconduct policies for employees of the church. Due attention must also be given to the development of such policies for volunteers. What follows is the sexual misconduct policy for the Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church.

I. The Need for a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy for Volunteers in the church.

Increasingly, churches are being held legally liable for sexual misconduct of volunteers; especially in cases involving children and youth. In light of increasing lawsuits, more attention needs to be given to those who volunteer to work in this "high risk" area of the church's life in order to protect both the children and youth as well as the reputation of the volunteer. Since it is impossible to guarantee absolutely a child's safety but it is possible not to be negligent, the purpose of a sexual misconduct policy for church volunteers should be to strengthen screening procedures and supervision and to establish procedures for responding to accusations and situations of suspected sexual misconduct.

II. The Misconduct Prevention Policy

- A. Initial confirmation of identity to be carried out by Christian Education Staff
 - 1. Confirm identity of new or unknown persons before initial contact with children.
 - a. Driver's license or State of Michigan ID AND
 - b. Social Security number [Providing your social security number is optional. Please know, however, that social security numbers are required for background checks, and that background checks are required if you desire to chaperone youth trips or sponsor a confirmation student. Withholding your SS# is to withdraw from consideration for these two roles.]
 - 2. Use the 6 month rule. A potential volunteer must have been involved with the Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church for at least six months prior to supervising children/youth.
- B. Screening Process
 - 1. Administer screening form including confidential question about sexual harassment, molestation or abuse of a minor.
 - a. Require signed statement indicating that the volunteer has read, understands and is willing to uphold the church's sexual misconduct policy.
 - b. Keep screening forms in a separate locked file.
 - 2. Follow up with reference checks for volunteers who have less than 2 years involvement in Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church.
 - a. Contact organizations given as references and make written record of conversations.
 - b. Contact 2 non-family references and make written record of conversations.
 - 3. Check the National Sex Offenders Public Registry for each volunteer
 - 4. Perform National Background check (currently through the Presbytery of Detroit) for any adult going on an overnight trip with youth or children or who might be alone with a youth (e.g. confirmation sponsor.)
 - 5. If the applicant has ever been convicted or has pending any criminal charges or probate juvenile petitions, then appropriate church staff will review and disallow volunteer to work with children or youth.
- C. Supervision
 - 1. Apprise volunteers of sexual misconduct prevention policy
 - a. Distribute and go over policy at orientation meeting.
 - b. Review policy annually.
 - c. Advise Session of reported incidents.
 - d. Report results should appear in annual minutes of session.

2. Use the "two adult rule": always have two adults present with children/youth or the "two child rule": always have two children present with an adult.
 3. Give special attention to overnight trips.
 - a. Provide adequate ratio of adult volunteers to number of children/youth participants.
 - b. Sleep male and female participants in separate areas.
 - c. Follow "two adult rule" and "two child rule" in sleeping areas.
- D. Response to Accusations and Suspected Problems
1. At all stages protect identity of parties involved.
 2. Report the situation to the appropriate persons
 - a. Christian education staff or
 - b. Other members of church staff or
 - c. Volunteers who may have supervisory responsibilities.
 3. Respond immediately to the situation.
 - a. Remove immediately volunteer about whom accusations are made from supervision of children/youth with reinstatement dependent upon outcome of investigation into the allegations.
 - b. Notify parents immediately
 - c. Write record of allegations
 - d. Record interview of alleged victim(s)
 - e. Keep log of specific steps taken to deal with situation
 - f. Contact pastoral staff to Apprise of situation.
 4. If pastoral staff determines further response is necessary
 - a. Contact church's legal counsel to apprise of situation.
 - b. Contact church's insurance carrier to apprise of situation
 - c. Contact local civil authorities to apprise of situation.
 5. Extended response to the situation
 - a. Activate response team
 - (1) one pastor
 - (2) two members of the session
 - (3) chairperson of the appropriate nurture committee.
 - (4) appropriate Christian Education Staff
 - b. Under guidance of response team, legal counsel, and civil authorities the response team will
 - (1) conduct preliminary investigation into allegations
 - (2) recommend appropriate action to session with regard to the situation
 - (3) will appoint a sole spokesperson.

III. The Administration of this policy ultimately is the responsibility of the Session and the Christian Education Staff.

IV. Appendix ~ Confidential Application to Work with Children and/or Youth