

Safe Sanctuaries Policies for the
Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist
Charge
Pennsylvania

Introduction

Heeding Christ's call to all people to love and serve one another (John 13:15,34); to serve those most vulnerable in his name, even the "least of these" (Matthew 25:40); and to welcome children and youth in Christ's name (Matthew 18:5), the Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge has developed this *Safe Sanctuary*¹ policy with accompanying procedures to reduce the risks of abuse to children, youth and vulnerable adults in the ministries of the church.

The physical and emotional safety, as well as the spiritual growth of all God's children is a priority of the Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge whereby we embrace a commitment to the holistic well-being of each child, youth and adult entrusted to us in ministry through our congregations.

The Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge *Safe Sanctuaries* Reducing the Risk of Abuse policy seeks to provide a framework for the Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge to practice cyber- safety in computer, internet, cell phone and other evolving cyber technologies to reduce the risk of abuse in our ministries to children, youth and vulnerable adults.

In our covenant together to do no harm by word or action, and to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, we outline in this policy, a set of minimum standards and suggested procedures for local churches and the annual conference that is in keeping with the 1996 General Conference *Safe Sanctuaries* resolution expanded to include abuse risk reduction for vulnerable adults and cyber safety considerations.

Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge Screening Procedures/ Recruiting and Selecting

Minimum Standard Policy and Procedures

Every ministry of the Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge that relates to children, youth, and vulnerable adults in its programming or oversight shall create procedures for implementing the church *Safe Sanctuaries Policy*. Administrative teams, ministries, and programs who give oversight to these ministries shall be responsible for implementing and monitoring the compliance of this minimum standard policy and its related procedures.

1. Every ministry and/or program of the Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge that relates to children, youth, or vulnerable adults shall have a *Safe Sanctuaries Policy*. These policies and procedures are required for all programs and/or ministries and shall include:

a. Reasonable safety measures and procedures in the selection and recruitment of both paid and volunteer staff who come in contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, which shall include:

- Written application for volunteers who have not yet become members of the Mifflin/Mexico Charge.
- Voluntary disclosure of past criminal history, allegations of criminal history, and driver history
- Waiver of confidentiality allowing the church to secure the background checks necessary for the position being applied for
- An interview process
- A completed background check using Pennsylvania Police Check and Child Abuse Check. Background checks need to be renewed every 60 months. Copies of completed checks will be kept in the individuals file in the pastors office. FBI fingerprinting will be required when required by state law.
- A current driver's license, registration, and insurance check when transporting children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- Maintain active attendance (3 or more Sunday's a month) at a Mifflin/Mexico Charge United Methodist church for at least six (6) months before being allowed to be in a supervisory role in children, youth, and vulnerable adult activities
- Use of age - and developmentally-appropriate language in educating children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding definitions of abuse and procedures for reporting

b. All forms and reference reports shall be kept as a part of an applicant's personnel file.

c. There shall be a specific person designated to be responsible for reviewing and following up on each application prior to service. All applications and related forms must be completed.

d. A method for reporting incidents of child, youth, and vulnerable adult abuse in accordance with the State Laws of Pennsylvania; the written guidelines of the Susquehanna Conference, and the written guidelines of the local United Methodist Church.

e. Measures to deal with the safety, protection, and ongoing emotional support of those who may have been victimized.

f. All staff and volunteer files will be kept in a locked cabinet in the secretary/ pastor's office.

Access to this material will be available to:

- a) The pastor
- b) Child advocate/Safe Sanctuary Rep.
- c) Youth Ministry Chair
- d) Chairperson of PPRC/SPRC
- e) Church Council Chair person
- f) District Superintendent
- g) Conference representative

g. If a person is away from the church or ministry with children, youth, or young adults for longer

than 6 months, new background checks and reference checks may be required.

2. Persons responsible for implementing, monitoring, and reviewing local church polices include “but are not limited to”: pastor; representative of staff parish, representative of trustees, youth leader, children’s leader, nursery leader. It is recommended that this group be accountable to the Staff Parish Relations Committee for purposes of confidentiality.
3. A copy of the policy shall be on file in the appropriate church office.
4. The Trustees will provide a facility use agreement for outside groups that gives information about the *Safe Sanctuaries* polices for use by the group.
5. Every Pastor and lay person who works with children, youth, or vulnerable adults shall:
 - a. Submit to a background check at a minimum of once every 60 months. The church is responsible for this process and the report of the Pastors background check shall be included with Charge Conference reports.
 - b. *Safe Sanctuaries* training is required of all pastors serving congregations within six months of their first appointment or assignment in the annual conference. The local church is responsible for this process, and the report of this background check shall be included with Charge Conference reports.
 - c. Clergy and lay persons serving congregations are required to attend *Safe Sanctuaries* training events mandated by the conference every five years
 - d. Annual training regarding policy and signs of abuse will be taken by those working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
 - e. Volunteers are encouraged to have Basic First Aid and CPR.
 - e. All clergy and lay persons in leadership in a congregation will be encouraged by the district superintendent (DS) and Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) to practice appropriate self-care.

Mifflin/Mexico

United Methodist Charge

Supervision

Every ministry or event of the Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge that relates to children, youth, and vulnerable adults in its programming or oversight shall provide conscientious and intentional supervision. These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of abuse to the children, youth, or vulnerable adults, and to protect the staff persons and volunteers from unwarranted accusations.

These are the MINIMUM standards, and each event may adopt more stringent requirements as necessary.

1. Two-Adult Rule – Minimum supervisory standards will include the “Two-Adult Rule” The Two-Adult Rule requires that no matter the size of the group, two unrelated adults (defined as two (2) adults not residing in the same household) shall be present with participants at all times. These adults shall have completed the screening process. One of the two adults may be a “roamer” who moves in and out of the rooms.

2. Five-Years-Older Rule – Every adult responsible for supervision shall be at least 18 years of age and at least five (5) years older than the oldest child or youth they are supervising.

3. No child or youth or vulnerable adult will be left unsupervised while attending a Mifflin/Mexico United Methodist Charge -sponsored event.

- In the event that child care/supervision services are not provided by the church for a church-sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.) the parent or legal guardian shall be fully responsible for their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) during the event.
- In the event that supervised programming for older youth/vulnerable adults is not provided by the church for any church-sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.), the parent or legal guardian shall be fully responsible for the supervision of their youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) during the event. Said child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) shall remain in the presence of their parent or legal guardian, and at no time be left alone and unsupervised.
- Should the parent or legal guardian arrange for their own child care/supervision of their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) for the church-sponsored ministry event to occur within the event facility, said child care/youth/vulnerable adult supervision shall be in compliance with the *Safe Sanctuaries* policies and procedures.
- If parents/legal guardians refuse to comply with *Safe Sanctuaries* policies and procedures they and their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) will be asked to leave the event.

4. All activities should occur in open view. Each room or space where activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults occur shall have visibility from an interior hallway or a connecting room by means of a window, a door with an uncovered window, or an open door.

5. For outdoor programs or programs which occur in non-traditional settings that makes supervision challenging, the staff person or volunteer in charge of the event shall take extra appropriate measures to make sure that the setting is free of obvious safety hazards and suits the event and that the children, youth, or vulnerable adult are properly supervised.

6. Bathroom Needs. When possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs, but should a child require assistance, the outer bathroom door will remain open while a *Safe*

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Sanctuaries certified volunteer assists the child, with an additional volunteer being present.

- For younger children, assistance will be provided.
- For elementary-age children, assistance should be limited to unfastening and fastening clothing. If more assistance is needed, parental permission should be received in advance.
- When accompanying a child to take care of his/her own bathroom needs, the *Safe Sanctuaries* certified volunteer will check the bathroom and stalls prior to the child entering the bathroom. Again, the outer bathroom door should be left open.
- A non-certified volunteer should **never** provide assistance with bathroom needs. It is encouraged that with youth that there be a buddy system created to help insure safety.

7. Event records for activities in which participants are outside of the direct supervision of their parents/legal guardians, shall require the following:

- Activity Registration, Parental/Legal Guardian Permission, and Signed Emergency Medical Release** – including participant’s name, address, birthday, parent/legal guardian information, telephone number, emergency contact information, pertinent information about the participant (allergies, medications, special instructions, etc.), such as medical history and insurance information, are required. These forms will be maintained and secured in a designated folder by the staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or event.
- Off-Site Activities** – Persons coordinating off-site events will assure every participant has completed the appropriate forms, and will take copies of these forms along on the event in a folder marked “Emergency Forms.”

8. Staff/Leader Supervision – the following **minimum ratios** will be maintained for **on-site activities** (in addition to the Two-Adult Rule – see #1, above) (for mixed ages use the youngest age ratio):

- Nursery through children two (2) years old – 1:4 (one adult to every four children)
- Children 3-4-years-old activities – 1:6 (one adult to every six children)
- Kindergarten-grade 6 – 1:8 (one adult to every eight children)
- Youth 7-12 grade – 1: 10 (one adult to every ten youth).
- Special Needs – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons).

Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.

9. Media – Written permission must be obtained from a parent/legal guardian prior to posting photos of children, youth, or vulnerable adult on a website or in other public locations, and names will not be included. This permission may be obtained as part of the Event Registration forms (see 7a., above).

10. If a participant requests to speak privately with an adult, the adult will ensure that the adult and the participant are visible to others while talking, even though they may not be heard.

11. Off-Site and Overnight Events/Activities

- The following **minimum ratios** will be maintained for **off-site events** (in addition to the Two-Adult Rule – see #1, above): In co-ed groups, remember to have both male and female adults present. Use the youngest age present when computing age ratios.
 - Nursery through 4-years old – 1:3 (one adult to every three children)
 - Kindergarten through grade 6 – 1:5 (one adult to every five children)
 - Youth 7-12 grade – 1:8 (one adult to every eight youth).

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iv. Special needs – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons).

Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.

b. Advance notice will be given to parents/legal guardian prior to events, and will include: date, time, and location, the means of transportation, and a summary of activities and events. Specific parental/legal guardian approval for off-site / overnight events is required. Should details of an event's start/end time change, (or other pertinent information change) the event's coordinator is to have a plan for notifying parents/legal guardians. Changes in transportation plans should be communicated with parents as well.

c. Events attended by child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adults(s) of both genders must be adequately chaperoned by adults of both genders.

d. All medications and medication instructions shall be given to a designated adult prior to the trip for disbursement as appropriate, and will be enclosed in its original container (including prescription medications). [Exception: Epipens and inhalers may be carried by child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s), with the understanding that they will be secured and out of sight unless needed. Due to the nature of these medications, adult leaders will be aware that the child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) is carrying medication, and will be familiar with how to use an EpiPen in case of emergency]

e. Appropriate buddy systems, check-in times, and appropriate male and female supervision need to be established for each ministry or event. The staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or event will assure the setting (and any equipment used) is appropriate for the event, and by implementing the above-named measures, will minimize risk of incident or injury to all participants. Events where direct adult supervision of child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) is not feasible (e.g. *Creation*, amusement parks, youth rallies and other large-group public events) will, at the minimum, incorporate a 3-5-person buddy system and check-ins for all participants as part of appropriate adult supervision.

f. Drivers to and from events must have completed the appropriate forms. Drivers must be a minimum of 25 years of age or older. If the Two-Adult Rule is not feasible to maintain, drivers will make reasonable effort to not transport less than two (2) participants at a time. Each vehicle should have a first aid kit, and one (1) seatbelt per occupant. Drivers will practice safe driving procedures such as assuring that all passengers remain properly secured throughout the trip, and by obeying all posted speed laws and regulations. The event's coordinator should provide as necessary any appropriate maps, directions, and emergency contact numbers to each driver, as well as a communication plan for contacting assistance should an emergency arise.

g. It is recommended that event coordinators attempt to secure at least one (1) adult with current certification in First Aid and CPR for each trip or event, and that all adult leadership participating in the trip or event is aware of such person(s).

h. For overnight children/youth/vulnerable adult events:

i. There will be separate sleeping areas for males and females.

ii. At least one adult will be present in each sleeping area, and will be of the same gender as the children/youth/vulnerable adult in that area.

iii. Sleeping areas should be pre-arranged by staff person or event coordinator prior to trip.

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- iv. Random and regular rounds may be conducted by two (2) adult leaders (of the opposite sex) throughout the nighttime sleeping hours of all sleeping areas.
 - v. Separate shower and bathrooms facilities are highly encouraged. When separate facilities are not possible, procedures for use of the facility will be conveyed to all event participants by the staff person or ministry team leader.
 - vi. If child/youth/vulnerable adults are found to be in violation of the Participation Covenant, the situation will be handled by the staff person or event coordinator as deemed appropriate. Said action may result in the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the participant being notified regardless of the time of day/night, and the participant maybe required to leave the event.
 - vi. Adults must respect the privacy of children/youth/vulnerable adults, during such situations as changing, showering, etc., and should intrude only to the extent that health or safety may require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations as well.
- i. Automobile Insurance Coverage for Volunteers
 - i. When a volunteer or employee drives their own car
 - i. When volunteers or employees drive their own vehicle on church sponsored events or other church business, the volunteer's/employees own auto insurance is the sole source of protection for the volunteer/employee for liability, or for physical damage to their vehicle. The church insurance policy does not provide any coverage to the individual. The following are the **minimum recommended** limits:
 - i. \$100,000/\$300,000 Bodily Injury
 - ii. \$100,000 Property Damage
 - ii. When the Church Leases a Vehicle
 - i. When the church (in the churches name, not an individual's) leases a vehicle to travel to an event, the driver would be covered by the Conference Insurance Policy.
 - ii. Moving Violations that will prevent a volunteer/employee from driving children/youth:
 - i. Within Three (3) years:
 - i. No more than 2 violations and/or accidents
 - ii. No more than 3 vehicle related suspensions/reinstatements
 - ii. Within Five (5) years:
 - i. No DUI
 - ii. No Reckless driving convictions
 - iii. No felony driving convictions
 - iii. Drivers with convictions for:
 - i. Passing a school bus
 - ii. Using an auto in the commission of a felony

Internet Safety Recommendations

The Internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Some excellent ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry, there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. There is no such thing as privacy on the Internet. Consider anything and everything on the Internet as public information. Here are some recommendations.

■ **Obtain written parent/legal guardian permission.**

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

1. Taking and using photos of participants. Use includes, without limitation, posting on any websites, sending them in e-mail or by cell phone messages, making videos for any use or reproducing them in brochures, posters or newspapers.
2. E-mailing, Instant Messaging (IM'ing), calling, texting, or sending data to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by computer, PDA, or cell phone (keep in mind that "free" minutes and data plans vary tremendously even with the same carrier); and,
3. The sharing of any full name or contact information.

■ **Never post easily identifiable information online.**

1. Do not use "broadcast" e-mails. Use the "Bcc" option (blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.
2. Be cautious when transmitting easily identifiable information such as event dates, times, locations, or participants.
3. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests. When placing a child, youth, or vulnerable adult on an electronic prayer list, use only first names and only then if you think a name is necessary.

■ **Sharing photos electronically.**

1. Obtain permissions to use photos or other content (poems, songs, etc.). Keep in mind that intellectual property laws are not necessarily universal and can get rather complicated.
2. Consider using stock or purchased photos.
3. When posting photos, refrain from using names, and never use last names or identifiable information.
4. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure they uphold your mission. Check to make sure name-tags are not distinguishable.
5. Use low-resolution photos whenever possible and slightly blur/pixelate photos.
6. Block "save photo as" options on websites. (Ask a web savvy person for assistance.)
7. Limit access to photos by employing the use of a password.

" Social networking sites e.g. (MySpace, Facebook, 7Villages, Xanga, Friendster, Plaxo, etc.) and others.

1. Restrict who can be a friend.
2. Do not post anything to the social networking site that you would not want attached to your resume or printed in the church newsletter or bulletin. (The same goes for blogs.)
3. Do not post inappropriate comments, photos, etc. and monitor and remove such material.
4. Encourage children, youth, and vulnerable adults to follow these same guidelines.
5. Consider including terms and conditions of use on the site advising that inappropriate content must not be posted and will be taken down etc.

" Limit individual communications with children, youth, and vulnerable adults and then only if you have obtained advance written parent/legal guardian permission.

1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner. (Even though you may be a sounding board for a person having a bad day, the reverse is not true.)
2. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.

" Do not collect, or allow third parties to collect, personal information from children under the age of 13. See Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA") and Federal Trade Commission Rules implementing COPPA (the "Rule").

COPPA and the Rule require certain permissions and privacy policies if a website or online service, including a mobile app, collect, or allow third parties to collect, personal information from or about its users if the service is directed to:

1. Children under the age of 13; or
2. A general audience and the organization has actual knowledge that it collects personal information from children under 13.

Do not give out passwords to church ministry accounts or any other accounts.

The computers in the church will at all times have a password preventing log in. The password will be known by the secretary, substitute secretary, pastor, and, if necessary, other approved individuals to limit access. The computer in the Pastor's office will at all times have a password preventing log in. The password will only be known by the pastor to limit access. If it is determined that the security of a computer has been compromised the password will be changed. The churches wireless internet will also be password protected.

Responding To and Reporting Abuse

Introduction

A quick, compassionate, and unified response to an alleged or actual incident of abuse is necessary and expected. All allegations are to be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in a ministry event, the entire staff of that event, paid and/or volunteer, shall be at the service of all official investigating agencies.

The goal of an immediate response to alleged or known incidents of abuse will be to ensure the safety of the victim and any additional potential victims. In all cases of alleged or actual abuse, professional support is obtained by informing the police, ChildLine and Abuse Registry, or other appropriate authorities. The legal parent/legal guardian of the victim will be notified unless they have been named as the alleged perpetrator of the abuse. Pastoral support is sought by informing the conference director of communications, district superintendent or advising pastor, as appropriate.

If the allegation or incident concerns events or persons outside any relationship to a church related event, it is the responsibility of the staff person in charge of the ministry event to make the initial contact with the ChildLine and Abuse Registry. The procedures outlined in this section will provide guidance for responses and reporting.

Example: Child, youth, or vulnerable adult telling a camp counselor about abuse by a relative during the prior year. If this report were made to the counselor in the course of his/her duties as a camp counselor, then an incident report should be filed with the camp's dean to be given to the staff person in charge of the campsite immediately.

If the allegation is against or involves a church or conference staff person or volunteer, or if it occurred in the course of a church ministry event, the staff person in charge of the event, and the pastor of the church shall be contacted immediately to handle communications. Procedures for responding to and reporting the abuse are contained herein.

The communications director of the Susquehanna Conference or his/her designee is the only person/s authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements shall be directed to the director of communications. Staff persons and volunteers are to be trained in how to handle media requests by referring them to the communications director.

Who is a Mandatory Reporter: Anyone who works with children/youth as an employee or volunteer. Though anyone who observes or is confided in by a child or youth is strongly encouraged to report, even if they are not a mandatory reporter.

How to respond to allegations of abuse while at a church event

Care for the alleged victim's safety.

Once a child, youth, or vulnerable adult has disclosed alleged abuse, the one to whom the disclosure has been made should reassure the alleged victim of a concern for his or her safety and well-being. The alleged victim (and any other potential victims if the abuse has allegedly taken place onsite) should be calmly moved to another safe place onsite in view of at least two other non-related adults. Someone safe and familiar should stay with the victim at all times.

Persons, who are the objects of the report, if on site, will be immediately and discreetly removed from the ministry setting (both the alleged abuser and the victim to separate locations) until the incident is resolved. This is to protect all persons involved, including the accused. The person to whom the disclosure was made should inform the victim in an age appropriate way that a report will be made.

Should the victim be in need of immediate medical attention, a call should be made for medical transport by ambulance. If it is appropriate, the parents/legal guardians of any victim under the age of 18 should be notified. It may not be appropriate to contact the parents/legal guardians if they are the alleged perpetrators. In this case, the person designated as the reporter should be contacted and should handle contacting the parents/legal guardians when appropriate.

Report the allegations of abuse.

The designated reporter will obtain the information needed for the filing of reports, including, but not limited to, the victim's name and age, the name of the alleged perpetrator, the alleged facts of the abuse, and physical home addresses for the victim and the perpetrator. It is important to let the victim verbalize the allegations in his or her own words, being careful to limit questions asked of children or youth under the age of 18, or to vulnerable adults. If the victim is under age 18, a report should be made immediately to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. If the victim is older than 18, a report should be made to local law enforcement directly. It is the responsibility of the designated reporter to handle these matters in a professional and caring manner and to immediately notify the Conference Director of Communication, Director of Connectional Ministries, and the Dean of the Cabinet.

If the designated reporter is not available, then the person to whom the abuse was disclosed should immediately call the Conference Director of Communication, the Director of Connectional Ministry, and the Dean of the Cabinet. He or she should tell the office administrator or person answering the phone that this is a confidential emergency and that they need to speak directly with the person to whom they are reporting.

Maintain confidentiality.

Allegations are to be discussed only on a need-to-know basis. The person or persons to whom the allegations were disclosed should immediately contact the person who has been designated as responsible for making reports, and should give the details to that person only. Other adult's onsite should be alerted to stay with the alleged victim and other potential victims, but they do not need to know the allegations. Once the allegations have been reported to the designated reporter, the person to whom the allegations were made should not discuss the matter with other persons except law enforcement or designated state investigators. To do so could cause irreparable harm to the victims, their families, and the community.

How to respond to known incidents of child abuse

Care for the victim's safety.

Once the abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult has been discovered, the person who discovered the abuse should reassure the victim of a concern for his or her safety and well-being. The victim should discreetly be removed to another safe spot onsite in view of at least two other non-related adults. Someone safe and familiar should stay with the victim at all times. Appropriate action should be taken to minimize risk for all other potential victims.

Persons who are the objects of the report will be immediately and discreetly removed from the ministry setting to a secure place until the incident is resolved. This is to protect all persons involved, including the accused.

The first response of the designated reporter, or in his/her absence, the person who discovered the abuse, is to contact ChildLine, if the victim is under 18, to report the incident. The designated reporter is to call law enforcement if the victim is over 18, to report the incident. The next step is to notify the parent/legal guardian of those under the age of 18 (unless alleged to have committed the abuse), the senior pastor, and the Safe Sanctuary representative.

The victim should be informed in an age appropriate way that a report is being made to Child Line and/or law enforcement. If the victim is able to assist in making the report, the person to whom the victim disclosed and another unrelated adult should go with the victim to the person onsite who is designated as responsible for making reports, or in the absence of that person, proceed to a quiet place where the report can be made by telephone.

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Should the victim be in need of immediate life-sustaining medical attention, a call should be made for medical transport by an ambulance first, and then the designated reporter should be notified. If the injuries are not life-threatening, the designated reporter should be notified immediately.

Response Team.

As directed by the Office of the Bishop, the Conference Response Team may be called upon to assist in a situation.

Report the incident of abuse.

The person responsible for making reports will obtain information needed for the filing of reports, including but not limited to, the victim's name and age, the name of the alleged perpetrator, the alleged facts of the abuse, and physical home addresses for the victim and the perpetrator. It is important to let the victim verbalize the allegations in his or her own words, being careful to limit questions asked of children or youth under the age of 18, or to vulnerable adults. If the victim is under age 18, a report will be made as soon as possible to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. If the victim is older than 18, a report should be made to local law enforcement directly. It is the responsibility of the designated reporter to handle these matters in a professional and caring manner, and to immediately notify the senior pastor of Grace United Methodist Church and the Safe Sanctuaries representative.

If the designated reporter is not available, then the person to whom the abuse was disclosed should immediately call the senior pastor of Grace United Methodist Church or the Safe Sanctuaries Representative. He or she should tell the office administrator or person answering the phone that this is a confidential emergency and that they need to speak directly to whom they are reporting.

Maintain confidentiality.

Allegations are to be discussed only on a need-to-know basis. The person or persons to whom the allegations were disclosed should immediately contact the person who has been designated as responsible for making reports, and should give the details to that person only. Other adult's onsite should be alerted to stay with the alleged victim and other potential victims, but they do not need to know the allegations. Once the allegations have been reported to the designated reporter, the person to whom the allegations were made should not discuss the matter with other persons except law enforcement or designated state investigators. To do so could cause irreparable harm to the victims, their families and the community.

How to answer inquiries (personal and media) about alleged or known incidents of child abuse.

Confidentiality.

Allegations should **never** be discussed outside the investigation. This can cause irreparable harm to victims, their families, and the community. All inquiries or questions shall be referred to the conference director of communications.

Appropriate emergency contacts.

All questions and inquiries **must** be referred to the appropriate district superintendent, who is authorized by the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church to activate the Conference Response Team. He or she should tell the office administrator or person answering the phone that this is a confidential emergency, and that they need to speak directly with the person they are reporting to.

Handling calls and questions from the media.

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If a member of the media – newspaper, TV station, Radio station, Magazine – calls or approaches a staff member in person and asks about the situation, that staff member should get their name and phone number and respectfully tell them that the director of communications will get back to them with the answer as soon as possible. The following “hold response” can be used:

“I want to make sure we give you the most accurate and up-to-date information. The Senior Pastor can best help you. If you give me your contact information, deadline and topic you are calling about, I will have them return your call as soon as possible.” or, “Here is the phone number/email of the Senior Pastor...”

No staff person should answer any questions.

The staff person should be polite, but firm. A staff person should **never** simply tell a reporter, “*No Comment*,” as this response raises concern that the incident (alleged or known) is not being dealt with or taken seriously by the church. Nothing is assured to be “off the record” when talking to the media. A staff person should realize that any statement made to the media can be used publicly, even if the reporter says it is “off the record.”

Appendix 1 Definitions

Definitions

What is Safe Sanctuaries?

In 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted the resolution, Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church. This resolution, reaffirmed at every General Conference since then, became the impetus for annual conferences and congregations to develop and implement abuse risk reduction policies. The General Board of Discipleship has identified *Safe Sanctuaries* as Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth.

What is abuse?

“Child Abuse” is defined under Pennsylvania’s Child Protective Services Law (PA Law 23 Pa. C.S.A. §6303) to mean any of the following:

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

Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law 23 Pa.C.S.A. §6303 also provides that, “If, upon investigation, the county agency determines that a child has not been provided needed medical or surgical care because of seriously held religious beliefs of the child’s parents, guardian, or person responsible for the child’s welfare, which beliefs are consistent with those of a bona fide religion, the child shall not be deemed to be physically or mentally abused. The county agency shall closely monitor the child and shall seek court-ordered medical intervention when the lack of medical or surgical care threatens the child’s life or long-term health.”

In *Safe Sanctuaries, Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church*, 2008, Discipleship Resources, Nashville, TN, Joy Thornburg Melton defines and describes five types of abuse:

1. Physical Abuse is abuse “in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to another through violent attack with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, etc), burning,

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shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, or any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a person's body." (Melton 2008, pages 29-30)

2. Emotional Abuse is abuse "in which a person exposes another person to spoken or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty ... sending a message of worthlessness, badness, being unloved, and undeserving of love and care. Emotional abuse may include locking someone in a closet, depriving a child or youth of parental affection, constantly telling someone they are bad or stupid, allowing or forcing a minor to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is very difficult to prove and devastating to the victim." (Melton, 2008, page 30)
3. Neglect is abuse "in which someone's health, safety, or welfare is endangered through negligence. Some forms of neglect are: withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of self-worth." (Melton, 2008, page 30) If a parent cannot provide adequate care for a child due to poverty, infirmity, or other disability, their negligence is not legally categorized as abuse, although the neglected person still needs to be cared for.
4. Sexual Abuse is abuse "in which sexual contact occurs between a child, [youth, or vulnerable adult] and an older or more powerful person, where the vulnerable person is not truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact ... [because of] physical or psychological dependence. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, the exploitation of and exposure to pornography or prostitution." (Melton, 2008, page 30)
5. Ritual Abuse is abuse "in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a person are inflicted regularly by someone responsible for the vulnerable person's welfare. The abuser may appeal to a higher authority or power to justify the abuse. Such abuse may include actual or threats of cruelty to a person, animals, or others." (Melton, 2008, page 30)

What are the definitions of "child," "youth," and "vulnerable adult"?

For the purposes of this Policy, the definition of abuse also includes vulnerable adults. One definition of vulnerable adult is: any person, 18 years and older, who because of physical or mental infirmity or emotional disability or other physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction may be vulnerable to maltreatment. We also mean vulnerable adults to be adults who have been abused either as a child or an adult; or adults, who in their work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, can be in a position where accusations of abuse could mistakenly arise. As mentioned above, a child is anyone under the age of 18 years. A youth may be a child in the age range of 12 to 18 years, and is a colloquial term used in ministries to mean junior and senior high school age groups.

What are the "children's, youth, and vulnerable adult ministries and/or activities" covered under this policy?

The churches referred to in this policy are Trinity and, Grace United Methodist Churches. Ministries and/or activities are defined as any ministries to children, youth, and vulnerable adults that include any programming or activities in which children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are under the supervision of the church through its staff persons or volunteers.

Cyber Space and Cyber Safety:

While ministries and activities take place in a variety of venues, new forms of communication via the Internet and wireless cell-phones and other hand-held devices constitute a new space for ministry and activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Cyber Space includes: communications via email, instant messaging, and cell phone (speaking and texting), and other devices; communicating on social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, etc.; web-surfing and downloading of materials from the Internet; and gaming. Cyber Space is a fluid space which changes more and more as communications become more portable and websites change with increasing frequency.

Cyber Safety is the part of our *Safe Sanctuaries* policy that seeks to encourage those in ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to update their knowledge of Cyber Space; provide ground rules for ministries and activities in Cyber Space; encourage critical thinking among those ministered to for posting, reading, and seeing; encourage good sense and safety in Cyber Space; and, model appropriate Cyber Space behaviors. The dangers of direct access to age-inappropriate content, risky social contacts, intimidation, making threats, bullying, posting of remade and/or inappropriate photos, disclosure of information that could increase risks for abuse, and more in Cyber Space make Cyber Safety an important part of *Safe Sanctuaries*.

What are the definitions for staff person, helper, employee, volunteer?

Staff Person – a person engaged in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults through the church who: has been screened and trained in *Safe Sanctuaries* practices; performs tasks specified in a mutually agreed upon job description; and, is accountable to a supervisor for work habits and products.

Helper – a person engaged in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults through the church who has been screened and trained in *Safe Sanctuaries* practices, but who works only in an assisting role under supervision of a staff person.

Employee – a person who works in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults either as a staff person or a helper for compensation

Volunteer – a person who works in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults either as a staff person or a helper without compensation

Individuals who have been convicted of child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, or ritual) or whose name appears on Megan's List, may not work in any church-sponsored activity or program for preschoolers, children, youth or vulnerable adults

Appendix 2 Resources

Reporting

Childline	1-800-932-0313
State Police- Mifflintown	1-717-320-1010
District Superintendent—Lori Steffensen	1-814-237-4365
Conference Office	1-717-766-7871
Anne Horton— Director Camp & Retreat Ministry	1-717-766-7871 ext. 3603
Conference Director of Communications	1-717-766-7871 ext. 3607
Children and Youth Services for Juniata Co.	1-717-436-7707 (emergency 717-436-7770)

Potential Abuse Counselors

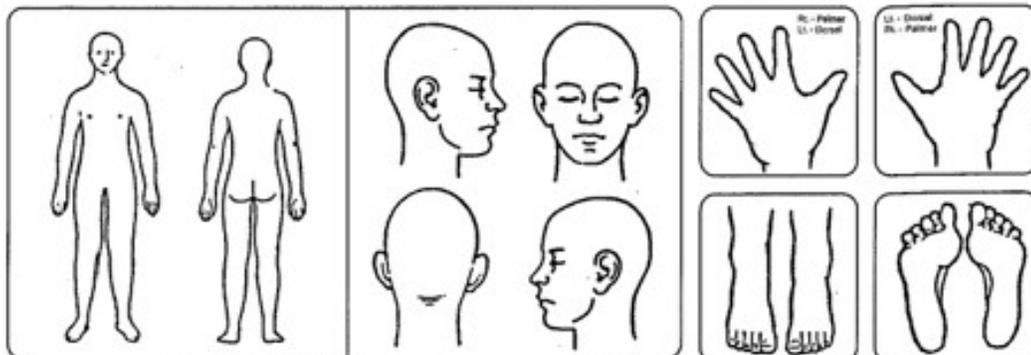
Cumberland Valley Counseling Associates	1-717-243-1511
Debbie N. Goldberg	1-717-827-4837

Appendix 3 Report of Suspected Abuse

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE
(CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE LAW - TITLE 23 PA CSA CHAPTER 63)

PLEASE REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE. EXCEPT FOR SIGNATURE. PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

1. NAME OF CHILD (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
1A. PRESENT LOCATION IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE			COUNTY	
2. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE MOTHER (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
3. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE FATHER (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
4. OTHER PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	TELEPHONE NO.
5. ALLEGED PERPETRATOR (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	TELEPHONE NO.
6. FAMILY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (Excluding Above Names)				
NAME (Last, First, Initial)		RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	NAME (Last, First, Initial)	
A.			D.	
B.			E.	
C.			F.	
DESCRIBE INJURIES/CONDITION AND WHY YOU SUSPECT ABUSE/NEGLECT. INCLUDE EVIDENCE OF PRIOR ABUSE TO THIS CHILD, SIBLING OR PERPETRATOR. (PLEASE REFER TO OPPOSITE SIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION). PLEASE NOTE EXACT LOCATION OF THE INJURY(S) ON MODEL BELOW.			COUNTY WHERE ABUSE OCCURRED	DATE OF INCIDENT



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7. ACTIONS TAKEN OR ABOUT TO BE TAKEN BY REPORTER, COUNTY AGENCY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, SCHOOL OFFICIAL, OR OTHERS.	
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTIFICATION OF GORCHER	<input type="checkbox"/> X-RAYS
<input type="checkbox"/> PHOTOGRAPHS	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITALIZATION
<input type="checkbox"/> POLICE NOTIFIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAL EXAMINATION
<input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY CUSTODY TAKEN	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify) _____
8. RISK FACTORS, CHILD:	
A. DESCRIBE ANY PHYSICAL, MENTAL OR BEHAVIORAL FACTORS THAT MAY PLACE THE CHILD AT RISK: <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
B. DOES THE CHILD APPEAR TO NEED IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:	
C. LEVEL OF PAIN CHILD EXHIBITS <input type="checkbox"/> MILD <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE <input type="checkbox"/> SEVERE PLEASE DESCRIBE:	
D. DOES THE CHILD APPEAR TO BE FEARFUL, SUICIDAL OR WITHDRAWN? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN: <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES	
9. RISK FACTORS, FAMILY:	
A. DESCRIBE ANY CARETAKER/PERPETRATOR CHARACTERISTICS THAT PLACE THE CHILD AT RISK: <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
B. DESCRIBE THE EXTENT OF PERPETRATOR(S) ACCESS TO CHILD: <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
C. IS THERE ANY SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES	IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:
D. DOES THE CARETAKER/PERPETRATOR HAVE A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE OR SEVERE EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN: <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES	
E. WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL (HEALTH AND SAFETY) CONDITION OF THE HOME? <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
F. WILL CHILD BE AT RISK DUE TO COUNTY AGENCY INVOLVEMENT? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:	
G. ARE THERE WEAPONS IN THE HOME? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES	IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:

INSTRUCTIONS TO MANDATED PERSONS: Any persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession come into contact with children shall report or cause a report to be made to Childline (800-932-0313) when they have reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of their medical, professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is a victim of child abuse. Within 48 hours after making the oral report, send one copy of this report to the county children and youth agency.

NOTE: If the child has been taken into custody, you must also immediately contact the county children and youth agency where the abuse occurred. Except for confidential communications made to an ordained member of the clergy, the privileged communication between any professional person required to report and the patient or client of that person shall not apply to situations involving child abuse and shall not constitute grounds for failure to report suspected abuse.

REPORTING SOURCE			
SIGNATURE	TITLE OR RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	FACILITY OR ORGANIZATION	
ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	DATE OF REPORT	