

POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN
AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
FOR
THE SOUTH FRANKLIN CHARGE
REVISED MAY 6, 2019

INTRODUCTION: The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse and/or sexual abuse in the church. The adopted resolution calls all churches to welcome the children and also to make our churches safe places for children to grow and learn. It is our responsibility to be proactive in our recruiting and training to find people with a gift for caring for children and vulnerable adults and also to protect those volunteers from false accusations. It is also our responsibility to oversee all programs involving children to make sure there is a safe environment and to have a plan of response in place should an accusation arise. The General Conference resolution affirmed that every local church shall have in place a policy for protecting children and vulnerable adults.

PURPOSE: The South Franklin Charge's purpose for establishing this Child Abuse and Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

STATEMENT OF COVENANT: As a Christian community of faith committed to ministry to and with children, youth and vulnerable adults, we pledge to conduct all our activities and ministries in such a way that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all children, youth and vulnerable adults entrusted to us. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers and we will be responsible in overseeing our programs and events and in training our staff, so that they are able and equipped to minister to children in Jesus' name. We will report and respond to all suspected incidents of abuse as is required by state law and our moral conscience and we will be prepared to minister to the families of both the abused and the perpetrator.

PROCEDURES: We adopt these **minimum** standards for our ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

1. Screening and Recruiting

- a. Based on the size of our church family, volunteers are given the opportunity to work with children, youth and vulnerable adults based on their gifts, talents and willingness to help.
- b. All workers (both volunteers and staff) will be interviewed by the Pastor and the Sunday School Superintendent/coordinator before working with any children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- c. All workers will demonstrate an active relationship with their church (or ministry-related United Methodist Church) of at least 6 months before being allowed to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- d. All workers will complete a PA request for Criminal Background check, Child Abuse History Clearance and FBI Criminal History Report-Fingerprint-based background checks are required for staff and volunteers that have not resided in Pennsylvania continuously for a period of 10 years. Volunteers that have lived in Pennsylvania continuously for a period of 10 years prior to becoming a volunteer must sign a Volunteer Affidavit compiled by the Susquehanna Conference. All workers must complete Safe Sanctuaries Training on the Susquehanna Conference Web Site or attend a Safe Sanctuaries Training Class. All clearances and training are good for five (5) years.
- e. All forms and reference reports will be maintained by the Charge's Safe Sanctuary Coordinator for all three churches in a secure manner.

2. Supervision

- a. Our church goal is a two (2) un-related adult rule; however, due to the size of our church family and availability of necessary help that rule may not be followed at all times. In the case the 2-adult rule is not followed, we will have someone serving as a roamer to walk the halls and move amid the classrooms during the program period.
- b. No person shall supervise an age group unless that person is at least five (5) years older than the oldest student.
- c. No person under the age of eighteen (18) shall be considered as one of the two (2) adults.

- d. Each room will have a window or the door will be let open at all times.
 - e. Training shall occur at least once a year and teachers shall be trained to recognize the signs of abuse.
 - f. Registration materials for activities, programs, and/or ministries in which children are outside of the direct supervision of their parents/guardians shall require a signed written permission forms renewed annually. These forms should include pertinent health information and be completed in order for the child to participate in the activity, program, and/or ministry.
 - g. Parents will have advanced notice and full information regarding the activity, program, and/or ministry in which their child will be participating. Parents will also be notified of any activity, program, and/or ministry in which a staff person and/or volunteer will be alone with their child.
 - h. Staff persons and/or volunteers should be conscious of safety concerns when leading activities and games. Proper equipment and adequate supervision of the activity, program, and/or ministry should always be in place.
 - i. No drugs alcoholic beverages, weapons or fireworks will be allowed.
 - j. No permission or opportunity for children to separate themselves from the group, with or without an adult, will be granted or provided.
 - k. No inappropriate touching creating the perception that the personal space and privacy of the individual is being violated will be allowed.
3. Transportation
- The following areas will be addressed for settings outside the local churches which require transportation of our children, youth and vulnerable adults.
- a. Transportation plans will include individual seat belts, adequate space for passengers and luggage, sufficient qualified drivers and effective maps and directions.
 - b. Interpersonal boundaries between the students and leaders (volunteers and staff) will be in accordance with Safe Sanctuaries directives.

- c. In addition to other clearances and requirements, drivers of children need to fill out a driver clearance form and provide proof of coverage by adequate insurance.
 - d. No drivers under the age of 25 shall be used to transport youth.
 - e. An adult who transports youth, children or vulnerable adults should be a safe driver and have proper credentials in Pennsylvania. Including a driving record without DUI's or excessive number of speeding tickets.
 - f. Car seats or booster seats are required for children up to the age of 8 years or as otherwise required by current law.
 - g. If possible two unrelated adults (one of each gender) should be in each car. If only one adult is taking a carload of children, the group shall all meet at the church, travel together and return to the church so a parent or guardian can pick up the children.
 - h. Where possible use caravans of cars as you travel.
4. Overnight Activities
- a. Planning and implementation of effective sleeping arrangements will be by gender to maximize safety measures and minimize any potential for abuse or conflict.
 - b. Adults will not sleep in the same bed with a child or children. In a hotel-type or dormitory setting, it is recommended that, if possible, an adult room is between two children's rooms. (In order to minimize the possibility of danger from within the group as well as from strangers, choose a hotel where the rooms open to the interior of the building rather than the outside, if possible.)
 - c. In camping situations, adults will not sleep in the same tents as children. In a setting where adults and youth are in a large open area, adults will sleep in a separate area of the room from the children.
 - d. No permission for boys to enter the room where girls are sleeping and no permission for girls to enter the room where boys are sleeping will be given.
 - e. Adults should arrange among themselves to check on the children, youth and vulnerable adults on a random schedule during the night.

5. Medication

- a. When possible all medication shall be administered by the child or youth's parent or legal guardian. If a child, youth or vulnerable adult needs medication while attending a church activity, the medication must be given to the designated Adult supervising that child, youth or vulnerable adult by the parent with written instructions regarding the use of the medication. The medication must be in the original container the label intact. If it is a prescription drug, the label with instructions must be on the label. The Adult will return the medication to the parent or legal guardian at the end of the church activity.
- b. All children, youth or vulnerable adult must have a signed parental consent-medical information form on file.

6. Reporting

- a. Upon receiving information of abuse, the adult will report immediately to the Childline & Abuse Registry 1-800-932-0313, the Pastor and/or the Christian Education Leader concurrently.
- b. If the abuse happened on church property by church worker (volunteer or staff), they shall immediately be removed from contact with children, youth or vulnerable adult until the reported incident has been resolved. The removal should be handled in a discreet manner and the worker shall not be banned from other church ministries.
- c. All allegations of abuse including those against a staff person or pastor will be reported to the District Superintendent immediately.

7. Responding.

- a. A quick compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse and/or sexual abuse will be initiated. All allegations will be taken seriously, nothing will be covered up.
- b. The Director of Communications of the Susquehanna Conference or his/her designee, is the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements should be directed to the Pastor.
- c. Pastoral support and comfort will be available to all persons involved in the incident.

8. Internet Safety.

a. Obtain written parent/legal guardian permission:

In addition to general permission to participate in a conference ministry or event, obtain written advance parent/legal guardian permission for children and youth, and personal permission for vulnerable adults, in writing for:

1. Taking and using photos of participants.

(a) Use includes, without limitation, posting on any websites, sending them in e-mail or by cell phone messages, making videos for any use or reproducing them in brochures, posters or newspapers.

(b) Before using any pictures for the above uses, we will need to get parental consent.

2. The sharing of any full name or contact information.

Never post easily identifiable information on line.

3. Do not use "broadcast" e-mails. Use the "Bcc" option (blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.

4. Be cautious when transmitting easily identifiable information such as event date, times, location, or participants.

5. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests. When placing a child, youth, or vulnerable adult on an electronic prayer list, use only first names and only then if you think a name is necessary.

b. Responsibly and safely share photos electronically.

1. Obtain parental permission to use photos of children or other content (poems, songs, etc.)

2. When posting photos, refrain from using names, and never use last names or identifiable information.

3. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure they uphold your mission. Check to make sure nametags are not distinguishable.

4. Use low-resolution photos whenever possible and slightly blur/pixelate photos.

5. Block "save photo as" options on websites. (Ask a web savvy person for assistance.)

6. Limit access to photos by employing the use of a password.
- c. Responsibly and safely use social networking sites e.g. My Space, Facebook, 7Villages, Xanga, Friendster, Plaxo, and others.
Refrain from using personal social media presence for ministry. Use group social media site e.g. Facebook site for the youth group.
 1. Restrict who can be a friend on the church/group account.
Friends should only include people associated with the charge, those associated with the charge ministries, and parents/guardians of children involved in charge ministries.
 2. Do not post anything to social networking site that you would not want attached to your resume or printed in the church newsletter or bulletin.
- d. Limit individual communications with children, youth and vulnerable adults and then only if you have obtained advance written parent/legal guardian permission.
 1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner. (Even though you may be a sounding board for a person having a bad day, the reverse is not true).
 2. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.
- e. Do not collect, or allow third parties to collect, personal information from children under the age of 13. See Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA") and Federal Trade Commission Rules implementing COPPA (the "Rule").
- f. COPPA and the Rule require certain permissions and privacy policies if a website or online service, including a mobile app, collect or allow third parties to collect personal information from or about its users if the service is directed to:
 1. Children under the age of 13 or
 2. A general audience and the organization has actual knowledge that it collects personal information from children under 13.

DO NOT GIVE OUT PASSWORDS TO CONFERENCE MINISTRY ACCOUNTS OR ANY OTHER ACCOUNTS.

DEFINITIONS

Adult - means a person 18 years of age or older.

Child – means any person under the age of 18

Child abuse – as defined under the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law means any of the following:

1. Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.
2. An act or failure to act by a perpetrator, which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
3. Any recent act, failure to act or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator, which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
4. Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning. No child shall be deemed to be physically or mentally abused based on injuries that result solely from environmental factors that are beyond the control of the parent or person responsible for the child's welfare, such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care.

Children's activities – means any activity, program, or ministry in which children are under the supervision of responsible adult staff persons or volunteers at or sponsored by the South Franklin Charge.

Charge – means the following churches: Fetterhoff Chapel United Methodist Church, 4025 Fetterhoff Chapel Road, Chambersburg, PA., Mont Alto United Methodist Church, 10 S. Main Street, Mont Alto, PA., and Quincy United Methodist Church, 8734 Anthony Highway, Quincy, PA.

Conference – means the Susquehanna Conference, The United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg, PA. 17055, (717) 766-7441.

Helper or assistant – means anyone who is under the supervision of a responsible adult staff person or volunteer during a children’s program, activity, or ministry.

Mandated reporter – means persons, who in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession, come into contact with children. Such persons include, but are not limited to, medical professionals, school administrators, teachers and nurses, social services workers, day care center workers, mental health professionals, peace and law enforcement officers.

Staff person – means any adult person working with children employed by the South Franklin Charge.

Monitor – means an adult staff person or volunteer who randomly circulates throughout the South Franklin Charge churches facilities and/or children’s activities, programs, or ministries.

Perpetrator – means someone who has committed child abuse and meets the definition of one of the following four relationships to a child: a parent of a child; a person responsible for the welfare of a child; an individual residing in the same home as the child, or a paramour of the child’s parent.

Staff person in charge of a children’s activity – means the adult charge staff person responsible for the conduct of this activity, program, or ministry.

Volunteer – means a responsible adult who assists in conducting church activities, programs, or ministries under the supervision of a staff member or any adult person responsible for any children’s activities, programs, or ministries that use any of the churches of the South Franklin Charge facilities.

Vulnerable Adult – means any person 18 years and older, who because of physical or mental infirmity or emotional disability or other physical, mental or emotional dysfunction may be vulnerable to maltreatment. Or vulnerable adult is any adults who have been abused either as a child or an adult

Youth – means a child in the age range of 12 to 18 years, and is a colloquial term used in ministries to mean junior and senior high school age groups.

