



Indiana-Kentucky Conference, United Church of Christ Safe Church Policy

Indiana-Kentucky Conference, UCC
1100 W 42nd Street, Suite 350
Indianapolis IN 46208
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Merom Conference Center
PO Box 127
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Phone: 812-356-4511 Fax: 812-356-4002



Safe Church Policy

As a community of Christian faith, the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ (hereinafter the IKC-UCC) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities, and a community in which employees, volunteers, and persons served by the IKC-UCC can work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation and/or intimidation.

All persons associated with the IKC-UCC should be aware that the IKC-UCC will not tolerate sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and physical or verbal abuse and that such behavior is prohibited by IKC-UCC policy. It is the intention of the IKC-UCC to take action to prevent and/or correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, as necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

It is the policy of the IKC-UCC to encourage its employees and volunteers to nurture safety within ministerial relationships and ministry activities by being attentive to self-care, education, maintenance of appropriate boundaries, and referral of those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, physical or verbal abuse of employees, volunteers or those served by anyone engaged in ministry, including any program on behalf of the IKC-UCC, is unethical behavior, will not be tolerated by the IKC-UCC, and may be cause for immediate termination of employment or volunteer leadership or participation with the IKC-UCC.

Requirements for Commencing and Continuing Employment or Volunteerism

Prior to **employment**, the IKC-UCC will conduct a criminal background check and employment reference for all prospective employees working with children and youth, including, but not limited to, a registered sex offender review for each prospective employee by searching by name on the Department of Justice website at www.nsopr.gov. The registered sex offender review will be repeated on an annual basis for these employees.

Prior to **assignment as a volunteer or program/event participant**, the IKC-UCC will carry out a registered sex offender review by searching by name on the Department of Justice website at www.nsopr.gov. The registered sex offender review will be repeated annually for volunteers and program/event participants who return to or continue in their positions. In addition, reference checks may also be conducted for volunteers and program/event participants.

In addition, all Authorized Ministers doing ministry in the IKC-UCC will attend boundary workshops required by their association, attending at least one approved workshop on this topic every three years.

Authorized Ministers

Apart from any disposition of the matter by the IKC-UCC, all allegations of behavior that call into question the fitness for ministry of any Authorized Minister will promptly be forwarded to the Association that has granted that Minister's Authorization.

Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Exploitation, Harassment, Physical or Verbal Abuse

The initial steps to resolve the complaint may include but not be limited to:

- a) The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual(s) against whom the complaint is made (respondent) — the individual(s) accused of sexual exploitation, harassment, physical or verbal abuse.
- b) The complainant can report the incident to the program/event leader in an effort to resolve the matter informally.



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- c) If the complainant is a child or youth, an adult advocate may be appointed by the program/event leader, IKC-UCC Conference Minister or his/her designee (hereinafter the Conference Minister).
- d) If the informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant may request that the Conference Minister institute formal proceedings to investigate and take appropriate actions to resolve the matter.

Alleged incidents, i.e. complaints under this policy, involving IKC-UCC employees will be addressed as outlined in Section XIII of the Personnel Policy of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference United Church of Christ.

Alleged incidents, i.e. complaints under this policy, involving IKC-UCC volunteers and program/event participants will be addressed by the Conference Minister.

The appropriate program/event leader (if not the respondent), in consultation with Conference Minister, will take the leadership in determining how best to assure the safety of all. If necessary, the leadership will make an immediate decision to temporarily suspend or remove the respondent from the program/event.

If it is found that sexual exploitation, harassment, physical or verbal abuse has occurred, action taken may include:

- a) a formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
- b) an assignment to probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
- c) dismissal from further participation in the event;
- d) actions reported to civil authorities.

If it is found that sexual exploitation, harassment, physical or verbal abuse did not occur then actions will be taken for the respondent's return to participation.

Appropriate written records of the investigation, actions and resolutions of the matter shall be kept on file at the IKC-UCC office. If the records of the investigation absolve the respondent then the records will be maintained until the death of the respondent. If misconduct was found, then the records will be maintained until the death of the respondent.

The investigating individual may seek the advice of legal counsel to advise him/her in performing the investigation.

The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. The IKC-UCC may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process at any time.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse, consideration shall be given to the record of alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstance, including the context in which the alleged incident occurred.

Any person bringing a sexual harassment, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

A written summary of the investigation, actions and recommendations will be maintained by the IKC-UCC Office.

Child Abuse

Apart from any legal requirements, the IKC-UCC will make a report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Indiana/Kentucky/Illinois Departments of Family and Children's Services, if at any time the IKC-UCC has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child.

Any employee or volunteer of the IKC-UCC who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the Indiana/Kentucky/Illinois Departments of Family and Children's Services. To report child abuse or neglect in



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Indiana, call 1-800-800-5556 (<http://www.in.gov/dcs/protection/dfcchi.html>). The Kentucky adult and child abuse hotline number is 1-800-752-6200 (http://chfs.ky.gov/dcb/dpp/Child_Safety.htm). The Illinois child abuse hotline number is 1-800-252-2873 (<http://www.state.il.us/dcf/child/index.shtml>). For more information or assistance with reporting, please call Childhelp USA ®, 800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453).

Ministry for Children and Youth: Additional Requirements

The IKC-UCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which children and youth can learn about and experience God's love. It is the goal of the IKC-UCC to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for children and youth activities.

In order to promote this goal, the following requirements apply in addition to the general requirements listed above.

- All prospective **employees, adult volunteers and adult program/event participants who work with children and youth** will submit the Information and Disclosure Form (Form A) (hereto attached) on an annual basis.
- Before beginning their duties, **all prospective employees for children and youth ministry** will undergo a background check, in accordance with the Information and Disclosure form (Form A).
- All prospective **adult volunteers and adult program/event participants for children and youth ministry** will undergo a background check, in accordance with the Information and Disclosure Form (Form A) including but not necessarily limited to, inquiries of references and the IKC Safe Church Policy Reference Form (Form B).

Ministry for Children and Youth: Policy Administration

- This policy regarding Ministry for Children and Youth will be administered by the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries and/or the Director of Merom Conference Center or his/her support staff person.
- The completed forms are to be kept in a secured location within the Merom or Indianapolis offices with limited access. These forms will be kept until that year's event registrations are destroyed. These procedures will help to protect the IKC-UCC and the personal information of the employees and volunteers. This will also help to keep our records confidential and consistent.
- No other forms may be substituted. Recommendations for changes or updates to these procedures, including the forms, must be provided in writing to the Director of the Youth and Young Adult Ministries or to the Director of the Merom Conference Center subject to the Board of Director's approval.

All employees, volunteers and adult program/event participants who do ministry with children and youth will abide by the expectations and behaviors set forth.

Ministry for Children and Youth: Expectations and Behavior Guidelines

IKC-UCC provides ministry with youth, young adults and adults through many programs including events held at and provided through the Merom Conference Center and program/events held at other locations through Boards, Committees and Planning Teams. IKC-UCC program/events enhance our Christian community. The IKC-UCC programs create opportunities where all participants are safe, open to discussions and free from harassment.

Adults need to be aware that program/events vary and may have additional guidelines, age requirements, training and forms.



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Expectations

- Abide by and enforce the rules and boundaries set for the program/event. Be aware that rules and boundaries may differ between program/events.
- Adults are responsible to set boundaries.
- Adults are automatically in mentor positions.
- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Everyone has a right to be at the program/event.
- Participate fully and help when needed.
- Help people new to program/events feel welcome and comfortable within this setting.
- Adults have responsibilities to all participants.

Behavior

- Private discussions are to be handled with care and nurture. These discussions should be in a public place away from others so the conversation can be private.
- Discretion and modesty are necessities at all times especially when showering, changing clothing and preparing for the day. Allow privacy and discretion for others.
- Be sensitive to verbal and non-verbal expressions of discomfort.
- Use or possession of alcohol, controlled substances, firearms, ammunition and weapons are not permitted.
- Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Harassment, physical or verbal abuse, use of profanity, endangerment, intimidation or discrimination of children, youth, volunteers, employees or participants engaged in ministry on behalf of the IKC-UCC may be cause for immediate termination of leadership.

Driving

- Drivers should be 25 or older to transport people.
- In order to be a driver during a program/event driving records must be supplied and checked.
- Copies of valid driver's licenses shall be kept at the primary site (camp or conference office) for the duration of the driver's program/event participation. After completion of the trip, the copy shall be destroyed.
- Drivers will abide by the traffic laws and are responsible to make sure all occupants wear seat belts.
- Drivers that provide their own vehicles for Conference use must have their own insurance.
- Vehicles rented for Conference use should purchase the collision/loss damage (vehicle insurance).
- During medical emergencies, these guidelines may be lifted.

Housing

- Adult chaperones are required for overnight program/events.
- Gathering is to be in public spaces.
Sleeping spaces are considered sanctuaries.
 - o Only participants assigned to the room are to be in the room.
 - o Shall be determined by gender (family camp programs may differ).
- Camp housing – cabins, College Hall, retreat houses:
 - o Allows for multiple youth with a minimum of one adult sharing a room
 - o An adult must be housed in every building housed by youth
- Hotels or college dormitories where only 2 beds per room are provided – IKC-UCC Annual Meeting/National Youth Event/Regional Youth Event/Synod/other non-camp facilities:
 - o Youth and adults are to be roomed separately in the same area
 - o If rooms have internal doors adjoining rooms, both rooms must match gender and age (youth/adult)
 - o Youth that have just completed high school and are over 18 may be housed together

Ratios Adults to Youth

- A minimum of 2 adults shall be with youth
- 1 adult per 10 youth
- Adults should match gender of youth
 - o Example: 4 boys and 3 girls requires 1 man and 1 woman
 - o Example: 24 boys and 15 girls requires 3 men and 2 women



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International Programs

- A minimum of 2 adults (male and female for mixed gender groups) shall accompany an out-of-country youth trip.
- Copies of passports for all participants shall be kept at the primary site (camp or conference office) and with the chaperones for the duration of the trip. After completion of the trip, the copies shall be destroyed.
- Itinerary and flight information must be kept on file at the primary site (camp or conference office).
- One of the adults must file an itinerary with the state department which is available through the passport website.
- Adults that show disrespect for the program, towards youth or act inappropriately shall be sent home at their own expense. Disrespect includes, but is not limited to, use of illegal substances, sexual activity or being inebriated.

Resolution Process

- Person will be pulled aside by the leader of the program/event or site manager/director.
- Complaint to be discussed
- Authorities may be contacted
- Possible repercussions:
 - o Formal, written reprimand on file with appropriate committee, board or child services.
 - o Removal from the program/event.
 - o Probationary standing – with written outline of terms
 - o Banning from working with youth at the conference level

Background Information from Employees and Volunteers

The Safe Church Policy requires paperwork to be completed annually for all employees and volunteers participating in IKC-UCC children and youth programs. The background information will include:

- IKC-UCC Information and Disclosure Form and Reference form (Form A)
- Reference Forms for Adults Participating in Youth Programs completed as requested (Form B)
- Review of the national sex offender register through the Department of Justice website www.nsopr.gov (done by IKC-UCC representative or staff)

Other Provisions

- Adults that have not completed background checks are considered ‘red tagged’ and must be accompanied by an adult that has completed the background check. (This is the practice for summer camps.)

Ministry for Children and Youth: Ministry Contacts Involving Participants

Friendships develop naturally among participants. With the diverse opportunities increasingly accessible for contacting one another, it is recommended that contacts through e-mail, phone calls and/or uploading information to social network sites (examples: Facebook, My Space, Twitter) be held until after the event concludes. This will limit exposure of participants while they attend an event.

It is our protocol to provide event contact information and digital photos to participants. This information will be maintained by the Indianapolis or Merom office to use for mailings regarding additional events, stewardship requests or IKC-UCC updates. It is recommended that social contacts be initiated only by youth. Adults may initiate contacts to encourage additional participation in church-related events or to facilitate on-going pastoral care.

Definitions

Age Definitions:

- a) Children are defined as minors under 18 years of age.
- b) Youth are defined as those in high school including those 18 or over.
- c) Adults are defined as 18 years of age and older and out of high school.



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Authorized Minister: A person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an Association of the United Church of Christ or region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Ministerial Relationship: The relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the IKC-UCC and the one being served by that ministry.

Physical and Verbal Abuse: To injure another, mentally or physically, either by words, actions or physical contact.

Sexual Exploitation: Sexual activity or conduct (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person engaged in a ministerial relationship with another takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person being served by causing that person to engage in sexual behavior with the IKC-UCC employee or volunteer.

Sexual Harassment: Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment or participation in any IKC-UCC activity; or

Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or IKC-UCC related decisions affecting an individual; or

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in IKC-UCC activities or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails or invitations;

Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender specific traits, sexual propositions;

Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and

Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, leadership opportunities, or comfortable participation in the life of the IKC-UCC. It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Forms:

A. *Information and Disclosure Form*

B. *Reference Form*



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Form A

Information and Disclosure Form

Form A

Page 1 of 2

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 1 of 2

All adults will be screened through the US Department of Justice national sex offender public registry:

www.nsopr.gov.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Birth Date: _____ Email: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Circle all that apply: Board Committee Confirmation Retreats Summer Camp Youth Events Work Camps

Home church: _____ Town: _____ Program/event _____

1. Have you ever been found guilty, or pled guilty, or no contest, to a criminal charge alleging actual or attempted sexual harassment, exploitation, physical abuse, child abuse, financial misconduct?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, provide an explanation on attached sheet of paper.

2. Has a formal complaint relating to a civil, ecclesiastical, educational, or employment setting ever been made against you alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, misconduct, physical abuse, child abuse or financial misconduct?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, provide an explanation on attached sheet of paper.

3. Have you ever been convicted of, pled guilty or no contest to a crime?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, provide an explanation on attached sheet of paper.

4. Is there any other fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with responsibilities for children or youth in programs sponsored by the Indiana-Kentucky Conference?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, provide an explanation on attached sheet of paper.

Regarding driving and driver's license information please follow the "Expectations and Behavior Guidelines" instructions for Driving and attach information as appropriate.

RELEASE AND AUTHORIZATION

I acknowledge that the information provided is true and complete. I understand any misrepresentation or omission is grounds for rejection. It is my responsibility to update the information as appropriate. I authorize the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, UCC to investigate all statements contained in this disclosure and reference form. I also authorize all persons and entities to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the information provided, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background and character. I hereby release all such persons and entities from all liability and responsibility arising from their doing so.

By completing this form I have read and agree to follow the IKC-UCC Safe Church Policy.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Office Use Only		
SOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	Valid Dates
Date Completed	_____	
IKC/MCC rep	_____	_____



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Form A
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Information and Disclosure Form CONFIDENTIAL

Form A
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Name: _____

REFERENCES: Please list three adults not related to you or one another. These persons should be familiar with your work and/or your volunteer activities. One of your references should be a 'faith' reference (pastor, youth advisor, church member).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day-time #(cell, home, work) _____ Fax # _____

E-mail _____

In what capacity does this person know you? _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day-time #(cell, home, work) _____ Fax # _____

E-mail _____

In what capacity does this person know you? _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day-time #(cell, home, work) _____ Fax # _____

E-mail _____

In what capacity does this person know you? _____



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Form B

Form B

Reference Form CONFIDENTIAL

All adults will be screened through the US Department of Justice national sex offender public registry.

Reference for: _____

Home church: _____ Town: _____ Program/event _____

How long have you known this person (approximately)? _____

In what capacity do you know this person? _____

1. To the best of your knowledge, has this person ever been found guilty, pled guilty, or no contest, to a criminal charge alleging actual or attempted sexual harassment, exploitation, misconduct, physical abuse, or child abuse?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, give a short explanation (back of sheet available if needed).

2. To the best of your knowledge, has this person ever had a formal complaint in a civil, ecclesiastical, educational, or employment setting alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, misconduct, physical abuse or child abuse?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, give a short explanation (back of sheet available if needed).

3. To the best of your knowledge, is there any fact or circumstance involving this person that would call into question being entrusted with responsibilities for children or youth in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, give a short explanation (back of sheet available if needed).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day-time #(cell, home, work) _____ Fax # _____

E-mail _____