

RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

For employees and volunteers working with children and young people

FACING Sexual Abuse

As Christians we believe that man, made in the image of God, is loved and unconditionally accepted by Him. According to Jesus' words (Matthew 18:1ff. and 19:13ff.) we as the Seventh-day Adventist Church feel a great responsibility for the children and youths entrusted to us.

In the context of my volunteer work / my employment with the Seventh-day Adventist Church I confirm that I have read the manual "Obviating Sexual Abuse" and commit myself (by my signature) to observe the following points:

- My position concerning the children and youths is a special position of trust and authority. I must not abuse this position. As a helper, group leader or staff member I will not misuse my role to initiate sexual contact with the young people entrusted to me.
- I shall respect the individual personalities of children and young people and treat them with trust and dignity.
- I shall encourage a healthy self-assurance and the capacity for self-determination in the children and young people entrusted to my care because "strong" children and youths are able to say "No!" and are less vulnerable.
- I shall structure my relationships with children and youths transparently and with positive, appropriate forms of attention and I shall handle boundaries of closeness and distance responsibly.
- I shall take seriously the individual emotions of children and youths in relation to closeness and distance to other persons and respect their personal boundaries.
- I shall do everything within my power to ensure that, while working with children and young people of Adventist youth groups, no violation of boundaries, no sexual abuse and no sexualized violence will be tolerated.
- I shall protect the boys and girls, children and youths entrusted to me from physical and mental harm, danger, abuse and violence.

- I consciously recognize the trespassing of boundaries by other coworkers and participants in groups, teams, programs and activities and I do not conceal it.
- In case of a conflict I shall seek professional support and help and inform the responsible person(s) at the leadership level. In such cases protection of children and young people must come first.
- I refrain from belittling, sexist, discriminatory and violent verbal and nonverbal behavior and will not tolerate it from others but shall take an active stand against it.
- I also refrain from the viewing of all audiovisual and virtual images or descriptions of sexual violence or pedophilic-type material in my personal use of media. According to the principle described in Matthew 5:28 I am convinced that guilt does not first arise from the actual deed, but that it originates through the effects of indulging in an initial fantasy.
- I am conscious of the fact that any sexual contact with persons entrusted to my care is subject to punishment. Each offense by an employee, according to the Working Policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, leads to a compulsory loss of employment. If the offense is committed by a volunteer, the Church Manual¹ of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church dictates that the volunteer be removed from the position.
- By signing these rules of conduct I assure that there were/ are no pending legal proceedings against me in connection with sexual violence, nor has any such proceeding been discontinued due to a fulfillment of conditions. I promise to inform the Conference immediately should any pertinent legal proceedings be initiated against me and to resign from any assigned church duties until the matter is settled.

¹ Alteration is intended in 2010

Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth
Function		
Place, Date	Signature	

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Presentation of the Issue

Sexual abuse is an issue widely discussed in the media, in social institutions, and in religious denominations. We, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, have also to accept that in our local churches there are persons who have committed sexual abuse and others who have been victims of sexual abuse or harassment. We confess that we have not been sensitive enough for the dangers and the suffering of our children, youth, and adults who have been entrusted to us and have become victims in our midst. We acknowledge the urgency to respond and to make our local congregations a safe place for our children and youth to grow, to find faith, respect, and benevolence.

With this manual we present a summary of the subject to our local Adventist churches and to all volunteers and church employees. It is our hope that sexual abuse will no longer be viewed as a taboo, but will become an important issue in the minds of church members, so that our children can be protected and persons affected can be helped. We know about the dangers which persons of all age and especially children and youth are exposed to. Free access to media, the dissolving of family structures, violence in families and groups due to social stress, problems in parenting, diffusion of value systems and of personal identity point to the severity of the issue.

Children, youth, and adults who have experienced sexual abuse or harassment come to us and expect to be listened to, to be helped and supported, to find a place of comfort and security. We are called to turn our hearts and hands towards hurting persons and against those who misuse their position or power over dependent persons in our congregations. Children and young people seek our company and fellowship. They are looking for someone they can depend on, they want to develop and to grow with all the gifts God has entrusted to them. It

is our sacred duty to create an atmosphere of trust, benevolence, and security, and to safeguard our children against any kind of religious or sexual abuse.

It is also the duty of the church to consider the subject of sexual abuse from a biblical standpoint. God gave man sexuality as a gift as well as a commission. We are allowed to enjoy our sexuality as a deep expression of love and trust. But wherever this gift is misused as a means of power or selfish pursue of sexual desires or drives, we are called to intervene. God grants value and dignity to everyone. He calls us by our personal name. Whenever this dignity is violated and destroyed by an abuser, the victims need somebody who will stand up for them and support them on their journey to their own wounded self, to God, and to the church, as long as necessary. For the aggressor, sexual abuse must have the consequence of legal prosecution and that he or she will no longer be allowed to work with children or youth.

Content and text of this manual tend to elucidate how sexual abuse should be understood. It also offers guidelines for appropriate behavior and lists information for further reference.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (that is, the Conferences) is obligated to make the manual known to its members and to supply the rules of conduct to all volunteers and church employees. Those working with children and youth are required to sign the rules of conduct as an expression of self obligation and of respect towards the children, the youth, and to the ethics of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

June 2013
 „Commission against Sexual Abuse“
 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany

www.kinderschutzbund.de
 Support for persons who have observed violence or are affected by it.

www.schulische-praevention.de
 In this portal you will find expert information as well as a great number of prevention projects for practical work in the area of sexual violence against girls and boys.

www.bzga.de
 Center for health information of the Federal Republic of Germany

www.hinsehen-handeln-helfen.de
 Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth - Information about the topic / brochures for free download / counseling centers in Germany / Links etc.

www.itfaces.me/de
 The Seventh-day Adventist Church is working (connected by the Internet) on this issue all over Europe.

Further Literature

Materials from YMCA
 “Fighting Sexual Violence” YMCA Association, Office for Materials, Im Drusetal 8, 34131 Kassel versand@cvjm.de, Tel. 0561-3087-222

Books for Children
 Aliki: *Feelings Are like Colors*, Weinheim 2000
 Blattmann, S.; Hansen, G.: *But I Am Not a Sugar-mouse*, Book and CD, Berlin 2002
 Bohljahn, U.; Deinert, S.; Krieg, T.: *The Family Album*, Oldenburg 1993
 Enders, U.; Boehme, U., Wolters, D.: *Sooo Many Children*, Weinheim 1999
 Enders, U.; Wolters, D.: *Beautiful and Silly. A Picture Book about Nice and Silly Feelings*, Cologne 1999
 Braun, G.; Wolters, D.: *The Big and the Small No*, Mühlheim 1991
 Mebes, M.; Snadrock, L.: *No Kiss on Command*, Berlin 1991

Books for Young People
 Bain, O.; Sanders, M.: *Ways out of the Labyrinth: Questions from Young People about Sexual Abuse*, Berlin 1993

Hassenmüller, H.: *Good Night, Sugar Baby*, Recklinghausen 2000
 Irwin, H.: *Dearest Abby*, Basel and Weinheim 1990
 Kühn, F.: *It Started Quite Harmlessly*, Herder Publishing, Freiburg 1990

Guidance Materials for Parents
 White Ring: Brochure: “Sexual Abuse of Girls and Boys. Facts - Counseling - Prevention.” By Braun, G.; Deegener, G.; Lambert, D. and Marx, S., Mainz
 Kohlhofer, B; Neu, R.; Sprenger, N.: “Taking it Seriously - Prevention of Sexual Violence among Youths.” Education manual, Power Child e.V. 2008
 “Courageous Questions - Prudent Actions” 3rd Edition 2006. Editor: Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth (publikationen@bundesregierung.de)
 Geisler, Dagmar: *My Body Belongs to Me*, Pro Familia, 2002 (ages 5 and up), Loewe Publishing House, 2002

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 Braun, G.: *I Say “No!”* (ages 1 year and up), reference materials for combating the sexual abuse of girls and boys, Mühlheim 1999
 Karremann, M.: *It Happens in Broad Daylight - The Secret World of Pedophiles and How We Can Protect Our Children from Abuse*, Cologne 2007
 Schaffrin, I.; Wolters, D.: *In the Footsteps of Strong Girls - on This Side of Good and Evil. Cartoons for girls* (ages 12 and up), Volksblatt Publishing House, Cologne 19933

ANNEX

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