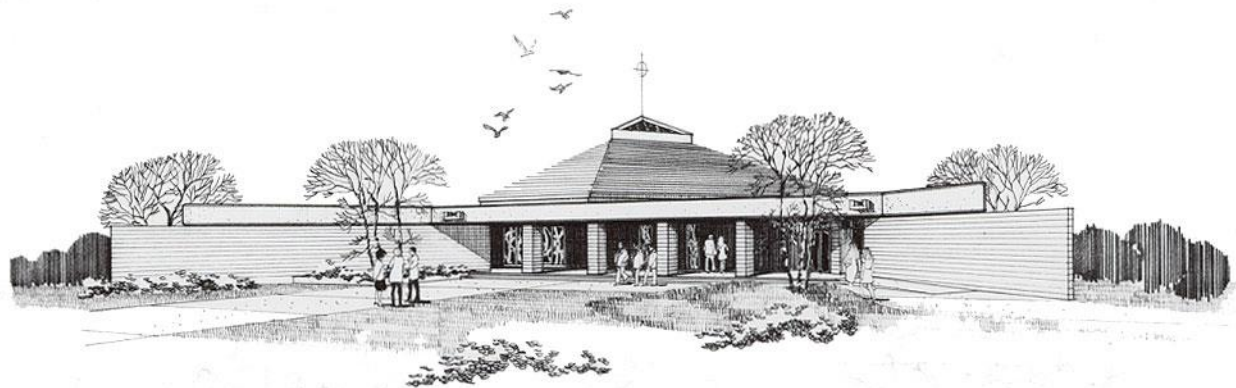


Woodland Presbyterian Church



Safe Ministry Policy

(September 2012)
(Amended June 2018)

1324 Columbia Drive
Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 662-5254

Woodland Presbyterian Church

Safe Ministry Policy

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Introduction:

The congregation of Woodland Presbyterian Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children (0-12 years), youth (12-18 years), vulnerable adults (those elderly or are dependent adults), and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church.

Jesus, time and time again, spoke of the importance of young people being included and provided for within the community of faith. Our hope and belief today is that the church is a place where children, youth, and vulnerable adults will find the unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow and thrive.

Sadly, the abuse of children and vulnerable adults happens all too frequently. Abuse often happens in settings where people should be able to feel safe—in homes, schools, camps, and even at Church. Abuse does occur in churches, large and small, rural and urban. It is a problem which cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. It is real.

Purpose:

God has given us a sacred opportunity and great responsibility to nurture and protect children and youth and the persons who work with them. Our Church bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of safe sanctuary for them. Thus, we establish this Safe Ministry Policy to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of this group of individuals.

It is the purpose of this policy first to protect the people who come to us. The second purpose of this policy is to protect our staff, both paid and volunteer, from unfounded and/or malicious allegations of abuse. We do the best we can to ensure this policy is followed, realizing we depend on volunteers and the policy is administrated by volunteers.

I. Policies and Procedures When Working With Children and Youth

The following policies and procedures govern all volunteers and paid staff members who work with children and youth (0 to 18 years of age). Occasional volunteers (defined as those volunteers working under the direct supervision of screened volunteers or a paid staff member) are exempted from the following:

1. There will be an annual orientation (usually electronically or hard copy) for volunteers and paid staff during which they will be informed of the following as needed:
 - The church's policies for the prevention of child abuse
 - Safety procedures to be used in all ministries with children and youth
 - Appropriate steps to report an incident of suspected child abuse (see Reporting Child Abuse section)
 - Review state laws regarding child abuse

All volunteers and mandated reporters (state or church) will advise the church office manager by email they have read and understood the training materials. The church will keep an updated record that it has informed all of its volunteers and paid staff about its policies.

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2. First Aid/CPR training will be provided to all paid staff who work with children and/or youth. At all church sponsored events involving children and/or youth, at least one paid staff or volunteer with first aid and CPR training will be present whenever possible. Copies of the training certificates shall be kept in the church office.
3. All paid staff and volunteers who work with children and/or youth will fill out an application for the position and will have their fingerprints recorded and checked by the California Department of Justice. If there is a conviction for child abuse on the Department of Justice record, this person may not serve as a volunteer or paid staff with children and/or youth. The church will check the volunteer applicant against the Megan's Law website (www.meganslaw.ca.gov) and other databases, as appropriate. Volunteers must present a California driver's license or other government picture identification verifying the volunteer's identity.
4. The "Two Adults Rule" will apply whenever possible. No fewer than two volunteers and/or paid staff should be present at all times during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and/or youth. If two adults are not present, doors to meeting rooms should be left open, and a "roamer" will be assigned to drop in where they are gathered.
5. At any one-on-one counseling session with children and/or youth, the door to the counseling office will remain open.
6. The windows in the doors of all classrooms or meeting rooms where children and/or youth meet must be uncovered. If there are no windows, the doors will remain open.
7. All screened volunteers involved with children and/or youth must have been actively involved in the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
8. The "Five-Years-Older Rule" will apply. Any screened volunteer or paid staff recruited or hired to work with children and/or youth should be at least five years older than any of the children or youth with whom he/she will work, unless specifically reviewed and approved by the Session.
9. All screened volunteers and paid staff should be eighteen years of age or older unless specifically reviewed and approved by the Session.
10. Parents or guardians will be given advance notice and full information about events in which their child will be participating. Parents must give written permission for their child's participation in off-site events. Please see attached sample permission slip. Parents will be provided with names of chaperones and contact information, if requested by parents.
11. Any volunteer who transports children and/or youth in his/her own car or in a car belonging to the church or another church member will be at least 25 years of age or older, have at least three years' driving experience, provide a copy of a valid California driver's license, and provide a copy of a valid insurance card. The following minimum insurance coverage is desired: \$100,000 liability per person, \$300,000 per occurrence, \$50,000 property damage, and \$1,000 medical coverage.
12. Whenever possible, there should be at least three persons in the vehicle when transporting children and youth, including when there is one child left to be dropped off at home after an event.

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13. Church staff and volunteers shall conduct themselves with the intent to find balance between positive and appropriate interaction and avoiding physical or verbal contact that may be threatening or demeaning. Depending on the age of the individual, examples of *appropriate* interaction may include (but not limited to):

- Brief hugs or side hugs
- Pats on the back or shoulders
- Handshakes, high fives
- Arm around the shoulders
- Holding hands with young children to guide them

Inappropriate actions may include (but not limited to):

- Frontal hugs
- Prolonged touching
- Comments regarding a physique or physical development
- Sexual advances – verbal or physical
- Obscene materials in any form of media

II. Policies and Procedures When Working Vulnerable Adults

California defines vulnerable adult abuse as physical abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction, or other behavior that causes physical harm, pain, or mental suffering; or deprivation by a caregiver of things or services that the vulnerable adult needs to avoid physical harm or mental suffering.

Reality check. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, the lifetime prevalence of abuse for vulnerable adults reaches as high as 90 percent. Those with greater degrees of disability are more likely to have been abused at some point.

Behavioral Indicators

- Hostile
- Aggressive
- Destructive
- Secretive
- Wary of contact
- Clingy
- Showing signs of depression, apathy, substance abuse, sleeping or eating disorders
- Toileting accidents

Other Indicators of Possible Abuse

- Individual states that injury caused by abuse
- Inadequate supervision
- Injuries are not typical for the individuals age or ability
- Guardian does not seek medical attention for injuries
- Injuries that are inconsistent with the explanation provided for the injury

In general, the safety policies and procedures applicable to children and youth pertain to vulnerable adults, including the two-person rule.

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III. Reporting Abuse

It is the policy of the Woodland Presbyterian Church that any volunteer or staff member who works with children, youth or vulnerable adults is required to report suspected abuse.

The PC(USA) Book of Order, G4.0302, mandates that any member engaged in ordered ministry (teaching elders, ruling elders, deacons, and certified Christian educators) report suspected abuse, neglect, or molestation to ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Note that California mandated reporters must be employees, but PC(USA) mandated reporters include church officers/elders.

At any church activity, if a volunteer or staff member suspects the abuse or neglect of a child, youth or vulnerable adult, whether it has occurred at the activity or prior to the activity, that person must report his/her suspicions to the leader of the activity or the church pastor, who will inform the church Safety Committee (see below for makeup of the Safety Committee). If proper, the leader of the activity or the pastor will notify the alleged victim's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Note: Personally, secure the safety of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Do not leave the child, youth or vulnerable adult alone to report the incident.

At least two adults present at the activity will conduct an immediate review of the situation and together they must ascertain the details needed to make an incident report without interrogating or confronting either the victim or alleged abuser. Note the goal is not to investigate or try to determine the truth of any allegations but is only to gather information as noted below. This incident report must be made within 24 hours or immediately upon return to the church if the activity is off site. Filling out the church form to report an incident does not restrict or interfere with a California mandated reporter contacting the county's Child Protective Service (CPS) (for Yolo County the numbers for CPS are 530-669-2345 or 530-666-6612) or Adult Protective Services (530-661-2955) as may be required by California law. Note: Mandated reporters under California law must make a verbal report to civil authorities immediately or as soon as practical and file a written report within 36 hours using California DOJ Form SS 8572. Mandated reporters under PC(USA) rules may be asked to make a written report.

The Safety Committee will consist of members of the Personnel Committee, the pastor, the youth elder, the child care elder, the Sunday school elder, and the preschool supervisor. This team may meet at least annually to review procedures, prior to the annual volunteer training.

IV. Response Plan

The church pastor will contact the appropriate agency. If the pastor is not available in a timely manner, a member of the Safety Committee will contact the appropriate agency. The date and time of notification should be noted on the incident form. A copy of the information reported should be kept at the church and considered confidential.

If the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is providing ministry to children, youth or vulnerable adult under the auspices of the Woodland Presbyterian Church, he/she will be required to refrain from all events involving children, youth, or vulnerable adult until the incident report is resolved. In any removal of a person from any activities, care must be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.

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A quick, compassionate, and unified response to an alleged incident of abuse is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in an activity, the entire staff of that activity will cooperate with the investigating agencies.

The Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church will be notified of any alleged incident of abuse by paid staff or volunteers.

Appendix A
Recommended Volunteer Recruitment Procedure

**Woodland Presbyterian Church
Children and Youth Ministry
Recommended Volunteer Recruitment Procedure**

1. The appropriate church leader recruits volunteer(s) with the advice of the pastor, including a discussion of the gifts and graces of the volunteer(s).
2. The volunteer fills out an application/disclosure form after approval of the pastor and discusses it with the appropriate church leader.
3. The application is reviewed by the appropriate church leader with the advice of the pastor or his/her designee. All “yes” answers on the disclosure form will be considered in this review.
4. The volunteer submits his/her fingerprints to the Department of Justice using the Livescan process, available at the Yolo County Sheriff’s Department on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm (by appointment only). The Sheriff’s Department takes cash, cashier’s checks, or personal checks. No credit cards.
5. When the Department of Justice report is returned, the pastor will advise the leader, and the volunteer may begin if the Livescan report is clear.

Appendix B

Forms

- SCREENED VOLUNTEER AND PAID STAFF DISCLOSURE
- INCIDENT REPORT FORM (SUSPECTED ABUSE/NEGLECT)
- VOLUNTEER APPLICATION
- YOUTH ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM
- DRIVER'S INSURANCE VERIFICATION
- CHILD AND YOUTH MINISTRY COVENANT

**Woodland Presbyterian Church
Screened Volunteer and Paid Staff Disclosure Form**

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

CA driver's license number (if driving) or other picture ID _____

Auto Insurance company policy number (if driving) _____

Position of Service _____

The congregation of Woodland Presbyterian Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and youth, staff and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. We require disclosures by all persons who will be working with these groups. All those who wish to work/volunteer as youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, or drivers of such persons must fill out this form completely and return it to the appropriate church leader. This form will be retained in the church office.

History *(Please answer yes or no to each question, and attach an explanation for each "yes" answer)*

1. Have you ever been convicted for the possession, use, or sale of drugs within the past five years? _____
2. Have you ever been convicted of, or charged with, a crime against children or other persons? _____
3. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor other than traffic offenses? _____
4. Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and/or youth? _____
5. Has your driver's license been suspended or revoked within the past three years? _____
6. Within the past 30 days, have you abused alcohol or illegal drugs? _____
7. Have you ever been reviewed by church and/or secular bodies and been restricted from involvement with children and/or youth, or been restricted from children and/or youth ministry? _____

I certify that the information I have provided is true and correct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Woodland Presbyterian Church
Incident Report Form (Suspected Abuse/Neglect)
(Please print all information)

Date of Incident _____

Time of Incident _____

Name of person involved _____

(A separate form should be completed for each person involved in order to keep the information confidential)

Gender (circle one) M F

Birth date or age of the victim _____

Address of victim _____

Phone number of alleged victim _____

Name of parent(s) or guardian(s) _____

Location of incident _____

Name(s) of person(s) who witnessed the incident *(continue on reverse if needed)*:

Name _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Phone _____

Please describe the incident as seen/heard and actions taken *(continue on reverse if needed)*:

If abuse or neglect, is there evidence of previously or suspected abuse or neglect of the victim or siblings?

If incident is alleged abuse or neglect, give alleged perpetrator's name, address, phone number, and relationship to alleged victim

Include any additional information that may be helpful to an investigation on the back of this report.

Signature of first person completing the form

Date

Signature of first person completing the form

Date

(Upon completion of this form, give to the pastor or a member the church Safety Committee for appropriate action.)

Date/time of notification if CPS notified _____

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION
Woodland Presbyterian Church

VOLUNTEER POSITION: _____ DATE: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ HOME OR CELL PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Please complete the following:

PRESENT EMPLOYER: _____

TITLE: _____ DATES WORKED: _____

VOLUNTEER HISTORY

ORGANIZATION: _____ DATES VOLUNTEERED: _____

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____ DATES VOLUNTEERED: _____

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES: _____

Please list other experience or skills which support this volunteer position. Include your education, hobbies, and computer experience. Please list two personal references. Use back of form if you need more space.

Are you CPR/First Aid certified? _____ Expiration Date _____

Applicant's Signature

Date

Woodland Presbyterian Church
1324 Columbia Drive
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Youth Activity Permission Form

Activity: _____

Date of Activity: _____

Minor's Name: _____

Minor's Address: _____

I, _____, the parent or legal guardian of the above-named minor, hereby give my permission for his/her participation in the youth activities named above. I agree to direct my child to cooperate and conform to directions and instructions of personnel responsible for the activities.

I agree that in the event my child is injured as a result of his/her participation in the above-named activities, including transportation to and from these activities, whether or not caused by the negligence (active or passive) of the activity or the church program, or any of its agents or employees; recourse for the payment of any hospital, medical, dental, or related costs and expenses will be paid either by me or my spouse, accident, hospital or medical insurance, or any available benefit plan of mine or my spouse.

I consent to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, or surgical diagnosis or treatment and hospital care under the general or special supervision and upon the advice of or to be rendered by a licensed physical, surgeon, and dentist. As parent or legal guardian, I am responsible for the health care decisions of my child and am authorized to consent to services to be rendered, and no other consent is required by law.

I hereby give permission to the physician or dentist selected by the activities supervisory personnel then present to render medical treatment deemed necessary and appropriate by the physician or dentist.

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature Date

Print Name of Parent or Legal Guardian Relationship

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Contact Person (other than parent): _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Name & Phone of Primary Doctor: _____

Health Plan & Policy Number: _____

Allergies or Medicine Allergy: _____

**Woodland Presbyterian Church
1324 Columbia Drive
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(530)662-5254**

DRIVER'S INSURANCE VERIFICATION

I, _____, agree to utilize my vehicle, a

_____ to transport members of the Youth Group to and
(Year) (Make) (Model)

from church field trips at the request of the church. I certify I have the legally mandated insurance. [Note: The church strongly recommends that you have a minimum of \$100,000 liability per person, \$300,000 per occurrence, and \$50,000 property damage with minimum medical coverage of \$1,000.] I understand that when transporting Youth Group members, there should be a minimum of three persons in the vehicle.

To drive on a field trip, the church must have on file the following:

1. _____
Valid California License Number and Expiration Date

2. _____
Insurance Company and Policy Number

Signed _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

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Child and Youth Ministry Covenant

As a volunteer working with children and/or youth in this congregation, I agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth, to observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times, to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to my volunteer assignment, and to report promptly abusive or inappropriate behavior to the church staff member who supervises my work.

Signature of Applicant

Printed Full Name

Date