

UCC Belmont Safe Church Policy

Vision

The Congregational Church of Belmont seeks to be a place of full welcome for all the children of God. To that end we commit to provide an atmosphere that balances safety with radical hospitality and respect. In so doing we strive to gain a deeper understanding of God's grace, human need, and healthy boundaries. We understand that by taking steps to formalize strategies of prevention and response, we not only create a safer environment for our congregation, but also for our caregivers, volunteers, and church.

Policies

No staff member or volunteer of the Church will be permitted to engage in any of the types of abuse defined in Appendix A. Doing so may be grounds for firing for an employee or removing a volunteer.

No person — staff, volunteer, member or visitor — will face censure of any kind for reporting suspected abuse or any violation of this policy.

Children under ten years of age will be released from a class or activity only into the care of a responsible adult.

The bathroom door will remain open when an adult needs to help a child in the bathroom.

Any class or activity may be visited by any member of the congregation at any time.

All staff and volunteers will be advised of and expected to follow CCB's gifts policy.

Volunteers will tell the Christian Education Coordinator or the Pastor if they suspect that a minor or vulnerable adult has or is being abused, neglected or harassed.

Volunteers and staff will tell the Christian Education Coordinator or the Pastor if a minor or vulnerable adult shares with them that they are considering harming themselves or others, committing a crime, or are being abused, neglected or harassed. Volunteers and staff may also file a report of their own with Child Protective Services (CPS) or Adult Protective Services (APS).

Contact information for CPS and APS will be posted in a public area of the church.

A copy of the Church Safe Church policy and a first aid kit with instructions will be kept in areas where minors and vulnerable adults are routinely present. An escape plan and the location of the fire extinguisher must be posted near each classroom door.

The Church will post a list of those members who are mandated reporters, and who agree to be so listed, in a public area.

The Church will post a list of those members who are who are certified in CPR, and who agree to be so listed, in a public area.

All volunteers will be given a copy of this policy.

Overnight Activities

An adult chaperone who is not a family member will not share a bed with a child or youth. Males and females attending events will not share the same sleeping quarters and should have separate access to bathroom facilities when possible.

Off-site Activities

Whenever children, youth, or dependent adults will be off campus, and outside the direct supervision of their parents/guardians, a permission form shall be signed by the parents/guardians. The leaders of those off-site activities must have a list of names, emergency contacts and medical conditions with them at all times as well as permission to obtain medical treatment for a child, youth, or dependent adult.

Screening

To help protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults, the Christian Education Coordinator will check both the California Megan's Law (<http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/disclaimer.aspx?lang=ENGLISH>) and National Sex Offender Public Registry (www.nsopr.gov) websites at least once each year.

The Pastor or the Christian Education Coordinator will check to see that drivers who transport minors for church-sponsored events are at least 21 years of age and hold a current driver's license and insurance.

Staff will complete and any volunteer who works regularly with children or vulnerable adults will be asked to complete the Mandated Reporter Training available at http://www.humanservices.ucdavis.edu/resource/camrt/train_gen.asp.

Staffing

Minor children will always be in the care of more than one adult (over 18 years of age), or one adult and one minor over 12 and at least five years older than the children being cared for. At least one of the adults caring for minor children will be a screened and trained staff person or volunteer.

Reporting

Suspected violations of this policy should be reported to the Pastor or Church Council as soon as is feasible

Suspected abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult should be reported to the Pastor or Church Council immediately.

The Pastor and Church Council will respond to all complaints of abuse or violation of this policy.

All such reports will be held confidential.

The Pastor, staff and Church Council will follow all applicable reporting laws. If a report to civil authorities is not legally mandated, an appropriate course of action within the church will be determined and acted upon without delay and authorities may still be notified. All necessary steps to protect the complainant and promote reconciliation will be taken.

Appendix A: Definitions

Types of Abuse:

Physical abuse: the deliberate, non-accidental physical injury to a minor or adult.

This also includes willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment.

Emotional abuse: maltreatment of a person which elicits low self esteem, undue fear, anxiety, or shame, or other damage to a person's well-being caused by such acts as angry fault finding, humiliating and/or belittling a person for mistakes or failures, and deliberate inattention to someone's emotional needs. Emotional abuse causes mental or emotional injury resulting in an observable and material impairment in a person's growth, development or psychological functioning.

Neglect: failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, health care, psychological nurturing, education, supervision, or other basic necessities. This includes failure to protect a minor or vulnerable adult from harm.

Financial abuse: taking advantage of the vulnerability of an adult by deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of the person's belongings or funds.

Sexual abuse: any sexual activity with a minor or vulnerable adult, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult, child or youth. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child. Sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All sexual abuse is an exploitation of a person's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action.

Sexual Harassment: use of one's authority or power, either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for his or her refusal; or the creation of an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment involves repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to her or his wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation 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 for instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual: or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.
- California law also protects staff from harassment related to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

It is the policy of the Congregational Church of Belmont that no type of abuse or harassment will be tolerated.