

**Willow Glen United Methodist Church**  
**Safe Sanctuary**  
**Protecting our Children and Youth**  
**Policies and Procedures**

God has given us a sacred opportunity and a great responsibility to nurture and protect children, youth and vulnerable adults. For this reason, Willow Glen United Methodist Church (WGUMC) has established this abuse prevention policy and corresponding procedures to provide a safe and supportive place for children, youth and the persons who work with them, and to protect children and youth from abuse on its campus and in its programs.

**Document updates:**

Initial release – 06/01/04

Update & revised – 11/8/16

**Practices and Procedures**

- All children and youth will be treated with respect and consideration
- Positive techniques of guidance such as redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement will be used rather than competition, comparison and criticism
- Age-appropriate expectations, guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline will be established
- Whenever possible, adults will be assigned in teams of two or more to WGUMC programs involving children or youth
- All chaperones and supervisors of overnight activities must be cleared in advance with a member of the pastoral staff
- Whenever possible, adults will remain in view of others when working with a child or youth
- Restroom doors will remain open whenever adults are assisting a young child
- The Children's Pastor and other church leaders will make random visits to all classrooms and frequently visit or inspect areas of church buildings which are isolated from view.

**Policies for Staff**

The following criteria must be satisfied for each member of the paid staff of WGUMC before they will be permitted to participate with children or youth as part of a WGUMC program:

- An employment application must be completed including references *and contact information*
- A Volunteer and Staff Disclosure Form must be completed
- A personal interview must be conducted

- References must be checked
- Fingerprint screening must be completed. A criminal background check must be conducted. Persons with any criminal abuse and/or violent convictions will not be permitted to work with children or youth as part of a WGUMC program. Results are seen by the designated member of the pastoral staff only, and are destroyed after review.
- All records are confidential

### **Policies for Volunteers**

The following criteria must be satisfied for any volunteer before they will be permitted to participate with children or youth as part of a WGUMC program:

- A Volunteer and Staff Disclosure Form must be completed
- Fingerprint screening must be completed. A criminal background check must be conducted. Persons with any criminal abuse and/or violent convictions will not be permitted to work with children or youth as part of a WGUMC program. Results are seen by the designated member of the pastoral staff only, and are destroyed after review.
- All records are confidential
- Background checks and disclosure forms will be renewed every five years.

### **Policies for Drivers**

The following criteria must be satisfied before any person will be permitted to drive children or youth not in his or her own family in connection with a WGUMC program.

- A Volunteer and Staff Disclosure Form must be completed
- A current Driver's Application must be on file
- Fingerprint screening must be completed. Results are seen by the designated member of the pastoral staff only, and are destroyed after review. A criminal background check must be conducted. Persons with any criminal abuse and/or violent convictions will not be permitted to work with children or youth as part of a WGUMC program.
- Driver must be at least 21 years of age, have a current driver's license, automobile registration and insurance.
- Driver must also have at least 6 years of driving experience.

### **Reporting**

According to California law, every person who has reason to believe that a child or youth under the age of 18 has been abused can report the suspected abuse. Under the law, ministry staff are mandated to report suspected abuse. Volunteers are not mandated reporters.

At any church event, however, if an adult suspects the abuse or neglect of a child or youth, whether it has occurred at the event or prior to the event, that person should report his/her suspicions to the Pastor and together they will ascertain the details needed to make an accurate report. A report should be made within 24 hours. The report should include the following information, if obtainable:

1. The name, address, age and sex of the alleged victim;
2. The name and address of the alleged victim's parents/guardians;
3. The nature and extent of the alleged abuse or neglect;
4. The name, address and relationship, if known, of the person who is alleged to have perpetrated the abuse or neglect; and
5. Any other information known to the person making the report that would be helpful to the investigation of the alleged abuse.

The Pastor or ministry staff person shall contact the appropriate state, county, or local agency to file the abuse report and forward the aforementioned information to the agency as soon as possible. A copy of the report should be kept and handled as confidential information.