

APPENDIX E – Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct defines individual responsibilities as Ministers, leaders, employees or volunteers to meet the expectations of Peace Presbyterian Church with respect to behavior or conduct in the service of the ministries of the church, especially those which serve children and “vulnerable adults”.

General Requirements --

Each person subject to this Code shall

1. Act as a team member in fulfilling ministry objectives
2. Treat children and “vulnerable adults” (clients) with respect, and fairly without regard to race, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion
3. Practice those behaviors we regard as necessary and positive as well as to refrain from those behaviors which have been defined as prohibited.

General Prohibitions --

The following behaviors are prohibited at all times:

1. Display affection toward a child/client in privacy.
2. Use profanity or tell off-color jokes.
3. Discuss their sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involve children in their personal problems or issues.
4. Date or become romantically involved with children.
5. Use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
6. Possess sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on Church property.
7. Have secrets with clients
8. Stare at or comment on children’s bodies.
9. Engage in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children.
10. Work one-on-one with children in a private setting.
11. Abuse clients in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations
 - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly
 - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter
 - Permit children to engage in the following: Hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, games of Truth or Dare, ridicule or humiliation or sexual activity
12. Manipulate or exploit a “vulnerable adult” in any way.

Reporting Obligations --

Each Minister or statutory “mandatory reporter” shall report:

1. Concerns or complaints about other employees and volunteers, other adults, or children to a supervisor. (Appendix D – Leadership & Reporting Roster)
2. Allegations or incidents of “suspected abuse” to the designated law enforcement or child welfare authority. (Appendix D – Leadership & Reporting Roster)

Specific Interaction Standards –

Each Minister, employee or volunteer worker of Peace Presbyterian Church shall conduct him/herself in a manner that fosters understanding of SafeConduct™ in the context of serving children and “vulnerable adults”. The standards articulated below serve two purposes:

- To protect children and “vulnerable adults” from abuse or grooming for abuse elsewhere; and
- To protect/prevent church staff from engaging in patterns of behavior that may be construed as abusive or predatory. While a single infraction of guidelines may not constitute abuse, a pattern of repeated violations will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from ministry.

1. **Approval and Affection** – In providing approval or affection, the following guidelines apply:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs • Pats on the shoulder or back • Handshakes • High-fives and hand slapping • Verbal praise • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Arms around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) <p>These may be inappropriate if unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated area • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Allowing a child to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg • Any type of massage given by or to a child • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer • Compliments relating to physique or body development • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

2. **Verbal Interactions** – The manner of speaking with children establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming • Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children • Derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family

3. **Out-of-Program (Off-Site) Contact** –

Peace Presbyterian Church prohibits off-site contact with clients unless approved by the Session.

4. One-on-One Interactions –

Because most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a child, private one-on-one meetings with a child are prohibited unless approved in advance by the Pastor. When so permitted, the following guidelines shall apply:

One-on-One Interaction Guidelines

- When meeting one-on-one with a child, always do so in a public place in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a child and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

To the extent any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one shall seek to be under the supervision of others while meeting privately with a child.

5. Social Media – Electronic Communications –

General Social Media Policy -- No Minister, employee, volunteer or member of Peace Presbyterian Church shall create or use a media site (web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the church without the explicit written permission of the Session. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the church, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official church sites/channels when they have been made available by the church. These may include web pages, Facebook, e-mail and similar means.

Communication with Children – Due to the attendant risk of electronic communications with children, especially the inability to supervise, the following standards shall apply:

- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sending text messages to children and/or replying to text messages from children.
- If a child attempts to communicate with an employee or volunteer via text, a supervisor must be notified immediately.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from instant messaging with children.
- Any e-mail communications with children must include the child's parents or guardians. E-mail communications shall be limited to logistical matters, e.g., meeting dates, times and places.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from communicating with children using social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace.
- Personal social networking profiles and blogs of employees and volunteers must be private and inaccessible to children.

- Employees and volunteers with profiles on social networking sites may not request to be friends with children or approve friend requests from children.

Ministers having Facebook privileges on behalf of the church shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from children under age 13 as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting “friend” invitations by under-age children is a violation of the Peace Presbyterian’s Code of Conduct.

If a child reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the Minister must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse”.

When using Facebook to communicate with children, the authorized Minister shall inform parents/guardians of each child that the latter is communicating with the Minister via Facebook, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a Group.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Each Minister who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide children and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the Code of Conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized Minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children (or other client group) and parents/guardians.

If offered a position as Minister, employee or volunteer, I affirm that application disclosures are complete and truthful. I agree to comply with the policies and rules contained in this SafeConduct™ policy, to include training, monitoring, reporting and ministry administrative procedures. I agree to meet standards for one-on-one relationships with children/clients as defined above. If requested to do so, I will cooperate with any investigation of a possible violation of church policies and rules by providing complete and truthful information in an oral and/or written statements.

Signature

Date

Name