

SAFE PLACE POLICY

Continuing Resolution 2011-1

Policy for Prevention of Sexual Misconduct with Minor and Dependent Persons

- I. Authority: This policy is established by the authority of the Congregation Council of Grace Lutheran Church, Macungie and enacted by vote on September 13, 2011.
- II. Purpose: Our ministry is a position of trust and responsibility. This trust is fundamental to the well being of the Christian community and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sexual misconduct by a pastor, staff member, volunteer, or any participant in ministry violates this trust and is destructive to the community. It is the purpose of this policy to provide guidelines for the prevention of sexual misconduct in the activities and programs of the congregation and to ensure that Grace Lutheran Church is a safe place.
- III. Applicability: This policy applies to paid staff, volunteers, congregational members, and participants in all activities and ministries of Grace Lutheran Church.
- IV. Definition: Sexual Misconduct is defined as adultery, promiscuity, the sexual abuse of another and the misuse of counseling relationships for sexual favors. This definition includes attempted sexual seduction; unwelcome, offensive, obscene or suggestive language, behavior or action; and/or taking physical or emotional advantage of the vulnerability of another for sexual purposes.
- V. Policy: It is the policy of Grace Lutheran Church that:
 1. All minors and dependent persons will be treated with courtesy, respect, and Christian concern while attending the programs and activities of Grace Lutheran Church.
 2. All minors and dependents will be well and appropriately supervised while in the care of the church.
 3. Paid staff and volunteers who work with minor and dependent persons will receive appropriate screening and training as per the following procedures in order to conduct and supervise such activities properly and safely. They will be aware of the terms of this policy and agree to abide by its procedures, and will be instructed how to report circumstances of vulnerability or suspicious activities.
 4. Screening and education are the primary methods to be used to prevent sexual misconduct and to implement the protections of this policy.
- VI. Procedures:
 1. Paid staff and volunteers as may be deemed appropriate by the Congregation Council shall submit to a [State Police background check](#) and a [PA ChildLine clearance](#) before receiving approval to supervise and/or assist with activities involving minor or dependent persons. Grace Lutheran Church agrees to assist with the cost of such background screening, if needed.
 2. Any adult who has been convicted of or pled guilty to child sexual abuse or child physical abuse will not be approved to participate in activities involving minor or dependent persons.

3. All individuals wishing to provide leadership or supervision in activities involving minor or dependent children will be required to wait a minimum of six months following their formal acceptance as members of Grace Lutheran Church before they may be considered for such involvement.
4. Paid staff and volunteers who participate in or supervise activities involving minor or dependent persons shall receive a copy of this policy, sign a certificate acknowledging such receipt, and shall receive orientation and training regarding its terms and purposes from the pastor, paid staff, or other qualified person as designated by the Congregation Council.
5. Whenever possible, a minimum of two adults shall be present to supervise all official, scheduled and public activities of Grace Lutheran Church involving minor or dependent persons unless parental permission has been secured in advance. At least one of the adults must be over 21 years of age. All such supervisors must have successfully completed the appropriate screening and training process.
6. Children participating in nursery programs, their parents or guardians, and all volunteers and staff shall be clearly identified. Children shall be signed in, signed out, and only released to a properly identified or pre-authorized individual.
7. No paid staff or volunteer may transport a minor or dependent person to or from any church activity without securing permission from the parent or guardian in advance.
8. Any program for minor or dependent persons that involves overnight activities will observe the following procedures:
 - a. Written permission to participate must be obtained from the parent or guardian in advance.
 - b. Only adult supervisors who have successfully completed the required screening and training may attend.
 - c. There shall be a minimum of two approved adults present at all times.
 - d. Minor or dependent participants may not leave the location of the event without appropriate arrangements made by the parent or guardian in advance, except in cases of emergency.
9. Any inappropriate or suspicious conduct or relationship between an adult and a minor or dependent person shall be confronted immediately, reported to the Pastor or President of Congregation Council, and investigated by adult supervisors and the appropriate designee of the Congregation Council. Information should also be conveyed to the parent or guardian as well as to the Congregation Council. If the violation of a criminal statute is suspected of having occurred, the proper legal authorities must be notified immediately.
10. All members of Grace Lutheran Church congregation shall be informed of the presence and purposes of this policy through the newsletter and worship bulletins of the congregation. New members will be informed of the presence and purposes of this policy as a regular part of new member classes. Copies of this policy shall be made available upon request to any concerned parties.
11. All documentation and records appropriate to the enforcement of this policy will be maintained confidentially by the Pastor and may be accessed on a need-to-know basis at the approval of the Congregation Council.
12. Individuals who do not meet the above requirements may assist in activities only to the extent that they are not in a situation where they are alone with a child.