



### **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus taught, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me” (Mark 9:37 NRSV) and “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6 NRSV).

We should not allow possible risks to undermine or stop our ministry. Rather, we must acknowledge the risks and develop a practical plan to address these issues. We must take steps to prevent harm to our children, youth and other vulnerable persons. We must continue to answer the Gospel’s imperative to be in ministry with children, youth, and other vulnerable persons, thus making a difference in their lives

### **PURPOSE**

Kennonsburg Church (KC) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing this policy, our goal is to protect the children of KC from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.



### **MINISTRY SUPERVISION GUIDELINES**

#### **SIX MONTH RULE**

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with KC for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation of the suitability of the applicant for working with children. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Elders.

#### **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and volunteers, 18 years or older.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be emailed a link to complete the background check. If an individual declines to complete the form, she/he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Elders on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Background checks are fulfilled through Lifeway.com and KC receives a pass or fail notification.

The background check results will be maintained in confidence on file at the Church Office and should be renewed every 2 years.

#### **TWO ADULT RULE**

Two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, there must be an unobstructed window in the door, or the door to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in



a counseling situation. If the two-adult rule cannot be observed as described above, a screened, designated roamer will regularly check on groups with only one adult.

### **CHECK IN**

Children, youth, and other vulnerable people will be checked into and out of off-campus and/or overnight events by their parent or legal guardian or people authorized by the parent/legal guardian.

### **OVERNIGHT/OFF CAMPUS EVENTS**

Participants will have access to a telephone or cell phone when groups are at or away from the church facility.

For overnight events at the church and church-sponsored off-premises activities, two or more screened adults must be present. This arrangement must include at least one male and one female if the group is mixed gender.

Whenever KC transports children, youth, or other vulnerable people away from the church campus:

- No youth are permitted to drive to/from events.
- An adult should never transport a child/youth/other vulnerable person alone.
- Drivers of church vehicles should be approved and covered by the church's insurance company.
- Drivers should go through the same screening process as all other paid/volunteer staff.

### **MEDICATIONS POLICY**

It is the policy of KC not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care, unless prior written consent is given by the child's guardian.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted in an emergency.



### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

It is the policy of KC not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

If a child is unreasonably disruptive a parent should be called in to address the issue.

### **TEENAGE VOLUNTEERS**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for additional help or babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 12.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult on the premises who is a designated roamer.
- Must be screened by the Youth Director through a documented interview process.



### **RESTROOM GUIDELINES**

Children nine years of age and under should be escorted to the restroom by an adult. The adult should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the child inside. The adult should then remain outside the restroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. It is preferred to use the restroom next to the nursery during Sunday School and Children's Church.

Children that may need assistance should go to the main restroom as a class accompanied by two adults. When two adults are present in the restroom, an adult may assist a child, while leaving the stall door open.

If a child requires assistance, and the adult is alone, the adult should prop open the restroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child. If possible, the adult should have another adult present while assisting the child.

If the adult needs to assist the child with zippers or buttons, it is recommended to say out loud what they are doing, such as, "I am going to zip your pants now." If the child needs assistance with wiping, or anything else the adult is not comfortable with, the adult should ask the child's parent to take over.

For the protection of all, adults should never be alone with a child in a restroom with the door closed and never be in a closed restroom stall with a child.

### **TRAINING**

Teacher/helper training is held annually where all persons working with children will be given the Child Protection Policy along with support for their ministry.

KC is a certified trafficking free zone through the U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking. All persons working with children are required to complete the USIAHT educational course. Training results will be maintained in confidence on file at the Church Office.



### RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

**Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

**Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.

**Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.

**Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

- Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor and/or an Elder for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

**Incident Response Procedure** - In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

- The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
- The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
- All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and Kennonsburg Church will comply with the state’s requirements regarding



mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. KC will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.

- The insurance company will be notified, and Kennonsburg Church will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company. (Incident Report forms are available from the Church Office.)
- Kennonsburg Church will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of KC should refrain from speaking to the media.
- A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
- Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

### **ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO CHILDREN**

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under the care of KC, the following steps should be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
- Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring more than First Aid, or any injury the worker feels needs to be documented. (Incident Report forms are available from the Church Office.)



### **SEX OFFENDER – KENNONSBURG CHURCH (KC) RESPONSIBILITIES**

We have the responsibility to assure that children and youth will be safe in our church from sexual abuse, sexual assault and harassment even, or perhaps especially, when we do not know if there is an offender in our church. If an individual has been convicted of, or has been formally charged with, or is otherwise publicly identified as being accused or suspected of a sexual offense, but whose guilt or innocence has not yet been adjudicated by a court of competent jurisdiction, KC Elders are to act according to what in their view is safest for the church family.

We are committed to treat every person with worth and dignity and to offer a church home to all who are seeking one like ours. While honoring that, in the case of an individual with a history of sex offense, there may be limitations to church involvement at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and KC Elders. Others may be asked to be part of the evaluation as KC Elders deem appropriate to determine the involvement level in our church of each individual.

**It is not the job of the Elders to conduct investigations of accusations of abuse, but to function as mandatory reporters in the State of Ohio. However, in situations involving reported suspicious behavior of persons of any age:**

- The Lead Pastor and KC Elders must assess and address the suspicious behavior as soon as possible.
- If it is determined that no immediate intervention is warranted, the individual will continue to be welcomed to full participation in the life of the church.
- If it is determined to be necessary, access to church life will be limited appropriately. This could include one-on-one supervision, limiting which functions can be attended, or total exclusion from church functions and property.

Since each case is unique, it is important to be flexible in determining how best to handle each situation. Keep in mind while picking a course of action that the action must seem reasonable to a jury of peers if a situation would ever develop into a court trial scenario.



### SEX OFFENDER - DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, “sex offender” or “offender” may be used interchangeably and are defined as follows:

**Convicted or Registered Sex Offender** – An individual that is required to be registered as a sex offender in any state or county, must notify the Lead Pastor and/or Elders of KC. The convicted or registered offender must complete a **Limited Access Covenant** for any participation in KC ministries or access to KC property for any reason, if agreed to by KC Elders.

**Suspected or Confirmed Sex Offender** – An individual who has been stripped of Membership, Certification, or Licensure by, or who has otherwise demonstrated clear and convincing evidence of a sexual offense, by any Federal, State, County, or Local Governing Board or Association, or professional organizations providing employment, certifications, licensing, or other credentials, must notify the Lead Pastor or Elders of KC. The Suspected or Confirmed Offender must complete a **Limited Access Covenant** for any participation in KC Ministries or access to KC property for any reason, after agreed to by KC Elders.

**Suspicious Behavior** - Upon evidence of suspicious behavior (observed or heard), or a report by a KC member and/or participant of KC ministries, the allegations will be reviewed by the Lead Pastor and the Elders. If found to be of credible concern, the suspected offender will be reported to the appropriate authorities by the Lead Pastor or the Elders, both of whom are Mandated Reporters in the State of Ohio. Until the investigation is completed, the individual being investigated will be denied access to KC Ministries on private or public property. Once the official investigation is completed, a **Limited Access Covenant** may be agreed upon if deemed appropriate by the Lead Pastor and Elders.



### **SEX OFFENDER – UNEQUIVOCAL RESTRICTIONS**

The following restrictions apply to participation in Kennonsburg Church ministries on private or public property, and/or access to KC property for any reason:

**Victim Protection** – If the victim is a member or participates in our ministry the offender will be denied access to Kennonsburg Church ministries on private or public property, and/or access to KC property for any reason.

**Victim Family Protection** - If the victim's immediate family are members or participate in our ministry the offender will be denied access to Kennonsburg Church ministries on private or public property, and/or access to KC property for any reason.

**Suspicious Behavior** – Upon evidence of suspicious behavior, or complaint by any member and/or participant of Kennonsburg Church ministries, the offender will be denied access to KC ministries or access to KC property for any reason during review by Lead Pastor and KC Elders. Upon credible evidence, Lead Pastor or KC Elders will fulfill their role as mandatory reporters in the State of Ohio. A limited access covenant may eventually be agreed to if deemed appropriate by KC Elders.

**Limited Access Covenant** - All sex offenders as defined above, if allowed by KC Elders to attend KC, must complete and sign the appropriate limited access covenant as described in the following steps of this policy.

**Mandated Reporting** – Per the Ohio Attorney General's Office: In Ohio, all clergy members and individuals acting in an official capacity such as an Elder are mandated reporters who must report suspected child and elder abuse and neglect due to their role in protecting vulnerable populations. Reports must be made to the public children or senior services agency or a peace office in the county where the abuse occurred.



### **SEX OFFENDER – LIMITED ACCESS COVENANT**

(This is a private document, but it will be shared with any person that is deemed appropriate by the Lead Pastor, Staff, or Elders of Kennonsburg Church.)

#### **Sex offender desiring to attend Kennonsburg Church (KC)**

Kennonsburg Church affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who desire to worship with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. However, based on your legal sex offense conviction, we must exercise due diligence about your contact with children, youth and vulnerable people in our church.

The following requirements are designed to reduce the risk to both you and others of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our church and our membership, but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to help assure that you will not be subject to unwarranted accusations.

Within this covenant, the church welcomes your participation in Sunday morning worship services, congregational meetings, adult education, adult social events, adult ministry teams, and well-supervised inter-generational events.



### **SEX OFFENDER – LIMITED ACCESS COVENANT (Continued)**

**You are to avoid all contact with children, youth, and vulnerable people on church property or church-sponsored events.**

This includes the following:

1. Do not talk to children.
2. Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone, or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during inter-generational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
3. Remain in the presence of at least one of the three designated adults who know your situation at all church related events or when on church property. (Chaperones are listed below with phone numbers. Each chaperone shall acknowledge their agreement to support this covenant by signing at the end of this document.)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
4. If a child in the church approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
5. Avoid being on church property unsupervised during activities involving children, such as nursery school, youth group, children’s outreach events, or Vacation Bible School.



### SEX OFFENDER – LIMITED ACCESS COVENANT (Continued)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*Name of Offender*) accepts that the following people will be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care: Lead Pastor, Staff, Leadership Team, Children and Youth Ministry Leaders, and regional leadership within our affiliated denomination.

I give permission for the Lead Pastor and KC Elders to contact my parole officer, probation officer or treatment provider to request and receive from them an assessment of my risk of re-offending and will sign any documents necessary for KC to obtain this assessment.

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that if I violate this agreement in any way, I will be denied access to future KC functions and church property.

I understand that this covenant will be reviewed every six months and will remain in force for an indefinite period.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Elder: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chaperone A: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chaperone B: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chaperone C: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_