

# CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

## Parkwood Seventh-day Adventist Church



### 1. Statement of Purpose.

#### 1.1. Statement on the Nurture and Protection of Children.

Seventh-day Adventists place a high value on Children. In the light of the Bible, they are seen as precious gifts from God entrusted to the care of parents, family, community of faith, and society at large. Children possess enormous potential for making positive contributions to their church and to society. Attention to their care, protection and development is extremely important.

The Parkwood Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereinafter, "the Church") reaffirms and extends its longstanding efforts to nurture and safeguard Children from persons - known and unknown - whose actions would perpetrate any form of abuse and violence against them and/or sexually exploit them. Jesus modeled the kind of respect, nurture, and protection Children should be able to expect from Adults entrusted with their care. Some of His strongest words of reproof were directed toward those who would harm Children. Because of Children's trusting nature and dependence upon older and wiser Adults and the life-changing consequences when this trust is breached, Children require vigilant protection.

#### 1.2. Making Church a Safe Place for Children.

The Church acknowledges its responsibility to take reasonable steps in an effort to prevent sexual and other abuse of, and violence against Children. Church leaders and members must themselves live by a strict code of ethics that precludes even the appearance of evil as regards the exploitation of Minors for the gratification of Adult desires.

In recognition of its desire to nurture and protect Minors, the Church adopts this Child Protection Plan (hereinafter, "Plan").

### 2. Definitions.

As used in this Plan, the following words, when used with the first letter capitalized, have the definitions indicated.

**Adult** – any person who has reached the age of 18 years.

**Child** – any person under the age of 18 years. (See also, "Minor".)

**Known Sexual Offender** – Any person known by any elected or appointed Church officer to have committed, against a Minor, an act of “sexual harassment” (by which is meant, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature), “sexual misconduct” (by which is meant, allegedly unlawful or abusive physical conduct of a sexual nature), or “sexual molestation” (by which is meant, any sexual activities with or otherwise involving a Minor, including subjecting the Minor to advances for the perpetrator’s own sexual gratification, whether or not such advances involve actual physical contact with the Minor, and also including verbal advances and the unlawful display of sexually explicit images or suggestive pictures to the Minor, and also including unlawfully viewing or possessing sexually explicit images or suggestive pictures of a Minor). Knowledge of such an act, for purposes of this Plan, shall include knowledge of any of the following which establish such an act: (a) criminal conviction; (b) a positive finding resulting from a sexual ethics hearing of an employer or prior employer; (c) a finding in any church disciplinary proceeding; (d) an admission by the individual; (e) a compromised civil suit or claim resulting in a monetary settlement with a claimant; or (f) a judicial finding of fact against the individual in a civil suit.

**Minor** – any person under the age of 18 years. (See also, “Child”.)

**Ministry** – any worship, educational, recreational or other activity of the Church.

**Volunteer** – any person elected or appointed to any permanent or semi-permanent official Church position and any person who supervises or works with Minors in connection with any Church Ministry; provided, however, a person who receives remuneration for serving in any such capacity (other than reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with serving in such capacity) is not a Volunteer.

### 3. Objectives.

- 3.1. The Church is committed to making its Ministries free from abuse of all kinds.
- 3.2. The Church is committed to providing a safe and joyful environment which helps Minors learn to love and follow Jesus Christ.
- 3.3. The Church acknowledges its responsibility, in concert with the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, to select, screen, train and manage trustworthy individuals to fill Volunteer positions in the Church’s Ministries.
  - 3.3.1. The Church understands that the work of Volunteers is essential to the successful accomplishment of its mission and its Ministries.
  - 3.3.2. Only persons who support the mission and the Ministries of the Church shall be selected for Volunteer positions.
  - 3.3.3. Only Individuals who support the Church’s Volunteer background screening and training policies shall be selected for Volunteer positions.

- 3.3.4. The management policies and procedures employed to supervise the work of Volunteers must be consistent with the mission and the Ministries of the Church and must support the successful achievement of that mission and those Ministries.

#### 4. Organizational Responsibilities.

- 4.1. The Church will exercise reasonable care in the selection and supervision of Volunteers, including:
  - 4.1.1. Recruiting and selecting appropriate individuals needed to supervise a specific Ministry.
  - 4.1.2. Training and orienting Volunteers so that they may properly supervise and/or carry out the Ministry.
  - 4.1.3. Providing each Volunteer with a written copy of the Child Protection Guidelines for Volunteers adopted by the Church (“the Guidelines”).
  - 4.1.4. Requiring each Volunteer to sign and abide by the Volunteer Ministry Code of Conduct adopted by the Church (“the Code of Conduct”).
  - 4.1.5. Providing proper oversight and management of Volunteers.
  - 4.1.6. Taking appropriate corrective action to counsel, discipline, or remove a Volunteer when necessary.
- 4.2. The Church will report all incidents of known or reasonably suspected Child abuse or neglect to proper authorities in accordance with the requirements of California State law, including but not limited to the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (California Penal Code §§11164 – 11174.3 and hereinafter referred to as “the Act”).
  - 4.2.1. Every person who is a “mandated reporter” under the Act will report to the agency specified in the Act whenever the mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a Child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of Child abuse or neglect, as defined in the Act.
  - 4.2.2. All Volunteers will be required to participate in training, selected by the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in the identification and reporting of Child abuse and neglect (as defined in the Act) and, if they are not “mandated reporters” under the Act, are encouraged to report known or reasonably suspected instances of such child abuse or neglect to the agency specified in the Act.
  - 4.2.3. Where practicable, and to the extent allowed by law, a member of the Church pastoral staff will be involved in the reporting process.

- 4.3. If any Volunteer becomes aware of, or has a reasonable suspicion of inappropriate conduct by another Volunteer and involving a Minor, he or she shall—in strict compliance with, and subject to, legal requirements—promptly report that matter either to the Church Pastor or directly to the Vice President for Human Resources of the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. If the matter is reported to the Church Pastor, he or she shall—in strict compliance with, and subject to legal requirements—promptly report that matter to the Vice President for Human Resources of the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>1</sup>
- 4.4. The Church will take appropriate steps to protect Minors in its care from those—both known and unknown to the Church—who pose a risk of desiring to abuse or otherwise harm those Minors. (See Item 9 below.)

## 5. Volunteer Selection and Management.

- 5.1. It is the right and the responsibility of the Church to select individuals who will serve as its Volunteers.
- 5.2. No Known Sexual Offender will be allowed to serve as a Volunteer for the Church.
- 5.3. No newly attending person or newly baptized or newly transferred member will be considered for a Volunteer position in a Church Ministry involving supervising or working with Minors until the person has been known to the members of the Church for a minimum of six (6) months.
- 5.4. All prospective Volunteers, regardless of previous experience, shall complete the training program and screening procedure selected by the Central California Conference, which shall include a signed Volunteer Ministry Information Form, before serving as a Volunteer in any Church Ministry.
- 5.5. Individuals who submit incomplete Volunteer Ministry Information Forms will not be considered for a Volunteer position.
- 5.6. Volunteer background screening and training will be renewed for each Volunteer at least every three [3] years.
- 5.7. The Church is responsible for the cost of implementing its background screening and training procedures in accordance with the policies of the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
- 5.8. The Volunteer selection and training process will be administered by a Church Volunteer Service (Committee/Administrator) (see Item 7 below).

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<sup>1</sup> The Church does not undertake by this Plan to undertake its own investigation of any allegation of misconduct.

## 6. Protecting Confidentiality.

- 6.1. It is the duty and responsibility of all individuals involved in the process of screening, interviewing, and selecting of Volunteers to conduct themselves with utmost integrity and with due regard for confidentiality.
- 6.2. All information received concerning Volunteers and prospective Volunteers, including but not limited to information received during the Volunteer screening process, will be maintained with due regard for confidentiality.
- 6.3. All information received during the Volunteer screening process, will be maintained on a password-protected, secure electronic database.
- 6.4. **The Church will** respect the rights of all parties involved in any alleged incident and **treat all matters** concerning the situation discreetly, **with due regard for confidentiality**, and in strict accordance with legal reporting requirements.

## 7. Orientation and Training for Volunteers.

- 7.1. **The Church**, in conjunction with the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, **will conduct orientation meetings to train Volunteers** on the Church's expectations regarding Ministries for Minors.
- 7.2. Orientation will **cover at least the following areas**:
  - 7.2.1. **The Church's mission** and the Church's expectation for the accomplishment of that mission, through its Ministries, in a safe and abuse-free manner.
  - 7.2.2. **The Code of Conduct and the Guidelines to be followed by Volunteers in relation to supervising and interacting with Minors.**
  - 7.2.3. **Appropriate physical contact with Minors.**
  - 7.2.4. **Appropriate supervision of Minors.**
  - 7.2.5. **Openness and observation of activities.**

## **8. Volunteer Service Administrator.**

- 8.1. In order to carry out the objectives of this Plan, the Church will appoint a Volunteer Service Administrator through the Church Nominating Committee process.
- 8.2. The Volunteer Service Administrator shall be responsible for implementing and carrying out the provisions of this Plan, including administration of the Church's background screening and training program. In this regard, the specific responsibilities of the Volunteer Service Administrator shall include:
  - 8.2.1. Assisting the applicable Church body or person in the recruitment of appropriate Volunteers to participate in Ministry programs, which shall include: reviewing applications, communicating with personal references, completing the Church's training and background screening, and notifying the appropriate Ministry leader and the Volunteer in question when the process is complete. (The Volunteer Service Administrator shall work directly with the Church Pastor in the final notification process if the notification is of anything other than the proposed Volunteer having passed the background screening process.)
  - 8.2.2. Coordinating training and orientation activities for Volunteers.
  - 8.2.3. Serving as the Church's liaison with the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in regard to Volunteer selection and management.
  - 8.2.4. Periodically reviewing the compliance of all Volunteers with this Plan.
  - 8.2.5. Periodically reporting to the Church Board on the Church's compliance with this Plan.

## **9. Procedures to Protect Minors Generally.**

- 9.1. The Guidelines, as adopted by the Church, are intended to be of universal application, designed to protect Minors from unknown persons who pose a risk of desiring to abuse or otherwise harm those Minors.
- 9.2. The Church will take appropriate steps to protect Minors from persons in the congregation who are Known Sexual Offenders.
  - 9.2.3. Such steps may include, in those cases where the Church deems it appropriate, a participation agreement whereby the person in question agrees in writing to specified conditions on the person's attendance in the activities of the Church. Any such agreement shall be submitted to the Conference Vice President for Human Resources for his or her approval prior to its execution by the parties.

CERTIFICATE OF CHURCH CLERK

I certify that I am the duly elected and acting Clerk of the Parkwood Seventh-day Adventist Church, that the above Child Protection Plan was adopted by the Parkwood Seventh-day Adventist Church Board at a duly called and held meeting of that Board on May 13, 2013, and that the above Child Protection Plan has not been amended or modified since that time.

Executed on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_, California.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Church Clerk)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name of Church Clerk)