

POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT (adopted February 14, 2011)

Huff's Union Church Inc, Huff's Evangelical Lutheran Inc, Huff's United Church of Christ
(Hereafter known as the Church) 540 Conrad Road Albury PA 18011

STATEMENT OF POLICY. It is the policy of the Church that sexual harassment and misconduct will not be tolerated. Any complaint of this conduct will be dealt with quickly and confidentially. Our policy applies to clergy, staff, volunteers and all participants in Huff's Church sponsored events. The intent of this Policy statement is to make certain that responses to any allegation of this conduct will be just and compassionate.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT

Sexual harassment and misconduct refers to behavior which is not welcome to the recipient and that is personally offensive. There are many forms of offensive behavior including, but not limited to:

Unwelcome sexual advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures

Deliberate assaults or molestation

Questions or comments about sexual behavior

Gender based harassment

Undesired physical contact

Inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance

Persistent sexually-oriented humor or language

Continued or repeated jokes, language, epithets or remarks of a sexual nature

Causing another person to engage in a sexual act by threatening that other person, placing that other person in fear or asserting undue influence over that other person

Providing or displaying pornographic media to a person below the age permitted by law

Any attempt to engage in or perform any of the above.

Any additional activity that is covered either by Federal or State laws.

PRACTICES In qualifying all Clergy, staff, and volunteers desiring to work with minors, the Church will require a completed and signed Church Worker Application Form.

In addition to the Church Worker Application Form:

1-All Clergy and staff shall provide information so the church may run a background check on the applicant seeking employment at Huff's Church. Random background checks may be performed after the applicant has been hired.

2-Prior to a volunteer beginning any direct supervision of minors and chaperones of any youth overnight event, the volunteer must be known and affiliated with the Church for 6 months and shall provide information so the church may run a background check on the applicant seeking employment at Huff's Church. Random background checks may be performed after if the volunteer continues to work with Huff's minors. Follow-up Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Checks and Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearances may be requested any time on all Clergy, staff, and volunteers working with minors.

Clear photocopies of the original documents including a copy of the signed permission for the background check, plus a copy of the background check will be kept in a locked file in the Church office for review by the pastor and or person(s) authorized by Union Council to work with such confidential documents.

Anyone convicted of committing child abuse, whether physical, emotional, or sexual, will not be considered, under any circumstances, for a position involving contact with minors.

All Clergy, staff and volunteers working with minors and all participants in Huff's sponsored events, whether adults or minors shall abide by the Youth Protection Policy of Huff's Union Church.

REPORTING Any person who believes that they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or misconduct, or have a sexual harassment or misconduct issue reported to them should report it immediately to:

The President of the Union Council or his/her designated representative; or

The senior pastor of the Church.

Reports involving clergy, pastors in care, student pastors, or a rostered lay person shall also be promptly reported to both the Bishop of the ELCA and the UCC Conference Minister.

If required by law, ordinance, or similar regulations, the person who received the accusation shall report it immediately to the proper authorities listed below and follow-up with notifying the person(s) as listed above. Children & Youth Services of Berks County 1-866-777-8780 receives allegations of child abuse or neglect. An assessment will be made to assure the child's safety and determine if further investigation or services are needed.

Pennsylvania State Police to report criminal activity - 911

INVESTIGATION When the incident involves a minor or charges are filed with legal authorities, the authorities will conduct the investigation. If the charges involve a minor, the Clergy, staff person, or volunteer will be promptly suspended from any work involving minors until investigation and response are completed.

An incident of sexual harassment and misconduct that is not being investigated by legal authorities, will be promptly investigated with confidentiality, care, and concern for all involved by a committee of four people composed of the senior pastor, and the presidents of the Union Council, United Church of Christ Consistory, and Evangelical Lutheran Church or their designated representatives. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

The Church will provide support during the investigation and response including advising those involved of counseling resources.

RESPONSE The Committee will review the investigation results and when deemed necessary, will seek legal counsel to assist in the investigation and response. If the individual is convicted of misconduct involving a minor, termination of position as Clergy or staff at the Church shall follow promptly. A volunteer convicted of charges of misconduct involving a minor will be suspended from working with children at the Church.

In cases other than conviction of misconduct involving a minor, recommendations for action will be developed and the Committee will take appropriate action. The action taken will depend on the severity of the situation. The Committee upon reaching a course of action, will meet separately with the person filing the complaint and then with the accused to communicate the results and resolution in writing. The Committee may recommend a course of action that may include reprimand with defined expectations for changed behavior, counseling, education, or disciplinary action including probation or dismissal from employment or volunteer leadership position.

If a complaint is not substantiated, all parties will be informed in writing. The Church will not engage in or tolerate retaliation against any clergy person, lay employee, or volunteer for making a good faith claim of misconduct or harassment or providing information relating to such complaints during an investigation.

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY This policy shall be given to and reviewed and signed annually by the Church's clergy, staff, members of the Union Church Council, any volunteer prior to working with a minor, and others as the Church may determine to ensure their understanding and support of this policy. Their signature below indicates that the individual has reviewed, understands and supports this policy statement.

In addition, the Church shall periodically publicize this Policy to all its members and volunteers through church newsletters and other appropriate forms of communication.

APPROVAL

The Union Council Huff's Union Church has approved this policy as of February 14, 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REVIEW AND RECEIPT OF COPY ON _____
DATE

Print name _____

Signature _____

Witness by Church Representative _____