

“Let the youths come. The Kingdom of God belongs to them.” -Jesus

I. Purpose

A central value of Humble Walk is to be a caring community. The “Kingdom of God” is not something we wait for passively, but work for actively, through our choices, relationships, and values, in the here and now. The purpose of this policy is to be active and caring people to some of our most vulnerable members: children and youth. The Humble Walk community is charged with the responsibility to protect children and youth from abuse and neglect, both from within our congregation and outside of it. Humble Walk provides a safe and healthy environment for our children and youth by educating all people in appropriate ways of relating to one another, and by implementing screening, supervisory, and reporting procedures to reinforce our educational efforts. These steps will serve to:

- Educate our children and youth in ways of identifying and resisting abuse, which will benefit them both at Humble Walk and in the wider world;
- Assure parents that Humble Walk is a safe place for their children;
- Protect employees, volunteers, and parents of Humble Walk from meritless allegations of abuse.

LGBTQIA+ Affirmation

I. Statement of affirmation

- A. Humble walk is an affirming and accepting congregation. We believe and empower our youth to tell us who they are, this entails the unconditional support of our trans and gender nonconforming teens and youth in their respective journeys.

II. Acknowledgment of institutional harm

- A. We acknowledge that both in the past and currently people have invoked the love of God to do irreparable harm to the queer community. Specifically with the intention of “Curing” queer and trans children and teens. Humble walk with no reservations condemns the idea that anyone needs to or should be “Cured” of any element of their identity, and we will do whatever is in our power to protect our queer, trans, and non-binary teens/ youth.

III. Lodging and bathroom use.

- A. Trans and gender non-conforming teens and youth will be allowed to use the gendered spaces they are most comfortable with. Entering gendered spaces can be an anxiety-inducing experience for trans and nonbinary youth. It is our responsibility to empower them to choose where they feel safest and support them.

II. Education/Expectations

Expectations of caring for our youth

A necessary part of a safe and loving community, built in the image of Christ, is that all people at Humble Walk understand healthy and appropriate ways to relate, touch and be with one another. By extension, people must also know and recognize unhealthy and inappropriate relationships and touch. The key to a fully realized safe and healthy environment for children and youth is regular education for all people in the community, whether they are employees, volunteers, parents, children.

Employee/Volunteer Education. All employees and volunteers who work with children or youth shall attend a training on how to promote healthy relationships and boundaries with children and youth. Prevention and identification of child abuse and neglect shall also be presented. Records shall be maintained by our church administrator for those attending such training.

Notification. All employees and volunteers shall be provided with a copy of this policy. A summary shall also be posted at prominent places on our website and shall contain the definitions of abuse and neglect and reporting procedures.

III. Safety Procedures for Children and Youth Ministries

A. Employee and Volunteer Screening Process

Application Required. Any person wishing to work with or who may have access to children or youth as an employee or volunteer of Humble Walk shall complete an application and, if requested, an interview for that position. The application shall include a request for references, authorization for a criminal background check, and notification of the Policy. All applications, responses by references, and criminal background check reports shall be kept confidential. A person may not work with children or youth until they have submitted a completed application.

Screening. A reference check shall be conducted for all applicants. The Youth Team shall be responsible for screening all volunteers. Humble Walk, as an option, may conduct a criminal background check on applicants. No person convicted of child abuse or neglect shall be permitted to work with or have access to children or youth. An applicant may be denied the opportunity to work or volunteer at Humble Walk for any legal reason. Background checks are done annually.

Criminal Background Check. In the event that an applicant is denied a position at Humble Walk as a result of a criminal background check, the applicant has the right to be informed of the results of the criminal background check and to receive a copy of the records from law enforcement agencies. The applicant shall have the right to challenge the accuracy and

completeness of any information contained in the background check report. Results of a criminal background check shall be kept confidential. Only authorized persons, which shall include the Pastor, Youth Team and Church Leadership, shall have access to or discuss the results of the criminal background check.

B. Supervisory Guidelines for Children and Youth Ministries

Two Adult Rule. Events and activities for children and youth must include at least two unrelated adults at all times. In the event that unanticipated circumstances cause an adult to be alone with children or youth, that employee or volunteer should immediately contact either a Pastor or Youth Team and inform them of the circumstances.

“Open Door” Classrooms/Activities. All classes, events and activities for children and youth must maintain open doors to rooms when only one adult is teaching/supervising. When “bathroom breaks” are necessary for young children, an adult must accompany the child(ren) to and from the bathroom. For young children, adults should ensure that the bathroom is empty, close the door and wait outside until the child is finished.

Events and Activities Off Art House Property. All children and youth events or activities occurring off Art House property shall be approved by the Youth Team. Events or activities occurring off property shall have the presence of two unrelated adults.

Say Something. Employees and volunteers will be trained to identify inappropriate behavior with children and youth. Inappropriate and questionable behaviors by any person should be reported to supervising volunteers/employees.

C. Reporting Requirements

Any employee or volunteer who becomes aware of *inappropriate or questionable behavior* at a Humble Walk event shall report the behavior to a member of the Child Safety Team.

Child Safety Team. The Child Safety Team shall be composed of the Pastor(s), the Youth Leader, and two (2) designated church adults.

Immediate Action. Once a Child Safety Team member has been informed of an inappropriate or questionable behavior at a Humble Walk event, that member shall immediately inform the other members of the Child Safety Team and write down what was observed in as much detail as possible. If appropriate, the Child Safety Team may conduct an investigation of the allegations. During an investigation the names of all persons involved with the allegations shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need for a thorough investigation. If the Child Safety Team determines that the allegation is credible, it may take any action required to

remedy the situation, including prohibiting the volunteer or employee from working with Humble Walk youth or children. Employees who engage in inappropriate behavior toward Humble Walk youth or children may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Abuse and Neglect. If the Child Safety team becomes aware of an *an allegation of abuse or neglect* that, if true, would violate Minnesota Statute §626.556 it shall inform appropriate law enforcement officials within 24 hours of the determination, unless the Pastors determine that the information is privileged from disclosure under Minnesota Statute §595.02(1)(c) Law enforcement will generally be notified in the event of credible allegations of physical abuse, sexual abuse, for neglect as defined below.

For purposes of this policy:

Physical Abuse of a child is any physical, mental or threatened injury, inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care, other than by accidental means. Physical abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child administered by a parent or guardian that does not result in injury.

Sexual Abuse means the subjection of a child to sexual contact by an older person, whether an adult or minor. Sexual contact includes fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism, exposure to pornography and sexual intercourse. Sexual abuse also includes the use of a child in prostitution or in the production of sexually explicit works. Sexual abuse also includes threatened sexual abuse.

Neglect is the failure by parents or caretakers to provide a child with necessary food, shelter, clothing or medical care. Neglect also includes failure to ensure that a child is educated.

Emotional Abuse is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child or youth's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticisms, threats or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Examples of behaviors include: Inadequate nurturing or affection; Permitted drug or alcohol abuse by youth; isolation; Lack of supervision; Exposure to safety hazards, smoking, guns, weapons.

APPENDIX A

Humble Walk Children and Youth Safety Policy

In order to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for Humble Walk children and youth, the following guidelines apply to Children and Youth Ministries events. Any person who becomes aware of inappropriate behavior toward children or youth at a Humble Walk event should immediately notify a member of the Youth Safety Team. You should also notify a member of the Youth Safety Team if you believe that a child or youth at Humble Walk is the victim of abuse or neglect as defined below.

Supervisory Guidelines for Children and Youth Ministries

Two Adult Rule. Events and activities for children and youth must include at least two unrelated adults at all times. In the event that unanticipated circumstances cause an adult to be alone with children or youth, that employee or volunteer should immediately contact either a Pastor or the Youth Team and inform them of the circumstances.

“Open Door” Classrooms/Activities. All classes and activities/events for children and youth must maintain open doors to rooms when only one adult is teaching/supervising. When “bathroom breaks” are necessary for young children, an adult must accompany the child(ren) to and from the bathroom. The adult must keep the bathroom door open while the child(ren) is/are using the bathroom.

Events and Activities Off Art House Property. All children and youth events or activities occurring off Church Property shall be approved by the Youth Team. Events or activities occurring off Church property shall have the presence of two unrelated adults.

Say Something. Employees and volunteers will be trained to identify inappropriate behavior with children and youth. Inappropriate and questionable behaviors by any person should be reported to supervising volunteers/employees or a member of the Child Safety Team

What is Abuse and Neglect?

Physical Abuse of a child is any physical, mental or threatened injury, inflicted by a person responsible for the child’s care, other than by accidental means. Physical abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child administered by a parent or guardian that does not result in injury.

Sexual Abuse means the subjection of a child to sexual contact by an older person, whether an adult or minor. Sexual contact includes fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism, exposure to pornography and sexual intercourse. Sexual abuse also includes the use of a child in prostitution or in the production of sexually explicit works. Sexual abuse also includes threatened sexual abuse.

Neglect is the failure by parents or caretakers to provide a child with necessary food, shelter, clothing or medical care. Neglect also includes failure to ensure that a child is educated.

How Should I Report A Violation of Humble Walk’s Children and Youth Policy or a Concern about Abuse or Neglect?

If you believe a child or youth is in *immediate* danger, call 911.

If you believe that a Humble walk child or youth has been subjected to inappropriate behavior at a Humble event or you suspect or know of abuse or neglect of a child or youth within Humble Walk, you should contact any member of Humble Walk's Child Safety Team:

Pastor Jodi Houge 651.786.9028 (cell)

Bryan Shirley 651.336.2695

Casey Linstad 651.271.4960

When in doubt, you should report what you know or believe.

APPENDIX B

Application for Employees and Volunteers Working with Children and Youth Humble Walk Lutheran Church

Humble Walk seeks to be a caring and safe place for children and youth. It is of the greatest importance that employees and volunteers who work with children and youth are guardians of their spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing. We ask that you submit this application for this important ministry so that we may all live well together. .

Please answer all questions fully. Your application and any information received from personal references or criminal background checks will be kept confidential.

Full Name:

Maiden, Alias or Former Name:

Date of Birth (mo./day/year):_Last 4 digits of SSN

Driver's License No.:_State of Issue:

Address:

Home phone: Cell phone:

Time at this address:

If less than two (2) years at current address, list previous address for last two (2) years:

Have you ever lived in a state other than Minnesota?: Yes / No

If "yes," list all other states/countries of residence:

City: Country:

State/Province: Dates: to

(mo./year) (mo./year)

City: Country:

State/Province: Dates: to

(mo./year) (mo./year)

City: Country:
State/Province: Dates: to

(mo./year) (mo./year)

City: Country:
State/Province: Dates: to

(mo./year) (mo./year)

City: Country:
State/Province: Dates: to

(mo./year) (mo./year)

If you have lived in more than five (5) places other than Minnesota, please continue your list on the back of this page.

Have you ever been arrested for, convicted of, or pleaded guilty to a crime involving sexual behavior or child abuse? Yes / No

If "yes," describe the crime, date of conviction/guilty plea, and the location (city and state):

(Attach relevant documents and/or attach a separate sheet with further details, if necessary.)

Type of position/ministry you are applying for:

List any other churches you have attended in the last five (5) years:

Church:

City: State/Province:

Were you a member of this church?: Yes / No

Did you participate, lead or supervise any ministries or activities involving children or youth? Yes / No

If "yes," please describe the ministry or activity, and the dates you were involved with the activity:

Church:

City: State/Province:

Were you a member of this church?: Yes / No

Did you participate, lead or supervise any ministries or activities involving children or youth?: Yes / No

If "yes," please describe the ministry or activity, and the dates you were involved with the activity:

If you have attended more than two (2) churches in the last five (5) years, please continue your list on the back of this page.

List all *non-church* children and youth work or activities you have been involved with as a leader/volunteer:

Organization Name:
Address:
Work/volunteer activities performed:
Dates involved:

Organization Name:
Address:
Work/volunteer activities performed:

Dates involved:

List two (2) personal references related to working/volunteering with children or youth. Do not list relatives:

Name:
Address:
Name of organization:
Telephone:
Position:

Name:
Address:
Name of organization:
Telephone:
Position:

Applicant's Statement

I have been provided and read Humble Walk's Children and Youth Safety Policy. I agree to act by the letter and spirit of that Policy, and, specifically, to do no harm to others, never intentionally be alone with a child or youth, and to give and receive only safe and appropriate touch while in the service of Humble Walk.

The information contained in this Application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the churches, organizations, and personal references listed in this application to give any information that they may have regarding my character and fitness of work with children and youth. In consideration of the submission and evaluation of this Application by Humble Walk Lutheran Church, I release any individual, church, organization, employer, or reference, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages for release of information requested by Humble Walk Lutheran Church and/or its agents.

I have read the foregoing release and understand its terms. I sign this release of my own free will, and understand it is a legally binding agreement.

Signature of Applicant:

Date:

Background Check Authorization

I, _____, hereby authorize Humble Walk Lutheran Church or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, credit history, adult criminal or police records, and motor vehicle records including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained in this Application and/or obtaining information which may be material to my qualifications for service now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my service with Humble Walk Lutheran Church.

Signature of Applicant:

Date:

Parental Release

(for applicants under 18 years of age, to be completed by parent or guardian)

I, _____, as the parent or legal guardian of the Applicant, hereby authorize Humble Walk Lutheran Church or its agents to make an independent investigation of the Applicant, including materials maintained by public and private organizations and all public records, for the purpose of obtaining information relevant to the Applicant's service at Humble Walk Lutheran Church.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Date:

Relationship to Applicant: