

East Union Mennonite Church
Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures

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Policy Guidelines

It is the policy of the East Union Mennonite Church that anyone attending East Union should have the ability to worship in a safe environment, free from sexual misconduct. The church shall work to be proactive in their approach, administering preventive measures.

Any concerns about sexual misconduct issues, information, or seeking advice may contact the committee governing sexual misconduct to discuss concerns and obtain information about the complaint process and sexual misconduct issues in general.

Anyone who believes they have been a victim of sexual misconduct or is aware of instances of sexual misconduct should speak to a member of the committee. All complaints will be handled with discretion and respect, and will be given immediate attention.

The Elder Board will review the complaint to determine the scope of the investigation and any action to be taken. The investigation will involve interviewing the person making the complaint, any witnesses, and the person or persons involved in the activity complained about. When the investigation is completed, appropriate action will be taken. The investigation will be reviewed with the person making the complaint, the accused offender and other persons on a “need to know” basis.

Current committee members governing allegations of sexual misconduct are:

The current Elder Board (with discretion to pull in other relevant persons)

I. Primary Screening Form (See VIII)

- A. Paid workers (pastors, secretaries, and janitors) will fill out an employment application and a Primary Screen Form.
- B. Youth Volunteers
 - 1. All candidates for youth leadership positions as indicated below in B2 will have attended East Union for at least 6 months.
 - 2. All MYF Leaders, Jr. MYF Leaders, Venture Club Leaders, Primary/Jr Sunday School and Bible school Teachers and Superintendants, and Mentors will submit a Primary Screen Form when accepting their position if not completed in the past 5 years.
 - 3. Responsibility for giving and obtaining the completed form is the committee or person responsible for asking the above listed to serve in role (i.e. Gift Discernment, Elders, Church Council, Bible School/Jr/Primary Superintendants, Life Planning Coordinators).
 - 4. Completed forms will be returned to the Nurture Committee Chair.
- C. Primary Screen Forms will be kept on file in the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Folder in the Secretary's office

II. Sex Offender Registry Screen

- A. Completed for all paid church workers or at the time of applying for paid position
- B. Youth volunteers in leadership positions where 1:1 or overnight contact with youth is possible
 - 1. Include MYF & JR MYF Leaders, Venture Club Leaders, and Mentors
 - 2. Any person when an allegation of offense is made.
- C. Church secretary (to maintain confidentiality and continuity) will do screening. Secretary will immediately report any negative results to Elder Board chairperson. He/She will contact the committee doing recruitment/approval of worker/volunteer.

III. Supervising Church Workers

- A. Christian Nurture Committee will annually arrange an Awareness Seminar/DVD viewing regarding promotion of safety. This will be highly promoted for all new staff in the Christian education/youth work departments and for the Gifts Discernment Committee, Elder Board, and Church Council and all current staff at least every 5 years. Everyone in congregation should be invited to attend.
 - 1. Christian Nurture Committee will update the list of all persons who participate in the Awareness Seminar each year. List will be given to the Church Secretary to be placed on file in the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Folder.
- B. The Church Secretary will maintain a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Folder which will include Primary Screening Forms, Sex Offender Registry Screenings and list Awareness Seminar participants.

IV. Promoting Safety: General guidelines

- A. A team approach (2 adult rule) when working with children, especially in an overnight situation, will be promoted.
- B. As nearly as possible, windows shall be present in classroom doors to promote openness and to help prevent secretiveness.
- C. Church nursery will use an identification procedure (i.e. a bulletin/white board with child's name and parent's cell phone).

V. Reporting Procedures

- A. If anyone becomes aware of an event or suspicion of an event of sexual misconduct on the Church premises or in a setting sponsored by church group, report to the Elders Chairperson.
- B. The Chairperson will report the incident to the Elder Board and the Department of Human Services for determination of proper action. Chairperson will follow guidelines for Response and Complaint Procedures (see VI and VII).
- C. The Elder Board may consult with Church council if there is need for extra support or input.

VI. The Church's Response to Allegations of Misconduct

- A. Church officials will be made aware of the incident as per reporting procedure above and carry out proper action they have determined.
- B. Elder board will be responsible to notify parents/guardians of any minor involved in a misconduct allegation promptly.
- C. Elder board will report incident to insurance company promptly.
- D. The accused, the accuser and the alleged victim will be treated with dignity and respect.
- E. Care should be taken to maintain privacy and confidentiality of all involved in any allegation.

VII. Sexual Misconduct Complaint Procedure for Committee Governing Misconduct Allegations

- A. Promptly arrange to have your discussions where it can be confidential and without interruption.
- B. Share with the person that it is the church's policy and legal obligation to take appropriate action to eliminate sexual misconduct, that this obligation requires it to promptly and thoroughly examine all complaints of sexual misconduct, and that no one reporting sexual misconduct will be subjected to criticism.
- C. Explain that it is also the policy to treat the complaint in confidence and that the complaint will be discussed with persons on a "need to know" basis.
- D. Allow the person to tell the story and circumstances in their own fashion without interruption.

- E. Listen carefully, respectfully and be objective. Do not make or display any judgments, and do not express your own values, perception, assumptions and/or knowledge of the individuals involved.
- F. Tell the person you would like to go back over the details of the complaint to make sure you correctly understand what has happened and to take notes.
 - 1. Record when and where the events of the complaint happened and if anyone else was present and witnessed and/or heard what happened.
 - 2. Ask if the person knows of any similar things that have happened to others.
 - 3. Ask what the person's response was to each event or action – what did he or she do?
 - 4. Ask if the person made any notes or records of the incident. If yes, ask for a copy.
 - 5. Ask if the person has discussed the problem with anyone else – what, if anything was decided?
- G. Ask the person what they would like to see happen next.
- H. If the person suggests that no action be taken, explain that sexual misconduct is illegal and prohibited by law, and that the church has a legal obligation to promptly and thoroughly examine all complaints of potential misconduct and take appropriate action.

