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Introduction

First United Methodist Church is a part of the body of Christ, a community knit together by God that takes seriously its task to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” We also take seriously Jesus’ command to love one another and seek always to follow in His way as we think about our covenant life together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We understand that through our baptism we are called into fellowship with the Triune God and also into fellowship with one another as disciples of Jesus Christ. As a vital part of living in this covenant with God and with one another, we take seriously the task of demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that children, youth, and adults will be safe to grow spiritually. We further commit to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be “surrounded by steadfast love, established in the faith and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to eternal life” (Baptismal Covenant, UMC Hymnal, p. 44).

Thus, we strive to fulfill this commitment of providing a safe and nurturing environment for all who participate in our ministries in order to prevent abuse, neglect, and harm. First United Methodist Church is committed to providing an environment in which children, youth, and adults feel safe, secure, and protected from physical and emotional abuse. We therefore adopt this Safe Sanctuary policy and its accompanying procedures in covenant with the United Methodist Church and the North Carolina Annual Conference and dedicate ourselves to always “living lives worthy of the calling to which we have been called” (Eph. 4:1).

The Safe Sanctuary Policy is a comprehensive and holistic effort for the benefit of the entire FUMC congregation as well as all visitors and participants in our programs and events. Every staff member and volunteer will be expected to conduct his/her responsibilities and tasks with complete adherence to the guidelines outlined within this policy manual.

Theological Foundation

In 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. This resolution contains the following statement:

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes [a] child...welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God. Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse” (§ 162C).

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse occur in churches both large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real and appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation within churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma. Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church, and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse. God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. (From The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church – 2000, pp.180-181).

Statement of Purpose

Members of First United Methodist Church, Wilson, North Carolina, come from a variety of experiences, backgrounds, and needs. FUMC is committed to providing an environment that is as safe as possible for children, youth, and vulnerable adults who participate in any FUMC Ministry. Also, FUMC is committed to taking the necessary precautions to protect any persons working in a FUMC Ministry from false accusations or suspicions.

Safe Sanctuaries Committee

Each position listed below will be a standing appointment to the Safe Sanctuary Committee:

<p><u>Clergy/Staff:</u> Director of Youth Ministries Director of Children’s Ministries Director of Weekday Preschool</p>	<p><u>Committee Representatives:</u> Staff Parish Relations Committee Designee Discipleship Committee Representative</p>
<p><u>Parent Representatives:</u> Children’s Council Representative Youth Discipleship Team Representative Preschool Advisory Committee Representative</p>	<p><u>Member at Large:</u> Professional Volunteer (lawyer, social worker, counselor, law enforcement professional, or other church member in a relevant vocation)</p>

The Committee will meet at least annually to update policy and to verify that the Committee is fulfilling its obligations to the congregation. The Committee will be assembled for emergency purposes at any time, but as soon as practicable, following any reportable incident and as often as necessary to revise procedures, provide instruction/assistance to clergy, staff, or volunteers, and to keep members of the congregation properly informed of the FUMC Safe Sanctuary Program and its ongoing administration. The Committee will also be responsible for coordinating training

for all staff and volunteer workers in these policies and procedures in either verbal or written form (See section on Volunteer Training).

Volunteer and Staff Requirements

Volunteers with children and youth will be offered training regarding the implementation of this policy. After the training, all participants will be required to authorize First United Methodist Church to complete a background check through a certified agency of the church's choosing and to sign a Safe Sanctuary Volunteer Covenant.

An authorization form for the background check will be available in the office to anyone who has completed the Safe Sanctuaries training. The background check for staff and volunteers will be paid for by the church. The forms should be turned in to the Office Administrator for submission. All background checks will be kept confidential and will be kept on a secure server. Background checks must be renewed every 3 years. Anyone who has been in North Carolina for less than three years will have a background check in their previous state of residence.

Volunteers who serve as teachers and leaders of children will be at least 5 years older than the oldest person they are teaching or leading and at least 18 years old unless approved by the Director of Children's Ministries or Director of Youth Ministries.

For a volunteer to serve without the training, they must have a background check, read the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, and sign the Safe Sanctuary Volunteer Covenant* stating that they have read the policy and that they agree to take the next available training. This volunteer must work as an assistant to a trained leader until they have received training.

Volunteer training will be offered twice a year.

Definitions

Church Worker: Any paid staff member, volunteer, intern, contractor, or other adult acting in an official or informal ministry capacity.

Unrelated Adults: Persons over the age of 21 who are not related, including but not limited to spouses, parent/child, siblings, cousins, aunt/uncle, niece/nephew.

Adult (to work with youth): Anyone who is at least 23 years old.

Volunteer: Any adult who has direct or indirect contact with any minor, including high school students who have direct or indirect contact with any minor who has not yet entered high school.

Leaders: Any adult responsible for an activity or event.

Minor / Child: Any person under the age of 18, or any person over 18 defined as a minor under applicable state law; includes any child or youth under the age of 18.

Youth: Persons generally aged 12–17 participating in youth ministry programs.

Vulnerable / Disabled Adult: Any adult aged 18 or older who, by reason of disability, cognitive impairment, mental illness, age, or other circumstance, may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation. Disabled adults of any age are protected in North Carolina under State law (N.C. General Statute 108A-102), which mandates that “any person having reasonable cause to believe that a disabled adult is in need shall report such information.” Disabled/vulnerable adults are defined as people over the age of 18 who are mentally or physically challenged, either temporarily or long-term, and are unable to fully care for themselves.

Abuse & Misconduct Definitions

Child Abuse: Includes the physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a minor, and may also include neglect or exploitation.

Sexual Abuse: The exploitation or use of anyone under 18 years of age through any contact or interaction in which the minor is used for the satisfaction of the older person. This includes both touching and non-touching behaviors. It also includes rape, unlawful sale, surrender, or purchase of a minor, incest, preparation of obscene photographs, disseminating obscene material to a juvenile, sexual exploitation of a juvenile, promoting prostitution, and taking “indecent liberties” with a juvenile.

Touching Behaviors: Behaviors including but not limited to kissing on the mouth, fondling, intercourse, forcible rape, genital or anal penetration, and oral sex.

Non-Touching Behaviors: Behaviors including but not limited to verbal comments of a sexual nature, display of pornography, obscene telephone calls, exhibitionism, and allowing or coercing minors to witness sexual activity.

Physical Abuse: Inflicting, permitting to be inflicted, or creating a substantial risk of injury (other than by accident). North Carolina law does not specifically define injury to prohibit as many forms of physical abuse as possible.

Emotional Abuse: Creating or allowing serious emotional damage to a juvenile; evidence may include severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior toward self or others.

Neglect: Refers to a disabled adult who is either living alone and unable to provide necessary services to maintain mental or physical health, or not receiving necessary care from a caretaker.

Exploitation: The illegal or improper use of a disabled adult or their resources for another’s profit or advantage.

Behavior Modification: Using or allowing cruel or grossly inappropriate procedures or devices to modify a child’s behavior; some legal claims have included practices intended to prevent or “cure” a child of homosexuality as abuse under this definition.

Safety Policies & Practices

Two-Adult Rule: The requirement that at least two unrelated, screened adults be present whenever children or vulnerable adults are in a ministry setting. No worker should ever be alone with a child or vulnerable adult.

Open-Door Policy: Meetings, sessions, and activities involving minors or vulnerable adults must be conducted in visible, observable spaces. Closed, locked, or obscured settings are not permitted.

Source Note: Portions of these definitions are drawn from North Carolina General Statute, Chapter 108A, Article 6 (Adult Protective Services Statute).

Two Adult Rule

The two-adult rule requires that, no matter the size of the group, there will be at least two unrelated adults present. This may include the presence of an adult “roamer” who moves in and out of the rooms.

Safe Sanctuary Training & Background Checks

- A. All staff and volunteer workers will receive training in Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures. Training will be offered two times each year.
- B. These policies and procedures shall be made known to the congregation and to all new members.
- C. Volunteers and staff who work with children and youth will be required to submit to a background check.
 1. Volunteers and staff submitting to a background check must complete an authorization form available in the church office. This form will be supplied to all persons completing Safe Sanctuaries training. Authorization forms should be turned in to the Office Administrator.
 2. Background checks for FUMC employees and volunteers will be paid for through the church budget. Background checks for volunteers of other organizations are the responsibility of that organization.
 3. Only the Senior Pastor, Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Children’s Ministries, Director of Weekday Preschool, and/or Office Administrator will see the results of the background checks and determine the eligibility of persons to work with children and youth. Other staff members will receive a list of persons who have been approved for service with children and youth.
 4. All background checks will be kept confidential. Files from background checks will be kept in a locked cabinet with other personnel files.
 5. Background checks must be renewed every 3 years.

6. Persons who are found to represent a potential threat of committing abuse or violating this policy will not be allowed to serve as teachers, leaders, or helpers with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Nursery/Children's Division

Protection Procedures

These procedures cover the activities in the Nursery/Children's Ministry of First United Methodist Church. The Nursery division's age is from birth to 3 years of age, and the Children's division is from Pre-K through 5th grade.

A. Drop off and Pickup

1. All parents or guardians leaving children in the nursery and children's divisions shall follow these procedures to assure proper drop off and pickup.
2. All parents or guardians are to complete a Registration Form for their children, which shall be kept on file with the Director of Children's Ministries. The form will ask for the child's name, parent or guardian, home address, medical information (which should include allergies and medical conditions), and a cell phone number where the parent or guardian can be reached.
3. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to indicate to the Director of Children's Ministries if there are any custody concerns regarding the release of the child, and, if this is the case, a copy of the custody order will be required.
4. All nursery children will have a parent/guardian fill out the daily roster with his/her full name, the child's full name, where the parent/guardian will be while the child is in the nursery, and a number where the parent can be reached.
5. Parents or other adults who bring children to FUMC are encouraged to remain on the property while their children are signed into FUMC ministries. Persons who leave the property while the children for whom they are responsible are signed into classes or events will provide emergency contact information. Parents of nursery-age children are required to remain on the property.
6. The only person allowed to pick up a child will be the parent/guardian who dropped off the child, unless other arrangements are made when the child is dropped off. In this situation, if the person picking up the child is unknown to the nursery/children's division workers, he/she will need to show a picture identification to the workers.
7. Children not currently signed into a classroom or children's event are the responsibility of their parents and must be attended to by their parents. Children must be supervised at all times while on church property.

B. Restrictions

1. Only trained, assigned workers/volunteers will be allowed in the nursery/children's division rooms. No other individuals will be allowed in these areas without an identified need and the approval of the Director of Children's Ministries.

C. Providing Adequate Personnel:

1. *On-site* programs that involve Nursery and elementary-age children will include supervisory personnel according to the following ratios under the “Two Adult Rule.”
 - a. Children Infant through 2 Years of age, 1 adult to 4 children
 - b. Children Pre-School Age (3-5 Years) 1 adult to 8 children
 - c. Children 1st – 5th Grade 1 adult to 12 children

2. *Off-site* programs that involve elementary-age children will include supervisory personnel according to the following ratios:
 - a. Children Pre-School (3-5 years) 2 adults to 10 children maximum
3 adults to 15 children maximum
4 adults to 20 children maximum
 - b. Children 1st -5th Grade 2 adults to 16 children maximum
3 adults to 24 children maximum
4 adults to 32 children maximum

*No children under the age of 3 will be transported off-site

Rules of Behavior

1. Two Adult Rule – Whenever possible, a minimum of two workers shall be present during any children’s activity. We will strive to never have a worker alone with any children. These two adults rule overrides all adult-to-child ratios. This may include the visible presence of an adult roamer.
2. Open Door Policy – All children’s classrooms will have either a viewing window that will remain free of covering or a Dutch door where the top door will remain open at all times. If a room does not have either a Dutch door or a viewing window, that door will always be unlocked and accessible.
3. Visible Presence – Every effort will be made to have someone present in the hallways during classes or events. This person will act as a visible presence in support of workers, as well as a deterrent to any potentially harmful situations for our children. Two Adult Rule – Whenever possible, a minimum of two workers shall be present during any children’s activity. We will strive to never have a worker alone with any children. These two adults rule overrides all adult-to-child ratios. This may include the visible presence of an adult roamer.
4. Open Door Policy – All children’s classrooms will have either a viewing window that will remain free of covering or a Dutch door where the top door will remain open at all times. If a room does not have either a Dutch door or a viewing window, that door will always be unlocked and accessible.
5. Visible Presence – Every effort will be made to have someone present in the hallways during classes or events. This person will act as a visible presence in support of workers, as well as a deterrent to any potentially harmful situations for our children.
6. Restroom Policies – In situations where an escort is needed for a trip to the restroom, a worker will stand outside the restroom and only assist the child if needed. Whenever a worker is in the

restroom with a child, the door will remain open. The worker will never be in a closed-door situation with a child. If a child soils themselves during Sunday school, every attempt will be made to locate a parent. If a parent is unable to be located, two adult volunteers will be present while cleaning up the child.

7. Discipline – Corporal punishment, of any kind, is never appropriate. Teachers are asked to redirect a child if they display inappropriate behavior. In the event that redirection does not work, a child will be separated from the group but remain in the same room and placed in time out for a short period of time.
8. Injury – Injuries requiring on-site first aid will be reported to the parent..... Incident Report Form

Prohibited Behaviour:

1. Threatening or intentionally inflicting emotional or physical injury
2. Committing any sexual offense or engaging in any sexual contact, including any kind of sexual advance or requesting sexual favors, engaging in verbal, visual, or physical conduct
of a sexual nature, e.g, back rubs, massages, kissing, or similar behavior
3. Physical discipline, such as spanking
4. Discrimination of any type

Touching to comfort or affirm a child in an age-appropriate manner is permitted. Side-by-side hugs are suggested instead of full-body contact. Appropriate touching need not be completely avoided, but is acceptable only in public. Workers shall be aware of how it looks and how the person being contacted may interpret the contact.

The following are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the ministry:

1. Tobacco - presence or use
2. Alcohol - presence or use
3. Illegal Drugs - presence or use
4. Firearms or other weapons
5. Foul or offensive language

The above examples are not all-inclusive. Any inappropriate behavior that does not reflect our Christian beliefs will not be tolerated.

Procedures for Overnight Activities

These procedures cover children's activities that require an overnight stay and are sponsored by First United Methodist Church. This includes, but is not limited to, camping, lock-ins, hotel/motels, and overnight stays in personal dwellings.

1. Approval: A signed parent/guardian permission form will be required for each child before the activity. These will be collected and approved by the group leader before the activity. Following the activity, the forms will be given to the Director of Children's Ministries.

2. All overnight or off-property activities require prior permission from the Director of Children's Ministries.
3. Providing adequate personnel: programs that involve children will include a supervisory ratio of 1 adult to 10 children following the 2-adult rule.

Rules of Conduct for Overnight Activities

1. All persons are to abide by the Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures.
2. No child will be allowed away from the designated overnight area without prior permission of the group leader and the parents' signed permission.
3. No members of the opposite sex will be allowed to sleep in the same room unsupervised.
4. The Children's Covenant must be signed by the child and their parents before being allowed to participate in overnight activities.
5. Adults will not be allowed to sleep in the same bed with a child unless the child is their child and of the same sex. (This rule allows for the rare instance when this is necessary on ski trips or other similar events.)

Transportation Procedures

The following procedures are for providing transportation for children to and from activities sponsored and/or supervised by First United Methodist Church. These procedures relate to transportation provided by the church, parents of children, and children's workers to and from activities off the church property.

A. Vehicle Requirements:

1. These vehicle requirements pertain to vehicles owned by First United Methodist Church, those provided by parents of participating children, those provided by child workers, and any external commercial vehicles provided for the transportation of children.
2. All vehicles shall be in good running order, have a current, valid license plate, inspection sticker, and passenger restraints. The passenger restraints must be used while transporting children. If the child requires a booster seat per NC state law, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to provide one.
3. All vehicles shall have insurance coverage as required by North Carolina law.

B. Qualification of Drivers:

1. All drivers will be workers (as qualified by the Safe Sanctuary Policy), parents of participating children, or licensed commercial drivers. The Director of Children's Ministries will pre-approve drivers.
2. All drivers will have a current, valid driver's license with the classification for the vehicle being driven and be at least 25 years of age, unless he/she is a staff member of the church.
3. All drivers who are staff workers will be subject to periodic checks of their motor vehicle records.

C. General Rules of Transportation:

1. Unless otherwise approved by the administrator and the parents/guardians, all transportation subject to these procedures will begin and terminate at the church property.
2. All drivers will obey all traffic laws. Failure to do so may disqualify them from driving for church-related activities.
3. For overnight church functions, signed parent permission forms will be obtained from each child prior to being allowed in any of these vehicles. If the child does not have a completed permission form, he/she will not be permitted to participate in the transportation provided by the church. The permission forms are to be collected and checked by the group leader before leaving the church property. Upon return to the church, the forms will be given to the Director of Children's Ministries.
No driver is to transport any child alone, without written or verbal permission from the child's parents. If possible, there will always be more than one child in the vehicle. In the event there is one child in the vehicle, the minor must be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle.

Weekday Preschool Division

Protection Procedures

These procedures cover the activities in the First United Methodist Church Weekday Preschool. The preschool offers the following classes:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. One-Year-Old Class: | Toddlers – 23 Months |
| 2. Two-Year-Old Class: | 2 Years – 3 Years |
| 3. Three-Year-Old Class: | 3 Years – 4 Years |
| 4. Four-Year-Old Class: | 4 Years – 5 Years |
| 5. Kindergarten Class: | 4 Years – 5 Years |

A. Drop off and Pickup

1. All parents or guardians leaving children at the preschool shall follow these procedures to ensure proper drop-off and pickup.
2. All parents or guardians are to complete a Registration Form for their children, which shall be kept on file with the Director of Weekday Preschool. The form will ask for the child's name, parent or guardian, home address, medical information (which should include allergies and medical conditions), emergency contact, approved pick-up adults, and a cell phone number where the parent or guardian can be reached.
3. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to indicate to the Director of Weekday Preschool if there are any custody concerns regarding the release of the child, and, if this is the case, a copy of the custody order will be required.
4. The only person allowed to pick up a child will be the parent/guardian or individuals listed on the Registration Form. In this situation, if the person picking up the child is unknown to the preschool staff, he/she will need to show a picture identification to the workers.

B. Providing Adequate Personnel:

1. *On-site* programs that involve preschool-age children will include supervisory personnel according to the following ratios under the “Two Adult Rule.”
 - a. One-Year-Old Class 2 adults to 10 children
 - b. Two-Year-Old Class 2 adults to 12 children
 - c. Three-Year-Old Class 2 adults to 14 children
 - d. Four-Year-Old & Kinder Class 2 adults to 16 children

2. *Off-site* programs that involve weekday school students will include supervisory personnel according to the following ratios:
 - a. Children Pre-School (3-5 years)
 - i. 2 adults to 10 children maximum
 - ii. 3 adults to 15 children maximum
 - iii. 4 adults to 24 children maximum
 - iv. 5 adults to 36 children maximum
 - v. 6 adults to 45 children maximum

*No children under the age of 3 will be transported off-site.

Rules of Behavior

1. *Two Adult Rule* – Whenever possible, a minimum of two workers (age 18 or older) shall be present during any children’s activity. We will strive to never have a worker alone with any children. These two adults rule overrides all adult-to-child ratios.
2. *Open Door Policy* – All children’s classrooms will have either a viewing window that will remain free of covering or a Dutch door where the top door will remain open at all times. If a room does not have either a Dutch door or a viewing window, that door will always be unlocked and accessible.
3. *Visible Presence* – Every effort will be made to have the Director of Weekday Preschool present in the area during classes or events. This person will act as a visible presence in support of workers, as well as a deterrent to any potentially harmful situations for our children.
4. *Restroom Policies* – In situations where an escort is needed for a trip to the restroom, a worker will stand outside the restroom and only assist the child if needed. Whenever a worker is in the restroom with a child, the door will remain open. The worker will never be in a closed-door situation with a child.
5. *Discipline* – Corporal punishment, of any kind, is never appropriate. Teachers are asked to redirect a child if they display inappropriate behavior. In the event that redirection does not work, a child will be separated from the group but remain in the same room and placed in time out for a short period of time. If further action is needed, the child will be taken to the Director of Weekday Preschool and, if necessary, the child’s parent/guardian will be contacted.

Prohibited Behaviour:

1. Threatening or intentionally inflicting emotional or physical injury
2. Committing any sexual offense or engaging in any sexual contact, including any kind of sexual advance or requesting sexual favors, engaging in verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, e.g, back rubs, massages, kissing, or similar behavior
3. Physical discipline, such as spanking
4. Discrimination of any type

Touching to comfort or affirm a child in an age-appropriate manner is permitted. Side-by-side hugs are suggested instead of full-body contact. Appropriate touching need not be completely avoided, but is acceptable only in public. Workers shall be aware of how it looks and how the person being contacted may interpret the contact.

The following are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the preschool area:

1. Tobacco - presence or use
2. Alcohol - presence or use
3. Illegal Drugs - presence or use
4. Firearms or other weapons
5. Foul or offensive language

The above examples are not all-inclusive. Any inappropriate behavior that does not reflect our Christian beliefs will not be tolerated.

Procedures for Overnight Activities

The preschool will not participate in overnight activities.

Transportation Procedures

The following procedures are for providing transportation for children to and from activities sponsored and/or supervised by First United Methodist Church Weekday School. These procedures relate to transportation provided by the Weekday School Staff, parents of children, and Foundation YMCA of Wilson Staff to and from activities off the First United Methodist Church property.

A. Vehicle Requirements:

1. These vehicle requirements pertain to vehicles owned by First United Methodist Church, those provided by parents of participating children, those provided by child workers, and any external commercial vehicles provided for the transportation of children.
2. All vehicles shall be in good running order, have a current, valid license plate, inspection sticker, and passenger restraints. The passenger restraints must be used while transporting children. If the child requires a booster seat per NC state law, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to provide one.
3. All vehicles shall have insurance coverage as required by North Carolina law.

B. Qualification of Drivers:

1. All drivers will be workers (as qualified by the Safe Sanctuary Policy), parents of participating children, or licensed commercial drivers. The Director of Weekday School will pre-approve drivers.
2. All drivers will have a current, valid driver's license with the classification for the vehicle being driven and be at least 25 years of age, unless he/she is a staff member of the Weekday School or Church.
3. All drivers who are staff members will be subject to periodic checks of their motor vehicle records.

C. General Rules of Transportation:

1. Unless otherwise approved by the Director of the Weekday School and the parents/guardians, all transportation subject to these procedures will begin and terminate at the church property.
2. All drivers will obey all traffic laws. Failure to do so may disqualify them from driving for church-related activities.
3. No driver is to transport any child alone, without written or verbal permission from the child's parents. If possible, there will always be more than one child in the vehicle. In the event there is one child in the vehicle, the minor must be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle.

Youth Division

Protection Procedures

These procedures cover the activities of the Youth Division at First United Methodist Church. Children are placed in the Youth Division beginning in 6th grade through the summer after 12th grade.

A. Supervision of Youth

1. Supervision ratios of youth and adults (under the 2-adult rule)
 - a. For safety purposes, with high school and middle school students, there will be, whenever possible, one adult for every seven youth.
 - b. For purposes of supervising youth, an adult is defined as anyone who is at least 23 years old. Anyone under the age of 23 must be approved by the church staff before being allowed to be used in a leadership position.
 - c. Volunteers and staff should be responsible for no more than 7 minors at any given time, regardless of age.

B. Responsibility Times for Youth Ministry Workers

1. The youth ministry is not responsible for youth at times when no youth ministry offerings are scheduled.

2. The youth ministry is not responsible for youth who are supposed to be involved in youth activities but choose not to participate in the youth ministry offerings as scheduled. Their parents will be contacted to pick them up when they choose not to participate.

Guidelines for Counseling in Informal and/or Individual Settings

- A. Same sex counseling is encouraged. However, ministry priorities and immediate circumstances may make same sex counseling unfeasible. When occasions of other than same sex counseling occur, a youth worker should seek to abide by the 2-adult rule.
- B. In a situation where the 2-adult rule is not feasible, a youth worker is expected to move him/herself and the youth he/she is counseling towards the rest of the group, in the hope of finding a second adult or notify another leader when/where the open-door conversation is being held.
- C. The youth ministry has an interest in helping youth and youth ministry workers maintain appropriate boundaries. Youth workers need to communicate clearly at all times the message "I am your friend, but I am not your peer."

Procedures for Overnight Activities

These procedures cover youth activities that require an overnight stay and are sponsored by First United Methodist Church. This includes, but is not limited to, camping, lock-ins, hotel/motels, and overnight stays in personal dwellings.

- A. Approval: A signed parent/guardian permission form will be required of each youth before the activity. These will be collected and approved by the group leader before the activity. Following the activity, the forms will be given to the Director of Youth Ministries.
- B. All overnight or off-property activities require prior permission from the Director of Youth Ministries.
- C. Providing adequate personnel: Programs that involve youth will include a supervisory ratio of 1 adult to 10 youth following the 2-adult rule.

Rules of Conduct for Overnight Activities

- A. All persons are to abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policies and Procedures.
- B. None of the youth will be allowed away from the designated overnight area without prior permission of the group leader and the parents' signed permission.
- C. No members of the opposite sex will be allowed to sleep in the same room unsupervised.
- D. The Youth Covenant must be signed by the youth and their parents before being allowed to participate in overnight activities.
- E. Adults will not be allowed to sleep in the same bed with a youth unless the youth is their child and of the same sex. (This rule allows for the rare instance when this is necessary on youth ski trips or other similar events.)

Transportation Procedures

The following procedures are for providing transportation for youth to and from activities sponsored and/or supervised by First United Methodist Church. These procedures relate to

transportation provided by the church, parents of youth, and youth workers to and from activities off the church property.

A. Vehicle Requirements:

1. These vehicle requirements pertain to vehicles owned by First United Methodist Church, those provided by parent of participating youth, those provided by youth workers, and any external commercial vehicles provided for the transportation of youth.
2. All vehicles shall be in good running order, have a current, valid license plate, inspection sticker, and passenger restraints. The passenger restraints must be used while transporting youth.
3. All vehicles shall have insurance coverage as required by North Carolina law.

B. Qualification of Drivers:

1. All drivers will be workers (as qualified by the Safe Sanctuary Policy), parents of participating youth, or licensed commercial drivers. The Director of Youth Ministries will pre-approve drivers.
2. All drivers will have a current, valid driver's license with the classification for the vehicle being driven and be at least 25 years of age, unless he/she is a staff member of the church.
3. All drivers who are staff workers will be subject to periodic checks of their motor vehicle records.

C. General Rules of Transportation:

1. Unless otherwise approved by the administrator and the parents/guardians, all transportation subject to these procedures will begin and terminate at the church property.
2. All drivers will obey all traffic laws. Failure to do so may disqualify them from driving for church-related activities.
3. For overnight church functions, signed parent permission forms will be obtained from each youth prior to being allowed in any of these vehicles. If the youth does not have a completed permission form, he/she will not be permitted to participate in the transportation provided by the church. The permission forms are to be collected and checked by the group leader before leaving the church property. Upon return to the church, the forms will be given to the Director of Youth Ministries.
4. No driver is to transport any youth alone, without written or verbal permission from the youth's parents. If possible, there will always be more than one youth in the vehicle. In the event there is one youth in the vehicle, the minor must be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle.

Behavioral Standards

Physical Conduct

Physical touch in ministry can be appropriate and affirming. All touch must be age-appropriate, consensual, observable, and never sexual or intimate in nature.

Appropriate	Inappropriate
✓ Side-hugs initiated or welcomed by the child	✗ Initiating full-body, prolonged, or tight embraces
✓ Brief, welcoming handshakes or high-fives	✗ Kissing a child on the mouth, cheek, or head
✓ Patting a child on the back or shoulder in greeting	✗ Allowing children above kindergarten to sit on a worker's lap
✓ Holding the hand of a young child to guide them safely	✗ Tickling, wrestling, or rough physical play
✓ Kneeling or crouching to speak at a child's eye level	✗ Touching any area covered by a swimsuit
✓ Comforting a distressed child with a brief, observed hug	✗ Any touch a child has indicated is unwelcome
✓ Age-appropriate physical activity during games or sports	✗ Physical discipline of any kind (spanking, slapping, grabbing)
✓ Assisting with physical needs (injuries, disabilities) with parental consent and a Second adult present	✗ Initiating repeated or preferential physical contact with one child

One-On-One Interactions

Workers should avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult. The Two-Adult Rule should be observed at all times. When individual attention is needed, if reasonable, it should occur in a visible, observable setting.

Appropriate	Inappropriate
✓ Meeting with a child in a room with a window or an open door, with another adult nearby	✗ Being alone with a child in any room with a closed or locked door
✓ Counseling or mentoring with a second An adult is present in the same space	✗ Driving a child alone without parental supervision consent and a second adult

✓ Conducting one-on-one sessions only with parental knowledge and consent	✗ Meeting a child or youth outside of official church activities without parental knowledge
✓ Leaving doors open or using rooms with full-length windows	✗ Conducting counseling, prayer, or discipleship meetings in private spaces
✓ Sitting in a visible area of a café or common space for informal mentoring	✗ Entering a child's bedroom, bathroom, or changing area
✓ Ensuring a second adult can see and hear the interaction at all times	✗ Taking a child off church premises without written parental authorization

Verbal & Emotional Interactions

Words have a profound impact. Church workers are expected to communicate in ways that build up, encourage, and reflect Christlike character. No communication should demean, confuse, sexualize, or manipulate.

Appropriate	Inappropriate
✓ Affirming a child's worth, gifts, and identity in Christ	✗ Using sexual, crude, or profane language around children
✓ Offering age-appropriate encouragement and praise	✗ Making comments about a child's developing body or appearance
✓ Asking open-ended questions that invite honest conversation	✗ Sharing adult personal problems, relationship issues, or sexual topics with minors
✓ Discussing Scripture, faith questions, and personal growth	✗ Telling off-color jokes, sharing suggestive humor, or showing inappropriate media
✓ Expressing genuine care for a child's wellbeing and family	✗ Demeaning, shaming, belittling, or mocking a child
✓ Addressing behavior calmly, respectfully, and constructively	✗ Asking a child to keep secrets from their parents
✓ Using inclusive, welcoming language with all children	✗ Telling a child their parents are wrong, bad, or don't understand them
	✗ Making a child feel responsible for a

	worker's emotions or well-being
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Digital & Electronic Communication

All digital communication with minors or vulnerable adults must be transparent, ministry-focused, and occur through approved church channels. Church workers should never communicate privately or secretly with minors online.

Appropriate	Inappropriate
✓ Communicating via official, monitored church platforms (e.g., group texts, church app)	✗ Sending direct, private messages to a minor on any platform without parental knowledge
✓ Using group messaging threads for ministry announcements and updates	✗ Sending or requesting photos, videos, or personal information from minors
✓ Conducting virtual ministry sessions on observable video platforms with parental awareness	✗ Communicating with minors late at night or in a secretive manner
✓ Responding to ministry questions during normal hours in a transparent way	✗ Accepting friend or follow requests from minors on personal social accounts without parental knowledge
✓ Archiving and retaining digital communications per the church records policy	✗ Sharing personal phone numbers, home addresses, or social media handles with minors without parental knowledge

Gifts, Favors, & Special Treatment

Giving gifts or special attention to individual children can be a grooming tactic. All recognition and generosity should be transparent, equitable, and known to parents.

Appropriate	Inappropriate
✓ Giving group incentives or prizes for ministry participation for all children equally	✗ Giving personal gifts, cash, or gift cards to an individual child without parental knowledge
✓ Recognizing milestones (birthdays, baptisms) in a group or public setting	✗ Singling out one child for special outings, meal, or activities not available to others

✓ Providing snacks or refreshments to all participants in a ministry program	✗ Lending money or personal items to a minor
✓ Purchasing resources (Bibles, devotionals for ministry programs with church approval	✗ Purchasing clothing, personal items, or technology for a minor
✓ Notifying parents of any gift given to a child outside of a group context	✗ Providing alcohol, tobacco, medications, or supplements to a minor under any circumstances
	✗ Offering preferential treatment in the ministry roles as a reward for personal relationships

Red Flag Behaviour

The following behaviors by any adult church worker or volunteer should raise concern and be reported to the staff member in charge of the event or program, or to the Chair of the SPRC if the person is a staff member.

Boundary Violations

1. Consistently seeking to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult, especially in private or unsupervised settings.
2. Touching a child in ways that are unnecessary, prolonged, or that the child appears uncomfortable with (including hugging, kissing, lap-sitting, or tickling).
3. Entering restrooms, changing areas, or sleeping quarters when a child is present without a valid, observable reason.
4. Allowing or encouraging children to sit on their lap, especially when the child is older, or the setting is informal.
5. Showing physical affection to one child significantly more than others or targeting a specific child for special attention.

Grooming-Type Behaviors

1. Giving gifts, money, candy, or privileges to a child without parental knowledge or approval.
2. All communications with children must be open for parents and/or staff to view at any time.

3. Sharing inappropriate jokes, stories, images, or content of a sexual or adult nature with children or youth.
4. Asking children to keep secrets from their parents or other adults or discouraging children from telling their parents about activities.
5. Showing excessive, unusual, or preferential interest in one particular child or youth.
6. Discussing personal adult problems (relationships, sexuality, finances) with children or youth in a confidential manner.
7. Arranging to meet with a child outside of sanctioned church activities without parental knowledge.

Attitude & Pattern Indicators

1. Dismissing or minimizing concerns raised by parents, children, or other workers about boundaries.
2. Resisting the two-adult rule or other child protection policies or finding reasons to circumvent them.
3. Expressing that physical punishment of children is necessary or advocating for it in ways that go beyond normal discussion.
4. Preferring the company of children over adults in social settings in a way that seems unusual.
5. Making comments that minimize the seriousness of sexual abuse or its impact on victims.
6. A history of boundary complaints, disciplinary action, or unexplained departures from prior ministry roles.

Red Flag Behaviors In Children & Youth

Changes in a child's behavior or demeanor can signal that something is wrong. Church workers Those who have regular contact with children are often well-positioned to notice these signs.

Behavioral Changes

1. Sudden withdrawal from friends, activities, or ministry involvement they previously enjoyed.
2. Unexplained changes in mood, including increased anxiety, fearfulness, anger, or depression.
3. Regression to younger behaviors (bedwetting, thumb-sucking, clinginess) in older children.
4. Nightmares, sleep disturbances, or fear of specific people, places, or situations.
5. Reluctance or refusal to be around a specific adult, or distress when that adult is present.
6. Sexualized language, behavior, or knowledge that is not age appropriate.
7. Acting out sexually with other children or adults.

Physical Indicators

1. Unexplained injuries, bruises, burns, or marks, especially in unusual locations or with inconsistent explanations.
2. Flinching at sudden movements or displaying a heightened physical startle response.
3. Complaints of pain in the genital or anal areas, or recurring unexplained physical complaints (stomachaches, headaches).
4. Signs of physical neglect: consistently inadequate clothing, poor hygiene, and appearing hungry.

Disclosure Indicators

1. A child makes a direct or indirect statement suggesting they have been touched inappropriately or harmed.
2. A child describes situations or scenarios during play, art, or conversation that suggest abuse.
3. A child tells another child or adult that something “bad” happened, but then recants or becomes evasive.
4. A child expresses unusual knowledge of or comfort with sexual topics or makes references to sexual contact with a specific person.

Situational Red Flags

Beyond individual behavior, certain situations and environments increase risk and warrant heightened vigilance.

1. Activities or settings where the Two-Adult Rule is required or suggested, but is not being followed.
2. Closed-door meetings, counseling sessions, or mentoring without visibility or a co-present adult.
3. Overnight events, retreats, or camps where supervision ratios are inadequate.
4. Online ministry platforms (video calls, group chats) without appropriate monitoring or parental awareness.
5. Informal, unsanctioned gatherings between a worker and children (rides, shopping trips, meals) not organized through church channels.
6. Any setting where alcohol or substances are accessible to minors.

Response and Reporting

Mandatory Reporting

Who must report

The North Carolina reporting law applies to every person and every institution in the state. Do not ignore any reported incident of abuse. The law requires any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any child has been abused or neglected to make a report to the county department of social services (NC G.S. 7B301).

North Carolina's statute does not specifically address religious officials and their duty to report. Therefore, they would be included under the mandate that "any person" with cause to suspect child abuse or neglect must make a report.

Reporting

Having "cause to suspect" child abuse or neglect is not just a feeling about a situation alone. It is important that it is connected to something observable or disclosed, such as a child's statements, behavior, or appearance. Legal definitions of abuse and neglect are important, but anyone concerned about a child who is confused about whether their concern is reportable or not should make the report. Child Protective Services Social Workers are trained to assess the presenting information and determine whether a report needs to be taken. If CPS determines that the report does not need to be handled by them, they will automatically forward the report to local law enforcement for investigation. If the report is made in good faith, there is no liability risk in reporting. So, if in doubt, report.

A person who has cause to suspect a child is being abused or neglected has no duty to investigate to uncover evidence for the report. In fact, that could interfere with a Child Protective Services investigation. He or she is not required to have detailed knowledge of the abuse to make the report.

If other church officials are notified prior to a report being made to the Department of Social Services, that notification must be intended as communication and awareness for the church and not as a process of screening the reporting.

What to include

When making a report to CPS, include as much of the following as the person making the report knows.

1. The child's name, age, and address
2. The name and address of the child's parent, guardian, or caretaker
3. The names and ages of other children in the home
4. The child's location if not at the home address
5. The nature and extent of any injury or condition resulting from the abuse or neglect
6. Any other information that might help establish the need for protective intervention

Steps to be taken

Allegations against volunteers

- A. Ensure the physical safety of the child/youth. The accused adult should not be confronted.
- B. The Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Children's Ministries, or Director of Weekday Preschool will be notified (by phone or in person).
- C. Independent of that notification, a report to Child Protective Services will be made by the person who received the allegations.
- D. The volunteer will be relieved of duties by the Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Children's Ministries, or Director of Weekday Preschool pending a DSS or law enforcement investigation.

- E. The Director of Youth Ministries/Director of Children's Ministries/Director of Weekday Preschool will report the allegations to the Senior Pastor.
- F. The Senior Pastor and the Director of Youth Ministries/Director of Children's Ministries/Director of Weekday Preschool will determine if the District Superintendent should be notified or if other action is to be taken.

Allegations against employees

- A. Do not confront the employee.
- B. Notify the Senior Pastor, Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Children's Ministries, or Director of Weekday Preschool (by phone or in person).
- C. Independent of that notification, a report to Child Protective Services will be made by the person who received the allegations.
- D. The Director of Youth Ministries/Director of Children's Ministries/ Director of Weekday Preschool will report the allegations to the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and response team.
- E. The Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and response team will determine if the District Superintendent should be notified or if other action is to be taken.

Allegations against any Pastor

- A. Do not confront the Pastor.
- B. Notify the Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Children's Ministries, or Director of Weekday Preschool (by phone or in person).
- C. Independent of that notification, a report to Child Protective Services will be made by the person who received the allegations.
- D. The Director of Youth Ministries/Director of Children's Ministries/ Director of Weekday Preschool will report the allegations to the response team.
- E. The specific committee chairperson will report the allegation to the District Superintendent.

Allegations against someone outside of the church

- A. Do not confront the alleged parent, caregiver, or individual.
- B. If the alleged abuser is a direct parent or caregiver, do not restrict the child from leaving with the parent.
- C. An immediate report to CPS is to be made by the person who received the allegations.
- D. Notify the Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Children's Ministries, or Director of Weekday Preschool (by phone or in person).
- E. The Director of Youth Ministries/Director of Children's Ministries/Preschool Director will report the allegations to the Senior Pastor.
- F. The Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and the Director of Youth Ministries/Director of Children's Ministries/Preschool Director will determine if other action needs to be taken.

Suspicion of child abuse (Preschool)

- A. Do not confront the alleged parent, caregiver, or individual.
- B. Do not restrict the child from leaving with the parent.
- C. An immediate report to CPS is to be made by the person who received the allegations.
- D. Notify the Director of Weekday Preschool (by phone or in person).
- E. The Director of Weekday Preschool will report the allegations to the Senior Pastor.
- F. The Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and the Director of Weekday Preschool will determine if other action needs to be taken.

Response to Abuse

The following steps shall be taken once abuse is reported:

- A. A response team shall be formed and will be assigned to take any further actions that are required. The response team shall follow the advice of legal counsel and the District Superintendent or the District Superintendent's representative.
- B. The response team shall be made up of the Senior Pastor, the Chairman of the Staff Parish Relations Committee, the Church Council Chairperson, and a mental health professional.
- C. The response team shall appoint one sole media spokesperson. The response team shall determine the appropriate means of communicating with the congregation.
- D. The Response Team will:
 1. Inform the employee or volunteer of the accusation.
 2. Suspend with pay (for a paid employee) the alleged offender while the confidential investigation is being conducted.
 3. Consult with the church attorney.
 4. Reassure the victim that he or she has done nothing wrong and that it was right to report the incident.
 5. Allow the victim to speak freely.
 6. Not coach responses from the victim and will not become defensive to any statements.
 7. Cooperate in the investigation conducted by CPS and the insurance company.
 8. Provide ongoing spiritual and counseling support for the victim and his/her family.
 9. Consider the spiritual needs of the accused and seek assistance from the District Superintendent and Conference personnel in providing for proper counseling and response for the accused and the accused's family.
 10. Use the response team to ensure all necessary steps were followed, reports made, and documentation completed.
 11. Review the process to see if improvements need to be made in policy or procedure.

Notification Contacts

Child Protective Services - Wilson County (252)206-4000

Insurance: John Hackney Agency, Inc. (252)291-3111

Law Enforcement: in accordance with local law, as instructed by Child Protective Services

Legal Representation: As provided by the insurance company & Legal representative for the church

Post Reporting Procedure

First United Methodist Church acknowledges that there are many victims beyond the abused who may be affected by an incident or suspicion of child abuse or neglect. We are mindful that the following persons will require the proper response, care, counseling, and support following any such event.

1. Family members of the harmed child or youth
2. Peers of the child or youth
3. Peers of the child's or the youth's parents

4. Remaining child/youth workers
5. Congregation as a community of faith
6. Family of the accused abuser

We believe that failure to address the issues of suffering, anger, fear, and grief that occur within the church after abuse can have extended and unnecessary consequences for everyone. We will not hide nor shrink away from our responsibility to promptly and appropriately address any incident of abuse. As a congregation, we will be committed to the prevention of and termination of behaviors that contribute to the cycle of abuse. The following represents the steps we will take to ensure that the congregation and those affected may be restored to a feeling of well-being and justice.

1. Truth-telling is the most important component in post-loss recovery. Our communications will be honest, measured, and respectful of all parties involved. Written communication shall be factual and will work to dispel rumor and innuendo and to assure the congregation of the efforts taken to secure the safety of the victim and to resume the functions of ministries and programs.
2. Senior clergy will host a planned congregational meeting so that members can attend to learn about the church's response to the allegation of abuse. The meeting will be led by appropriate senior clergy, lay leaders, and the District Superintendent. A non-member counselor will be available to address attendee questions and feelings.
3. A task force will be established to determine how FUMC will adapt its ongoing ministries to appropriately acknowledge and recover from the incident. Educational programs in various forums (Wednesday night classes, Adult Sunday School Curriculum, Youth, etc.) will be implemented to promote healing, justice, education, and restored worship.
4. The Safe Sanctuary Committee will work closely with the response team and clergy to modify any procedure and policies based upon incident outcomes and will diligently engage in every effort to prevent further incidents of abuse or neglect.

Documentation for Reported Abuse

The Pastor or appropriate church staff will be responsible for maintaining the following documents and assuring the confidentiality of the same:

1. Staff background checks
2. Volunteer background checks
3. Motor vehicle reports
4. Suspicion of incidents
5. Incident meeting notes/correspondence
6. Instructions from law enforcement/Child Protective Services
7. Insurance claims records and correspondence
8. Litigation files and associated documents/correspondence

Copies will be produced only as required by law, insurance, or as deemed appropriate by the Senior Pastor and the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Documents necessary for employment at FUMC will be secured by the Chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee, and documents

necessary for employment at FUMC Weekday Preschool will be secured by the Director of Weekday Preschool. Background checks for prospective applicants who are not hired will be destroyed within 60 days. All information acquired during the recruiting of volunteers and employees shall be treated in a confidential manner. Paid staff records will be destroyed after a 20-year period. For volunteer church workers, records will be purged no sooner than 24 months after the volunteer's last active participation in a Children or Youth Program (including music ministry).

The Safe Sanctuary Committee will meet annually to review records of volunteers, and the Senior Pastor and the SPRC will meet periodically to review paid staff records and to purge outdated documents. It is particularly important to have a routine method to properly dispose of anything discovered in the employment or volunteer application process that is not public record. Such files must be maintained under the strictest confidence and locked in a cabinet to ensure that they are not seen by unauthorized parties.

Because liability insurance policies are largely written on an occurrence basis, these policies and other related insurance records, and any claims files will be kept indefinitely.

Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse*

Date report is completed: _____

Name of church worker observing or receiving disclosure and making the report of child abuse: _____

Victim name: _____

Victim Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Date/place of initial conversation with or report from victim: _____

Victim's Statement: _____

Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of the accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): _____

Date Reported to Director of Children's/Youth/Preschool Ministries: _____

Date Reported to Senior Pastor: _____

Additional Information: _____

Call/meeting with victim's parent/guardian: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary of conversation: _____

Date/time call to Child Protective Services: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary of Conversation: _____

Date/time call to law enforcement: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary of conversation: _____

Signature of Adult Completing Form
(applicable)

Signature of Youth Reporting Incident (if
applicable)

*Adapted from *Safe Sanctuaries, reducing the risk of Child Abuse in the Church* by Joy Thornburg Melton, 1998. Discipleship Resources, reprinted 2004

Before taking any action or completing this report, it is required that any person completing this form be familiar with the laws of the state of North Carolina regarding the reporting of incidents of child abuse.

Volunteer Covenant

First United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of worship, safe and secure for all who enter, and as a place where everyone can experience God's love through fellowship and growth in Christ.

1. Persons who have been convicted of child neglect or abuse (sexual, physical, and/or emotional) shall not volunteer to work with children or youth in any First United Methodist Church-sponsored activity or in any activity to which First United Methodist Church is providing volunteers or participants.
2. All adult volunteers involved with children, youth, or vulnerable adults of our church in a *lead capacity* must have been a member or active participant of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
3. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" (as defined in the Safe Sanctuary manual) at all times so that no adult is ever alone with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
4. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse and neglect.
5. Adult volunteers shall immediately report to the Director of Children's Ministries, Director of Youth Ministries, and/or Director of Weekday Preschool any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer the following:

1. As a volunteer in the First United Methodist congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth?
___yes ___no
2. Do you understand and agree to observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times? ___yes
___no
3. Do you understand and agree to observe the six-month membership (or active participation) rule?
___yes ___no
4. Have you been trained in First United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuary program and agree to abide by its dictates, expectations, and requirements?
___yes ___no
 - a. If no, do you agree to read the safe sanctuaries policy and take the training at the earliest availability?
___yes ___no
5. Do you agree to report to the Director of Children's Ministries, Director of Youth Ministries, and/or Director of Weekday Preschool any observance, awareness, or suspicion of abusive or inappropriate behavior as defined in your training?
___yes ___no

6. As a volunteer of First United Methodist Church, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse?
___yes ___no

Please list any ministries in the church you may be interested in serving.

I have read this Covenant,t and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Printed Name_____

Signature_____ **Date Completed Training**_____

Background Check Authorization

Area of Ministry/Service: _____

Print Name: _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Former Name(s) Used: _____
(Maiden)

Current Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State/Zip)

Previous Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State/Zip)

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Driver's License Number/State: _____

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize First United Methodist Church and its designated agents and representatives to make an investigation of my background, criminal records, and, where applicable, my motor vehicle records, for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my job application or volunteer form.

I understand this authorization extends to the obtaining of information that may be material to my qualifications for employment or as a volunteer.

I release First United Methodist Church and its designated agents and representatives from any and all liabilities, claims or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above reference sources used.

Signature _____ Date _____