

First United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Safe Sanctuaries is the name commonly given by United Methodist Annual Conferences and local churches to their individual efforts to make conference, district, and local church programs welcoming and safe for children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Child abuse is a well documented fact in our society. Hardly a week goes by that each of us does not read or hear a horror story of how a young person or vulnerable adult has been violated by some trusted person in authority. Most of this abuse happens outside the church setting, but some of it does occur while persons are engaged in ministries of the church.

We at First United Methodist Church believe that we must make every reasonable effort to protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults who are in our care so that nothing damages their life. This is part of what it means to "so order our lives after the example of Christ that, surrounded by steadfast love, [each person] may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (UMC, Baptismal Covenant III).

While First United Methodist Church cannot guarantee the safety of every person, we can be responsible for reducing and eliminating circumstances that can lead to harm or injury. Developing and implementing a Safe Sanctuaries policy is a first-step in protecting our young and most vulnerable.

I. Preamble

Children hold a special place in God's family. Jesus taught that children were to be included and provided for within the community of faith. When the crowd tried to devalue children and keep them away from Jesus, he was quick to respond, "Let the children come to me for to such belongs the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16).

Children hold a special place in our Church's family. In the Baptismal Covenant, professing members assume a holy responsibility "to so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (*The United Methodist Hymnal*, page 44). Our promise places solemn responsibility on each person to help children grow in the knowledge of God's love and as whole persons.

As Christians, we take our responsibility to nurture children very seriously. We acknowledge the "sacred trust to maintain an environment that is safe for people to live and grow in God's love. Sexual misconduct in the church and ministry settings impedes the mission of Jesus Christ. Leaders have the

responsibility not only to avoid actions and words that hurt others, but also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words which cause harm" (Resolution 36, *The Book of Resolutions, 2004*).

The spiritual consequences of doing harm are significant. The victim's physical and emotional pain and suffering as well as a loss of trust and faith are barriers to the abundant life Christ desires to give. Jesus took these negative consequences so seriously that he warned against impeding the faith of others by saying, "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).

Neglecting to take adequate precautions against child abuse in our church is one of the ways we fail in our nurturing responsibilities. While it is unlikely that we can completely prevent child abuse in every situation, it is possible for us to greatly reduce the risk by following a thorough, practical policy of prevention and supervision. This policy attempts to do just that for First United Methodist Church in our ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (see definitions Section III).

It is the purpose of this policy to:

- A.** protect the children, youth and vulnerable adults that participate in the ministries of First United Methodist Church;
- B.** protect our staff, both paid and volunteer, from potential false allegations of abuse; and
- C.** protect all the various ministry assets of First United Methodist Church for making disciples of Jesus Christ.

This policy presents a comprehensive plan that includes the areas of: Screening, Supervision, Reporting, and Response. We consider the policies here to be the **MINIMUM** acceptable precautions for protecting children, youth and vulnerable adults.

II. Scope of the Policy

- A.** This policy and its provisions shall apply to all adults, volunteer or staff persons, whether laity or clergy, who have any direct or indirect contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults who participate in any activities or events sponsored by First United Methodist Church.
- B.** This policy will be implemented immediately following its adoption by the Administrative Board, with full compliance required by January 1, 2009, for all First United Methodist Church sponsored events.
- C.** First United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuaries Policy shall be applicable at all First United Methodist Church activities involving children, youth and vulnerable adults.

1. Church events are those events sponsored, promoted or financially supported by First United Methodist Church. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: Children's and Youth Sunday School Classes, First United Methodist Youth Group Activities (including all trips, camps, conferences, and meetings), All Children's Activities (including Mission Mondays, ALL STARS, Choir, Vacation Bible School, First United Methodist Church Preschool, Nursery Care, and Camp), and all other church sponsored activities where children and youth are present.

III. Definitions

The following terms are defined for the specific purpose of this document.

A. "Adult" ... The adult definition is used to define an adult as it relates to supervision, screening, reporting and responding within the Church's Safe Sanctuaries policy. "Adult" means a person 18 years of age or older, who engages in supervisory responsibility. The term does not apply to program participants.

B. "Adult Monitor" is an adult who frequently moves in and out of rooms or activity areas adding additional supervision where two adults (not spouses) are not available to care for the children.

C. "Assistant Who is a Minor" are persons under 18 years of age who help with activities (e.g., crafts or recreation) but are not in a supervisory role. An "Assistant Who is a Minor" does not satisfy the two unrelated adults rule.

D. "Certifying Officer" is the individual who receives applications, conducts background checks, assesses results, verifies requirements are met, and certifies a person for supervision of children whether as an employee or volunteer. For the purposes of hiring program staff the Certifying Officer is the Staff Parish Relations Committee, or an individual designated by the Staff Parish Relations Committee. For the purposes of hiring support staff the Certifying Officer is the director of the given area.

For the purposes of approving volunteers for service with children and youth in the life of the church the Certifying Officer is the director of the given area, or an individual designated by the director of a given ministry area:

For Children's Activities, including the nursery – Director of Children's Ministry

For Youth Activities – Minister of Youth

For Children's and Youth Choir – Director of Music

E. "Child abuse" is a harmful act against any person under 18 years of age that presents themselves in the following forms or types:

1. Verbal Abuse – Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades or threatens any child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

2. Physical Abuse – Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical and mental health. In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual's caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to the physical health of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

3. Sexual Abuse – Child, youth, or vulnerable adult sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of minors or vulnerable adults for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to:

a) incest,

b) rape,

c) prostitution,

d) romantic involvement with any participant,

e) any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual enrolled as a child, youth, or vulnerable adult at a First United Methodist Church sponsored event.

f) sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. Examples of sexualized behavior include, but are not limited to: "displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body, touching another person's body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse" (Resolution 36, *The Book of Resolutions 2004*).

4. Ritual Abuse – Any act of physical, sexual, psychological violence or manipulation inflicted on a minor or vulnerable adult intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone or multiple people that appeal to a higher authority or power to justify the abuse.

NOTE: This includes any acts utilizing electronic means that could be construed as verbal, physical, sexual, or ritual abuse.

F. "Child abuse" in this policy also includes abusive acts against vulnerable adults.

G. "Child" or "Children" or "Minor" means any person(s) under the age of 18.

H. "Children's and youth activities" means any activity or program in which persons under the age of 18 are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.

I. "Church" means First United Methodist Church.

J. "Church Crisis Team" is composed of the District Superintendent, Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair, and the Church Department Heads.

K. "Conference" means the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

L. "Conference Crisis Team" is composed of the Resident Bishop, the Director of Connectional Ministries, and the Director of Communications. Others will join the consultation process depending on the situation (i.e., the Conference Chancellor, the District Superintendent in whose district the incident occurred, the Conference Pastoral Counselor, etc.). The Conference Crisis Team will assist in determining and implementing a comprehensive response to a crisis.

M. "Safe Sanctuaries" is the name commonly given by United Methodist Annual Conferences and local churches to their individual efforts to make conference, district, and local church programs welcoming and safe for children and youth.

N. "Staff person" means any person employed by the First United Methodist Church who is responsible for children's or youth activities (as defined above).

O. "Staff person in charge of a children's or youth activity" means the First United Methodist Church employee responsible for the supervision of this activity, such as the Director of Children's Ministry in the case of a Church sponsored children's events, the Minister of Youth in the case of Church sponsored youth events.

P. "Supervisor" means any staff person or volunteer who leads, directs, counsels, teaches, mentors, chaperones, transports or assists in programs and activities related to children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Q. "Volunteer" means a person 18 years of age or older who assists in conducting children's or youth activities.

R. "Vulnerable adult" means any person 18 years of age or older identified by a caregiver, staff person in charge or him/herself as an individual unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation due to diagnosed diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities.

S. "We" means First United Methodist Church.

T. "Youth" means persons 18 years of age or younger who are strictly participants, holding no supervisory responsibility, in a Church sponsored activity.

IV. Screening Procedures

A. Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. While screening will consume time, raise questions of trust, and cost money to implement, screening is well worth the effort. Parents, congregational leaders, and participants can rest assured that the most reliable, committed and experienced staff and volunteers are in place for every program that involves children, youth and vulnerable adults. Leaders who willingly submit to the screening process demonstrate the high value they place on the protection of children, the protection of all who offer supervision, and the protection of ministry assets for disciple-making.

1. Children's Retreats/Trips

The Director of Children's Ministry acting as a Certifying Officer, or a designated Certifying Officer, shall conduct the screening process for the adult counselors or chaperones who accompany participants away from the Church. The following criteria shall apply for all Church sponsored children's events:

A. There must be at least one (1) adult counselor/chaperone for every six (6) children in order to actively supervise the children when traveling away from the church.

B. Each counselor/chaperone must have completed Safe Sanctuaries screening, and training, in order to participate in the retreat or trip.

C. For every church sponsored Children's event the Director of Children's Ministry shall certify that the volunteers/staff working the event are in compliance with Safe Sanctuary screening, training, and supervising requirements. This must be certified by the Director of Children's Ministry at least two weeks prior to the event. In cases where enough certified workers are not available, event leaders will need to recruit, train, and screen additional volunteers or cancel the event.

2. Youth Retreats/Trips

The Minister of Youth acting as a Certifying Officer, or a designated Certifying Officer, shall conduct the screening process for the adult counselors or chaperones who accompany participants away from the Church. The following criteria shall apply for all Church sponsored events:

A. There must be at least one (1) adult counselor/chaperone for every six (6) youth in order to actively supervise the youth when traveling away from the church.

B. Each counselor/chaperone must have completed Safe Sanctuaries screening, and training, in order to participate in the retreat or trip.

C. For every church sponsored youth event the Minister of Youth shall certify that the volunteers/staff working the event are in compliance with Safe Sanctuary screening, training, and supervising requirements. This must be certified by the Minister of Youth at least two weeks prior to the event. In cases where enough certified workers are not available, event leaders will need to recruit, train and screen additional volunteers or cancel the event.

B. We propose these **MINIMUM** screening standards:

All adults, volunteer or paid persons, whether laity or clergy, who have any direct or indirect contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults who participate in any activities or events sponsored by the First Methodist Church shall be required to submit an application that includes:

- 1.** Standard contact information.
- 2.** Experience and qualifications for the position.
- 3.** Documentation of an active relationship with a local church of at least six months before being allowed to be in a supervisory role in any Church sponsored children's or youth activity.
- 4.** Signed voluntary disclosure of past criminal history and allegations of criminal history.
- 5.** A listing of at least 3 non-related personal references. This list shall have complete contact information for all references. This portion of the application process is considered incomplete if full contact information for the references is not provided.
- 6.** Waiver of confidentiality allowing the criminal background checks necessary for the position. The criminal background check shall include a local, state and national search of the applicant's criminal record.
- 7.** Documentation of any reasons for why a volunteer or employee was approved for service in the instance that there are discrepancies in any of the aforementioned screening standards.

C. If any of the reports raise questions about the fitness of the applicant to serve, the application will be disapproved and the person will not be placed in service. For example, persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children, youth and vulnerable adults:

- 1.** If the applicant (paid or unpaid) is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children, youth or vulnerable adults, the applicant shall not be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children, youth, or vulnerable adults shall disqualify any applicant.
- 2.** Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, neglectful or ritual shall disqualify any applicant.
- 3.** Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc., shall disqualify any applicant.
- 4.** Persons having a criminal history of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to the application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.
- 5.** Persons having a criminal history of a drug related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to the application shall not be allowed to directly or indirectly supervise children, youth or vulnerable adults.

D. During the first year of this policy's implementation (from January 1, 2009 through January 1, 2010), all current staff persons and volunteers will begin submitting to the screening procedures prescribed by this policy.

E. After January 1, 2010, no person will be allowed to supervise children or youth without being completely screened, trained and having agreed to follow the minimum supervisory standards. After January 1, 2009, the following persons will submit to screening: any new volunteer or staff person; any volunteer or staff person with a break in service of one year or more; and any person for whom it has been five (5) or more years since their last criminal background check.

F. Great care shall be taken in establishing the protocols for conducting the review of the application, the reference checks, reviewing the criminal background check, verifying the required training, and maintaining the personnel records for each employment applicant and volunteer applicant. Results of screens shall be kept under lock and key in the applicant's file and revealed on a "need-to-know" basis. All forms and reference reports shall be kept as a part of an applicant's secured personnel file maintained by the certifying officer and the Church Business Administrator. The certifying officer is responsible for reviewing and following up on each application prior to service, upon acceptance into employment or service the applicant's secured personnel file shall be maintained by the Church Business Administrator. All applications, related forms, and requirements must be completed prior to service. In the event that a reference follow up is accomplished by phone, detailed notes of the conversation should also be included in the personnel file.

V. Minimum Supervisory Standards

Conscientious and intentional supervision of participants and adults is the second step for providing a holy place of safety for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. These supervisory procedures are designed to reduce the possibility of abuse to the children, youth or vulnerable adults and to protect staff persons and volunteers from unwarranted accusations. Again, these are **MINIMUM** Supervisory Standards. Each children's activity may adopt more stringent requirements as necessary. **MINIMUM** Supervisory Standards require:

A. All staff persons and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable adults in Church activities receive an annual Safe Sanctuaries orientation. This orientation will include information regarding the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, the minimum standards of supervision, the signs of possible abuse, and the process for reporting suspected child abuse. This training may be received at one of the Church sponsored training events.

B. All children's and youth activities shall utilize the "two-adult rule" when supervising children. The two-adult rule requires that no matter the size of the group, there will always be two adults (not spouses) present. It is expected that there will be at least one male and at least one female adult supervisor when there are male and female participants. This may include the presence of an adult monitor who frequently moves in and out of rooms to supervise the activities. An assistant who is a minor shall not supervise other children regardless of age differentiation and therefore would not satisfy the two-adult rule.

C. No adult (age 18 or older) shall supervise an age group unless he/she is AT LEAST 5 years older than the children or youth with whom he/she is working.

D. Each room or space where children or youth are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open. All indoor activities should occur in open view. Should the children's activity be an outdoor program or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this policy, the staff person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to adapt practices and procedures to the setting so all are properly supervised.

E. Registration materials for activities in which children or youth are outside of the direct supervision of their parents/guardians shall require signed written permission forms, which include pertinent health information, in order to participate.

F. A Children's and Youth Event Registration form for each child or youth must be completed and signed before the child or youth will be allowed to participate in a day or overnight field trip. Parents/guardians may sign a yearly, "blanket"

permission form for day trips only. All Children's and Youth Event Registration forms will be kept with the worker at all times during the field trip. On any overnight field trip, at least two workers of the same gender as the children or youth must chaperone the activity.

G. All participants who can understand a covenant shall sign a participation covenant wherein each person states their understanding of the rules and their agreement to follow the rules. Adult staff and volunteers will have a covenant that includes a reminder of the Safe Sanctuaries minimum supervisor requirements that serve as a protection for all involved.

H. Recognizing that there is safety in numbers, children and youth will be instructed to use the "buddy system" wherein children and youth are required to remain with at least one other partner at all times for help and protection.

I. During any counseling session with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, the door of the room used should remain open for the entire session unless there is visibility from the outside through an observation window. Ideally, the session will be conducted at a time when others are nearby.

J. The screening and supervisory requirements outlined in this policy shall be followed when a nursery is provided at Church sponsored events.

K. Parents are to sign in their child into the nursery upon arrival. Children will only be released to a parent, guardian, or person previously authorized to pick up the child (siblings must be at least 13 years old in order to pick up a child).

L. No adult worker is to date a youth or be romantically or sexually involved with a youth.

Additional considerations:

- In order for First United Methodist Church to achieve compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policy it may be necessary to combine groups; recruit, train, and reference additional volunteers; or cancel an event.
- It is also strongly encouraged that there be present at least one leader who is trained and certified in First Aid and CPR at all Church sponsored events.
- At events that require overnight accommodations, participants will be supervised by an adult. We strongly recommend that at least two (2) leaders be present in every room occupied by a participant. If necessary for participants to share a room with a leader, leaders shall sleep in

separate beds from participants, so long as any one leader shall not be alone with any one participant. Recognizing lodging accommodations may be restricted in some situations; one leader is adequate, so long as any one leader shall NOT be alone with any one child, youth or vulnerable adult.

VI. Reporting

A. Once an incident of child abuse occurs or allegation of an incident is made, it is crucial that it be dealt with promptly and in a clearly outlined manner. All staff, employees, and volunteers shall take seriously all allegations received. The staff person or volunteer who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported shall report the incident immediately to the staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity. The staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall provide immediate care to ensure the safety and well-being of the victim. Further, the staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity will obtain a Safe Sanctuaries Crisis Form and record necessary information such as, the name of the alleged victim, his or her address and family contact information, the nature of the allegation, and the name of the alleged perpetrator. Also, the staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity will contact his/her supervisor or the next person in the supervisory chain immediately.

B. The staff person in charge of the children's or youth event and the supervisor will consult to determine the appropriate next steps of response. The Church Crisis Team and Conference Crisis Team will be contacted to join in the consultation to support a comprehensive response to this incident.

C. Following the consultation, the staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity will implement a response plan formulated in the consultation. If the allegations fall within the list of child abuse offenses found in the Florida Code, which requires mandatory reporting, the staff person shall make a report to the proper authorities. The staff person in charge of the children's activity will cooperate fully with the investigation. The parents of the child shall be contacted and informed of the alleged incident and appropriately assisted by the staff person in charge of the children's activity.

D. The person suspected of abuse (respondent) shall, for the safety and wellbeing of all involved, be removed with dignity from further contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults until an appropriate investigation has taken place. In the event that the respondent is the staff person in charge of the children's activity, the report should be made to the Senior Pastor or Church Crisis Team who will place the staff person on leave of absence during the

investigation, will ensure the safety of all event participants and leaders, and will provide for the administration of the event.

E. If the allegation concerns activities or persons outside any supervisory relationship to a Church related event or activity, the staff person in charge of the Church activity will consult with his/her supervisor immediately. If the allegations fall within the list of child abuse offenses found in the Florida code, which requires mandatory reporting, the staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity will make the initial contact with the Department of Family and Children's Services in a timely manner. For example, if a child tells a children's or youth counselor about being abused by a relative during the prior year, the counselor receiving the statement will make a report to the staff person in charge of the children's activity. The staff person in charge of the children's activity will report this incident to his/her supervisor and a report will be filed with the proper authorities as the situation dictates.

F. The staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity will carefully and contemporaneously document all information received and all actions taken in follow-up of the allegation.

VII. Response Plan

A. A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in a children's activity, the entire staff of that activity shall cooperate with all official investigating agencies and appropriate conference officials.

B. The staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity will immediately contact one of the members of the Church Crisis Team (Senior Pastor, District Superintendent, Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair, or a Department Head) who will immediately contact the Annual Conference Crisis Team (Bishop, Director of Connectional Ministries, or Director of Communications). The staff person in charge of the children's activity, the Church Crisis Team and the Conference Crisis team will consult to assess the incident, offer support to the staff person in charge of the children's or youth activity, and determine the appropriate comprehensive response to this situation. This consultation will continue as the response is implemented.

C. The Conference Crisis Team will designate the official spokesperson for this incident. This designated person is the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements should be directed to the Conference Communications Director, who will provide access to the spokesperson. Those answering phones or receiving in- person inquiries

for information will politely refer all those seeking information to the Conference Director of Communications.

D. Pastoral care and support will be available to all persons involved with the incident. The Conference Pastoral Counselor may be called to assist in providing care. The Conference Sexual Ethics Response Team may be deployed by the Bishop if it is determined that their service would be helpful.

VIII. Accountability

Because we highly value protecting the children, youth, and vulnerable adults that participate in the ministries of the church, protecting our staff both paid and volunteer from potential false allegations of abuse, and protecting all the various ministry assets of the church for making disciples of Jesus Christ, we expect full implementation of this policy.

A. First United Methodist Church's pastoral leadership will be held accountable to the Annual Conference for the full implementation of the local church policy after it is adopted.

B. The Program Staff and Department Heads will be held accountable for fully implementing this policy for Church sponsored events by January 1, 2009.

C. The Director of Christian Children's Ministry and Minister of Youth will be held accountable for fully implementing this policy for Church sponsored children's and youth events sponsored by January 1, 2009.

D. Program Staff and Department Heads failing to comply with the requirements of the First United Methodist Church Policy shall be subject to an Administrative Complaint being filed against him or her

E. The pastoral leadership of First United Methodist Church will be accountable to offer periodic Safe Sanctuaries training for volunteers and staff.

IX. Amendments

Following adoption of this policy by the Administrative Board of First United Methodist Church:

A. Editorial changes that clarify the policy without changing its requirements may be made by the Church Crisis Team and others charged with such work by the Administrative Board.

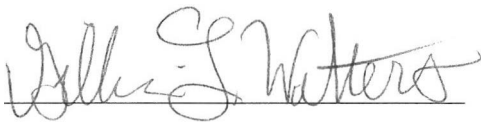
B. Substantiate changes that alter the requirements outlined in this policy must be presented to the Administrative Board for approval.

X. Application

All those who participate in the life of this congregation and use its facilities, individuals, organizations, and groups within and outside this congregation – are expected to respect, implement, and adhere to these provisions as a minimum.

Adoption

This Child, Youth, and Adult Protection Policy is adopted by action of the Church Council of the First United Methodist Church this 15th day of September 2008.



Senior Pastor



Chair, Board of Trustees

Associate Pastor



Chair, Church Council

Emergency Contact Information

Appointed Clergy and supply pastors: Rev. Gillian Walters, 334-202-9092

Chairperson, Board of Trustees: Jim Ifland, 850-305-4559

Director of Ministries: James Whited, 850-974-6789

Director of Youth Ministries: Rev. Chandler Robbins, 850-240-5902

Director of Children’s Ministries: Cathy Wyant, 850-496-0677

District Superintendent: _____

Florida Conference Bishop’s Office: 1-334-356-8014

Note: Under these circumstances, the bishop’s office will determine the appropriate time to contact the Risk Management Office of the Conference.

Fort Walton Beach Police Department: 850-833-9546

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department: 850-651-7400

Okaloosa Count Child Abuse Reporting: 1-800-44ABUSE

Florida Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-962-2873

Conference Communications / Media Office: 1-407-897-1140

PARENTAL CONSENT AND MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

Name of child/youth: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Street/Apt Number

City

State

Zip

Phone Number: _____

Day

Evening

Cell

As the parent (or legal guardian) of: _____

Child/Youth's Name

I understand that my child will be participating in a number of activities for the calendar year 2_____, which carry with them a certain degree of risk. Some of the activities are swimming, boating, hiking, field trips, sports and other activities which the church may offer. I consent for my child to participate in these activities.

Please indicate and restrictions on your child/youth's activities:

_____I represent that my child/youth is physically fit and has the necessary skills to safely participate in these activities.

_____I represent that my child/youth has restrictions on the following particular activities:

_____I also understand and give consent for my child to travel to and from these events in transportation provided by volunteer drivers.

MEDICAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION

It is my understanding the Church will make every attempt to notify me in case the need for emergency medical care for my child/youth arises. If the church is unable to reach me, then I authorize the church to hire a doctor or health care professional, and I give my permission to the doctor or other health care professional, to provide medical services he/she may deem necessary. I further understand that I will be responsible to any medial expenses so incurred.

I will notify the church if I feel there are any health considerations that would prevent my child/youth's participation in any of the activities listed above.

Allergies or other health considerations:

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Notary Stamp/Seal and Signature:

Date

Insurance Company: _____ Policy/Group #: _____

Child/Youth Protection Incident Report Form

Reason for Report: _____

Date-of-incident: _____ Time: _____

Place of incident: _____

Name of reporter: _____ Title: _____

Name(s) of Child(ren)/Youth: _____ Ages: _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

Where there any witnesses? _____ No _____ Yes If Yes, please list.

What action did you take? _____

Has the incident been resolved? _____ No _____ Yes Explain: _____

Have the following people been notified?

Pastor _____ Bishop's Office _____

Parent _____ Police _____

Chair, Board of Trustees _____ Sheriff _____

District Superintendent _____ Other _____

Signature of reporter

Date

Report submitted to: _____

Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards
(adopted at the 2016 Annual Conference Session)
Digital/On-Line Ministry Addendum

Digital/On-Line Ministry includes, but is not limited to, video conferencing, teleconferencing, chat rooms, private/group messaging, web sites, and all social media platforms.

DIGITAL/ON-LINE MINISTRY guidelines include:

1. Church “Admin” on Ministry Accounts. There shall always be two, unrelated authority figures with administrator rights on any account that is posting official ministry content.
2. Church-Sponsored programs/events/broadcasts.
 - a. Where there is no real-time interaction between viewers (e.g., a video posted but not broadcast live) the two adult rule applies in that there shall always be two, unrelated authority figures with administrator rights on any account that is posting official ministry content.
 - b. Where there is real-time interaction between viewers, there shall be two, unrelated authority figures in attendance wherever the real-time interaction is happening (chat room, etc.).
 - c. The church programs/events/broadcasts shall be initiated from official church accounts rather than personal accounts. Two authority figures shall be included.
3. Friending/Online Social Connections.
 - a. Digital/on-line media accounts shall be set up as ministry accounts and shall have two authority figures as administrators.
 - b. Ministry leaders involved with children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults shall never initiate a “friend request” on personal accounts. Parents of children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults may request to be a friend on a personal account of a ministry leader.

c. The connections and all shared information on these sites shall only be ministry related and that information includes but is not limited to: GIFs, videos, and photographs.

4. Video Conferencing.

a. There shall always be two unrelated authority figures present in any video conference.

b. When possible, a waiting room shall be employed for participants to ensure that two authority figures are present before students enter the video conference.

c. When breakout rooms are employed one authority figure shall function as a floater (refer to II. B. 5) when it is possible to “float” between rooms.

d. When an authority figure is available in the house of a participating student, their presence in the room with the student can count toward the two-adult rule.

5. Private Text Messaging.

a. Private text messaging is allowed. When possible, it shall be shifted to a group text that shall include two authority figures.

b. No messaging shall take place on a platform where messages automatically disappear.

c. Authority figures shall not delete history or chat logs from a messaging platform for 30 days.

6. One on One Video Calls.

a. One on one video calls shall not take place.

b. When a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult initiates a video call the authority figure is to deny the call and move the conversation to a group video platform, text, or audio call.

c. If and when video calls are unavoidable, due to medical emergency, the authority figure shall involve another authority figure as quickly as possible.

d. A parent present with the child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult when the call is initiated shall serve as the second authority figure.

7. Apps with disappearing message capability shall not be used.

8. Best Practices of Video Conferencing.

a. If using video conferences, one must be sure to understand how the conference works. Most have tutorials to help the leader understand controls and abilities of the software being used.

b. The parent shall be notified of the conference and give permission for their child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult to participate.

c. At least two authority figures shall be on the video at all times.

d. Passwords and waiting rooms shall be used.

e. Parents are always welcome to attend conference videos.

f. All chats shall be open to all participants. No private messages. Turn off peer-to-peer chat so all chat occurs between all participants.

g. Limit screen sharing to hosts only.