



SAPC Kids/Youth SafeConduct Policies

It is Summit Avenue Presbyterian Church's (SAPC) mission to grow disciples in all generations by loving God, loving others and serving the world. To this end, we seek to provide safe environments for kids, youth, leaders, and volunteers alike to have fun, grow in faith, and in relationship with God and with one another. It is important to build and maintain trust between parents and guardians of kids and youth as well as with the community. Below is our SafeConduct Policies that are reviewed, edited, updated on a consistent basis by our Kids and Youth Advisory Board in order to meet our Insurance Board requirements as well as State-Law requirement that address issues such as organizational conduct, individual conduct (kids/youth/adult alike), boundaries, responsibilities of leader and participants, and procedures regarding sexual harassment, tolerance around race and sexual orientation, bullying, and stalking and the potential for child abuse.

The following principles will be discussed regarding

- Screening** and selecting clergy, employees, and volunteers.
- Guidelines** for interaction for adults and children
- Creating safe places** for ministry
- Responding** to inappropriate behavior, breaches in policy and allegations and suspicions of child abuse.

Terms and Definitions for Summit Avenue Presbyterian Church (SAPC):

SafeConduct: refers to organizational and personal behaviors that affect adults and children alike. Every relationship is defined by the quality of conduct. From the ethics of adult relationships, to fair uses of power, mutual support among peers, nurturing of trust and tolerance, and defense of vulnerable individuals; our conduct defines us as individuals and leaders.

Organizational/Individual Conduct: refers to policies and a set of procedures appropriate to ministries. On the one hand, policies have to be comprehensive yet able to be lived out every day. This packet is comprehensive but at the end of the packet is a "Check-List" of procedures for practical use in kids and youth ministries. These issues address boundaries for clergy, staff, leaders, volunteers, kids, and youth, tolerance around race and sexual orientation, bullying and stalking and potential for child abuse.

Kids: programs for grades 1-6th

Youth: programs for grades 7-12th

Participants: All individuals under the age of 18 participating in SAPC related activities that are not volunteering as leaders.

Leader: Anyone volunteering or serving who is not on staff with SAPC. This includes adult volunteers as well as youth who are volunteering in Kids ministry related activities such as Sunday School or Vacation Bible School.

Adult: Reference that incorporate leaders, staff, clergy, and volunteers over the age of 18.

General Procedures-

Two-Leader/Open-Door Policy: Adult leaders and staff are not allowed to be behind closed doors alone with one or multiple children under the age of 18. This rule also applies to children of the opposite sex under the age of 18. Example: during youth retreats, boys and girls are not permitted to be alone together. Rooms must be open and visible to others.

Leader-to-Child Ratio Rule: Our leader to child ration is the following:

1:3 for children birth – 12 months

1:6 for children 1 – 6 yrs

1:15 for children 7-18

At least 1 male and 1 female adult must be present for overnights if both male and female participants are present.

No One-on-One Contact Rule: Similar to the open door policy, no leader is to be alone with a child under the age of 18. This also applies to leaders and youth of the same sex. Only exception to leaders and youth meeting one-on-one is in public settings such as a restaurant, café, or anywhere that is easily viewable to others. This accountability protects children from potential risk, and also protects adults from false accusations. At no point is a leader to give a ride to children of the opposite sex without first applying the Leader-to-child ratio rule.

Whenever possible, any adult who is present in a church sponsored activity for children or youth should be accompanied by another adult. SAPC employees and volunteers should not, during an SAPC program, be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others.

In order to avoid situations where an individual is alone in a room with children, all children's and youth activities should adhere to the leader-to-child ratio rule. This rule is to protect children and youth against situations in which abuse might occur, and to protect leaders against false allegations of abuse or neglect.

Classrooms, childcare rooms, and any area in which programs for children or youth are taking place may be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents, or other volunteer church workers. No windows may ever be totally blocked so as to prevent visual observation into the classroom.

In the event that two leaders cannot be present in the room, such that one leader is alone in a room with one or more children or youth, a door or half-door from the room must be left open. The leader should not position himself or herself in the room such that other adults passing in the hallway cannot see him or her.

Furthermore, at any counseling session with children or youth, the door or half-door of the room used must remain open for the entire session. The session should be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance.

Each classroom for children and youth should ideally have a door with an observation window or a half- door, such that the upper half may be kept open. If it does not, and two leaders are not present in the room, then the door must remain open at all times.

Parental/Guardian Consent

Children and youth must obtain parental or guardian permission for involvement in church or school sponsored activities or programs that involve travel away from the church's physical facilities.

“Six Month” Rule for Volunteers

A volunteer must be a member of SAPC, or have regularly attended SAPC, for six months before working with youth or children. This requirement does not apply to paid staff. Nor does it apply to volunteers involved in activities in which their own children are present. The Youth Advisory Board shall have the authority to waive this six-month rule upon request, where appropriate.

Policy Review

The provisions of this Policy shall be reviewed annually by the Kids/Youth Advisory Board. Any proposed changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of Session for its input, if any, prior to any such changes by the Kids/Youth Advisory Board becoming final. The Kids/Youth Advisory Board shall report periodically to the Session and recommend any changes deemed appropriate.

SafeConduct

1. Staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the SAPC Child Protection Policy guidelines in all their interactions with children and youth.
2. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable or that disregard their right to say no.
3. Staff and volunteers may not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.

4. Physical restraint is used only in situations necessary to protect the child, other children, or staff from harm.
5. While supervising children and youth participating in SAPC programs, staff and volunteers should know where participants are at all times. No youth of the opposite sex are permitted to be in the same room alone.
6. Restroom supervision: Whenever possible, volunteers will make sure any restroom used is not occupied by any suspicious or unknown individual before allowing children and youth to use the facilities. Always send children in pairs with a volunteer. The staff or volunteer, will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy and protection for both the children and the staff or volunteer. Staff and volunteers shall strongly encourage parents to take children to the restroom whenever possible.
7. Diapering and potty training should be done primarily by staff members or paid caregivers. Volunteers may be asked to help in certain situations and should follow nursery guidelines when performing diapering.
8. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of children. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported according to the SAPC Kids/Youth SafeConduct Policy and state law.
9. Staff and volunteers are discouraged from being alone with children or youth without parental permission.
10. Under no circumstances should volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other individual authorized by the parent or guardian.
11. Consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
12. Being impaired by legally prescribed drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
13. Possessing or using concealed weapons or firearms while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco *in the presence of* children, youth, or parents while working or volunteering is prohibited.
15. Profanity, inappropriate jokes and media, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, youth, or parents are prohibited.
16. Staff and volunteers will be mindful of the content on any portable electronic device, social networking pages, or other electronic media that might be accessible to any children and youth.
17. Staff and volunteer adult and youth leaders shall wear appropriate dress when volunteering with kids and/or youth. No cleavage or cracks exposed, please.
18. Movies used in all church settings shall meet the voluntary movie rating system guidelines established by the Motion Picture Association of America for age-appropriate content. Any movies with rated R will need parental permission before showing. (For example; *The Passion of the Christ* is Rated R)
19. Staff and volunteers may not date or be romantically involved with program participants or church members who are younger than 18 years of age.

20. Staff and volunteers are required to read, sign, and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and will attend training sessions on the subject. Particularly, leaders and volunteers for overnights, camps, and retreats will need to take specific training and must be familiar with policies on kids and youth protection.
21. Staff and volunteers are required to report any concerns or suspicions regarding their observations of any individual's interaction with a child. Except for concerns related to alleged or potential abuse, which require specific immediate reports, these concerns may be reported to the individual. If the concerns are not alleviated by a change in the individual's behavior, a second report must be made to the Kids/Youth Advisory Board.
22. If it is necessary for an adult to take a child or youth home after an event, all staff and volunteers shall abide by safe driving laws when transporting children. An effort should be made to contact the family and inform them of the situation before transporting the child or youth. It is always advisable for leaders to give parents advance notice and full information regarding the event in which their child or youth will be participating.
23. In the event that a one-on-one child/youth to adult scenario arises, i.e., unexpected transportation needs, confirmation mentoring, or otherwise, parent permission should be granted by phone or in writing when possible.

Reporting

Reporting Incidents

Any individual who observes or becomes aware of any alleged or potential incident of child abuse must, as soon as possible, report the matter to the staff member in charge of the program, the Kids/Youth Advisory Board, or the Pastor. Because of the importance of proper reporting, pastors, employees, Session members, and persons highly visible to church members and visitors should understand the terms of the policy and be ready to help direct any such reports or allegations to the appropriate persons.

Investigation

Upon receipt of a report or allegation of child abuse at SAPC, the Kids/Youth Advisory Board shall ensure that an appropriate investigation is commenced and appropriate procedures are followed as required by Washington State law. The process will include documenting all steps undertaken in handling the investigation, and a **report shall be completed.**

Confidentiality

All investigations shall be conducted in as confidential a manner as is compatible with a thorough investigation of the report or allegation.

Parental Notification

If an incident has occurred on church property or during a church-sponsored event, the parents of any minor involved in any allegation of abuse shall be immediately notified.

Potential Responses

Upon any report of potential or alleged child abuse by an employee or volunteer of SAPC, any individual accused of such conduct may be temporarily relieved of any duties involving youth or children pending an appropriate investigation.

Off-Site Trips & Events

Permission/Waiver Forms

Parent/Guardian Permission Forms and Medical Consent Forms must be completed prior to all trips. The leader-to-child rule must be followed for the trips and overnight events with any foreseeable exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities.

Rooming Arrangements

- Rooming arrangements should provide for children and youth of the same sex to room together and adults of the same sex to room together.
- When possible, adults' rooms shall be next to youth rooms and youth may be checked on during the night.
- Ordinarily, adults should not share rooms with children. An individual minor may share a room with an individual adult if the two are related (parent/child/sibling/cousin), or if written permission has been granted prior to the event by a parent or guardian.
- In situations where one large sleeping area is provided, *an* adult of the same sex shall accompany children or youth of the same sex as long as it adheres to the leader to child ratio rule. This allows appropriate supervision and protects from situations where abuse might occur amongst participants such as hazing, fighting, or sneaking out.

Medical

- Each child, youth, adult volunteer, and staff must submit a completed medical/insurance form. Each minor's forms must have a parent or guardian's signature.
- Whenever possible, all activities with children and youth shall have a staff or volunteer adult leader with current-certification first aid/CPR training.
- Group leaders should have a copy of all medical forms for overnight or off-site events. These forms will be kept on the event site for the duration of the event.
- Whenever possible, First Aid supplies will be available on the event site. All workers will be informed of the location of First Aid supplies/equipment and shall have access to information concerning specific medical conditions and concerns of participants.
- A written report will be completed in the case of any accident, medical emergency or injury.

Driving Rules/Travel

- As recommended by our church insurance company, it is suggested that all drivers of children and youth be over 21 and under 65. In situations where this is not possible, parent permission shall be obtained before the trip and vehicles shall travel together.
- For each vehicle used during events and trips, the leader-to-child ratio rule still applies unless parental permission is obtained prior to the trip. Travel arrangements for off-site events will be coordinated through the church.
- All adult drivers of children and youth will be screened through a driving history search. A valid driver’s license will be required.
- All vehicles should remain parked throughout the duration of the activity except for transporting children and obtaining supplies.
- Seat belts will be provided for all passengers.

Outside Groups

All leaders of non-SAPC sponsored groups and events that use SAPC facilities and supervise children and youth are expected to adhere to these policies. This includes, but not limited to, groups such as: Boy/Girl Scouts, groups renting church space, and visiting youth groups. Given the nature of the outside groups that use SAPC facilities, SAPC will not perform background checks, seek personal and professional references, review employment records, or obtain civil and criminal records for such groups. Leaders of outside groups will be invited to attend SAPC’S scheduled training classes and are expected to conduct their own due diligence in this regard.

Checklist for Kids and Youth Activities: developed from SAPC’s Insurance Board (IB) Policy Handbook and by Kids/Youth Advisory Board.

Below is a checklist for practical application and use for leaders and staff during SAPC related activities. This also helps communicate simply to parents, guardians, the Church, and community what the roles and expectations are for Organizational Conduct for leaders, volunteers, staff, and clergy.

Kids and Youth Overnights, Camps, and Retreats	Yes	No
Do all volunteers and leaders have an up-to-date background check on file?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there at least 2 adult leaders; 1 male and 1 female?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are leaders and participants within Leader-to-Child Ratio Rule?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do all participants have a signed Waiver Form on file for the current year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have all participants and parents/guardians signed a Behavior agreement form?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do all participants have necessary items for event? (<i>ie: sleeping bag, appropriate attire, payment, necessary documentation etc?</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training		
Have all volunteers and leaders received training on SafeConduct Policies and Procedures in the last 6 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspection		
Are sleeping areas divided appropriately by age and gender?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are leader sleeping areas in plain view of others, as well as located in areas that make it possible to supervise and ensure safety of participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are there bathrooms designated for boys and girls to use? b. If no, is there appropriate supervision for bathroom use? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have bathing and bathroom facilities been inspected and are functional?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all doors of the church locked at night ensuring no kids/youth are outside building during night time hours, as well as securing outsiders from intruding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an emergency evacuation plan in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there at least one leader/volunteer/staff with CPR or first aid training present?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation		
Do employees or volunteers have appropriate licenses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Is the leader-to-child rule being adhered to? b. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. If no; is the leader and the child of the same sex? ii. Has permission by parent or guardian been given for child to ride in the vehicle with leader? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remediation and Resolution		
Has there been a review and audit by the Kids and Youth Advisory Board within the last 6 months? --- do we want to change that time frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Kids and Youth Sunday School, Youth Group, Events	Yes	No
Do all volunteers and leaders have an up-to-date background check on file?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Is there more than one adult leader? b. If NO, are leader-to-child ratios being adhered to? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the teaching area have an open door policy or is it easily visible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have all volunteers and leaders received training on SafeConduct Policies and Procedures in the last 6 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>