

Kenilworth Union Church

**CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY**

**FEBRUARY 2017**

*Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."  
(Matthew 18:5)*

God calls us to make our church a safe and secure place, and to create communities of faith where Children can grow safe and strong. The purpose of this Child Abuse Prevention Policy is to state our commitment to the physical safety and emotional safety of our Children. As a Christian community of faith, we pledge to conduct our ministry in ways that provide this safety for our Children as well as those who work with our Children.

**DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Activity" means a program or event for Children sponsored by or under the control of Kenilworth Union Church, regardless of whether the program or event takes place at a church location or facility.
- B. "Child" and "Children" are used interchangeably and each refer to a person or persons until the age of eighteen (18) or graduation from high school, whichever occurs later. Additionally, if a person chooses and is permitted to participate in an Activity after his or her graduation from high school or attainment of the age of eighteen (18), whichever comes later, this Policy is intended to cover that person's participation in an Activity until the start of the next program year. These words also mean any person without regard to age who is developmentally disabled.
- C. "Child Abuse" consists of and includes Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Neglect, and Emotional Abuse:
  - 1. Physical Abuse is any non-accidental act which causes, or permits to be caused, injury to be intentionally inflicted upon a Child.
  - 2. Sexual Abuse is any act or interaction, with or without consent, even if initiated by the Child, which involves sexual contact, molestation, sexual exploitation, or other contact or activity of a sexual nature that is intended for the sexual gratification of a person responsible for the Child's welfare.
  - 3. Neglect is when a person responsible for a Child's welfare fails to provide for basic needs of food, appropriate clothing, shelter, or medical care, or when a person responsible for a Child's welfare fails to provide adequate supervision.
  - 4. Emotional Abuse is any non-accidental action which causes, or permits to be caused, mental or emotional injury resulting in impairment to the Child's growth, development or psychological functioning.

- D. “Clergy” means one or more of the ministers, including associate ministers, of Kenilworth Union Church.
- E. “DCFS” means the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.
- F. “Personnel” means any full-time or part-time employee of Kenilworth Union Church, including but not limited to Clergy.
- G. “Personnel Committee” means the Personnel Committee of Kenilworth Union Church.
- H. “Policy” means this Child Abuse Prevention Policy.
- I. “Program Supervisor” means an employee of Kenilworth Union Church with primary responsibility for running one of the ministries, programs or events offered by Kenilworth Union Church.
- J. “Representative” includes both Volunteers and Personnel.
- K. “Volunteer” means a person over the age of eighteen (18) who performs services related to the mission and under the direction of Kenilworth Union Church without receiving compensation in return.

#### **APPLICABILITY**

This Policy protects Children who are participating in, and governs Representatives at, any Activity. This Policy also applies more generally to Representatives who provide supervision to, have custody of, or who otherwise have the opportunity to have contact with Children at Kenilworth Union Church or elsewhere during an Activity. This Policy does not apply to adults who are attending an Activity as participants only and in a non-supervisory capacity.

#### **PREVENTION**

##### **A. Screening**

1. Each Representative governed by this Policy shall provide identification and consent to a background check.
2. A review of sex offender registries shall be performed for all persons governed by this Policy.
3. Other background checks, such as criminal records and motor vehicle driving records, may be performed at the discretion of Kenilworth Union Church for any reason. Persons governed by this Policy shall be required to provide additional information and/or additional consents as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Policy.

4. A persons whose background reveals any indication of Child Abuse shall not be allowed to serve or participate in any Activity.<sup>1</sup> In situations where the background check does not reveal an indication of Child Abuse but shows other concerning information, the case will be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Personnel Committee and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
5. The Director of Business Operations shall maintain signed copies of this Policy and the results of all reference and background checks for all Personnel in the employee's personnel file. The Director of Children's Ministries shall maintain such records for Volunteers working under his or her direction, and the Director of Youth Ministries shall maintain such records for Volunteers working under his or her direction. All records shall be strictly confidential and may be shared only on a need-to-know basis.
6. Personnel and Volunteers covered by this Policy shall submit to a background check as described above every five (5) years, or more frequently if appropriate.

## **B. Transportation**

1. All persons providing transportation for Children must provide a copy of their driver's license and a copy of their insurance card to the person in charge of the Activity. Drivers may only transport the number of people based on the working seat belts in the vehicle.
2. Any professional transportation provider should be bonded and provide proof of insurance.

## **C. Acknowledgement and Training**

1. Kenilworth Union Church will provide a mandatory training program for its Personnel covering the topics of Child Abuse and safety.
2. Representatives will provide written acknowledgement that they have reviewed this Policy. This may be accomplished by signing the acknowledgement at the end of this Policy and returning the signed Policy to the appropriate person as provided under Section A.5 above.

## **OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

In addition to the preventative policies set forth above, the following specific operating policies and procedures are intended to protect Children and guard against Child Abuse, which is expressly prohibited at Kenilworth Union Church or at any Activity. Any violation of this Policy or

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<sup>1</sup> An indication of Child Abuse is present where the person is a registered sex offender or where an accusation of Child Abuse against such person has been investigated by the proper authorities (such as DCFS) and the investigation revealed credible evidence supporting the investigation.

inappropriate conduct between an adult and a Child shall be confronted immediately and reported as required below.

- A. **Two-Adult Rule:** A minimum of two Representatives shall be present at each Activity, except (1) when two high school student teachers (each approved by the Associate Minister for Children and Youth) are leading a Sunday school class on Church premises, in which case only one Representative shall be required to be present; (2) in the event of an emergency; (3) for brief intervals; or (4) in situations other than (1)-(3), one Representative may be present so long as: (a) the single Representative reports that fact to the Program Supervisor as soon as feasible, (b) the applicable Program Supervisor or another Representative acts as a “floater” and makes unannounced visits during the Activity, and (c) the one Representative is never alone with a single Child at any time during the Activity.
- B. **Minors:** Persons under the age of eighteen (18) will be allowed to volunteer at Activities as permitted by the Program Supervisor. For certain Activities, at the discretion of the Program Supervisor, minors who volunteer may be asked to complete an application form that will be submitted for approval by the Program Supervisor. In such circumstances, a parent or guardian must sign the application stating that the parent or guardian knows of no reason that the minor should not be allowed to work with other minors.
- C. **Windows/Doors:** Doors where an Activity is taking place shall contain unblocked clear glass windows, or top/bottom “Dutch doors” with the top door open, to allow for a clear view of the Activity. In the event a door does not contain a window, that door shall remain open during the Activity.
- D. **Individual Counseling of Children:** Counseling and advising of Children by Clergy and Personnel is to be done in such a way that the counselor and Child are both clearly visible from outside the room. If the use of a room with a closed door is necessary for confidentiality, it shall be a room with an unobstructed window that allows for a clear view of the counselor and Child.
- E. **Bathroom Visits:** Representatives should take care not to be alone with a minor under the age of twelve (12) in a bathroom with a closed door. If an adult escorts a minor under the age of twelve (12) to a bathroom, the adult should prop open the door and remain outside. In the event a Child needs assistance in a bathroom, the adult should leave the exterior and stall doors open while helping the minor.
- F. **Overnight Activities:** An Activity that involves an overnight stay shall be supervised by at least two Representatives and sufficient adult chaperones. There shall be male and female chaperones if there are male and female Children.
  - 1. Males and females will have separate sleeping areas. If separate shower and bathroom facilities are not available for males and females, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled if practical. Likewise, Children and adults must shower at different times.
  - 2. Adults are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds or sleeping bags with Children unless the adult is an immediate family member of all the Children present.

3. Proper written consent/medical release forms from parents or guardians are required for each Child participating in an overnight Activity.
- G. **Alcohol, Tobacco and Controlled Substances:** The use of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances shall not be allowed during any Activity. Representatives shall not use any form of tobacco, including vaping and other forms of electronic cigarettes, in the presence of Children at Kenilworth Union Church or at any Activity.
- H. **Cameras, Computers and Digital Devices:** Recording or transmitting visual images in restrooms or other areas when privacy is expected is prohibited. Likewise, displaying or transmitting obscene or sexually explicit materials is prohibited.
- I. **Dating:** Representatives are prohibited from becoming involved in a dating or sexual relationship with any Child.
- J. **Discipline:** The purpose of discipline is to teach the encouragement of appropriate behaviors and the elimination of inappropriate ones, enabling Children to develop self-control. Adults should model positive interactions and communications among themselves and with Children. Adults should use appropriate verbal and non-verbal methods to reinforce positive behavior. Corporal punishment, or any form of punitive physical contact, shall not be used.

## **RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS AND REPORTING**

- A. **Immediate Safety:** When a person governed by this Policy becomes aware of alleged violations of this Policy, he or she will first determine if there are safety issues currently present. If there is an immediate danger to any Child, all necessary steps shall be taken to insure the Child's safety.
- B. Reporting an Incident**
1. A person having knowledge of suspected Child Abuse shall report the incident or suspicion immediately to a member of the Clergy, the Program Supervisor, the Personnel Committee Chair, and/or the General Counsel of Kenilworth Union Church. Such information shall then be shared on a need-to-know basis.
  2. The parents or guardians of the Child shall be notified as soon as practicable by the appropriate Kenilworth Union Church representative. The identity of the alleged abuser, reporter, the witnesses and/or other alleged victims should not be disclosed to the parents of the Child by Kenilworth Union Church unless required by law or such person consents to having his or her identity disclosed.
- C. Additional Reporting to DCFS Hotline**
1. The Illinois Abused And Neglected Child Reporting Act mandates that certain categories of persons who have reasonable cause to believe a child is abused or neglected make a report to the DCFS.

2. Clergy and other professionals who work with children in the course of their duties are included as “Mandated Reporters” under the Illinois Abused And Neglected Child Reporting Act, as explained further in the DCFS “Manual For Mandated Reporters” (revised May 2015) (found at [https://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting/Documents/cfs\\_1050-21\\_mandated\\_reporter\\_manual.pdf](https://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting/Documents/cfs_1050-21_mandated_reporter_manual.pdf)) For purposes of this Policy, Kenilworth Union Church generally deems Clergy and all employees of Children’s Ministries and Youth Ministries to be Mandated Reporters for purpose of complying with the Illinois Abused And Neglected Child Reporting Act.
3. All persons specified in the Illinois Abused And Neglected Child Reporting Act as Mandated Reporters are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect immediately when they have a reasonable cause to believe that such abuse has occurred. Note that mandated reporters must report *all* suspected instances of abuse and neglect that rise to this level of credibility, *regardless of where the abuse is alleged to have occurred or who the alleged abuser is.*
4. Immediately upon having reason to suspect an instance of abuse or neglect, the Mandated Reporter shall make a report to the DCFS by calling the DCFS Hotline at 1-800-252-2873 (1-800-25-ABUSE), followed by a written report on the applicable state reporting form within 48 hours of the initial hotline report.
5. The Illinois Abused And Neglected Child Reporting Act requires that Mandated Reporters sign a statement acknowledging their status as Mandated Reporters before they commence employment and that employers retain the statements. Clergy and all employees of Children’s Ministries and Youth Ministries shall acknowledge their status as mandated reporters by completing the DCFS Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status Form.

#### **D. Further Investigation**

1. If the person accused or suspected of Child Abuse is a Representative, the Personnel Committee Chair shall exclude the Representative from work in programs which serve or interact with Children until such time as the allegations are resolved.
2. The Personnel Committee will consider the facts and circumstances of the situation and, if deemed appropriate, conduct or cause to be conducted an internal investigation to determine (a) the credibility and strength of the evidence against the alleged abuser; (b) whether the alleged abuse is part of a broader pattern; (c) how, if at all, the measures taken to prevent such Child Abuse failed; and (d) what steps Kenilworth Union Church should consider taking to prevent this type of situation in the future.
3. The Personnel Committee will report the results of any internal investigation to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for further action or investigation as appropriate, including but not limited to notification of the appropriate insurance carrier.

4. Any internal investigation may be halted in the event DCFS and/or the legal authorities conduct an investigation.
  5. Kenilworth Union Church will help provide care and exploration of helping resources to the alleged victim(s), the alleged abuser(s), and their families, as appropriate.
- E. **Confidentiality:** While any incident is being investigated, all persons with knowledge of the incident shall maintain strict confidentiality and shall share information with others only as needed to fulfill the requirements of this Policy, as required by law, or under the advice and direction of legal counsel for Kenilworth Union Church.

#### **POLICY REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

- A. The Board of Trustees, through the Personnel Committee, General Counsel or another duly appointed committee, shall review this Policy periodically as needed.
- B. In the event a particular provision is found to be unworkable in practice, the Personnel Committee, General Counsel, or other duly appointed committee shall recommend an appropriate amendment to the Board of Trustees. A Representatives shall inform the Personnel Committee or General Counsel if he or she believes a particular provision of this Policy is unworkable in practice. In no event shall the unworkable provision be ignored.
- C. The Personnel Committee shall periodically review the training program for Personnel to ensure that the program continues to reflect current expertise and knowledge in the field of Child Abuse prevention, as well as current law.

**RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I have received and carefully reviewed this Child Abuse Prevention Policy. I understand the commitment of Kenilworth Union Church to provide an abuse-free, safe and supportive environment for Children. I agree to abide by the directives, standards and prohibitions set forth in the Policy and to provide such further assurances to Kenilworth Union Church as are reasonable and necessary in connection with my ongoing work with Children.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_