

**PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

1. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT DEFINITIONS

A. Sexual Abuse

For the purpose of this policy, sexual abuse is sexual involvement or contact by clergy, staff or volunteer with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent. Sexual abuse is a criminal offense in this community and must be reported to law enforcement officials. It is Church policy to make such reports immediately and to cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in investigating any allegations of sexual abuse.

B. Sexual Harassment

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexually-oriented humor or language, unwelcomed or undesired physical contact, inappropriate sexually suggestive comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements, in a situation where there is an employment relationship or colleague relationship between the persons involved.

C. Sexual Exploitation

For the purpose of this policy, sexual exploitation is a betrayal of trust in a pastoral relationship by the development, or the attempted development, of a sexual or romantic relationship between a pastor and a person with whom the pastor has a pastoral relationship.

II. POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A. Distribution of this Publication

All clergy, staff and volunteers who regularly supervise children or youth shall be given a copy of this publication. Upon distribution of the publication, a discussion regarding its contents shall be held with a representative of the Staff/Parris Committee.

B. Selection and Screening

It is the policy of the Church to take all reasonable steps to provide an environment safe from employees, volunteers and clergy who have a history of sexual misconduct. No known child molester as an agent of the Church shall have access to any child.

A job application shall be completed and submitted by all new paid workers.

Thorough background checks shall be made of all clergy, all volunteers who regularly supervise children of youth activities (excluding unpaid Sunday School teachers), and all employees, within the confines of permissible law, prior to employment to determine current or historical sexual misconduct allegations, criminal records or paraphilia-type behavior.

A reference check shall be completed on all new volunteers

C. Supervision

Only persons who have been regularly associated with the Church for at least six months should be permitted to supervise youth, children or vulnerable adults.

For all youth and children activities (excluding regular Sunday School classes), at least two adults shall share the supervisory responsibility.

III. RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A. General

All complaints involving sexual misconduct are to be referred to the Staff/Parrish Committee (Committee). The Committee shall arrange for an interview of the complainant, the alleged victim (if other than the complainant), and the alleged offender. The Committee shall ask the complainant to sign a written statement which shall include the date, location, time and a description of any alleged misconduct, a description of the alleged offender and the names of any witnesses.

B. Sexual Abuse

If the complaint alleges sexual abuse of a minor or an incompetent adult, the Committee shall readily notify the relevant law enforcement authorities.

C. Sexual Harassment Exploitation

In cases other than those involving sexual abuse, the Committee will determine the degree of further investigation and will make a recommendation to the Leadership Council as to appropriate further action. A written determination of the substantiality of the complaint and resulting action will be made by the Leadership Council and communicated to the parties involved as well as the attorney regularly engaged by the Church. Additional action by the Committee and Leadership Council shall be taken based on the advice of legal counsel.