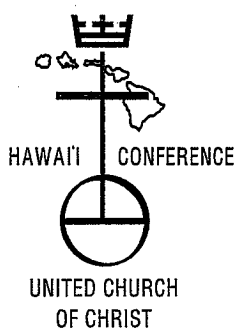


SAFE CONFERENCE POLICY

HAWAII CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(ADOPTED FEBRUARY 7, 2009)



Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ “Safe Conference” Policy

Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment

As a community of Christian faith, the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ (“HCUCC”) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which employees, volunteers and persons served by HCUCC can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation.

All persons associated with HCUCC should be aware that HCUCC is strongly opposed to Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Harassment and physical or verbal abuse, and that such behavior is prohibited by HCUCC policy. It is the intention and responsibility of HCUCC to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Conduct of Employees and Volunteers

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, all employees, including Authorized Ministers, and volunteers are engaged in the ministry of HCUCC.

It is important that every employee and volunteer be adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they serve others, and understand ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of HCUCC to encourage its employees and volunteers to nurture safety within Ministerial Relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Harassment, or physical or verbal abuse of or by anyone engaged in the ministry of HCUCC is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated by the HCUCC, and may be cause for immediate termination of employment or volunteer service with HCUCC.

Workplace harassment, including procedures for handling complaints, is covered in the HCUCC/Hawaii Conference Foundation Employee Handbook.

Requirements for Commencing and Continuing Ministry

- Before beginning their duties, all employees and volunteers will submit a Disclosure Form.
- Before beginning their duties, all employees and volunteers will be personally interviewed by an assigned immediate supervisor to assess the suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek.
- For compensated HCUCC staff, following a conditional offer of employment and prior to commencement of employment, HCUCC will conduct a criminal background check and employment reference check, including, but not limited to a registered sex offender review

by name search on the Department of Justice website at www.nsopr.gov and the Hawai'i Criminal Justice Data Center at www.Hawaii.gov/ag/hcjdc. The registered sex offender review will be repeated on an annual basis for all employees.

- For volunteers, prior to commencement of ministry, HCUCC will conduct a registered sex offender review by name search on the Department of Justice website at www.nsopr.gov and the Hawai'i Criminal Justice Data Center at www.Hawaii.gov/ag/hcjdc. The registered sex offender review will be repeated on an annual basis for all volunteers who return to or continue in their ministries. Reference checks may also be conducted for volunteers.

Additional Requirements of Child and Youth Ministry

HCUCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love.

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

- All prospective employees and volunteers who regularly work with children or youth will complete and submit a Disclosure Form or a document in a form substantially similar to the Disclosure Form.
- For compensated HCUCC staff, following a conditional offer of employment and prior to commencement of employment, the HCUCC will conduct a comprehensive background check, including, but not limited to, a criminal records check, as well as driving and motor vehicles records check if position includes transporting children and youth. The scope of the check will include the counties of residence and counties of work over the past ten years. HCUCC will withdraw the conditional offer of employment if the prospective employee has a conviction record that bears a rational relationship to the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- For volunteers, following an invitation to serve and prior to commencement of ministry (whether Authorized Minister or layperson), a comprehensive background check will be completed, including, but not limited to, a criminal records check, as well as driving and motor vehicles records check if position includes transporting children and youth, will be completed. The scope of the check will include the counties of residence and counties of work over the past ten years. HCUCC will withdraw the invitation to serve if the volunteer has a conviction record that bears a rational relationship to the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- All employees and volunteers who work with children and youth will receive orientation to the overall policy and must attend HCUCC-approved boundary training.
- The use of drugs (except prescription and over-the-counter medicine), alcohol, tobacco, firearms and fireworks is not permitted during children's and youth activities.

The following requirements shall apply to all HCUCC-sponsored children's or youth programming.

- Adequate supervision and safeguards will be provided for all activities. In any situation where participants are not readily visible to others, there will not be fewer than two unrelated adults present with children or youth. Youth over the age of 16 may assist an unrelated adult in supervising children and youth activities; however, this assistance does not change the requirement that at least two unrelated adults must be present.
- The ratio of minors to adults for supervision of overnight and off-site activities will be no more than six to one. If groups include both male and female participants, there must be both male and female adult supervisors.
- In situations of overnight housing, if adults are housed in the same room as youth, at least two preferably unrelated adults must be assigned to the room. When housing is in hotels or college dormitory rooms, it is recommended that youth and adults be housed in separate rooms.
- Signed written consent of one custodial parent or guardian of a minor (including transportation consent if appropriate) will be required for all activities off the property of the HCUC or a UCC-affiliated conference or any overnight activity.
- A valid health form is required for all children and youth attending an event taking place away from parental supervision.
- In the event youth are used as volunteers with children, every attempt will be made to ensure that they are at least 21 years of age, or that youth are teamed with, preferably, an unrelated adult. At least five years separation between adults in supervision and the children/youth they supervise is the recommended rule.

Definitions

Minister: A person engaged by the Conference to carry out its ministry. Minister includes elected or appointed leaders of the Conference, employees, and volunteers, as well as authorized employees and volunteers.

Ministry: Any officially-sponsored activity, event, meeting or program that involves the service of ministers and people served by the ministry.

Authorized Minister: A person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an association of the United Conference of Christ or region of the Christian Conference (Disciples of Christ). An Authorized Minister is one type of minister within the meaning of this policy.

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

Sexual Exploitation: Sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a Minister engaged in a Ministerial Relationship with another takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person being served by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the Minister.

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 Conference activity;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or Conference-related decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in Conference activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or Conference 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, Conference leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the Conference. 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.

Child Abuse or Neglect: The acts or omissions of any person who, or legal entity which, is in any manner or degree related to the child, is residing with the child, or is otherwise responsible for the child's care, that have resulted in the physical or psychological health or welfare of the child, who is under the age of eighteen, to be

176 harmed, or to be subject to any reasonably foreseeable, substantial risk of being harmed.
 177 Hawai'i State law requires all Employees and volunteers, employees and volunteers to
 178 report:
 179

- 180 (1) When the child exhibits evidence of: (a) substantial or multiple skin bruising or any
 181 other internal bleeding; (b) any injury to skin causing substantial bleeding; (c)
 182 malnutrition; (d) failure to thrive; (e) burn or burns; (f) poisoning; (g) fracture of any
 183 bone; (h) subdural hematoma; (i) soft tissue swelling; (j) extreme pain; (k) extreme
 184 mental distress; (l) gross degradation; (m) death; and such injury is not justifiably
 185 explained, or when the history given concerning such condition or death is at variance
 186 with the degree or type of such condition or death, or circumstances indicate that such
 187 condition or death may not be the product of an accidental occurrence; or
 188
- 189 (2) When the child has been the victim of sexual contact or conduct, including, but not
 190 limited to, sexual assault as defined in the Hawai'i Penal Code, molestation, sexual
 191 fondling, incest, or prostitution; obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or
 192 depiction; or other similar forms of sexual exploitation; or
 193
- 194 (3) When there exists injury to the psychological capacity of a child as is evidenced by an
 195 observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function; or
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- 197 (4) When the child is not provided in a timely manner with adequate food, clothing,
 198 shelter, psychological care, physical care, medical care, or supervision; or
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- 200 (5) When the child is provided with dangerous, harmful, or detrimental drugs.
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 202

203 **Procedures for Handling Complaints of Abuse, Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment**

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 205 Anyone who feels that he or she has been subjected to, or is aware of, conduct that is prohibited
 206 by this Policy should immediately report the matter to the designated supervisor, director,
 207 chairperson, or an Authorized Minister of HCUCC staff.
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209 The Conference Minister or his/her designee will conduct a prompt investigation of all
 210 allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse in as confidential a manner as possible. HCUCC is
 211 committed to providing work, worship, or Conference related programs free of unlawful
 212 discrimination, harassment and retaliation but can only do so if concerns or questions are brought
 213 to its attention.
 214

215 If HCUCC determines that prohibited abuse or harassment has occurred, it will take corrective
 216 action reasonably calculated to end the prohibited harassment, including appropriate disciplinary
 217 action up to and including termination or exclusion from HCUCC programs.
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219 Alleged incidents involving HCUCC employees will be addressed as outlined in the HCUCC
 220 Employee Handbook.
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222 **Procedures for Cases, or Suspected Cases, of Child Abuse**

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 224 Any employee or volunteer who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that Child Abuse or

225 Neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that Child Abuse or Neglect may occur
226 in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the designated
227 supervisor, director, chairperson or an Authorized Minister of HCUCC staff so that HCUCC may
228 take appropriate action in a timely manner.

229 HCUCC will make a report to appropriate authorities including but not limited to *Child*
230 *Protective Services (CPS) 24-hour reporting line: Oahu, 808-832-5300; toll free, 1-800-494-*
231 *3991; toll free fax: 1-800-399-1614.*

232 *In an emergency situation where a child's life or welfare is immediately threatened or*
233 *endangered, individuals are encouraged to call 911 or to make a report directly to CPS.*

234 **Procedures for Clergy Misconduct**

235 Apart from any disposition of the matter by a calling body, all allegations of behavior which call
236 into question the fitness for ministry of any Authorized Minister will be promptly forwarded to
237 the Conference and Ministry Committee of the Association of the United Conference of Christ in
238 which standing is held, by contacting the Conference Minister or any of the Associate
239 Conference Ministers of the HCUCC.

240 **Confidentiality**

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242 All application and disclosure information provided by volunteers and employees shall be kept in
243 a confidential file. When investigating an allegation, those involved shall maintain complete
244 confidentiality with respect to names and events. The guiding rule of confidentiality is to share
245 information only with those who need to know and only what they need to know when that
246 information enables them to make informed decisions that they are duly authorized to make.
247 This rule of confidentiality shall be followed by all involved.