

Wasatch Presbyterian Church  
Child Protection Policy

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## **Statement of Policy**

As a community of Christian faith, Wasatch Presbyterian Church is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, Clergy, employees, and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. The congregation of Wasatch Presbyterian Church supports principles of SafeConduct™, which include individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the congregation in fulfillment of the standards set by our Christian faith. Wasatch Presbyterian Church strongly opposes and prohibits sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or any form of exploitation or abuse of others regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identification or mental capacity. It is the intention of our congregation to affirmatively nurture good behavior, and to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, as necessary, discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Every member of the Congregation, whether “authorized clergy”, leader, lay staff, volunteer or parent, has a role to lead those who look to them individually for guidance, to monitor their behavior and redirect them as they cross boundaries of SafeConduct™. Our congregation shall nurture good conduct as demonstrated by personal behaviors that are consistent with our Christian values. As we might conduct an orchestra, we shall guide and lead in ministry.

## General Definitions

1. Physical abuse is injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a youth.
2. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a youth and an adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.
3. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
4. Neglect is the failure to provide for a youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a youth from harm.
5. A **Minor** is anyone under the age of 18 (also referred to as **youth** throughout policy).
6. A Vulnerable Adult is anyone aged 18 or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
7. Mandatory Reporters are those persons required by Utah law to report suspected abuse to police or child welfare agencies.
8. Authorized Clergy includes any person who is admitted to ministry by The Presbyterian Church, USA, who serves the congregation in any capacity whether called as pastor or serving in a retired, emeritus, administrative, or volunteer capacity.
9. SafeConduct™ is the training body of the Insurance Board, for information on their programs, see: <https://www.insuranceboard.org/safety-resources/safeconduct-workbench/>

## **Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adults**

The following Code of Conduct is intended to assist Clergy, employees, and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with youth and vulnerable adults. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact the Head of Staff

Wasatch Presbyterian Church strives to provide our youth and vulnerable adults with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth and vulnerable adults that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal or removal from participation in church services at Wasatch Presbyterian Church. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth and vulnerable adults or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously. Wasatch Presbyterian Church will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adult outlines specific expectations of the Clergy, employees, and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated fairly regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or religion.
3. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by Wasatch Presbyterian Church.
4. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will avoid affection with youth and vulnerable adults that cannot be observed by others.
5. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by Wasatch Presbyterian Church.
6. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not stare at or comment on youth and vulnerable adults' bodies.
7. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth and vulnerable adults.
8. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth and vulnerable adults.
9. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on Wasatch Presbyterian Church's property.

10. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not have secrets with youth and vulnerable adults and will only give gifts with prior permission.
11. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will comply with Wasatch Presbyterian Church's policies regarding interactions with youth and vulnerable adults outside of our programs.
12. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth and vulnerable adults.
13. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth and vulnerable adults in a private setting. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youth and vulnerable adults.
14. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not abuse youth and vulnerable adults in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:

*Physical abuse:* hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints;

*Verbal abuse:* degrading, threatening, cursing;

*Sexual abuse:* inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations;

*Mental abuse:* shaming, humiliation, cruelty; and

*Neglect:* withholding food, water, shelter

15. Wasatch Presbyterian Church will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth or vulnerable adult by another youth or vulnerable adult. In addition, Wasatch Presbyterian Church will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- a. *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- b. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- c. *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- d. *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:

- Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
- Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
- Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person’s willingness to participate.
- Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth and vulnerable adults, Clergy, employees, and volunteers.

16. All Clergy, employees, and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. They should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. They will:
  - a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
  - b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youth and vulnerable adults against abuse.
  - c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws. (<https://dcfs.utah.gov/child-abuse-reporting-form/>)
  - d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
17. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, adults, or youth to Wasatch Presbyterian Church’s Head of Staff.
18. Wasatch Presbyterian Church cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any Clergy, employee, or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the Staff and Session of Wasatch Presbyterian Church. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination for staff or Clergy.
19. Clergy, employees, and volunteers may not have engaged in or or be under investigation for accusations, or convicted of youth and vulnerable adult abuse, indecency with a youth and vulnerable adult, or injury to a youth and vulnerable adult.

## Policies for Working with Youth

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to youths, when staff know and understand policies, they can identify, interrupt, and report policy violations. Simply interrupting a policy violation can prevent a false allegation of abuse or put an offender on notice that no one works in private, the rules apply to everyone, and violations will be detected.

### A. Physical Contact

Wasatch Presbyterian Church’s physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youths, Clergy, employees, and volunteers. Wasatch Presbyterian Church encourages appropriate physical contact with youths and prohibits inappropriate physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by Clergy, employees, and volunteers towards youths in the organization’s programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment for staff and Clergy and volunteers may be banned from the church campus and activities involving youth and vulnerable adults.

Wasatch Presbyterian Church’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a youth to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul>

## B. Verbal Interactions

Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youths in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Clergy, employees, and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youths. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with youths.

Wasatch Presbyterian Church's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Appropriate jokes</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name-calling</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths in the personal problems or issues of Clergy, employees, and volunteers</li><li>• Secrets</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming</li><li>• Belittling</li><li>• Derogatory remarks</li><li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths</li><li>• Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</li></ul>

## C. One-on-One Interactions

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth. Wasatch Presbyterian Church aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the organization administration.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, Clergy, employees, and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:



***Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions***

- When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other Clergy, employees, and volunteers that you are alone with a youth and ask them to randomly drop in.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

D. Off-site Contact

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and Wasatch Presbyterian Church at increased risk.

Wasatch Presbyterian Church strongly recommends that staff do not have outside contact with youths from the organization. However, if off-site contacts are unavoidable (such as during mentoring programs), Wasatch Presbyterian Church has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

<b><i>Appropriate Outside Contact</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Outside Contact</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking groups of youths on an outing</li> <li>• Attending sporting activities with groups of youths</li> <li>• Attending functions at a youth's home, with parents present</li> <li>• Taking one youth on an outing with the parents' written permission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking one youth on an outing without the parents' written permission</li> <li>• Visiting one youth in the youth's home, without a parent present</li> <li>• Entertaining one youth in the home of staff or volunteers</li> <li>• A lone youth spending the night with staff or volunteers</li> </ul>

In addition, when outside contact is unavoidable, ensure that the following steps are followed:

1. Program Staff should identify for Clergy, employees, and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
2. Ensure that staff or volunteers have the parents' permission to engage in outside contact with the youth.

## E. Electronic Communication

Any private electronic communication between staff/adult volunteers and youths, including the use of social networking websites like **personal** accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, etc. - is prohibited. Staff may only message Youth from the approved WPC-linked accounts on Facebook and Instagram. These accounts will be tied to Wasatch Presbyterian Church, have limited access as regulated by staff. These contacts and personal phone texts may only occur after parents sign the appropriate waiver at the beginning of each program year. All communication between staff/volunteers and youths must be transparent. The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

<i>Appropriate Electronic Communication</i>	<i>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youths ONLY with approval of the youth’s parent or copying the youth’s parent.</li> <li>• Communicating through “organization group pages” on Facebook or other approved public forums</li> <li>• Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites that are available with access limited to approved viewers (eg, Some Cool Youth).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments</li> <li>• Sexually oriented conversations</li> <li>• Private messages between Clergy, employees, and volunteers with youths</li> <li>• Posting pictures of organization participants on public social media sites</li> <li>• Posting inappropriate comments on pictures</li> <li>• “Friending” participants on social networking sites using personal accounts.</li> </ul>

In addition, this information will be provided to participant’s parents so that they know what is appropriate and inappropriate from staff.

## F. Cell Phone Use

Youth are **not** allowed to use cell phones during church activities. While assigned to work with youths, staff and volunteers are not permitted to use electronic communications device for personal communications or other uses not directly related to the youth activity, except during approved breaks and emergency situations.

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) organization members and/or program participants for inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment or volunteer status.

## G. Gift Giving

Molesters routinely groom youths by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the youth. They might instruct the youth to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the youth to

keep secrets from parents. For this reason, Clergy, employees, and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youths, and only under the following circumstances:

1. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift.
2. Parents must be notified.

#### H. Overnight Activities

Youth activities that include an overnight stay will include at least 2 adult chaperones. Rules and expectations for behavior will be established with all participants at the beginning of each event. Sleeping arrangements will either include one room with genders separated on either end of the room with 2 or more adults sleeping between groups, OR 2 youth split by gender in different rooms with 2 adults per sleeping room. When camping in tents, youth of the same gender may sleep in a tent without an adult, but adults should be in listening distance of the youth tents. Individual adults will not sleep overnight in a room/tent with youth(s). Specific rules will be determined by the staff and volunteers for hotel stays. The role of staff/adult volunteers will be to ensure the following:

1. Youths are monitored throughout the activity and that they accounted for multiple times throughout the event.
2. At least one youth leader or volunteer will be awake until after “lights out” and the youth are all in bed and quiet.
3. At least one leader or adult volunteer will be responsible to check on Youth to ensure everyone is present at least once midway between lights out and sunrise.
4. Youths will be made aware of the requirement that they may not be out of bed after “lights out” and that they may not leave the common sleeping area without notifying an adult first.
5. Youths who sneak out of the sleeping area shall be sent home.

## Background Checks and Training

### A. Background Checks

Criminal history and sexual offender registry checks shall be conducted for all employees, volunteers, and parents. New employees and volunteers shall not be left unsupervised with youths until the criminal history results are returned.

The background check(s) will include the following:

- National multi-state criminal records search;
- National sex offender registry search;
- Social security number trace and alias search; and
- County criminal records search for every county where the applicant has lived or worked for the past 7 years

Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check. This will be done via the Presidium Online system, which obtains an electronic signature consent.

If a flag arises in the background check, staff and Session will work together to determine appropriate action.

Background checks will be conducted every 3 years, and a record detailing who has had a background check shall be maintained by the Head of Staff

### B. Training

The mission of Wasatch Presbyterian Church is first to prevent abuse of children and other vulnerable adults. We wish to identify and nurture SafeConduct™, to lead and to guide through adequate training. It is difficult to comprehend that those among us, our friends and family, would commit such acts willingly. Nevertheless, persons who have not received behavioral education may unwittingly engage in behaviors that may be perceived as predatory. Their personal reputations and that of WPC are then at risk.

To fulfill our leadership obligation, each new parent or volunteer shall complete a specific program of training **within 30 days of assuming duties**. Fulfillment of training requirements shall be documented by the Children's Ministry Director or Youth Director, depending on where the volunteer will be serving.

Training shall be repeated annually. Records shall be maintained by the respective program Directors.

Abuse prevention curriculum shall include:

1. Consent to a background check, conducted through the Praesidium Online Portal, as outline above, to be managed by the Office Manager and Head of Staff.
2. Completion of the Praesidium online training video: *Abuse Risk Management for Volunteers*
3. Read and affirm with digital signature the WPC Child Protection Policy document, provided digitally

## Responding

How an organization responds to suspicious or inappropriate interactions, policy violations, and incidents or allegations of abuse can dramatically affect the harm to the individuals involved and the damage to the organization. Once a Clergy member, employee, volunteer, youth, or parent has expressed a concern or made an allegation about the treatment of a youth, swift and determined action must be taken to reduce any subsequent risk to the youth, to the accused staff member or volunteer, and to the organization. Organizations must establish precise, unequivocal requirements for reporting to the authorities and for adhering to a serious-incident response plan.

### A. Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations

Because Wasatch Presbyterian Church is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone actively participates in the protection of youths. In the event that a Clergy member, employee, or volunteer observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of others, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations.

At Wasatch Presbyterian Church, the policies apply to everyone.

#### ***Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Youth***

- Violation of the abuse prevention policies described above
- Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youths
- Buying gifts for individual youths
- Making suggestive comments to youths
- Displaying favoritism

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youths will be taken seriously. Our procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected.

#### **Employee and Volunteer Response:**

If an employee or volunteer witness suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from another employee or volunteer, they are instructed to do the following:

#### ***Guidelines for Employees/Volunteers Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations***

- Interrupt the behavior.
- Report the behavior to a supervisor, director, or other authority.
- If you are not comfortable making the report directly, make it anonymously.
- If the report is about a supervisor or administrator, contact the next level of management.
- Document the report but do not conduct an investigation.
- Keep reporting until the appropriate action is taken.

**Supervisor and Administrator Response:**

In the event that a supervisor or an administrator receives a report of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from a staff member or volunteer, the supervisor is instructed to do the following:

<b><i>Guidelines for Supervisors and Administrators Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report to the next level of administration and determine the appropriate administrator to respond to the concern.</li><li>• Determine the appropriate response based on the report.</li><li>• Speak with the employee or volunteer or volunteer who has been reported.</li><li>• Review the file of the employee or volunteer or volunteer to determine if similar complaints were reported.</li><li>• Document the report on the appropriate form.</li><li>• If at any point in gathering information about a report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises about possible abuse, contact the state authorities and file a report.</li><li>• When appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians.</li><li>• Advise the person who reported the behavior that the report is being taken seriously.</li></ul>

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

- a. Increase monitoring or supervision of the employee, volunteer, or program.
- b. If policy violations with youths are confirmed, the employee or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and prosecution. Disciplinary action will follow the Progressive Disciplinary Process outlined in this manual.
- c. If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other Clergy, employees, and volunteers or youths.

Organizational Response:

<b><i>Guidelines for Organizational Response</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the need for increased supervision.</li><li>• Review the need for revised policies or procedures.</li><li>• Review the need for additional training.</li></ul>

B. Responding to Suspected Abuse by an Adult

**i. Employee or Volunteer Response to Abuse:**

As required by mandated reporting laws, Clergy, employees, and volunteers must report any suspected abuse or neglect of a youth—whether on or off organization property or whether perpetrated by employees, volunteers, or others—to state authorities. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith and without malice. *\*Refer to state specific mandated reporting requirements for definitions of abuse more specific reporting information.*

In addition to reporting to state authorities, Clergy, employees, and volunteers are required to report any suspected or known abuse of youths perpetrated by employees or volunteers directly to leadership so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims and others who may be at risk. Reports of suspected or known abuse may be made confidentially to the following:

- a. Immediate supervisor
- b. Directors
- c. Administrators

***Additional Guidelines for Employee/Volunteer Response to Incidents or Allegations of Abuse***

- If you witness abuse, interrupt the behavior immediately and remove youths from harm.
- If abuse is disclosed to you, assure the individual disclosing that he or she was correct to tell to you.
- Protect the alleged victim from intimidation, retribution, or further abuse.
- Immediately report the allegation or incident to the proper organization authorities (based on mandatory reporting requirements) and the designated authority.
- Be sure to document the incident, disclosure, or any circumstances causing your suspicion of abuse. State only the facts.
- It is not your job to investigate the incident but it **IS** your job to report the incident to your supervisor in a timely manner.
- Check back to make sure appropriate steps were taken. If not, report again to your supervisor or the designated organization authority.

Supervisors and Administrators Response to Abuse:

In addition to the above response procedures, supervisors and administrators should ensure the following:

***Guidelines for Supervisor and Administrators Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Abuse***

- First, determine if the youth is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm.
- Gather as much information about the allegation as you can. For example, who made the report, who was allegedly abused, who was the alleged abuser, what was the nature of the alleged abuse, where and when did the alleged abuse occur, etc.
- Accurately record everything you learn in as much detail as you can. Remember your notes may be read by others. Stick to the facts.
- Contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by your mandatory reporting procedures. Make sure you get a case number and the name and contact information of the person with whom you speak at the reporting agency.
- If the alleged abuse involves an employee or volunteer, notify the Head of Staff.
- Suspend the accused employee or volunteer until the investigation is completed.

C. Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Abuse and Sexualized Behaviors

The thought that one youth may sexually abuse another youth does not occur to many people. Unfortunately, abuse between peers has increased 300% in the past few years. Youth-to-Youth sexual activity and sexualized behaviors often remain unreported in organizations because Clergy, employees, and volunteers are not comfortable documenting these situations, or may not know how.

Most serious incidents of youth-to-youth abuse are preceded by more subtle incidents such as name-calling, taunting, or roughhousing. Interrupting these interactions early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can keep the program environment safe. Wasatch Presbyterian Church recognizes that the following interactions are high risk and should be prohibited:

<i><b>Prohibited Youth-to-Youth Interactions</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazing</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Derogatory name-calling</li> <li>• Games of Truth or Dare</li> <li>• Singling out one child for different treatment</li> <li>• Ridicule or humiliation</li> </ul>

In order to adequately respond to and track incidents within the organization, all sexual activity between youths and sexualized behaviors of youths must be consistently documented.

**i. Employee and Volunteer Response:**



Youth-to-youth sexual behaviors can include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity, and similar types of interactions.

If employees or volunteers witness youth-to-youth sexual behaviors, they are instructed to follow these guidelines:

***Guidelines for Clergy, employees, and volunteers Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity***

- If you observe sexual activity between youths, you should immediately separate them.
- Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted and separate the youths.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Complete the necessary paperwork including what you observed and how you responded.
- Follow your supervisor's instructions regarding notifying the authorities and informing the parents of the youth involved.
- In some cases, if the problem is recurring discipline may be required including not allowing one or both youths to return to the program.

Supervisors and Administrators Response:

In the event that a supervisor or administrator receives a report of a youth's sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the supervisor should do the following:

***Guidelines for Supervisors and Administrators Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity***

- Meet with the staff who reported the sexual activity to gather information.
- Confirm that the youths involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
- Review the steps taken by the staff on duty.
- Review the incident report to confirm it is accurately and thoroughly completed.
- Meet with parents of the youths involved.
- Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the children involved.
- Notify the proper authorities.
- Develop a written corrective action or follow-up plan in response to the incident

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

- a. Review the need for additional supervision.

- b. Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- c. Review the need for additional training.
- d. Alert others in the organization.

Organizational Response:

After the internal review of the sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the organization will determine what can be done to prevent a reoccurrence, such as:

<i><b>Guidelines for Organizational Response</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the need for additional supervision.</li> <li>• Review the need for revised policies or procedures.</li> <li>• Review the need for additional training.</li> <li>• Alert others in the organization.</li> </ul>

#### D. Responding to Victims

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of Wasatch Presbyterian Church is to be responsive to the needs of victims within the constraints or obligations imposed under insurance contracts. In general, we will attend to the immediate needs of victims by providing support and pastoral care.

*Insurance Board clients only:* An incident of alleged abuse that requires medical or psychological care for a victim or family shall be reported to the Insurance Board by the Office Manager and/or Head of Staff. The latter shall discuss with the Insurance Board Claims Department whether the circumstances warrant initiation of Crisis Management services which may include psychological counseling. Upon approval, counseling services may be offered to a perceived victim(s), which may include family members.

#### E. Notification of Parents

A minor child may be party to an incident either as an initiator or as the victim. Whether a child is initiator or victim may not be clear in all circumstances, such as a child-on-child incident. And violation of policy does not necessarily create a victim. While notification of parents of such circumstances may be warranted, utmost care in communication is required.

While communicating with a parent, and **being mindful of the importance of timely communication**, care shall be given to assessing:

- The specific facts;
- Whether a disciplinary or termination process is required;
- Whether a child should be dismissed from a program (requiring notification of other parents/guardians);

- Whether “mandatory reporting” is a factor;
- Who shall and in what manner communicate with the parents/guardian;
- Whether the Pastor should be involved in the communication;
- Tentative remedial steps to prevent a further incident.

Notification of parents shall not be delayed when immediate medical care is required.

#### F. Responding to Media

Media publicity following an incident of abuse or exploitation may be detrimental to the reputations of individuals, the congregation and Wasatch Presbyterian Church. Without intending ever to evade the media, contacts with media must be managed and conducted only by a person specifically designated by the Session to represent the church. No other person(s) may speak on behalf of the church. Unless designated differently by Session in a particular circumstance, the exclusive spokesperson for the church shall be the church attorney.

Prior to speaking to media, the Session designated spokesperson shall contact and consult with Presbytery Legal Counsel, to obtain an understanding of appropriate statements or admissions and issues of privacy that may apply to the situation.

## **Registered Sex Offender Policy**

At Wasatch Presbyterian Church we boldly affirm that all are welcome in this place, no matter where they may be on their journey of faith. Reflecting Christ's love, our church's Mission Statement urges us to welcome "all people with special concern for the young." Therefore, while we emphasize the welcoming love of God, our particular concern for children and youth causes us to place their safety and the safety of vulnerable adults in a paramount position.

With this concern in mind, we have a policy for those who are registered sex offenders (RSO). Any person known by the church who is identified on any sex offender registry shall not be permitted on the campus of Wasatch Presbyterian Church. This decision was made with utmost care, striving to protect the rights and safety of all, particularly children and vulnerable populations within our congregation.

We seek to offer pastoral care to those who desire it and are affected by this policy, and will offer that at an off-campus site.

## **Congregational Awareness**

We are dedicated to a policy of open communication and education for the benefit of the children, parents, vulnerable adults and guardians we serve. They are entitled to know what to expect of our ministries, the Ministers who serve them, and to know the related policies and procedures created to protect the respective ministry constituencies. Constituencies include the children, the parents, the vulnerable adults, the guardians, and the Ministers.

This entire policy shall be posted on the Wasatch Presbyterian Church website, [[www.wpcslc.org](http://www.wpcslc.org)].

At the time children or vulnerable adults are enrolled in Wasatch Presbyterian Church programs, parents or legal guardians shall be provided:

- A copy of the Wasatch Presbyterian Church Code of Conduct.
- A copy of the Wasatch Presbyterian Church Policies for Working with Youth.
- A summary of the content of the orientation to be provided to children and vulnerable adults regarding boundaries and reporting.
- Information regarding the means to report violations of policy or suspicions of abuse.
- Information regarding their personal obligation to report suspected abuse as it may exist under the laws of the State of Utah
- An invitation to visit programs in progress at any time at their convenience.

Children and vulnerable adults shall be provided an orientation covering the following subjects:

- Age-appropriate information about boundaries (with reference to the Code of Conduct);
- How to protect themselves from abuse; and
- How to report boundary violations or incidents of abuse.

The orientation shall be provided:

- Individually at the time a child or vulnerable adult begins participation in a ministry of the church; or
- As a group at the opening of a school term, event or league; and
- Annually when a program, event or league is perpetual.

Parents and guardians will be required to receive the same abuse prevention training as provided to staff and volunteers.

Parents/guardians shall be encouraged to report violations of policy, boundaries or suspected abuse to the Director of the respective ministry at which an incident has occurred or the Head of Staff.

**Acknowledgment of Child Protection Policy and Procedure**

I have read the Child Protection Policy document and agree to comply with my organization's policies regarding sexual abuse prevention.

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Signature of Employee or Volunteer

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Date

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Print Full Name