

## **Policy & Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct**

**Sonrise Church of God  
2805 Boulevard Road SE  
Olympia Washington 98501**

This statement of **Policy & Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct** of Sonrise Church (the "Policy") is to be given to each employee, to all lay volunteers who regularly supervise activities for children and youth, and to all clergy (paid or volunteer). Each of the persons named above shall sign a statement verifying that they have received the Policy, have read and understood it and agree to follow it.

### **Introduction:**

Those clergy or laity who serves the Sonrise Church (whether paid or volunteer) must adhere to Christian moral principles in their sexual conduct. It is a grave ethical transgression for any Christian to betray trust by sexually abusing or exploiting another person, whether child or adult. Sexual exploitation or abuse is a terrible injury to the one abused and a violation of faithfulness to Christ.

The Church has always recognized that clergy bear a particular responsibility to pattern their lives according to Jesus' example. All Clergy are regarded by the faithful and the world as examples of what Christian lives should be. Any moral offense by clergy is especially damaging because it betrays that trust committed to them by the Church to nurture and care for every member. Therefore, it is intolerable and morally wrong for a clergyman to exploit the inherent power and trust in his office to gratify his sexual appetite or emotional needs.

It is the responsibility of the clergy and church volunteers to do all necessary to stop sexual misconduct in the local church. Unfortunately, in the past, instances of sexual misconduct at some churches or denominations were denied by church authorities or dealt with secretly. Such a response fails to implement the standards of justice and love God requires of the Church.

**With this Policy, Sonrise Church of God is confronting the fact that sexual misconduct can occur in any church and is instituting policies and procedures for the prevention of such misconduct.**

## **Policy on Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual misconduct is strictly prohibited and will be cause for termination of the employee, volunteer or clergyman of Sonrise Church who is guilty of such misconduct. In the case of clergy, termination will be coordinated with the Pacific Northwest Association of the Church of God credentials committee.

### **Definition of Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual misconduct includes any form of sexually inappropriate behavior or contact, whether criminal or not, by employees or representatives of the Church, whether clergy or laity, whether paid or unpaid, and without regard to particular titles of positions. Without limitation, sexual misconduct encompasses:

- a. Sexual abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual offense against any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is below 18 years of age or who is legally incompetent; or
- b. Sexual exploitation or harassment, including but not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a clergyman, employee or volunteer and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual; or
- c. Sexual behavior or sexual contact between a clergyman and anyone other than his/her spouse.

(Examples of actions that could be considered sexual exploitation or harassment:

Touching any part of a person's body that would be covered by a modest swimsuit or the clothing that covers those parts; or  
Stroking the thigh or bare shoulder; or  
Hugging and/or rubbing the back of a person in a way that goes beyond a pastoral or professional relationship; or  
Jokes, remarks, conversation or writing with sexually suggestive content; or  
Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures: or  
Attempts to develop personal contact/friendship beyond a pastoral or professional relationship)

### **Reporting Suspicious Behavior**

Anyone who knows of or suspects sexual misconduct shall immediately report the incident or suspicion to a pastor or any member of the Sonrise Leadership TEAM. If the misconduct involves sexual offense or abuse against a child, the Leadership TEAM should report it also to the local law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable laws.

Suspicion is cause enough to report. The confidentiality of the victim and the person who reports will be maintained, in conformity with applicable laws.

### **Response Team**

When a suspicion is reported, the Leadership TEAM will serve as (the "Response Team") will meet as soon as possible to investigate and respond to any suspicious behavior. The Response Team will investigate and respond to any reported suspicious behavior. This team also will coordinate efforts to minister to the pastoral needs of any victim. The confidentiality of the victim and the person who reports will be maintained, in conformity with applicable laws. The Response Team will cooperate with law enforcement authorities, but will not attempt to determine legal or criminal guilt. Should the charge be against a member of the Leadership TEAM, that person shall not serve as part of the Response TEAM.

## **Policy on the Protection of Children**

Sonrise Church strictly prohibits interaction with children and youth by anyone with a civil or criminal record of sexual offense against a child or anyone who has admitted prior sexual abuse or anyone known to have a paraphiliac diagnosis or tendency (e.g. pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and computer sex crimes). All employees, lay leaders who regularly supervise activities for children and youth, and all clergy (paid or volunteer) will be subject to background screenings with police, previous employers and personal references.

### **Reporting Suspicious Behavior**

Anyone who knows of or suspects sexual offense or abuse against a child shall immediately report the incident or suspicion to a Pastor or any member of the Sonrise Leadership TEAM. The suspected offense or abuse should be reported also to the local law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable laws.

Suspicion is cause enough to report. The confidentiality of the victim and the person who reports will be maintained, in conformity with applicable laws.

### **Response Team**

When suspicion is reported, the “Response Team” will be meet as soon as possible to investigate and respond to any suspicious behavior.

## **Policy on Personnel Employment & Volunteers**

### **Requirement of Background Screenings:**

#### **Clergy:**

Prior to hiring by the Church or other paid or volunteer work at Sonrise Church, background screenings will be obtained on all clergy. Background screenings shall include such things as: inquiries of state and national credentials committees having past or present supervision or authority over the individual, schools attended by the individual and employers of the individual during the last five years. Additionally, background screenings shall be obtained of any past convictions of a criminal or sexual nature and civil claims regarding sexual misconduct or child abuse/neglect/abandonment. The completion of the Application for Child/Youth Workers shall be a required part of the background screening.

#### **Employees:**

Prior to employment, all church employees shall be subject to a background screening of any past convictions of a criminal or sexual nature and civil claims regarding sexual misconduct or child abuse/neglect/abandonment. Other background screenings, including previous employers and personal references, and other screening procedures will also be used. The completion of the Application for Child/Youth Workers shall be a required part of the background screening.

#### **Volunteers:**

Prior to assignment, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities (e.g., youth advisors, Sunday School teachers, regular chaperones) shall be subject to a background screening of any past convictions of a criminal or sexual nature and civil claims regarding sexual misconduct or child abuse/neglect/abandonment. Other background screenings, including personal references and other screening procedures will also be used. The completion of the Application for Child/Youth Workers shall be a required part of the background screening.

A driving record screening shall be obtained for volunteers who regularly drive on church business or events.

Background screenings will not be required of volunteers who occasionally assist with children/youth (e.g., parent volunteers for particular event), but who do not regularly supervise youth activities, as long as such volunteers are under the direct and constant supervision of someone who has been screened.

**Background screening reports shall be kept strictly confidential.**

#### **Compliance:**

Compliance with this Policy, including the need for periodic updates of employment and background records, shall be reviewed annually as a part of the annual internal audit of the church, or by another committee appointed by the Sonrise Leadership TEAM.

## **PREVENTION PRACTICES & PROCEDURES TO PROTECT CHILDREN & YOUTH**

These Prevention Practices & Procedures of Sonrise Church deal with the prevention of sexual misconduct as well as some general safety concerns. These Prevention Practices & Procedures shall be given to each employee, to all lay leaders who supervise activities for children and youth, and to all clergy (paid or volunteer) as a part of the **Policy & Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct** (the “Policy”) of Sonrise Church.

For the purpose of these Prevention Practices, "adult" means someone 18 years of age or older. Anyone below 18 years of age is considered a child or youth.

### **For Church Sunday School/Youth Groups/Children’s and Youth Programs and the like.**

- 1) All people who shall participate in ministries with children/youth must have been members of Sonrise Church for at least a year, and/or be well known to members of the church leadership.
- 2) All those working with children/youth are subject to background screenings and other screening procedures (as specified in the Policy), including a check for a previous record of Driving While Intoxicated or any reckless citation.
- 3) Older teenagers (18-20 years old) cannot work with younger children or youth (17 years old or younger) without an adult of 21 years or older present at all times.
- 4) At least two adults will be present during all child/youth activities.
- 5) Travel off church premises:
  - a) If children/youth are to be taken off church premises at any time, or are meeting off-premises, at least two adults (more if the size of the group requires), preferably a male and a female, should accompany them.
  - b) Permission slips with details are required for all trips off church premises.
  - c) When a church program or activity calls for someone to drive children/youth anywhere, be sure to have on file a form which records important information about the vehicle operator and the vehicle to be used. Fill out the form copy of the driver's license, the Proof of Insurance and the vehicle registration.
- 6) Pick up after youth events:
  - a) If children/youth are to be picked up by someone other than a parent or known babysitter or dropped off somewhere other than their home, the parent(s) or guardian should indicate that person's name and phone number. Children/youth will be released to properly identified and authorized adults only.

- b) An adult leader should stay with children/youth at the conclusion of an activity until every child/youth has been picked up. Never leave a child/youth alone waiting for a ride home.
- 7) Overnight events:
- a) Adult advisors and/or clergy must approve overnight stays in advance.
  - b) For overnights (lock-ins, camp, etc.) always have at least 4 adults present (and more if the size of the group requires), including 2 males and 2 females.
  - c) Make parents/guardians and children/youth aware of the ground rules which will govern all such overnight events and whenever possible have them sign an agreement to abide by those rules in advance of the event itself. Be clear about specifying the consequences of any infraction.
  - d) For overnights, whether on church property or elsewhere, be sure that separate sleeping areas are provided for boys and girls and that privacy is assured for use of bathroom facilities and for changing clothes. When staying in a hotel or camp, the rooms for the boys should not be adjacent to the rooms for the girls. Where possible, the boys' rooms should be at the opposite end of the hotel hallway or on a separate floor, or in a separate area of the camp.
- 8) If a child/youth needs to undress (for example, to get into a costume or for first aid), do call another adult to accompany you. (This is another good reason for adult teachers to work in teams). Be sure that separate dressing areas are provided for boys and girls and that privacy is assured.
- 9) Send two children together to the bathroom. Where possible, one child should not go to the bathroom alone.
- 10) We have an "open door policy"; that is, clergy, church staff and adult youth leaders always have the right to visit and observe a class or program at any time unannounced. Classroom doors should never be locked with children inside. Where feasible, put glass in doors so someone can see in the classroom at all times.
- 11) Even playfully, even if a child or youth asks, do not touch any part of the body that would be covered by a modest swimsuit, nor on the clothing which covers those parts.
- 12) Never meet a child/youth in secret or in an unplanned way (e.g., meeting them at the end of a school day) without discussing the meeting with parents and/or appropriate supervising people. Also, do not become involved in secret "meetings" with a child/youth by computer instant messaging, e-mail or in a chat room.
- 13) It is unwise to be alone (and out of sight of anyone else) with a child/youth. If that seems necessary, ask another adult to stand by. Or, file a short memo with the church office (or other person designated) noting that the private conference took place. Should a question ever arise, a dated memo would be more useful than your memory of the incident. Of course, such memo would not betray the privacy of the conversation itself.
- 14) If you have an encounter with a child/youth where you think there might be a possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpreting your behavior, discuss the encounter with the

Pastor or a member of the Leadership TEAM. Document with a dated memo. Where possible, discuss the matter with the child's parent or guardian.

- 15) Use caution about any movies or videotapes which might raise concerns. Offer to show them to parents first (even if parents do not take up your offer). Videos should be age appropriate, keeping in mind the rating. "R-rated" movies are never to be shown to children below the age of 17 without parental and clergy permission. All material dealing with sexual themes should be reviewed by clergy before it is seen by children/youth.
- 16) Never show youth any material which displays nudity or could by any standard be called obscene or pornographic. If such material is brought by youth or anyone, confiscate it at once and consult with clergy/supervisor/trusted adult.
- 17) Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or tobacco products are never permitted to be brought to or consumed during any church-related activity for children/youth.
- 18) If a child/youth comes to any church program and appears intoxicated (from either drugs or alcohol), contact parents immediately and consult with the clergy or other authority as to further action.
- 19) Examples of actions that could be considered sexual exploitation or harassment:
  - a) Touching any part of a person's body that would be covered by a modest swimsuit or the clothing that covers those parts; or
  - b) Stroking the thigh or bare shoulder; or
  - c) Hugging and/or rubbing the back of a person in a way that goes beyond a pastoral or professional relationship; or
  - d) Jokes, remarks, conversation or writing with sexually suggestive content; or
  - e) Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures: or
  - f) Attempts to develop personal contact/friendship beyond a pastoral or professional relationship)

### **Acknowledgement of Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Sexual misconduct is strictly prohibited and will be cause for termination of the employee, volunteer or clergyman of Sonrise who is guilty of such misconduct. Sexual misconduct includes any form of sexually inappropriate behavior or contact, whether criminal or not, by employees or representatives of the Church, whether clergy or laity, whether paid or unpaid, and without regard to particular titles of positions. (A more complete definition of sexual misconduct is found in the Policy.)

Anyone who knows or suspects sexual misconduct shall immediately report the incident or suspicion to the Pastor or any member of the Leadership TEAM. If the misconduct involves sexual offense or abuse against a child, it should be reported also to the local law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable laws.

Sonrise strictly prohibits interaction with children and youth by anyone with a civil or criminal record of sexual offense against a child or anyone who has admitted prior sexual abuse or anyone known to have a paraphiliac diagnosis or tendency ( e.g. pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, computer sex crimes).

Anyone who knows of or suspects sexual offense or abuse against a child shall immediately report the incident or suspicion to the Pastor or any member of the Leadership TEAM. The suspected offense or abuse should be reported also to the local law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable laws.

I acknowledge that I have received, understand and agree to follow the Policy & Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct of Sonrise Church of God, Olympia, Washington.

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Name of Clergy, Employee or Volunteer (Please print)

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Signature of Clergy, Employee or Volunteer

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Date

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Signature of Witness

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Date

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Title of Witness

SONRISE CHURCH OF GOD  
APPLICATION FOR CHILD/YOUTH WORKERS

This application is to be completed by all applicants, for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is being used to help the Church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. This application will be reviewed only by responsible parties and will be kept on file in a secure location.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

Middle

Present Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Current Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What type of child/youth work do you prefer? \_\_\_\_\_

2. On what date would you be available? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Minimum length of commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Marital Status: Married Single Engaged Divorced Remarried Widowed

5. Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number and State: \_\_\_\_\_

(Photocopy of Social Security Card and Driver's License is required.)

6. List other names used (maiden, former, nickname):

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Previous home address in last 10 years? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. When did you become a member here? \_\_\_\_\_ (12 months previous required)

9. Name and address of church of which you attended previously: \_\_\_\_\_

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11. List other churches (names and addresses) you have attended regularly during the past 5 years \_\_\_\_\_

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12. List names and phone numbers of clergy or church staff who know you and can be contacted at others churches you have attended in the past 5 years: \_\_\_\_\_

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12. List all previous work involving children/youth. Give the name of the church or other organization, location, dates and type of work:

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13. List any gifts, experience, training, education or other skills that have prepared you for work with children and/or youth: \_\_\_\_\_

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14. List by name, street address, telephone number and contact person of your two most recent employers; giving dates of service: \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Have you ever had any license or certification (e.g., professional) suspended or revoked because of a claim, charge, complaint or conviction of sexual offense or child abuse, neglect or abandonment? If so, give full details: \_\_\_\_\_

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16. Have you ever been charged or convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor or any sexual offense or abuse against a child? If so, please explain:

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17. Has any charge, claim or complaint or accusation ever been made and/or sustained that you engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior or sexual contact? If so, give details:

18. Is there any fact or circumstance about you or your background that would call into question the advisability of entrusting you with the supervision, guidance and care of young people?

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19. Do you have any special requirements of which we should be aware? (For example: cannot drive, prefer daytime hours only, cannot participate in outdoor activities, medical limitations, etc.)

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**Personal References**

(Not former employers or relatives)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attest Statement**

Under penalty of perjury, I swear or affirm that the information given above is true, complete and correct. I understand and agree that a complete background investigation, including criminal records and driving record, will be conducted with respect to me, and that this information may be verified by contacting persons and organizations with whom I have had contact or which may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides such information. I also agree to release and hold harmless Sonrise Church of God, their officers, employees, agents and volunteers.

The authorization and release herein stated are valid for a period of no longer than 180 days from date of application.

Applicant's  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Witness \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIAL PERSONAL REFERENCE FORM**

Your name has been given as a reference by \_\_\_\_\_,  
who submitted an application to work (as a volunteer or paid) with one of our youth programs.  
We would appreciate your completing this form and returning it in the enclosed envelope so  
that we may make a decision on the applicant's ability to fulfill this work commitment. All  
information will be confidential as specified by law. Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed: (Pastor or the Program Director, etc.)

1. How long have you know the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

2. In what capacity have you known the applicant? (co-worker, friend, neighbor, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you aware of any problems/issues that would limit the applicant's ability to fulfill or  
suitability for working with children/youth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Sonrise Church defines Sexual Misconduct as:

- a. Sexual abuse, sexual molestation or sexual offense against any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is below 18 years of age or who is legally incompetent; or
- b. Sexual exploitation or harassment, including but not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a clergyman, employee or volunteer and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual; or
- c. Sexual behavior or sexual contact between a clergyman and anyone other than his wife.

In reference to the above definitions ONLY, please check one of the following:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ I do not know nor have reason to know that this individual has ever engaged in sexual misconduct.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ I have the following information regarding the possibility that the applicant has engaged in sexual misconduct. (If checking this box, give details below).

4b

continued \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you recommend the applicant for placement in a setting such as ours? Or, do you feel he or she may be more suited for another type of work? If so, why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please call \_\_\_\_\_ if you have any questions about this request or if you have any concerns to discuss.

\_\_\_\_\_

**For Office Use Only**

Note: if 4.b. is checked, consult with a trusted authority:

- \* Pastor of Sonrise Church
- \* Sonrise Leadership TEAM member

before hiring or assigning to a volunteer position.