

Safe Sanctuaries
Child, Youth & Vulnerable Adult Protection Guidelines
Adopted by the Administrative Council of Old Bethel UMC
Revised January 2011

INTRODUCTION:

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 2006, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes 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, and sexual exploitation, and abuse."

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse (ritual abuse refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be) occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation in their 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, youth 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-1996)

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church.

PURPOSE

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Child Protection Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our commitment to the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

STATEMENT OF COVENANT

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults, as well as all of the workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding applicable policies and methods; we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

CONCLUSION

In all of our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ so that each child will be "...surrounded by steadfast love...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." (Baptismal Covenant II United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44)

SAFE SANCTUARIES PARTICIPATION COVENANT STATEMENT

The Congregation of Old Bethel United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and adults who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following statements reflect our congregations' commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) should work with children, youth or vulnerable adults in any church sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.
3. Adults working with children and youth shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever left alone with children or youth.
4. Adults working with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
5. Adults shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer the following questions:

1. As an adult in this church, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults? Yes No
2. As an adult in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult Rule" to the best of your ability? Yes No
3. As an adult in this church, do you agree to abide by the six-month rule before beginning a volunteer assignment? Yes No
4. As an adult in this church, do you agree to participate in training and educational events provided by the church related to your assignment? Yes No
5. As an adult in this church, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? Yes No
6. As an adult in this church, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this church your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse? Yes No
7. As an adult of this church, do you agree to inform a minister of this church if you have ever been convicted of child abuse? Yes No

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

Signature _____ Date _____

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

Eligibility

1. All employees and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable adults in a leadership role are required to be members or active constituents of the Old Bethel United Methodist Church or another church for a minimum of six (6) months before they begin their work.
2. Pursuant to Indiana Code 35-42-4-1, Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children/youth will not be employed nor volunteer service be accepted in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
3. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need and will receive the love and acceptance of our church family. Persons who have such a history, however, should discuss their history and desire to work with minors with our Senior Pastor before engaging in any paid or volunteer service.

Screening

All adults and youth, employed or volunteer, who work on a regular basis with minors or vulnerable adults must undergo a Screening Process prior to beginning work. Screening includes: State Police Background Check, Indiana Sexual Offender Registry Check, and a Reference Check. The forms to be used in the Screening Process are: For "Employees": use Appendix A.1., along with State Police Form; For "Volunteers": use Appendix A.2., along with State Police Form.

Adult/Youth Volunteers

An "adult" volunteer is classified as someone over the age of 18. Youth ages 12-17 may assist in the supervision with an adult over the age of 18. As a general rule, you must be 5 years older than the age group you are serving.

Training

All church employees and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable adults will receive training in these guidelines and procedures before beginning such work, and once in each calendar year thereafter. Such training will include reviews of signs of child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse. Calendar year training/retraining is intended to occur early in the fourth quarter each year.

Reporting

Our guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse or any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate are labeled "Appendix B". These guidelines and procedures are intended to be in accord with Indiana Code (IC) 31-33-5-1 and 31-33-5-4. Where they might differ, the IC statutes shall take precedence. (See Appendix C.)

Our guidelines and procedures for responding to reported incidents of abuse are labeled "Appendix D".

2 Person Rule

Employees and volunteers who work with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall observe the "two-person rule" or the "open door policy". The "two-person rule" requires that employees and volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with children, youth or vulnerable adults without a partner. In the absence of a partner, the open door policy will be observed. The "open door policy" is defined in the Glossary (Appendix E).

One-On-One Counseling

One on one counseling sessions with youth or children shall be conducted in a public space or in a space easily observable by others at all times (offices/classrooms with windows in doors).

Ratios

There will always be enough adults to supervise the number of children or youth present. Ratios should never exceed the following. If an adult finds him or herself in a situation where the ratios are not met, s/he should immediately notify the roaming teacher, who will find someone to assist in the classroom.

1. Infants: 1 adult for every 4 babies*
2. Toddlers: 1 adult for every 5 toddlers*
2. Preschoolers: 1 adult for every 10 preschoolers*
3. Elementary School – 12th Grade: 1 adult for every 10 youth.

**From Indiana State Daycare Requirements*

Transportation

You must be 25 or older to provide transportation to youth/children. Transporting children/youth by an employee or volunteer leader will occur with parent/guardian knowledge and permission. When transporting children, every reasonable effort will be made to observe the “two-person rule”. All State car seat/seatbelt laws must be adhered to at all times, no exceptions (attached as Appendix F).

Overnight Activities

If the activity is a coed overnight activity, both male and female adults are required. Adults should not be alone with a youth/child in any hotel room/sleeping area. No adult should sleep in the same bed as a youth/child, regardless of relationship to youth. Sleeping areas are never to be co-ed. No males are permitted in female only sleeping areas/no females are permitted in male only sleeping areas.

Drop off/ Pick-Up Policy

Parents/guardians of infants through three year olds should sign in their children for nursery care. Parents and/or guardians are also responsible for dropping off and picking up their elementary-aged children for/from Sunday School, VBS, or other children’s church activities. Note: All parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their own children on the church property at all times unless the children have been entrusted to the care of one or more of the church’s child-care providers, paid or volunteer.

Classroom Management and Discipline

All care providers will use the following discipline measures. If a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable, and state what the expected behavior is. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be taken to his or her parent/guardian. No physical punishment or verbal abuse, e.g., ridicule, are to be used at any time.

Bathroom Policy

If an adult or teacher takes a child to the bathroom, the adult should prop the hallway doors open.

Injuries/Accidents

In the case of accidental injury, an Accident Report Form (see attachment) should be completed by the childcare provider and turned in to the staff person overseeing the ministry/activity within 24 hours of the incident.

Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships between youth workers and youth are strictly prohibited, regardless of the proximity of age. Recent high school graduates who are dating people who have not yet graduated will not be allowed to volunteer with youth.

IMPLEMENTATION:

These guidelines, policies, and procedures, including Addendum A and Appendices B-E were adopted by the Administrative Board in September 1997 and were fully implemented prior to December 31, 1997. Revised May, 2005 – deleted Addendum A, changed Child Protection Guidelines, and included addition of reference checks for volunteers. IC statutes updated March, 2006

Revised January 2011 - The language “Vulnerable Adults” added, in accordance with the most recent UMC Safe Sanctuaries policies. Car Seat/Seatbelt policy added January 2011 pursuant to Safe Sanctuaries/Indiana State Law. Book of Resolutions language added. Policies regarding discipline, reporting accidents, classroom management of discipline, drop-off/pickup policy, romantic relationships, class ratios added per Safe Sanctuaries Manual.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee will have the responsibility to implement and enforce these guidelines and procedures, including the training of employees and volunteers, maintaining confidential records, and implementing the screening process.

**Old Bethel United Methodist Church
Child Protection Guidelines**

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Indiana law requires a person to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as the Old Bethel United Methodist Church to the appropriate individual in charge. A person who fails to do so can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor or, in extreme circumstances, may be subject to civil liability for money damages. Therefore, all employees and volunteers at Old Bethel United Methodist Church must adhere to the following procedures:

1. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or violation of the Child Protection Guidelines of Old Bethel United Methodist Church, the employee or volunteer (in conjunction with the director of the area in which the volunteer is working) shall immediately notify, both verbally and in writing by completion of the Employee/Volunteer Confidential Report Form, the Senior Pastor or, in the absence of the Senior Pastor, a person designated by the Senior Pastor and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. (See below for contact information)*
2. Within 48 hours, and after verification of the suspected abuse violation, the Senior Pastor (or the approved Senior Pastor/SPRC designate) shall then report the incident to Child Protection Services in accordance with IC 31-6-11-4. He/She shall document in writing (see sample form) the date of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, and a brief synopsis of the incident. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness, and in the presence of the employee/volunteer who first reported the suspected abuse violation.

CONTACT NUMBERS:

Senior Pastor: Jerry Rairdon Office: (317) 359-9651 Cell: (502) 552-2672
SPRC Designate: Helene Foust Office: (317) 359-9651 Cell: (317) 670-8196

ABUSE

Below are definitions and examples of the different types of abuse recognized by the Indiana legal system.

Legal Definition of Abuse: Indiana Code 31-34-1 states "...the child's physical or mental health is seriously endangered due to injury by the act or omission of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian."

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the intentional infliction of physical injury or allowing another to do so. Some physical indicators include unexplained bruises, welts, burns, lumps, fractures, cuts or abrasions; dental/oral injuries.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or older child in a position of power, or permitting another person to do so.

Physical indicators include any venereal disease; bruised/dilated genitals or rectum; pregnancy under 16 years of age; difficulty/pain in walking or sitting; foreign matter in bladder, rectum or urethra; torn, stained or bloody underclothing; recurrent urinary tract infections.

Behavior signs of sexual abuse may include: nightmares; anxiety when approaching the church building or nursery or preschool area (beyond normal separation anxiety); excessive nervous or hostile behavior; sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior; withdrawal from church activities and friends; female overt sexual behavior.

Verbal signs of sexual abuse may include statements such as:

"_____ does things to me when we're alone."

"I don't like to be alone with _____."

"_____ fooled around with me."

Neglect

Neglect is the chronic failure to meet child's basic needs for food, clothes, shelter, medical care, education or supervision. Physical indicators can include flat, bald spots on infant's head; dirty and/or smelly child; torn, dirty or inappropriate clothing for the weather; developmental lags; underweight child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the chronic attitude or acts of a caretaker which are detrimental to the child's development of a sound and healthy personality. Some indicators include eating disorders; elimination problems; sleep problems; sadistic or masochistic behavior; suicidal acts; reports emotional abuse.

Appendix C

Indiana Code (IC) 31-33-5-1*
31-33-5-2*
31-33-5-3*
31-33-5-4*

IC 31-33-5-1 **Duty to Make Report**

Sec. 1. In addition to any other duty to report arising under this article, an individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report as required by this article.

IC 31-33-5-2 **Notification of individual in charge of institution, school, facility or agency; report**

Sec. 2. (a)
If an individual is required to make a report under this article in the individual's capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency, the individual shall immediately notify the individual in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency or the designated agent of the individual in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency.

(b)
An individual notified under subsection (a) shall report or cause a report to be made.

IC 31-33-5-3 **Effect of compliance on individual's own duty to report**

Sec. 3. This chapter does not relieve an individual of the obligation to report on the individual's own behalf, unless a report has already been made to the best of the individual's belief.

IC 31-33-5-4 **Immediate oral report to department or law enforcement agency**

Sec. 4 A person who has a duty under this chapter to report that a child may be a victim of child abuse or neglect shall immediately make an oral report to

- (1) the department; or
- (2) the local law enforcement agency.

* ©2005 Thomson/West Current through the 2005 First Regular Session of the 114th General Assembly. Replace IC 31-6-11-3, 4 (repealed 1997)

**Old Bethel United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Protection Guidelines**

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. The official spokesperson for Old Bethel United Methodist Church shall be the Senior Pastor. All inquiries or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other parties shall be referred to the official spokesperson. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson.
2. The official spokesperson shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse to the appropriate local Child Protection Services agency of the county, Old Bethel's insurance carrier, the Conference Chancellor, and the District Superintendent.
3. The care and safety of the victim is our first priority. We will not confront the accused without the approval of the Child Protection Service or law enforcement authorities.
4. We will not prejudge any person accused, but we will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of child abuse.
5. We will treat the accused with dignity and respect. If the accused is a church volunteer, that person shall be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished and the person has been cleared by the authorities. If the accused is a paid employee of our church, that person shall be temporarily relieved of his or her duties, and his or her income will be maintained until the allegations are cleared by the authorities, or until criminal charges are filed, but no longer than a period of 90 days.
6. All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
7. All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Senior Pastor, and maintained in a secure and confidential file.

Appendix E
(Glossary Page)

(Printed Name of Worker)

Checklist for Employees and Volunteers

_____ Been an active member or constituent of Old Bethel for at least six (6) months or has documented involvement in another church*.

(*Please give pastor's name, church name, address and phone number for follow-up.)

_____ Completed the screening form.

_____ Completed the mandatory yearly training (year: _____).

_____ Stressed importance of having a witness present when dealing with children one-on-one [two-person rule] (alternatives: use open areas, leave door open).

_____ Given copy of instructions for handling possible or suspected child abuse cases.

Employee or Volunteer Signature with Date

Parent or Legal Guardian, if Minor, with Date

References checked by Supervisor
(keep written documentation)

Checked by Immediate Supervisor with Date

Approved by Senior Pastor with Date

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FORM

**Report of Employee/Volunteer
For suspected, Reported or Discovered Child Abuse or
Violation of Safe Sanctuaries Guidelines**

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse.

2. Victim's full name: _____

Victim's age and date of birth: _____

3. Date and place of initial conversation with/report from victim:

4. Victim's statement (detailed summary here)

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

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

Signature: _____

Date: _____

**Old Bethel UMC
Accident Report Form**

Date of Accident: _____ Time of Accident: _____

Name of Child Injured: _____ Age: _____

Location of Accident: _____

Name of Person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Describe the accident:

Parent or Guardian: _____ Notified? Yes / No

Resolution/Follow-up:

Reporter Signature: _____ Date _____

Staff Signature: _____ Date _____

Reference Check Form

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How well do you know the applicant?
4. How would you describe the applicant?
5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to youth?
6. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?
7. How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities?
8. Would you describe the applicant as someone who is a team player or would prefer to be a individual player?
9. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your youth?
10. Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with youth? If so, please describe them.
11. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.
12. Please list any other comments you would like to make:

Reference inquiry completed by:

Signature Date

**Old Bethel UMC
Volunteer Application**

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cellular Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____ Occupation: _____

Do you have a current Driver's License? Y / N License #: _____

If volunteering as a driver, please provide insurance company name: _____

What areas of ministry would you like to volunteer in?

- Youth Children VBS Nursery
- ReCHARGE Youth Mission Trip Transportation
- Special Needs Sunday School Classroom

Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children and/or youth? _____

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children and/or youth? _____

Work and/or volunteer experience involving minors (list type of work and location: _____

Special interests, hobbies, and skills: _____

How many hours per week are you available to volunteer? _____

Days Evenings Weekends

What date would you like to begin?: _____

What are your expectations of OBUMC in this volunteer experience? _____

Are you a member of Old Bethel United Methodist Church? Y / N If yes, how long?: _____

If no, please list the name, address, phone # and pastor of the current church where you hold membership and length of time there: _____

What areas/ministries have you been involved with at OBMC? _____

Would you be available for periodic volunteer training sessions? ___ yes ___ no

Were you a victim of abuse or molestation when you were a minor?

_____ Yes (If yes, our Senior Pastor would like to discuss your answer in confidence, rather than having you answer it on this form. Answering yes or leaving this question unanswered will not automatically disqualify you from work with minors.)

_____ No

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime? Y N

Do you use illegal drugs? Y N

Have you ever been charged with child neglect, abuse or sexual abuse? Y N

Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked? Y N

Is there any other circumstance in your background that might call into question your being entrusted with the supervision of minors? Y N

If yes, please explain: _____

Are you willing to sign a release which would permit a criminal history background check?

Y N

REFERENCES

References: Please list three personal references (people who are not related to you by blood or marriage) who have known you for at least 3 years and provide a complete address and phone information for each.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime/Evening phone: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime/Evening phone: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime/Evening phone: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check

I, _____, hereby authorize Old Bethel United Methodist Church as a part of its volunteer application process to conduct a background screening that may include a local or national police background check, Indiana Sex Offender Registry check, motor vehicle records check (for drivers). I do hereby consent to the use of any and all information provided to Old Bethel UMC in the application process to be used in the criminal history/background check.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Driver's License #:

Social Security #:

** Because we respect your privacy, all background check information, including Social Security numbers, is confidential and is stored in a locked cabinet, in a locked storage room, which is accessible by limited Old Bethel UMC staff. Failure to disclose your DL# and/or SS# will prevent Old Bethel UMC from performing a criminal records check. Until a criminal records check is completed, you will not be eligible to volunteer.**