

**Wayzata Community  
Church  
Safe Church Guidebook**

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## 1. COVENANTAL AGREEMENT

The safety of the children and youth who participate in the many wonderful ministries of Wayzata Community Church (WCC) is essential to its mission of helping them grow spiritually and emotionally and become disciples of Jesus. We covenant with one another to nurture our children and youth and to provide a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, paid staff, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities of Wayzata Community Church. Building a trusting environment requires confidence that WCC has taken the precautions necessary to provide safety for all. Establishing clear expectations defines safe boundaries. It is WCC's belief that individuals will act responsibly and appropriately when these expectations are well defined, and so we present this Child and Youth Protection Policy (Policy) as a means of creating a common understanding.

## 2. POLICY APPLICABILITY (WHO IS PROTECTED)

Those protected by this Policy are all children and youth who participate in activities sponsored by WCC.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

For clarity in all Policy references, the terms listed below are defined as followed:

**3.1. Child:** A “child” is a minor from birth to the completion of 5th grade.

**3.2. Youth:** A “youth” is a minor from 6th grade to age 18. WCC understands that some youth turn 18 before the completion of high school, and the Church will continue to protect those individuals under the umbrella of this Policy until the time of their graduation.

**3.3. Activities Sponsored By:** The phrases “activity sponsored by” and “activities sponsored by” encompass any event, group, ministry, program, or service provided by or organized under the auspices of WCC with the following exceptions:

**A. Boy Scout Troop:** Boy Scout Troop 283 are/is sponsored by WCC but operate under policies set by the Boy Scouts of America. This Policy does not apply to the activities of the Troop.

**3.4. Paid Staff:** A “paid staff” is any person compensated for work by WCC, including but not limited to Clergy, full-time staff members, part-time staff members, temporary workers, interns, and independent contractors.

**3.5. Volunteer:** A “volunteer” is one who offers of his/her own free will and without expectation of compensation to lead or provide childcare and/or faith formation leadership for the children and youth who participate in faith formation activities sponsored by WCC. The term “volunteer” includes but is not limited to teachers, drivers, chaperones, childcare providers, youth leaders, and Parables buddies who work with children and youth, as well as youth who serve as leaders working with children.

#### **4. REQUIREMENTS**

**4.1. Use of Compliance Agreement Form:** All paid staff and volunteers working with children and/or youth will be asked to sign the “Wayzata Community Church Child & Youth Protection Paid Staff, Volunteer and Leader Acknowledgement and Agreement” indicating that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with this Policy.

#### **4.2. Volunteers**

**A. Key Role of Volunteers.** All volunteers who are in leadership roles in the ministry and activities of WCC are living out their covenant promise to nurture our children and youth in the Christian faith. Every volunteer plays a key role in fostering the spiritual development of the children and youth in our Church community.

**B. Requirements for Volunteers.** Volunteers working with children and youth must:

- (1) Complete and submit a “Child and Youth Volunteer Application Form”.
- (2) Submit to a criminal background check upon request by the Minister of Faith Formation.
- (3) Be at least 18 years of age to serve in an adult volunteer role. Youth are encouraged to volunteer and may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult volunteers.
- (4) Be a WCC member for a minimum of six months; or if a nonmember or a WCC member for less than six (6) months unless you have a child in the program, provide the name and contact information for three non-family references, as requested in the Volunteer Application.
- (5) Attend an orientation meeting or meet with an appropriate paid staff person to review this Policy.

### **4.3. Drivers**

All volunteers who will be driving any children or youth to or from activities sponsored by WCC must have a valid driver's license, provide proof of liability insurance, be at least 25 years of age, and agree to obey all traffic safety laws. Individuals who have a driving record that suggests a compromise to child and youth safety will not be permitted to drive children or youth. Drivers who will be transporting children or youth for an extended period of time (for example, mission trips and retreats) must fill out a "Volunteer Driver Information Form".

### **4.4. Disqualified Persons**

**A. Who Decides:** What constitutes a disqualifying factor that will keep a person from working with children or youth will be determined by the Senior Minister, Minister of Faith Formation, and/or the Director of Operations/Personnel Director on a case-by-case basis considering all the surrounding circumstances.

#### **B. Examples of Disqualifying Factor**

(1) Any person who is currently under investigation for, has pleaded no contest or guilty to, or been convicted of (1) criminal sexual conduct, (2) neglect of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, or (3) physical abuse, will not be permitted to work or volunteer in any activities sponsored by WCC involving children or youth.

(2) Generally, convictions for or pleas of no contest or guilty of an offense involving minors, violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to WCC's mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children and youth.

(3) Failure to disclose a criminal conviction when requested may also be a disqualifying factor.

### **4.5. Use and Storage of Documents**

All forms filled out by volunteers will be treated in a confidential manner to the extent feasible and consistent with applicable law and will be kept in secure storage. Only paid staff working with children and youth will review the forms. The exception to this will be in response to a report of suspicious activity, in which case the information will be made accessible to WCC's Minister of Faith Formation, Director of Operations and appropriate legal authorities.

## 5. SUPERVISORY GUIDELINES

### 5.1. “Public View” Rule

**A. The Rule:** At no time will one paid staff or volunteer be allowed to be alone with a child or youth. This rule applies to all activities sponsored by WCC involving children or youth, whether on-site or off-site.

**B. Exceptions:** Exceptions to this would be in a situation in which:

(1) Graceland/Sunday school IF doors are left open. The Director of Children’s Ministries provides periodic observations.

(2) The contact occurs in a public place and other persons are in and out of the area where the paid staff or volunteer is working with the child or youth (for example, meeting in paid staff offices with an open door or a window with an unobstructed view of the room, or small group meeting with their students in a nearby coffee shop or restaurant).

(3) A volunteer who has agreed to uphold the same standard of care as paid staff and volunteers, who is acting in the role as parent, friend, or neighbor, and who has received in advance the consent of a parent or guardian, is allowed to transport a child or youth to or from WCC programming.

(4) A child or youth requests one-to-one pastoral counseling, provided that the parent or guardian should ordinarily be notified as to when and where the counseling sessions will take place.

(5) An emergency occurs and one-on-one interaction between a child or youth and an adult is necessary, provided (a) care must be taken to conduct the interaction with visibility to others, (b) another adult should have knowledge of the situation, and (c) WCC and the parent or guardian must be notified as soon as possible.

### 5.2 CPR/First Aid Training

**A. Required Training:** When required by law, paid staff who work with children and youth in activities sponsored by WCC will maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or the equivalent).

**B. Volunteer Training.** Volunteers are encouraged, but not required, to get training if they frequently accompany children or youth on activities such as camps, retreats, mission trips, or any other activity with an element of risk.

### **5.3 Protecting Children and Youth in Emergency Situations**

Paid staff and volunteers who work directly with children and youth will be made aware of, and will agree to follow, WCC's general safety and evacuation procedures.

## **6. PROCEDURES**

### **6.1. Overnight Activities or Events**

A minimum of two adult paid staff and/or volunteers (one of whom must be a paid staff person) will be required to supervise all overnight activities or events, both on-site and off-site. Adult paid staff will together consider all possible sleeping arrangements and decide upon an arrangement that best ensures the safety of all children, youth, paid staff, and volunteers involved. When realistically safe and possible, male and female participants will sleep in separate rooms or spaces and adult chaperones will sleep within close proximity to the entrances and exits of the designated space(s).

### **6.2 Off-site Procedures**

**A. Compliance with Policy:** As each off-site activity and facility used will be different, it will be the responsibility of the supervisors to determine how best to conduct the activity and use the facility so that it complies with this Policy.

**B. Permission Required:** An "Activity Permission Form for Children and Youth" must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian for children or youth to participate in activities and events outside of regular programming at WCC.

**C. Medical Information and Release:** When requested by WCC, a "Medical Information Form for Children and Youth" may also be required. These include, but are not limited to, mission trips and overnight retreats.

### **6.3. Off-Site Procedures with WCC Representatives**

In situations where paid staff or volunteers are representing WCC, but the children and youth are not part of the WCC community (for example: WCC Summer Camp, WCC mission trips which serve children, youth, and families), compliance with this Policy is mandatory. Paid staff and volunteers will also comply with any applicable policies of the program.

## **7. REPORTING AND RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT AND/OR INCIDENCES OF RISKY, SELF-INJURING BEHAVIOR**

## **7.1 Required Reporters:**

**A.** All Employees and volunteers working with children and youth and shall report suspected child abuse or neglect as provided by the Minnesota Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (M.S. 626.556) whether or not Minnesota law requires them to report. They also shall report threats or incidences of risky, self-injuring behavior or harm to other persons by children or youth.

**B.** Independent contractors, unpaid interns, and other persons whom Ministry Directors and the Director of Operations determine have substantial contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults in WCC ministries.

## **7.2 Reporting and Response**

**A. Immediate Reporting:** Employees and volunteers shall call law enforcement at 911 at once if they know or have reason to believe a child, youth or vulnerable adult is

(1) in immediate danger from abuse, neglect or abandonment,

(2) in immediate danger from incidences or threats of risky, self-injuring behavior; or

(3) has or imminently will harm another person.

**B. Reporting within 24 hours:** Employees or volunteers who have reason to believe a child, youth or vulnerable adult is currently, or has during the preceding three years, been neglected or abused, or has done or expressed thoughts of doing risky, self-injurious behavior or causing harm to others, where no immediate danger exists, shall report their knowledge or belief to a ministry director or Clergy member within 24 hours.

**C. Incident Report Form:** The person reporting the alleged activity will also document the date, time, and circumstances involved by filling out a “WCC Director Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Incident Reporting Form ” at the same time the report is filed.

**D. Notification of Minister of Faith Formation/Director of Operations.** The Director receiving the report will immediately notify the Minister of Faith Formation/Director of Operations. All reports shall be forwarded to the Personnel Director.

**E. Determination of Further Action.**

(1) In situations of abuse or neglect, a Director or Minister shall contact the social service agency serving the counties in which children, youth or vulnerable adults reside, working with the advice and recommendations

from WCC's legal counsel and insurance carrier. A Director or Minister also shall ensure their parents or guardians are informed unless they are the persons suspected of the abuse or neglect. The Minister of Faith Formation, Senior Minister and Director of Operations with input from the Personnel Director, will make the final determination as to what, if any, further action will be taken,

(2) In situations of self-injurious threats or behavior, a Director or Minister shall ensure parents or guardians are notified and in their discretion may contact the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) or other resources for assistance.

**F. Accused to Refrain from Further Participation.** Anyone accused or suspected of inappropriate activity will be required to refrain from participating in all child and youth activities until the situation is resolved. Care will be taken to handle the matter as discreetly as possible, consistent with applicable law.

## **POLICY MANAGEMENT**

### **8.1. Policy Implementation**

In fulfilling our promise to nurture and protect all children and youth in our care, every member of the Wayzata Community Church congregation should help to ensure the implementation of this Policy. Within this framework, the following specific measures will be taken for this Policy to be effective:

#### **A. Director of Operations/Personnel Director/Personnel Committee:**

(1) The Policy will be distributed to each paid staff who has significant responsibility for supervising paid staff or volunteers who lead children or youth.

(2) The Director of Operations will see that each newly-hired paid staff receives a copy of the Child and Youth Child Protection Policy.

(3) A copy of this Policy will be distributed to all paid staff

**B. Training.** This Policy will be incorporated into training sessions for all paid staff, Graceland teachers, middle school and high school adult leaders, Parables Respite Care leaders, mission trip and Colorado trip leaders, and any other volunteer opportunity that involves participation with children or youth.

**C. Council, Deacons, Board and Committee Awareness.** All Church paid staff will work with the Church Council, Deacons and their boards and committees to bring an awareness of this Policy and its implementation.

**D. Responsibility for Implementation.** The Director of Operations and the Personnel Director with support from the Minister of Faith Formation will be responsible to ensure the implementation of the Child and Youth Safety Policy.

**8.2. Policy Accessibility.** A current copy of this Policy will be made available electronically through a link on WCC's website. In addition, paper copies of this Policy will be available upon request and be kept in each Church School classroom/notebook to use as a reference.

**8.3. Policy Review.** The Personnel Committee, under the leadership of the Personnel Director and Director of Operations, with input from members of the Family Ministry Team will review this Policy and its implementation annually and report to the Church Council its findings and recommendations.