

SAFE CHURCH GUIDELINES
LAKE WASHINGTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Adopted by Administrative Council, October 18, 2010

I. Guidelines for Screening Paid Staff or Volunteers and Reporting of Alleged Abuse

All persons, having been created by God and invited by the Holy Spirit into a covenant relationship of love through Jesus Christ, are of inestimable worth regardless of age, sex, ethnic origin, race, cognitive capacity or psycho-social maturity.

However, any person may become the object of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Persons in subordinate power positions are especially vulnerable--not only children and youth but also adults, such as the developmentally or physically disabled and those experiencing grief due to recent loss. Such abuse is incompatible with God's covenant of love with us and our covenant of love with each other.

We acknowledge that no set of procedures and guidelines can guarantee that abuse will be prevented. Lake Washington United Methodist Church will minister to those who have experienced abuse or who are accused of abuse. We also recognize that guidelines must balance the goal of prevention with the goal of ministry to persons in a covenant of love.

Affirming each person's inherent worth and vulnerability, Lake United Methodist Church adopts the following guidelines intended to prevent abuse at any program or event of our church, and to respond redemptively to signs of abuse occurring beyond church activities:

1. Provide orientation and training for all persons working with children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding prevention, recognition and reporting of abuse, whether that abuse is observed by a leader or disclosed by a participant.
2. Screen paid staff and volunteer leaders for all church programs involving children and youth and vulnerable adults.
3. Establish and implement guidelines regarding the number of leaders present for programs involving children, youth and vulnerable adults.
4. Adopt specific procedures and guidelines upon recommendation by the Pastor, the Christian Education Director and Youth Director, and a representative of the initial Safe Church Guideline Task Force, and approval of the Administrative Council. Such procedures and guidelines will be reviewed periodically.

II. Code of Behavior

Rules of general supervision for adults working with children/youth

1. The behavior of adults working with children/youth must reflect the highest standards of Christian maturity, foster trust at all times, and be above reproach. Adults engaged in church-related events or activities with children/youth present should never engage in sexually suggestive behavior or inappropriate touching.
2. Any sexual or sexually suggestive behavior by an adult toward any fellow worker or event participant at a church event where an imbalance of power exists between the acting adult and the other person constitutes an abuse of power. Consent is not a defense to an abuse of power.
3. All adults shall avoid being alone, one-on-one, with children/youth unless prior parental permission has been given, preferably in writing. Interaction with children/youth shall be conducted within the sight/supervision of at least one other adult. In cases where it is impossible to avoid direct, one-on-one interactions, the following guideline shall be observed: If an adult or leader is alone with children/youth, two or more children/youth shall be present with the adult or leader.
4. **A.** Providing adequate supervision is important to insure that all are cared for and to provide continued supervision if an emergency arises. On Sunday mornings the following minimum ratios are recommended with one adult supervisor present at all times. Parents of each child in the Nursery will be given a pager.

Persons attending event	Recommended supervisor ratio
Infants through 3 years	1 to 4
4 years through sixth grade	1 to 7
Seventh grade and up	1 to 10

*Youth attendants must be at least 13 years old & 4 years older than oldest child/youth

B. At times other than Sunday morning, when other adults are in the building, the following minimum ratios are recommended with the preference being that two nursery attendants are always present. Parents of each child in the Nursery will be given a pager.

Persons attending event	Recommended supervisor ratio
Infants through 3 years	1 to 4
4 years through sixth grade	1 to 7
Seventh grade and up	1 to 10

*Youth Attendants must be at least 13 years old & 4 years older than oldest child/youth

5. When a group is meeting elsewhere, and on trips away from the church a minimum of two adult supervisors to provide for emergency needs and the following ratios are required.

Persons attending event	Recommended supervisor ratio
Infants through 3 years	1 to 3
4 years through sixth grade	1 to 5
Seventh grade and up	1 to 7

6. At least 50% of adults at an event where children and youth are present shall be at least 21 years of age and four years older than the oldest child/youth who is attending the event as a participant.

III. Recruitment and Screening

As a Christian Community of Faith it is our responsibility to set an example to the rest of the world on how to create places of sanctuary.

1. Pastors will be checked through District or Conference channels.
2. All paid staff/employees of the church working with children, youth and vulnerable adults shall complete:
 - a. an application or resume
 - b. an interview by the pastor and at least one Staff Parish Relations committee member.
 - c. a Federal/National background check authorization Form every two years
 - d. a Disclosure/Washington State Patrol Check Permission Form every two years
3. Primary Volunteers are volunteers with regular contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults. This category also includes volunteers active in higher risk activities: largely unsupervised activities, off-site activities, overnight activities, drivers, etc. This includes anyone who takes on a “parental supervisory role with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
4. Secondary Volunteers are persons who have occasional contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults, but never in a small group or in a 1 on 1 setting. This category also includes volunteers less than 18 years of age.
5. All volunteers/Primary and Secondary working with children, youth and vulnerable adults shall complete:
 - a. an interview by at least one of the following: the Christian Education/Youth Director, a program coordinator or a member of Leadership Development.
 - b. a Disclosure/Washington State Patrol Check Permission Form every two years
6. Primary volunteers shall also complete a Federal/National background check authorization Form every two years.

IV. Reporting of Alleged Abuse

Obligation: Any individual supervising or otherwise caring for children, youth and vulnerable adults shall report alleged abuse to the Pastor, Christian Education/Youth Director, or other appropriate church authority staff.

Documentation: Alleged Abuse Report Forms (attached at end of guidelines) will be available at training, in the church office or from program coordinators. Administrative Response to the Alleged Abuse Report Forms will be used to document actions taken.

Response: The authority receiving an abuse report shall respond according to the individual situation using options provided on the Alleged Abuse Report Form.

Support: The authority receiving an abuse report shall support the victim of abuse including referral to appropriate professional resources.

1. All reports of abuse shall be treated with utmost seriousness and confidentiality.
2. The highest priority shall be placed on securing the safety of the victim. In no case shall the accused be confronted until the safety of the victim is secured.
3. The person who receives the report of abuse shall immediately share this information with the event coordinator/leader unless the person suspected of abuse is the event leader, then the report will be made to the Pastor.
4. The event coordinator/leader or appropriate staff person and the person who receives the report of the abuse are responsible for:
 - a. filling out the Abuse Incident Report Form.
 - b. reporting the incident to the key leaders of the event and the Pastor.
 - c. documenting all aspects of the incident using the Abuse Incident Report Form. This report will be forwarded immediately to the Pastor.
5. The person who first hears the allegation of abuse, in partnership with the Pastor, is responsible for reporting to the Child Protective Services or to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
6. The Pastor will notify the parents when and if it is clear that it is safe to do so.
7. Any volunteer or hired staff person accused of abuse shall be immediately relieved of duties related to this or any other church event involving children, youth or vulnerable adults and be isolated from further contact with participants, guests and others who may be negatively impacted by the individual's presence until the review process is completed. The individual accused of abuse may not return to these type of duties until the Pastor and Staff Parish Relations Committee has completed a review determined that the case is fully resolved. This applies whether or not the alleged act of abuse occurred during a church-related event.

V. Orientation and Training

Lake Washington United Methodist Church believes preventive education is a primary component of the Guidelines for Screening Paid Staff or Volunteers and Reporting Alleged Abuse.

Orientation and training shall be provided for all adults working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults on prevention, recognition and reporting of alleged abuse. This training will be ongoing and will be offered at least annually. The Lake Washington United Methodist Church periodically will also offer this awareness training and education to the congregation.

A task force composed of a representative from Leadership and Development, Staff Parish Relations Committee, the Pastor, the Christian Education Director and/or Youth Director will establish the training schedule and secure the trainer(s).

VI. Children and Youth Activity Guidelines

A. General Safety Requirements

1. Parents shall be given advance notice and full information regarding any church-related activities or meetings for their children/youth.
2. Lake Washington United Methodist Church is required to be insured for abuse, risk, and facility hazards.
3. Any activity that has a risk factor to it requires the presence of an experienced and/or certified guide or instructor. Examples: swimming requires certified lifeguard; river rafting requires a licensed guide outfit with certified guides; rock climbing & challenge course require certified guides. Participation in these activities shall also be properly insured with a certificate of liability. If the activity is contracted to an outside party, then the contractor shall also be properly insured with a certificate of liability insurance that provides a minimum of one million dollars liability coverage limits and that names LWUMC and the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UMC as an additional insured.
4. If any special equipment is used that requires special instruction, the instructions for its use will be posted and followed. Participants will also be instructed verbally in the use of the equipment.
5. Current Permission Form and Emergency Information Sheet are required from all children/youth (and possibly adults) participating in church events. These forms shall accompany the adult coordinator of the event or meeting, and shall include a waiver of liability. In the case of an accident that requires medical attention, the person who is responsible for the event or the meeting will use all means possible to contact the parent, guardian or emergency contact, while ensuring that the children/youth receive the proper care.

6. There shall be a first aid kit on the premises at all church events and accompanying a qualified adult on all overnight events. That first aid kits shall include: disposable vinyl gloves, assorted gauze and bandages, antiseptic/alcohol wipes, adhesive tape, antibiotic ointment, cold compress, soft splints, triangle bandages, scissors and a CPR barrier.
7. Any overnight event shall have, at the least, first aid staff certified in first aid and CPR who can administer minor first aid, dispense medicine as needed,; and who are capable of determining whether additional medical attention is necessary. This person is also responsible for reporting all incidences to the Pastor.
8. For all overnight events that primarily target minors, all medicine including supplements, will be given to the first aid staff at the beginning of the event, and it will then be distributed as appropriate by first aid staff. An on-going log of all medications dispensed and treatments administered will also be kept.
9. Prior to the use of any photographs, videotape, or digital recordings of children, youth or vulnerable adults for the purpose of ministry, within or promotion of or within or promotion of the Lake Washington United Methodist Church the parent/guardian will have given consent with the "Adult release and Minor Consent Form For Media Recording".
10. All participants in an event will consistently remain in groups of three or more. All minors will have an adult leader present.
11. If anyone notices unrecognized people at an event, the event or meeting coordinator shall be informed as soon as possible and shall take appropriate action.

B. Driving Regulations Requirements

1. Only those who are 18 or older may drive on event business or during an event. If there are passengers involved the driver shall be at least 25. With additional training and certification (such as, a commercial drivers license with a passenger endorsement), drivers may be as young as 23.
2. The driver shall possess a valid driver's license, appropriate insurance and the driver's record shall conform to any standards that are required by the church's insurance company.
3. If an adult other than a parent or guardian provides rides to or from a church event or meeting for children/youth, the parent or guardian must provide permission to the chaperone who is driving.
4. Youth are discouraged from driving themselves to offsite events. If a youth drives to an event or meeting, the youth who is driving shall obtain permission to drive to the event from his/her parents/or guardian.
5. There shall be no "in and out" privileges for children/youth. Exceptions to this rule shall be approved in advance by the event leader.

C. Overnight Events

1. Boys and girls may not sleep in the same room unless there is no other option as a result of shortages of chaperones or because of the nature of the space. If they are in the same room and there is a divider available, it shall be used to separate the genders. If there is no divider available, boys and girls shall be at least six feet apart from each other.
2. There shall be at least one adult of the same gender in the sleeping quarters; two adults are required for each gender if less than three children/youth are present.
3. At overnight events a minimum of eight consecutive hours of sleep shall be scheduled per night. These hours begin with lights out and quiet time.

VII. ADDENDUMS

A. Screening Requirements for Paid Staff, Primary and Secondary Volunteers

	PAID	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Complete Volunteer Service Form, pages 3, 4 & 5	No	Yes	Yes
References Follow-up by church representative who decides regarding Page 13 & 21 of Volunteer Service Form.	3	2	2
Criminal/Court Records Check (Federal, State, and County Levels)	Yes	Yes	State Check
Child Abuse Registry Records	Yes	Yes	State Check
Driving Record *Unless no driving duties	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*

B. Volunteer Service Form. Pages 3, 4 & 5; Pages 13, 14 & 21.

The Volunteer Service Form is copyrighted. LWUMC purchased 20 copies in the 90’s. After these 20 copies are used the Safe Church Guideline will need to create forms in our own words & format or contact the PNW Conference Office regarding forms they provide.

Volunteer Service Form

Welcome! Please take a moment to read some special information about volunteer service in our church. First, thank you for considering volunteer service! Please know that your special gifts are appreciated! Coordinating the use of volunteers is a challenging, but rewarding task. Our congregation could not function without the support and commitment of volunteers. This form helps us to make the best use of our volunteers. Thanks for taking just a few minutes to fill it out.

Part 1: Personal Information. All volunteers are asked to complete Part 1 of this form. We keep this information on file and use it to coordinate our use of volunteers.

Part 2: For Volunteer Drivers. All volunteers who will drive a church vehicle or serve as a volunteer driver as part of their service to the church are asked to complete Part 2.

Part 3: For Volunteers Who Work With Children, Youth, Senior Citizens, the Developmentally Disabled, or In A Counseling Position. All volunteers who work with children, youth, senior citizens, the developmentally disabled, or in a counseling position are asked to complete part 3 of this form.

If you have questions concerning any part of this form, please ask! Just contact the church office. Again, thanks for your help and partnership!

Part 1: Personal Information (page 3)

Today's date: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____

Day time phone if different than home: () _____

Birth date (day and month only) _____

How long have you attended this church (if less than one year please indicate number of months)?

_____ years _____ months

Are you a member of this church?

_____ Yes If yes, please indicate how long you have been a member: years months

_____ No

In what capacity do you desire to offer your services as a volunteer within our church?

Part 2: Driving Information (page 4)

(confidential)

Complete Part 2 if you will drive a vehicle as part of your volunteer service to the church.

Key point Clearance must be obtained from the church ~ insurance carrier before you drive any church vehicle. Check with the church office.

1. Driver's license number _____

2. State of issue _____

3. Expiration date _____

4. Birthdate _____

5. Type of license:

operators

commercial

chauffeur

other (please specify)

6. Do you have any restrictions on your driver's license?

Yes If yes, please note here:

No

7. Have you been involved in any motor vehicle accidents while driving during the past 5 years?

Yes If yes, please list the question number and describe each accident on a separate sheet.

No

8. Have you been convicted of any moving violations during the past 5 years?

Yes If yes, please list the question number and describe each conviction on a separate sheet.

No

9. Do you carry liability insurance on your automobile?

Yes If yes, please identify the insurance company

No If no, do not drive as a volunteer. All volunteer drivers must have liability insurance coverage.

I represent that each of my responses is truthful and accurate. I agree to notify the church within a reasonable time of any changes in the above information.

Signature _____ date _____

Part 3: Providing a Safe Environment (page 5)

(confidential)

Complete Part 3 if you will work with children, youth, senior citizens, the developmentally disabled, or you will serve in a counseling position

1. Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes

No

2. Have you ever been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to a crime other than a minor traffic violation, or are you now under charges for any criminal offense? A criminal conviction will not necessarily disqualify you from consideration.

Yes (if yes, please list the question number and explain fully on an additional sheet)

No

Training, Experience, Professional Certifications, or Licenses

3. List any additional training or experience you have had that qualifies you for the position you are seeking, including any professional license or certification. Use the next page to write any additional comments that you would like to make about your background

References From Our Church

4. List below two personal references within our church who are well acquainted with you. Do not list relatives.

- A.
- B.

Volunteer's Statement — Read Carefully!

In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by the church, I agree and represent that:

- The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I authorize any references, or any other person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to give you any information (including opinions) regarding my character and fitness for volunteer service. I hereby release any individual, church, denominational agency or official, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, and whether or not identified in this application, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization, excepting only the communication of knowingly false information. I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding release which I have read and understand. I understand that I may consult with an attorney before signing this document. A facsimile or photocopy of this authorization shall be as valid as the original. I further understand that a criminal records check may be conducted on me, and I consent to any such check.

I (check one of the following two options):

- waive
- do not waive

any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization described above.

I have read and understand the above provisions, and agree to them.

Signature _____ date _____

Prior Service Reference Form (Page 13)

For Volunteer Service

(confidential)

Part 1: To Be Completed by Applicant

Name of Applicant

Name of Reference

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Please provide the following information concerning your employment history or volunteer service with respect to the reference listed above:

Position Title _____

Paid or Volunteer? _____

Beginning Date (mo/yr) _____

Ending Date (mo/yr) _____

Reason For Leaving _____

Part 2: To Be Completed by Church Representative

Name _____

Church _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

~ Reminder: Attach to this form a photocopy of the signed release of liability found on page 5 of the Volunteer Service Booklet.

Part 3: To Be Completed by Reference (page 14)

Instructions: The applicant listed above has applied for the volunteer position of _____ (position title) in our church. In order to determine the applicant's suitability for this position, we are asking that you take a few moments to complete and return this reference form to the church representative listed above. Please use an envelope marked Personal and Confidential. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

1. In what capacity do you know the applicant?

2. Is all the above information provided by the applicant concerning employment history or volunteer service correct?

___ Yes

___ No If no, please explain (use a separate sheet if necessary).

3. If the applicant is no longer working with your organization, why did the applicant leave?

___ voluntary resignation ___ dismissal (please identify reason) _____

___ involuntary resignation ___ other (please explain) _____

4. If the applicant is no longer working with your organization, would you consider rehiring the applicant?

Yes

No If no, please explain (use a separate sheet if necessary). _____

5. Are you aware of any facts demonstrating that the applicant's volunteer service should be restricted?

Yes If yes, please explain (use a separate sheet if necessary).

No

6. Are you aware of any facts demonstrating that the applicant should not be considered by our church for the position described above?

Yes If yes, please explain (use a separate sheet if necessary).

No

7. Based on your knowledge of the applicant, which of the following best reflects your evaluation of the applicant's suitability for the position described above:

highly recommend

recommend

neutral

do not recommend

insufficient knowledge to form an opinion

If you have any additional comments concerning the suitability of this applicant to work in our church, please note them below or on a separate sheet.

Signature _____ date _____

print name and title _____

Once completed, please return this form to the church representative. Please use an envelope marked Personal and Confidential. Thank you for your assistance.

LWUMC also purchased telephone interview forms (page 21).

C. Report of Suspected incident of Child, Youth, Vulnerable Adult Abuse

NAME OF ALLEGED ABUSER: _____
RELATIONSHIP OF ACCUSED TO VICTIM _____
DATE/TIME/PLACE OF INITIAL CONVERSATION: _____
Notes of Conversation: _____

CALL MADE TO STAFF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR EVENT
DATE/TIME: _____ SPOKE WITH: _____
Notes: _____

CALL MADE TO PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S):
DATE/TIME: _____ SPOKE WITH: _____
Notes: _____

D. Report of Suspected Incident of Child, Youth, Vulnerable Adult Abuse

As you complete these pages detail is good, but remember to consider the state of mind of the victim. Also, consider the seriousness of this report and it’s confidentiality as well. Please use the back of this page for any additional information.

YOUR NAME AND TITLE _____
Date: _____ Event: _____

REPORTEE’S NAME/PERSON OBSERVING/RECEIVING/DISCLOSURE OF ALLEGED

ABUSE, DATE/TIME/PLACE: _____
Brief notes: _____

WITNESS’ NAME/PHONE/CONTACT INFO:

WITNESS’ STATEMENT: _____

VICTIM’S NAME: _____
VICTIM’S AGE/DATE OF BIRTH: _____
DATE OF ABUSE AND TIME IF KNOWN:
Date/time/place of initial conversation with victim:

VICTIM’S STATEMENTS:
OTHER CONTACTS:
Name/date/notes:
Name/date/notes:
Name of Staff Person you will give this report to: _____
Signature of Person Giving Report: _____
Date: _____