

# Youth Ministry

(7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades)

## Policies and Procedures Handbook

Approved by Knox Session on 4/27/99

Revised by Knox Session on 4/23/02

Revised by Knox Session on 2/25/2014

Knox Presbyterian Church

2065 S. Wagner Rd.

Ann Arbor, MI 48103

734-761-5669

## Personnel Screening, Orientation and Supervisory Procedures

1. All paid and volunteer staff must complete the screening procedures as outlined below.
2. All volunteers with the youth ministry must be members or regular attendees of Knox Church for at least six months.
3. Volunteers, who serve in an incidental capacity, such as food service or planning events, are not required to complete a screening process. However, they should be involved in the life of Knox church and be known in the community.
4. Individuals convicted of any offense(s) involving criminal sexual behavior are not permitted to serve in a church sponsored activity or program for minors.
5. Individuals convicted of a criminal offense (excepting #4 above) *might be permitted* to serve with the youth ministry *only* after additional interviews with and approval by a minimum of three church leaders (Pastors, elders); one of which will be the Youth Director.
6. Procedures for hiring volunteer staff and interns include:

### Application and Screening<sup>1</sup>

- a. The applicant completes the Youth Ministry Application for volunteer/intern staff, including two character references.
  - b. The applicant has an interview with the Youth Director.
  - c. The church completes a Criminal History Check and a Driving History Check.
  - d. The applicant is given and reviews the Youth Ministry Policy and Procedures Handbook, completes the checklist and signs the ministry agreement.
  - e. The applicant will attend training in Policy and Procedures the year they begin volunteering and every 3<sup>rd</sup> year thereafter; at which time a Criminal History Check and Driving History Check will be re-run.
  - f. The volunteer will receive ongoing training in their area of ministry.
7. Individuals who will serve in temporary non-teaching roles (eg. Detroit tutoring drivers, Knox Futbol Coaches) will complete letters c, d and e from number 6 above.
  8. Small group leaders will be appointed by the Youth Director only.
  9. The Youth Director is responsible for making sure behavior and performance of volunteers is monitored, regular History Checks are conducted, and ongoing training in ministry and Policy and Procedures occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> The Youth Director, Senior Pastor and office staff assisting with processing the applications will be the only individuals with access to any information about staff. All documents will be kept in a locked cabinet and all information kept confidential.

## Policies for Participant Safety

### Building/Event Safety

1. Knox Youth staff is responsible for overseeing student meetings during authorized Knox events. Authorized Knox events are planned by the youth staff (or students with staff direction); are supervised by Youth Ministry staff; are recorded on the Knox calendar; and have clearly defined beginning and ending times. Knox youth staff is not responsible when students gather immediately after a Knox event has ended.
2. Christian Education teachers may take their class outdoors. However, a note must be left on the classroom door noting their location.
3. Youth remain the responsibility of their parents or host during activities where there is no programming specifically designed for them (potluck dinners). Knox Church is not responsible for the safety of children on Knox property when programs are not scheduled.
4. Annual Fire drills and Tornado training will be conducted once in the fall of each year during the Christian Education hour and once on a Wednesday night for all youth present. Procedures in the *Youth Ministry Emergency Evacuation Plan* will be followed [**Attachment 1**]. The timing will correspond to the drills done by CE.
5. The use of alcohol, tobacco products or illegal drugs is prohibited on Knox property and at any time during a Knox authorized activity or trip.
6. All balls must be kept in the locked closet found in the gym. The closet may be opened only with the permission of an adult supervisor, in order to distribute the balls for usage. Balls may be used for sporting activities including kickball, basketball, soccer, dodge ball and general play. It is understood that there is a chance of damage caused by these activities. The adult supervisor shall articulate expectations for appropriate ball use, interrupt unnecessarily risky behavior, assure balls are locked up after use, and report any breakage to the property supervisor.

### Health and Disease Prevention

1. All Youth will complete a Medical Authorization and Health History form annually.
2. All staff working with youth will follow the *Universal Precautions* [**Attachment 2**], in the event of injury resulting in the presence of blood or bodily fluids. Training will be provided to staff at orientation every three years. Documentation of training topics, date and signatures of those present will be on file.
3. Based on specific principles set forth in the Bible (e.g. love of neighbor, Leviticus 19:18; care of the sick and wounded, Luke 10:29-36) it is the position of Knox church that we should minister, in love and acceptance, to all persons, in all conditions, without discrimination, including those with or affected by AIDS, HIV or Hepatitis B or C. In order to best protect the infected child and other children and staff: Parents who enroll their child in any Knox program must advise the Youth Director of any known infectious disease.

## Illness and Injury

1. Fully equipped first aid kit will be available in the youth ministry area.
2. Parents will be notified of any injury sustained while their child was participating in a Knox-sponsored event: immediately if the injury is significant (any head injury or one that involves bleeding or severe pain), or when the child is picked up, if it is not serious.
3. The staff member who witnessed the injury will complete an *Accident/Injury Report Form* [Attachment 3], will have the parent sign it and submit it to the event coordinator who will submit it to the Youth Director within 48 hours. The event coordinator will make a follow-up phone call to check on the child's condition. The Youth Director then will submit the signed Accident/Injury report form to the office manager who will contact the church's insurance company if necessary.
4. If a child becomes significantly ill or injured, (experiences respiratory distress, chest pain, choking, convulsions, severe bleeding, or is suspected to have broken a bone or ingested a poisonous substance) and direct contact cannot be made with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s), the ministry coordinator will arrange to transport a child to a medical facility or call 911. 911 must be called immediately whenever there is a potentially life-threatening situation or severe physical trauma.

## Travel and Transportation Safety

1. All Knox vehicles must be scheduled in advance for use and are available for church functions only. The responsible party will need to follow the procedure for completing a Vehicle Reservation Request and submit it to the Office Manager. Vehicles are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis, with the understanding that Youth Ministry has the privilege of overriding a scheduled reservation with a minimum of one-month notice. This policy protects our youth from unnecessary carpooling by teen drivers.
2. In the event of a scheduling conflict, adult ministries will have to:
  - a. Use vehicles of church members
  - b. Rent and incur the cost of other transportation
  - c. Reschedule the event
3. The cost of gas for use of church vehicles is covered by individual ministry budgets. Parties using church vehicles must refill the gas tank after each use and submit the receipt to the Office Manager for reimbursement.
4. All drivers of a church owned vehicle or personal vehicle being used for a church function must be 21 years of age, have passed a Driver History Check and a Criminal History Check.
5. All drivers must have a satisfactory driving record as verified by the Secretary of State.
6. Drivers are responsible to adhere to all policies identified in the *Transportation Safety Procedures* [Attachment 4].
7. A Transportation Coordinator will see that all vehicles are properly maintained and that registration

and insurance information and a stocked first aid kit are available in each vehicle.

### **Knox-Sponsored Activities**

1. All church-sponsored off-site activities must be cleared through the Youth Director and placed on the church-wide calendar. Information about the activity should be published at least two weeks in advance of the event.
2. Church-sponsored off-site activities are subject to all applicable Knox policies.
3. All activities will be open to parental observation.
4. Significant appearance-altering activity such as hair cutting or coloring, body piercing or tattooing will not be allowed.
5. The use of audio, visual or printed materials inappropriate for a Christian youth setting will not be allowed. Permission for use of audio, visual or printed materials not included in established church curriculum shall be approved by the Youth Director.
6. Parents of youth must give written permission for each overnight trip or retreat their child attends.
7. A copy of Medical Authorization and Health History forms must be available in each vehicle for any out of town events. Signed Parent Permission slips will remain in the Knox office.
8. Coordinators of off-site overnight events must have with them a pre-established parent phone chain in the event of a delayed return or change of plans.
9. Youth attending a Knox-sponsored event shall not be permitted to participate in activities not previously scheduled and for which permission has not been granted by their parent(s)/guardian(s). Exceptions to this policy may include activities such as stopping for food or emergencies, which are required for the safety or health of the entire group.
10. All individuals working with children shall follow the *Discipline Policy for Knox Church* outlined in **[Attachment 5]**.

### Policies to Reduce the Risk of Child Abuse

1. Individuals accused of any offense(s) involving assaultive and/or criminal sexual behavior are not permitted to serve during the course of any investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, provided no criminal charges are filed and upon a thorough review of the circumstances surrounding the accusations, the individual may serve again at the discretion of the Session in consultation with the Youth Director.
2. Training and written information regarding child physical and/or sexual abuse will be provided to the Youth Ministry staff when they are accepted to a staff position and will be reviewed, at a minimum, every three years. This will include *Definitions and Indicators of Sexual Abuse and Responding to a Child's Report of Abuse*. [Attachments 7 & 8] Documentation of training date, topic and volunteer signature will be on file.
3. The Youth Ministry staff will strive to maintain the following adult to student ratios at all Knox sponsored events, recognizing that on occasion the child to staff/adult ratio may be higher due to unexpected events or higher than expected student participation. Junior Staff working in the middle school program may be included in the child to staff ratio. All overnight events will be conducted only with the following ratio as indicated and will always include a minimum of two unmarried adult staff.

Age	Child to staff/adult ratio For weekly programming	Child to staff/adult ratio For off-site/overnight events
Middle/High School	12:1	8:1

4. Appropriate displays of affection between adult leaders and youth that convey support and encouragement are considered acceptable. Such displays of affection should be limited to a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or a light touch to the forearm, etc.
5. Knox adult ministry staff are prohibited from dating minors involved in Knox church programs.
6. All staff are strongly discouraged from transporting individual minors. If the situation cannot be avoided, every effort should be made to acquire prior parental permission.
7. It is expected that volunteers and students will meet in public places except under the situations outlined in number nine (9) below.
8. Caution and discernment should be exercised by staff and volunteers when using email, Facebook messaging, Texting, Twitter, Instagram and other electronic message systems to communicate with students. All electronic communication should be viewed as public information. Staff and volunteers who find themselves uneasy about the time spent communicating with a student online or with the nature of the electronic relationship with a student should stop this form of communication and immediately inform the Youth Director regarding the extent and nature of the electronic communications. If the Youth Director directly or indirectly becomes aware of issues surrounding the nature of or quantity of electronic communications between a staff member/volunteer and a student he/she will discuss and review the communication history with the staff member/volunteer in question.

9. Small groups and mentoring relationships are an important component to the Knox youth ministry. In order to allow this significant ministry to occur, the following guidelines apply. Some of these guidelines, as indicated by (\*), are exceptions to previously stated policy.
- a. All Small Group Leaders and Mentors are selected by the Youth Director and go through the Youth Ministry Application process (see page 1, #6).
  - b. Parents will be notified first, regarding the possibility of their child participating in a small group or mentoring relationship.
  - c. A parents' meeting will be held between parents and the small group leader prior to the meeting with students in order to address any questions.
  - d. If a student agrees to participate in a Knox Youth Ministry sanctioned small group or long-term mentoring relationship, they and their parents will sign a release form. This form will highlight the following policies: [**Attachment 6**]
    - i. Small groups and their leaders will be of the same gender. \*
    - ii. Students may be transported to and from events by the small group leader, other parents and on occasion other students. Individual students may be transported by individual adults. It is the parents' responsibility to know how their child is getting to and from each event, so that they are comfortable with the arrangements. \*
    - iii. On occasion, the small group leader may invite other adults to participate with the small group in order to discuss particular topics.
    - iv. Small group leaders may plan overnight events. Medical release forms need to accompany any overnight event. Overnights will follow youth ministry guidelines of 8:1 ratio and two adults of the same gender as the students.
    - v. Parents understand that, on occasion, small group leaders may meet with individual students in homes or non-public places. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure they are comfortable with the situation. \*
    - vi. Students will most likely communicate with small group leaders via social media, texting, etc. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure they are comfortable with the situation.

### Policies for Reporting Child Abuse

1. Matters involving child physical and/or sexual abuse are governed by State Law: Michigan Penal Code and Child Protection Law. The agencies enforcing these laws are the Family Independence Agency (FIA) and Law Enforcement.
2. All paid and volunteer youth staff, officers, church leaders or anyone in a position representing Knox Church are required to report any suspected instances or symptoms of child abuse to the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Director or the Senior Pastor. The reporting person shall document all disclosed details pursuant to Attachment 8, however he/she shall not do anything to substantiate the alleged/suspected abuse. Indicators for identifying abuse are included in **[Attachment 7]**.
3. If the Youth Director receives a report of suspected abuse, s/he will inform the Senior Pastor.
4. Upon receiving a report of suspected abuse, the Senior Pastor (or his designee) will document in writing the reported incident/indicators, as well as all efforts on the part of the church to respond. Further, the Senior Pastor (or his designee) will take one or more of the following actions:
  - a. Review the report in conjunction with the definitions and indicators of abuse found in Attachment 7, the Michigan Penal Code, and the Child Protection Law (available in the office of the Director of Children's Ministries).
  - b. Contact FIA and/or Law Enforcement if the reported incident falls within the definitions and /or indicators.
  - c. If it is unclear whether the matter falls within the definitions and/or indicators, the senior pastor (or his designee) should consult with FIA and/or Law Enforcement.
5. If a report is filed with FIA and/or Law Enforcement, the Senior Pastor (or his designee) will:
  - a. Inform the person who initially reported the incident that a report has been made with FIA and/or Law Enforcement.
  - b. Offer prayer, counseling and referrals as needed.
  - c. Inform the church's attorney and insurance company per their requirements.
  - d. Convene an Abuse Response Team (ART) consisting of himself, a paid staff member, an elder, a church member with professional experience related to this matter (if available) and the church's legal counsel in order to monitor the matter.
  - e. If deemed appropriate after consulting with FIA and/or Law Enforcement, the Senior Pastor (or his designee) and at least one other ART member will contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) regarding the report.
6. In a case of alleged abuse, the church will provide appropriate and necessary assistance to the victim, the offender, Child Protective Services and the local law enforcement agencies.
7. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible while it is consistent with meeting legal duties and extending spiritual, psychological and emotional support for individuals involved.



## Policies for Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

### Dealing with the Alleged Perpetrator

1. After a report of abuse is made, and after consulting with FIA and/or Law Enforcement, two ART members will contact the alleged perpetrator. The alleged perpetrator will be suspended from participating in all service roles in the church until an investigation is completed by the proper authorities.
2. If the allegations are found to be false and/or no criminal charges have been filed, the suspension on service may be lifted, subject to the approval of the ART.
3. If criminal charges are made, the perpetrator must continue under the suspension on service. Session members will be informed and a written charge shall be filed with the Clerk of Session to commence the appropriate disciplinary procedures according to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Book of Discipline. If the alleged perpetrator is a pastor, the charge will be filed with the Clerk of Presbytery.
4. The Abuse Response Team (ART) will refer the alleged perpetrator and his/her family to a qualified Christian therapist for care and counseling. Additional pastoral care should be offered only after the matter is completely resolved.
5. After consultation with FIA and/or Law Enforcement, the ART, with the Session, will determine, whether any information should be communicated to the entire congregation. Any information shall be presented in a loving and gracious manner.

### Dealing with the Alleged Child Victim

1. Anyone who hears of alleged abuse from a child should follow the guidelines outlined in **Attachment 8**.
2. After the abuse allegation has been reported and investigated the ART (or members of the Session) will refer the child and his/her family to a qualified Christian therapist for care and counseling. Additional pastoral care may be provided by the ART (or members of the Session) if requested by the family, but discernment should be used regarding when and how that care is provided especially if criminal and/or civil charges against the alleged perpetrator are still being pursued.

### Dealing with the Media in the Event an Incident of Abuse becomes a Public Matter

1. When a matter becomes public record, one member of the Abuse Response Team (ART) will be designated to make any and all statements to the media.
2. The ART designee will consult with the Session, Knox legal counsel, FIA and/or Law Enforcement prior to any statements made to the media.
3. The ART designee will prepare a written statement, which will be reviewed and approved for publication by the ART, the Session and in consultation with legal advisors. This statement will include:
  - a. Acknowledgement of legal proceedings
  - b. Explanation of currently enforced Knox policies and procedures to prevent child abuse
  - c. Serious nature of such allegations and the serious attention it will receive
  - d. Request for patience and suspension of judgment until the matter is investigated
  - e. Request for prayers for all involved

*Approved by Knox Session on 4/27/99*

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# Policies and Procedures Attachments

1. ATTACHMENT 1: EVACUATION PLAN
2. ATTACHMENT 2: UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS
3. ATTACHMENT 3: ACCIDENT/INJURY REPORT FORM
4. ATTACHMENT 4: TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROCEDURES
5. ATTACHMENT 5: DISCIPLINE POLICY
6. ATTACHMENT 6: SMALL GROUP VOLUNTEER STAFF AND PARENT AGREEMENT FORM
7. ATTACHMENT 7: DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE
8. ATTACHMENT 8: RESPONDING TO A CHILD'S REPORT OF ABUSE

## **ATTACHMENT 1: YOUTH MINISTRY EVACUATION PLAN**

### **Turning Point and Light House Rooms (during Sundays - 2<sup>nd</sup> hour, and Wednesday nights)**

1. How to exit the building – **From the Children/Youth Wing**
  - a. One adult will usher students out leaving a remaining adult to check TP and LH rooms, bathrooms and stairwell for students.
  - b. Exit the building using the doors to the circular driveway.
  - c. Cross the driveway and head to the left.
  - d. Gather under the Marshalling Area sign, located on the light post at the right-hand corner of the parking lot.
  - e. Report any missing children to the Youth Director or Youth Ministry Associate.
  - f. Remain with children until parents come to pick them up.
2. How to exit the building – **From Knox Hall**
  - a. One adult will usher students out leaving a remaining adult to check Knox hall and bathrooms for students.
  - b. Exit the building through the doors by Knox Hall (upper level), and turn left into the parking lot.
  - c. Cross to the far-left corner of the lot (nearest the northern entrance from Wagner Rd) and stay together.
  - d. Report any missing children to the Youth Director or Youth Ministry Associate.
  - e. Remain with children until parents come to pick them up.

### **Shelter Areas**

In hazardous weather, such as a tornado, seek shelter in the nearest interior room on the lower level.

1. These are
  - a. In **the Children/Youth Wing**, the Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classrooms and bathrooms.
  - b. In **the Adult CE Wing**, the Gathering Place, Harvest and Hillside Rooms.
2. What to do
  - a. One adult will usher students out leaving a remaining adult to check for students.
  - b. Report any missing children to the Youth Ministry Director
  - c. Arrange children and adults in the room, asking all to remain calm and quiet, so you can hear any further instructions that may be given.
  - d. When the *all-clear* signal is given, remain with children until parents come to pick them up.

Instructions and maps of the evacuation routes and shelter areas are located in each room, near the door. Please take the time to look at these, ensuring that you understand where to go from the room in which you serve. Ask any of the Youth Ministry directors for clarification, as needed.

**ATTACHMENT 2: UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS**

Please see PDF on [website](#)

**ATTACHMENT 3: ACCIDENT/INJURY REPORT FORM**

**Accident/Injury Report Form**

Name of Person Injured \_\_\_\_\_ Date/ time of Accident or Injury \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Accident or Injury \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses of Accident or Injury \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation of Accident or Injury

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Explanation of Treatment or Response

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person reporting

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian  
(Acknowledging receipt of report)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **ATTACHMENT 4: TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROCEDURES**

*Knox Presbyterian Church owns one 15-passenger van. These vehicles are available for **Knox events only**. Before events are scheduled, availability of church transportation must be checked with the Administrative Assistant for Youth Ministry (734-761-5669 x.207 or youthdesk@knoxannarbor.org)*

#### **I. Driver Qualifications**

- Must be at least 21 years old. (No exceptions);
- Complete Criminal / Driver History Check Authorization, (copy attached).

#### **II. Driver Responsibilities**

1. Explain vehicle rules to passengers:
  - Seat belts required;
  - Remain seated during travel;
  - Do not throw anything out of windows;
  - Do not lean out of windows, (no arms, etc. out of windows);
  - Use trash bags in vehicle;
  - Doors must be locked during travel;
  - When the vehicle stops, passengers should remain seated until the driver gives verbal permission to exit the vehicle.
2. When transporting children in the elementary program or younger, an adult supervisor at least 21 years old (other than the driver) must be present in the vehicle.
3. Take a complete count of each person in your vehicle, including yourself, before starting a trip. You will need to make a recheck count before leaving each stop during the trip.
4. Driving will be in standard caravan style:
  - Single file line;
  - Headlights on;
  - Traveling the speed limit;
  - Keep the vehicle directly behind you in view at all times. We only travel as fast as the last vehicle in the caravan.
5. In case of emergency, call the lead van immediately. If you cannot reach via cell phone, flash your high beams at van in front of you. Pull over, when safe, to the right. Do not allow anyone to leave vehicle unless vehicle is unsafe.
6. In case of emergency or if you get lost, stay in one location and call your designated contact number (please prearrange with your group before leaving who the designated contact will be!).
7. Each vehicle also has current registration and proof of insurance. In the van, these are kept in the carry pouch attached to the driver's side overhead visor; in the bus they are in the overhead storage compartment at the front.

## **ATTACHMENT 5: DISCIPLINE POLICY FOR CHILDREN'S/YOUTH MINISTRY**

### **Discipline Policy for Knox Church Children's/ Youth Ministry**

**We seek to grow children in manifesting evidence of God's work in their lives. Situations involving misbehavior are an opportunity to help a child see his/her need for the Gospel more deeply. Staff shall use positive methods of discipline which encourage self-control, self-direction, regard for others, and cooperation, such as but not limited to:**

#### **Preventing Misbehavior**

1. Prepare lessons that are engaging, age-appropriate, and well planned.
2. Exercise adult authority in a loving and respectful manner using your voice, eyes, touch, and posture.
3. Arrange the furnishings so that children's developmental needs are met.
4. Be sure the children know the rules and what to expect when they do not follow them.
5. Look for reasons behind misbehavior. Observe the setting, time and other people present when a pattern of misbehavior develops.
6. Ignore behavior that will wear itself out. Do not ignore unsafe behavior.

#### **Dealing with Misbehavior:**

1. Move close to a troubled child and offer a gentle touch.
2. State a child's name firmly and look directly into the child's eyes.
3. Humor the child in a loving way to help him/her "save face."
4. Redirect the child to another activity.
5. Explain to the child what is happening, or ask him/her to say what is happening.
6. Explain to the child what the misbehavior is and why it's appropriate.
7. Let the child know how his/her behavior affects you or other children. "When You ----- I feel ----- because -----".
8. If a child continues to misbehave, remove the child from the group. Have him or her sit just outside the circle of activity.
9. If necessary, take the child into the hallway for a discussion about appropriate behavior. When able, invite a child to confess wrongdoing and examine motives that lead to wrongdoing. Help child think of ways to make up to an offended party, and encourage seeking forgiveness. Pray together, and assure of God's forgiveness and commitment.
10. Inform the child's parent when a time-out/ or conversation was necessary, and ask for their insight.
11. If there is an ongoing pattern of misbehavior or a significant incident, inform the Youth or Children's Ministry Director who will inform parents and solicit their involvement immediately or at a later time.
12. Non-severe discipline or restraint may be used when reasonably necessary, based on a child's development, to prevent a child from harming himself or herself or to prevent a child from harming other persons or property, excluding those forms of punishment prohibited below.

#### **Prohibited Methods of Discipline:**

1. Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting any form of corporal punishment.
2. Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
3. Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
4. Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
5. Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle.

**ATTACHMENT 6: SMALL GROUP VOLUNTEER STAFF AND PARENT AGREEMENT FORM**

Small Group Volunteer Staff and Parent Agreement Form

Small groups and discipleship relationships pose specific challenges in terms of supervision. In order to allow this significant ministry to occur, while protecting students and ministry volunteers, the following guidelines apply.

I, the parent of \_\_\_\_\_ understand that s/he will participate in the small group or discipleship relationship with Knox ministry volunteer/staff person \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ until I, my child or the leader give notice to the contrary.

I also understand that:

- i. Small groups and their leaders will be of the same gender.
- ii. Students may be transported to and from events by the small group leader, other parents and on occasion other students. Individual students may be transported by individual adults. It is the parents’ responsibility to know how their child is getting to and from each event, so that they are comfortable with the arrangements.
- iii. On occasion, the small group leader may invite other adults to participate with the small group in order to discuss particular topics.
- iv. Small group leaders may plan overnight events. Medical release forms need to accompany any overnight event. Overnights will follow youth ministry guidelines of 8:1 ratio and two adults of the same gender as the students.
- v. Parents understand that, on occasion, small group leaders may meet with individual students in homes or non-public places. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure they are comfortable with the situation.
- vi. Students will most likely communicate with small group leaders via social media, texting, etc. It is the parents’ responsibility to ensure they are comfortable with the situation.

I am comfortable with these guidelines and agree to allow my child to participate in this program. I understand that if have any concerns, I have the freedom and responsibility to contact the small group leader or the Youth Director.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name Please Print \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **ATTACHMENT 7: DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

**Child/minor:** under 18 years of age

**Perpetrator:** anyone. (i.e., stranger, acquaintance, caregiver).

**Note:** *80% of child abuse occurs by someone known and trusted by the victim. Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship. The usual offender is between ages of 20-30 years and is often married with children. Often an abuser is a respected member of a church that is a “concerned” adult.*

**Child abuse:** action or inaction resulting in ‘serious mental harm’ or any physical injury; action that is cruel or action likely to cause serious physical injury or ‘serious mental harm’ whether or not resulting in harm/physical injury. MCL 750.136b. (Michigan Criminal Law)

‘Inaction’ is the omission causing harm/injury. MCL 750.136b

‘Action’ is one of the following: knowing/intentional act that causes . . .

reckless act that causes . . . MCL 750.136b

‘Cruel’ is “brutal, inhuman, sadistic, or that which torments.” MCL 750.136b(1)(b)

**Criminal sexual conduct:** violent/non-violent sexual contact and/or sexual penetration upon a child. A minor less than 16 years of age cannot legally consent to sexual activity. MCL 750.520 et seq.

**Sexual contact:** intentional touching of child’s intimate clothed/unclothed parts or forcing the child to touch the perpetrator’s intimate clothed/unclothed parts for sexual arousal/gratification/purpose/manner. MCL 750.520a(l)

**Sexual penetration:** sexual intercourse, oral-genital sexual contact, anal penetration, and any other intrusion into a person’s body.

MCL 750.520a(m)

**Other abuse:** pornography, exposing minors to sexual materials/activity, exhibitionism

### **Examples of Abuse Indicators:**

#### **Physical**

Bruises, lacerations

Irritation, pain, or injury to genital area

Difficulty with urination, yeast infections

Discomfort when sitting

Torn or bloody underclothing

Burns, broken bones

Extreme or sudden weight gain

#### **Behavioral**

Withdrawal, chronic depression

Anxiety regarding activities involving the perpetrator

Nightmares

Nervous or hostile behavior towards adults

Sexual self-consciousness

‘acting out’—either sexually or physically aggressive

lack of emotional control, hysteria

Seductive or promiscuous behavior

#### **Verbal**

‘I don’t like X . . . .’

‘X does things or says things to me when we are alone’

‘I don’t like to be alone with . . . .’

‘X fooled around with me’

Most of the lawsuits filed against churches and pastors for child sexual abuse have alleged that the church was legally accountable either on the basis of negligent hiring or negligent supervision.

(taken from the *Michigan Criminal Law* and *The Department of Human Services*)

[http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971\\_7119\\_50648\\_7193-15254--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_7119_50648_7193-15254--,00.html))

**ATTACHMENT 8: RESPONDING TO A CHILD'S REPORT OF ABUSE**

- Take the child seriously when he/she tells the story
- Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the child's story, since this may cause the child to stop talking or to believe you are upset with the child.
- Do not offer any judgment on whether the child he/she has been abused or not. Do not try to convince the child that the story isn't true or that it did not happen the way the child reports it did. Avoid judgmental statements such as, "I think you just had a bad dream."
- Do not make promises to the child that you will not tell anyone what has been shared with you.
- Remind the child that whatever happened was not his/her fault.
- Remind the child that it was a good decision to tell someone what happened to him/her.
- Tell the child that you want to find help so the incident can be prevented from happening again.
- Do not offer a child a reward for telling the story or promise a gift if the child tells another adult.
- Reassure the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone.
- Do not frighten the child by talking about police involvement or medical examinations to verify the complaint; instead, share with the child that other people need to know about what happened, and they will talk to the child later.
- Do not ask the child to show you any bruises that are beneath the child's underwear or clothing; only observe those bruises that are accessible. In some communities, removing a child's clothing even to confirm a report of abuse is a violation of the law.
- Do not investigate the child's story; rather, listen to the story and take notes immediately afterwards while it is still fresh in your memory.
- Do not initiate any discussions about the allegations. Should the child bring up the topic, simply listen and reassure the child that they are not at fault.
- Document as many of the child's verbatim statements as possible.
- Report all conversations related to the alleged abuse to the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, or Senior Pastor.
- In the weeks subsequent to the disclosure offer emotional support to the child, reminding the child that you care about him/her.