

**Webster Presbyterian Church  
Sexual Misconduct Policy  
Policy 001-2011    Revision 4 August 2014**

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## Introduction

It is the policy and intent of the Webster Presbyterian Church (hereafter known as WPC) to maintain a workplace free from any form of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment (physical, verbal or non-verbal communication of a sexual nature) by any employee, member, friend of the congregation, outside organizations using the church, or any visitor to the church.

This policy is applicable within and outside the WPC building.

Through periodic training of adult and youth volunteers, church staff, and others, people who congregate and visit WPC will know how to prevent, observe and report alleged incidents of sexual misconduct.

## Policy Connection to Genesee Valley Presbytery and PCUSA

In addition to this document, the detailed understanding and implementation of this policy are found in three major documents which are accessible on line, on the WPC web-site, and in hard copies in the church office.

Policy on Sexual Misconduct Adopted by the Presbytery of Genesee Valley ([www.pbygenva.org](http://www.pbygenva.org))

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES. ([www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)) October 2013

Book Of Order. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) especially G4.0302

## Definitions

**Adult Volunteers** are those church members over 18 years of age who provide services to Webster Presbyterian Church and receive no monetary benefits. Examples of adult volunteers are those adults who volunteer to teach the church children and youth and to help with adult and youth fellowship events.

**Youth Volunteers** are those church family members between 6<sup>TH</sup> grade and 18 years of age who provide services to Webster Presbyterian Church and receive no monetary benefits. Examples of Youth Volunteers are persons elected or appointed to assist adults in serving the children and youth who participate in the Church's programs and activities.

**Employees or Staff** are those individuals who are hired or called by Webster Presbyterian Church to work for salary or wages.

**Non-member supervisor/volunteer** are those individuals over 18 years of age who are not members of Webster Presbyterian Church who work for activities sponsored by WPC or work within the walls of WPC. These individuals may or may not receive monetary benefits for their services. Examples are scout leaders, Webster Central Schools test administrators, and organizations using WPC facilities.

**Duty to report:** Officials such as Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Elders, Deacons, Commissioned Lay Pastors, Christian Education Director, Youth Director, Pre-School Director are expected to comply with Church-mandated abuse reporting provisions in the **Presbyterian Church USA Sexual Misconduct Policy and its Procedures**. Duty to report is defined as: Official shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when 1) such information is gained outside of a confidential (G4.0301) or privileged communication or 2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

## **Policy Implementation, Review and Supervision**

- A. The Session of WPC is responsible for implementation, review, and supervision of this policy.
- B. The Session delegates implementation and supervision of this policy to the Personnel Elder(s) who will chair a Steering Committee.
- C. The Session may amend this policy by a majority vote.
- D. The Session intends that this policy be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the current Policy on Sexual Misconduct of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley and the PCUSA Sexual Misconduct Policy. The detailed guidance, direction, and processes will come from these policies.

## **General Responsibilities:**

**Pastors/Ministers:** As a Minister of the Word and Sacrament defined in the Book of Order, “she or he is responsible for quality of life and relationships that commend the gospel to all persons and communicate its joy and justice. The Pastor “shall be the moderator of the session (G3.0104)”. The Sexual Misconduct Policies of the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley and PCUSA give specific instructions for the pastor(s). Pastors/Ministers have a duty to report.

**Session:** The Session’s duty is to supply leadership to the church. All session members (Elders) have a duty to report (see definition above). Elders whose responsibilities include Personnel, Children’s Education, and Youth will also have responsibilities involving the prevention of sexual misconduct, including actively serving on the Steering Committee and being involved with training as required.

**Personnel Committee:** The Elders serving on the Personnel Committee will be charged with oversight of the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy, chairing the Steering Committee, training, and other activities. It will be the responsibility of the Personnel

Committee Elders to be properly trained (by Presbytery and other means) on the prevention of Sexual misconduct so that these elders, along with the Pastoral staff and the Steering Committee will provide leadership in the prevention of sexual misconduct and leadership in the event of an alleged misconduct incident.

The Personnel Committee will maintain an updated copy of all the policies and documents that pertain to sexual misconduct in a readily accessible place such as hard copy in the church office and/or link on the Webster Presbyterian Church web site.

**Steering Committee:** Chaired by a Personnel Committee Member who will be joined by, Children's Christian Ed (CCE) Elder and Youth Elder, Director of CCE, Director of the Pre-School at WPC, two at-large members of the congregation, along with the Youth Director and Senior Pastor as ex-officio members. At large members will be appointed and approved by Session for a three year term.

Steering Committee responsibilities are:

1. Meet annually to **review** the policy **and propose updates that may be required. All changes to be approved by Personnel Committee and Session who has the ultimate responsibility for the program.**
2. Ensure that effective training is being carried out for adults, youth volunteers, staff, and youth.
3. Ensure that effective training is being carried out for incoming ordained Elders and Deacons.
4. Ensure that appropriate background checking is being carried out for staff, youth workers and any others whose ministry may require a background check.
5. Investigate any complaint to ensure that it is handled in accordance with the policies, especially the Genesee Valley Presbytery policy. The committee is to report incidents to the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Office at Presbytery. The important guidance for our church is that we have an obligation to cooperate and report incidents to both civil authorities and church leaders. The documents referenced above provide guidelines for this reporting. The Resource Manual contains the appropriate forms. **The Steering Committee in cooperation with the Pastor and Session will ensure that these guidelines are followed. All investigations must be treated with the highest confidentiality. Information will only be disclosed on a strict need to know basis.**
6. Report incidents, actions taken, and policy updates to Session to act upon. This reporting will be given with the highest level of confidentiality followed. Information will only be disclosed on a strict need to know basis.

# Specific Requirements by Area of Responsibility

## 1. Staff

It is the policy of Webster Presbyterian Church to maintain a work place free from any form of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment by any member of the staff. Appropriate Staff training is required. All staff members must have a background check before they are hired.

## 2. Children

All volunteers (adult and youth) involved with the children's program at Webster Presbyterian Church will have been trained in the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy and approved to serve. Training will take place during a scheduled session upon initially volunteering and every three years thereafter. **Background checks are encouraged for new youth workers especially for those who do not have children in the program.**

At least two adult supervisors shall be present during any church-sponsored activity for children and youth. An exception to this two adult supervisor policy is pastoral care and counseling situations requiring privacy. Church school classes will be visited frequently by the CCE Director.

To prevent inappropriate behavior between minors, two minors will not be left unsupervised. The only exception to this shall be when children use the buddy system for trips to the restroom, movement between supervised classrooms, and similar types of activities as approved by the supervising adults.

Wherever possible, all activity areas must have doors with windows. If a window is not present, doors shall remain open. Window coverings will remain open as much as possible.

## 3. Pre-School

Teachers (2 per class) will have filled out the adult screening form (either as church members or when hired by the Pre-School). They will complete a form each fall, stating that nothing has changed in regard to the information stated on the original screening form. These records are kept by the Pre-School Director.

The Pre-School classrooms are locked after all the children have arrived and are not accessible to unknown individuals. The Pre-School has windows in the doors, in order to be visible for parents who wish to observe their children in the classroom setting.

Although every effort is made to encourage a child's independence in the bathroom, we recognize that pre-school children sometimes need help with their toileting routine. If a child needs assistance in the bathroom, one teacher will assist with the door open, so that the other teacher can observe that the child is being treated properly.

#### **4. Youth**

Youth and Adult Volunteers who work with youth, will be trained in preventing and recognizing a sexual harassment or sexual abusive situation. The youth will be trained to be aware of their surroundings when there is an event outside the church walls. They will be advised to follow the T.L.C. Guidelines:

T – Three youth together at all times

L – Leaving to go or returning, inform an adult

C – Communicate with an Adult, any Uncomfortable Situations

This training will be reinforced using the Youth Situation Pop Quiz developed to present various situations (copy of Pop Quiz is in The Reference Manual). The adults who volunteer to work with the youth will be trained as soon as possible after expressing their wish to be a volunteer. The training will be valid for a three year period. Adults who will be traveling with the youth on work-camps, retreats, and other church sponsored events will be trained annually on recognition of sexual abuse and harassment situations, and how to deal with such situations, including reporting requirements.

#### **5. Outside Organizations: Requirements for organizations working with children and youth sponsored by or using the facilities of Webster Presbyterian Church**

Each organization must provide a copy of its sexual misconduct prevention policy to the Chairperson of the Steering Committee. This policy will be filed in the church records. If the organization does not have a policy, Session will be notified and take this into account in the vote to allow the building use.

Each organization will receive, and acknowledge receipt of, a copy of the Webster Presbyterian Church Policy for Prevention of Sexual Misconduct.

**Conduct or events contrary to these principles intent will result in immediate termination of use.**

Each organization will report on the Confidential Incident Report Form any accusation or incidents involving sexual misconduct on Church property. The Form will be given to the Chairperson of the Steering Committee or to a Pastor who will follow the reporting procedure as described.

## **Training:**

Training is the most important step in the prevention of sexual misconduct at Webster Presbyterian Church. Staff, ordained Elders and Deacons, and volunteers are encouraged to attend Presbytery wide training when offered. Pastors are required to attend Presbytery training sessions when offered. For the training requirements, tools for training and appropriate forms, refer to the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Training [area of the church's website](#). Websterpres.org

## **Reporting:**

If an incident occurs that falls into this category, the first concern is the safety and well-being of the abused party. The rights of an accused person(s) must also be taken into account. The leader of the activity where the incident occurred will contact a Pastor or chairman of the Steering Committee within 24 hours of the event. The leader will fill out the reporting form and give it to the Chair of the Steering Committee as soon as possible. The Steering Committee in turn will report to the Pastor as soon as possible. **The civil authority will be notified as soon as possible.** It is advised that an immediate Steering Committee Meeting be called to investigate the incident. The Session will be notified as soon as possible. All the reporting will be done with the highest level of confidentiality. Minimal information will be disclosed on a need to know basis.

## **Disclosure:**

The practice of Webster Presbyterian Church shall be to disclose to the congregation at the appropriate time, as determined by Session, the basic facts regarding an incident, The Presbytery of the Genesee Valley Sexual Misconduct Policy, Attachment D, will guide the reporting process