

## FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**Assistant Pastor**

**Directors of Children's Ministries**

**Youth Pastor**

**Adult Ministry Director**

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**Congregational Care Coordinator**

**Outreach Director**

**Worship Director**

**Staff Parish Relations Chair**

**Administrative Board Chair**

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**Facilities Coordinator**

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## SAFE SANCTUARIES FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Handbook of First United Methodist Church's  
Policies and Procedures to Protect, Children, Youth,  
and the Church Community.



## ALL ARE WELCOME

First United Methodist Church is a Christian community that welcomes all to enter its doors. As such, the church community must be mindful that the church building is a public facility. Adults, children, and youth must take the same precautions they would in any public place. Children should always be accompanied by a parent or designated adult and never left alone. All members have the shared responsibility for the welfare of children and should be attentive to their safety. The Church community should be alert and aware of their surroundings and those around them, knowing they are empowered to act to ensure the well-being of any child, youth, or adult.

\*\*\*Little Friends Preschool, a ministry of First United Methodist Church, due to the unique dynamics and structure of preschool environments have a child protection policy worded for their specifics use and environment. To understand the Safe Sanctuary Policy as played out in the preschool environment, please see the Little Friends Policy Handbook. First Church and Little Friends are aware of each other's policies and work together to ensure each child's safety and security.

- Basic First Aide Kits are located in the Crib room, welcome desk, and the multipurpose room closet.
- If appropriate file an accident report.
- First Church has an AED (automatic external defibrillator) hanging on the wall just outside of the south entrance doors to the Multipurpose Room. See First UMC Emergency Plan of Action for Using AED located with the AED.

## **Missing Child:** In the event of a missing child,

- all exits must be immediately secured by ushers, red-coats, and designated members of the congregation.
- The parking lot and alley areas will be searched for the child and all vehicles stopped from exiting the parking lot.
- Parents if not yet aware will be notified.
- Teachers will check bathroom areas, closets, and other classrooms.
- If the child is not found immediately call 911.
- Follow-up with the family and child after the child is found make sure that the child is ok. Assist family in identifying and meeting any needs following the incident.
- Investigate what factors contributed to the missing child and evaluate policies and procedures to enhance safety of all children in the future.

## **Fire Alarm:** In the event of a fire or other emergency which requires a building evacuation:

- Every person within the building must calmly and quietly leave the building immediately using the exit which is nearest to them.
- Once out of the building, every person must go a safe distance away from the building, which is out of the main traffic area (to allow for the arrival of emergency vehicles).
- Children and youth in classroom areas will proceed outside through the nearest exit and will be escorted by their teachers/caregivers.
- Once outside, children and youth will remain with their teachers/caregivers and will immediately go to the far side of the back parking lot which is next to Keller Street. (This area is a safe distance from the building, and is out of the main traffic area that would be used by emergency vehicles.)
- Parents shall meet their children in this designated spot.
- Parents must inform their child's teacher/caregiver that their child is now back in the parent's care before the child may leave with their parent.
- In order to assure everyone's safety outside (and to avoid a traffic jam situation) it is recommended that drivers wait to leave in their vehicle until asked to do so by the Facilities Director or designated personnel.
- Everyone may re-enter the building after receiving permission to do so from the Facilities Director or designated personnel.

## **Medical Emergency:** In the event of a medical emergency:

- If the injured person is unconscious evaluate for CPR, call for help of qualified medical personnel, and call 911.
- If the injured person is conscious, call for help of qualified medical personnel, after evaluation, call 911 if needed and or escort to proper medical attention.

*‘ Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."” Matthew 19:14*

In our ministry to proclaim God's love, we are charged with the sacred trust of caring for God's children. To this end, our ministry to children and youth extends far beyond the goals of Christian education. Our goal is that all children and youth be loved, valued, and nurtured in their faith as part of a church family composed of individuals committed to Jesus Christ. We have the responsibility, as a church, to provide the best possible care, comfort, guidance, and instruction for our children and youth. In doing so, God calls us to make our church a safe place, protecting them from physical danger, emotional trauma, and sexual exploitation. The accompanying procedures and guidelines for the children's department and youth department demonstrate the unwavering commitment of the congregation to the physical safety, emotional well being, and spiritual growth of our children and youth.

To this end, it is our covenant to:

1. Protect the children and youth to which we minister from being physically, emotionally, or sexually abused while they are under our care.
2. Assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth, as well as, all of the workers within the children and youth departments.
3. Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers and teachers.
4. Implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events involving children and youth.
5. Educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding all department policies and safety measures. This shall include awareness and training regarding identifying and reporting various forms of child abuse, appropriate methods of first aid, and guidelines for discipline.
6. Have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law.
7. Be prepared to respond appropriately if an incident occurs; including ministering to the needs of victims and the church body.
8. Guard our professional and volunteer staff from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior toward a minor.
9. Be good stewards not only of those entrusted to our care, but also of our assets by protecting our church against lawsuits.

While we cannot guarantee the safety of our children and youth and workers, guidelines have been designed for their protection. All teachers and volunteers who work with our children and youth must comply with the policies and procedures.

## SAFE SANCTUARY POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following policies and guidelines are designed to inform, protect, and ensure the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety and comfort of the children and youth attending First Church, their parents, and all children and youth workers. First Church is dedicated to partnering with parents in cultivating the spiritual growth of children and youth. Our goal is that all are loved, valued, and nurtured in their faith. Children and youth are a priority in the First Church Community and receive the support of the entire congregation as we strive to meet this goal. We recognize specific guidelines for meeting the needs and safety of children and youth vary on their developmental stage. General guidelines cover all ages, still, all guidelines shall be considered within age appropriate levels.

### General Guidelines for all Children's Ministries (Birth—5th grade) And Youth Ministries (6th-12th grades)

#### Staffing Guidelines

Staffing guidelines apply to *all* children's and youth department activities

#### **Volunteer staffing procedures:**

All adults involved in leadership roles within the children/youth departments providing supervision and discipline of children must have current clearances on file with the church. The Adult must be an active attendee at First Church for at least six months, have met with a Church Staff Member, and signed the *Children and Youth Ministries Covenant*.

1. **Church Membership is encouraged:** The membership process includes the requirement to attend membership classes. Membership class shall review the *First Church Children and Youth Protection Policy*. New members will complete the Ministry Inventory questionnaire. If they are interested in working with children/youth they may complete a survey and begin the volunteering process.
2. **Process for Children's Ministry Involvement:** Volunteers will be required to provide an affidavit or FBI fingerprinting as well as background clearances from law enforcement and child protection agencies. Any other current requirements as per state law will also be required.
3. **Meeting with Staff:** A meeting will be mandatory for all individuals seeking to work with children/youth. After favorable verification of background checks, (and references if needed) a meeting will be scheduled with a Pastor, the Director of Children's Ministries or the Youth Pastor. The meeting will serve to clarify and develop a better understanding of the volunteer's desire to serve children/youth within the church family. Consideration is given to the individual's spiritual gifts.
4. **Volunteer data:** Is kept in confidential files in the church office. Approved staff can only access files.

## CHILDCARE POLICY FOR CHURCH RELATED EVENTS

*Childcare is arranged by many church groups to coincide with meetings or other church related events. These events are separate from the children's department and youth department and are not subject to their respective staffing, supervision, and training guidelines. Still, it is important that all childcare occurring at First Church complies with the Safe Sanctuary policy. In this effort, the Church encourages all groups arranging childcare to heed the following guidelines.*

- There must be at least two individuals present to supervise children. This allows one to be available in case there is a need to contact a parent, or go for help in an emergency.
- One individual must be clearly deemed the "individual in charge". The "individual in charge" must be at least 16 years old. It is preferred that they have completed a babysitting-training course.
- The supervising helper may be a youth, but must be at least 13 years old.
- Childcare workers will be observed and evaluated on a regular basis.
- Adults involved in the meeting or event requiring childcare shall periodically check in with the childcare workers like the "roaming adult".
- Childcare workers are expected to interact with the children in their care this includes but is not limited to: playing with children and reading to children.
- Childcare workers are expected to follow all diapering, bathroom, and health and safety guidelines and procedures as outlined in nursery guidelines and posted in the childcare rooms.
- Parents are required to make reservations for childcare when it is made available to allow for proper caregiver to children ratios. Reservations should be received at least 1 week before the event, otherwise childcare may not be available.
- When arranging babysitting please reserve a room through the Facility Use Form.
- Childcare workers may be financially compensated at the current rate as deemed by the church.
- All toys in the children's department are available to be played with by children. Please be considerate of items on display, as well as, special items indicated for Nursery school use. Encourage babysitters to be examples of good stewardship assisting the children to properly care for and clean up the classroom space they use.

2. Congregations shall develop, approve and follow a written local church policy on Sexual Harassment and Misconduct of a Sexual Nature. (Helpful information on developing these policies as well as sample policies are found at: [www.gcfa.org/lcshmemo.pdf](http://www.gcfa.org/lcshmemo.pdf))

3. Congregations need to show concern for their own health and that of their clergy. Laity must strive to be aware of the demands on clergy time and establish reasonable expectations for work loads as well as leisure time. Laity are also urged to replace pedestal images of clergy with a more authentic understanding of pastors as human beings with gifts, talents, skills and strengths as well as faults, wounds and weaknesses that may require intervention and care.

4. Congregations are challenged to confront inappropriate behavior and hold clergy accountable for boundary violations. Laity need to be willing to hear any legitimate complaint of clergy misconduct and act on it in an appropriate and timely fashion according to the process outlined in the Central Pennsylvania Conference Policy. Ministering to the needs of persons harmed by clergy misconduct is essential for congregations affected by this issue.

5. Congregations need to support clergy continuing education, training, consultation and peer connections to help deal with the complexity of personal and professional needs in the parish.

Annual Conference, June 2005

**The Two-Adult Rule:** Two adults should be present during any church activity. Both should be over eighteen years of age. Youth helpers may be used to assist and meet requirements of staffing ratio needs but they are not to be in a supervisory capacity. If for some reason two adults are not available, a wandering monitor/greeter should check - in at unexpected intervals during the activity.

**Five-Years-Older Rule:** Adult leaders should be five years older than the people with whom they work and never younger than eighteen years old.

**Visitors or “New Volunteers”:** Visitors or “New Volunteers” are not permitted to help in the children/youth departments unless approved by the children’s director, youth pastor, or appropriate superintendent. At no time shall a visitor be left alone with children/youth.

**Parents:** Parents are permitted to observe their child in his or her class. At no time are parents allowed to be alone with any child except their own.

**Registration/Attendance:** All children shall be registered and or checked in with attendance to all church activities.

**Activities/Special Events:** All activities or outings outside the normal planned children’s/youth calendar must be approved by the Director of Children’s Ministries or youth pastor to ensure proper supervision, e.g., Sunday School teachers or a group leader initiating a special activity for their group. Parental permission is needed for all church sponsored programs or activities that require leaving church property. This will be documented with a Parent Permission Slip.

**Facilities:** Every effort will be made to design all children/youth department facilities to ensure maximum safety. There should be windows in all classroom doors. Consideration shall be given to the supervision needs of the age group. For example, Early childhood classrooms need to ensure that children are not able to leave the classroom area without supervision. All classroom toys and material should be age appropriate.

**Illness:** If a child has been ill within the last 24 hours or has one of the following symptoms, we ask that parents keep them home to ensure the health of the other children.

- a. Fever – A temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
- b. Any nasal discharge that is not clear.
- c. Diarrhea – frequent loose and/or watery bowel movements that are different from your child’s normal bowel pattern
- d. Vomiting- regurgitation other than “normal” spitting of feedings.
- e. Skin rash – A generalized rash should be evaluated and confirmed by a physician. Localized rashes such as prickly heat, eczema, and diaper rash are not contagious.
- f. Eye drainage—should be evaluated by a physician to determine that it is not contagious.
- g. We understand that in some cases, illnesses may present themselves suddenly. If it is suspected that your child is ill, parents will be contacted.

**Medications:** If a child needs medication while attending a church activity, the medication must be given to the designated Adult supervising that child by the parent with written instructions regarding the use of the medication. The medication must be in the original container with the label intact. If it is a prescription drug, the label with instructions must be on the label. The Adult will return the medication to the parent at the end of the church activity.

All youth must have a signed parental consent-medical information form on file.

**Emergency Procedures:** Emergency exits are posted in classrooms. A First aid kits are located in the crib room, welcome desk, and the multi-purpose room.

**Discussion of Any Suspicious Behavior:** Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult worker and a child or youth must be reported and confronted immediately. Please see reporting procedures.

**Transportation: The insurance committee recommends:**

- No drivers under the age of 25 be used to transport youth and that drivers be covered by adequate insurance.
- An adult who transports youth or children should be a safe driver and have proper credentials in the state of residence. Including a driving record without DUI's or excessive number of speeding tickets.
- Each passenger should have a seat belt and use of them should always be enforced.
- Where possible, use caravans of cars as you travel.
- If only one adult is taking a carload of children or youth, they should all meet at the church, travel together and return to the church to be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- There should be enough space for the passengers to be reasonably comfortable and for all the luggage and equipment.
- If possible, there should be a cell phone or some other way to communicate in an emergency.
- Take along a map and/or good directions.

**Physical safety:** All children and youth workers should be conscious of safety concerns when leading activities and games. Proper equipment and adequate supervision of activities should always be in place.

No drugs, alcoholic beverages, weapons or fireworks will be allowed.

**Medical Information:** Will be collected by the youth and children's department for those who are actively involved in the ministries of FUMC. Forms can include but is not limited to insurance information, allergies, emergency contacts, photo release, immunizations, etc. These forms will be taken with the supervising adults for off-site events and will be used for medical permission in the case of an emergency.

## ***Education and Training***

Education and awareness for both clergy and congregations are key elements in the prevention of sexual misconduct and in effective intervention when misconduct does occur.

The Central Pennsylvania Conference makes a commitment to the provision of training and resources on the subject of clergy sexual misconduct for clergy and designated laity.

This education shall include knowledge of ethical standards of behavior, information about appropriate professional boundaries and personal self care, a description of the complaint process and resources available to affected individuals and congregations.

Finally, clergy and laity will be schooled in the guidelines for mandated reporting of misconduct that also violates the state or federal crimes codes.

## ***Clergy***

1. Because clergy are charged with the responsibility for knowing and maintaining appropriate boundaries in ministerial relationships, they must access relevant training available to them in preparation for parish ministry as well as in continuing education. Many seminaries now provide this training to students, and this information shall be provided in the orientation and mentoring process within the Central Pennsylvania Conference. Attendance at annual training events on this subject will be required for all clergy under appointment.
2. Clergy are encouraged to seek appropriate supervision and consultation if they are engaged in counseling ministries. Clergy who provide ongoing/in depth counseling are particularly in need of supervision to be fully aware of the unique dynamics of such relationships and the great potential for idealization of the pastor in this process and thus are required to seek appropriate supervision and consultation.
3. Referral is a vital subject to be learned. Clergy need to be able to identify those presenting problems which lie outside of the scope of their expertise and clearly indicate the need for referral to a medical or mental health specialist. Relationships with such specialists should be cultivated by clergy both for consultation and referral purposes.
4. Clergy are encouraged to learn and practice self care. Balancing one's time and attention among the competing needs of congregants, community, family and self is a special challenge for clergy. With all the demands of parish ministry, it is easy to put one's own needs for family time, recreation, solitude or spiritual renewal last on the priority list. This tendency contributes to high stress, burnout and increased clergy vulnerability to boundary violations. Thus clergy are advised to self monitor for balance in their lives, seek peer support to ease the isolation of parish ministry and find professional help and guidance with their own experiences of brokenness and emotional distress if needed.

## ***Congregations***

1. Congregations are encouraged to stay informed about issues related to appropriate professional boundaries and clergy sexual misconduct. Attendance at training events should be encouraged for Staff Parish Relations Committee members and these persons should be aware of relevant literature and conference resources.

**Sexual harassment** is “any unwanted sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender.” (*The Book of Discipline* ¶161.1)

**Sexual abuse** may include sexual contact with the body by force, coercion, or emotional manipulation. Sexual abuse includes more violent forms of the violation of the body such as rape, but it is also the subtle manipulation of a vulnerable person for sexual gratification. Consent by the recipient is not a legal or moral defense for sexual abuse.

**Supervisory response** means the pastoral and administrative procedure administered by the Bishop and directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not a part of any judicial process.

***Procedures for Reporting Allegations of Sexual Abuse, Sexual Harassment, or Sexual Misconduct***

1. Anyone who wishes to present an allegation of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct, may contact the District Superintendent or the Bishop. Any supervisory response shall follow the provisions outlined in *The Book of Discipline* ¶362.1b.
2. When a formal written complaint is filed, the provisions of *The Book of Discipline* ¶362 shall determine the procedure.
3. When an allegation of misconduct is subject to mandatory reporting requirements by the state or federal government (as in the case of a minor or an adult incapable of self-reporting), it shall be reported to the Bishop and to the appropriate authorities: a local law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction where the crime is alleged to have been committed, i.e., a municipal or township police department or to the Pennsylvania State Police or to the district attorney of the county where the incident allegedly occurred.

***Role of Intervention Teams***

1. To assist the Bishop, by invitation, in assessment, intervention, or healing as provided for in *The Book of Discipline*, ¶362.1e
2. To provide support, compassion and direction for the Person filing the Complaint, the Respondent, and the affected Congregation(s); and
3. To offer information and education about this Central Pennsylvania Conference Policy and the issue of professional sexual misconduct to persons who contact the Intervention Team.

***The Make-up of the Intervention Team***

1. Team members will be named by the Bishop.
2. Training of the Intervention Team on the issues of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct shall fall within the responsibility of the office of the Bishop.

**Interpersonal Boundaries in Relationships:**

- Everyone is expected to be present with the group for all activities.
- Adults will provide leadership by modeling appropriate behaviors.
- No profane language will be tolerated by children, youth, or adults.
- No practical jokes (especially ones that are potentially harmful) will be tolerated by children, youth, or adults.
- Boys are not permitted to enter the room where girls are sleeping.
- Girls are not permitted to enter the room where boys are sleeping.
- At no time shall two youth or one adult and one youth separate themselves from the group.
- Inappropriate touching creating the perception that the personal space and privacy of the individual being violated will not be tolerated.

**Sleeping Arrangements:** Adults will not sleep in the same bed as youth. In a hotel-type setting, it is recommended that if possible, an adult room is located between two youth rooms. This is also recommended for dormitory settings.

Adults should arrange among themselves to check on the children or youth on a random schedule during the night.

Effort shall be made to minimize the possibility of danger from within the group as well as from strangers, if possible choose a hotel where rooms open to the interior of the building rather than to the outside.

**Ratio of Adult Caregivers to Children and Youth**

If the ratio ever exceeds the following for any classroom or activity, please notify the Director of Children’s Ministries, Youth Pastor, or your area superintendent immediately:

Birth-12 months	2 adults for every 1 to 8
12-24 months	2 adults for every 1 to 8
Ages 3-5	2 adults for every 1 to 12
Grade School	2 adults for every 1 to 16
Youth	2 adults for every 1 to 20

**Previously Convicted:**

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.

Effective reporting procedures enhance the effort to maintain the safety and well being of children/youth. Reports must be made for suspicions of abuse, accidents, and unhealthy symptoms.

**Abuse:** Any suspicion or report of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect shall be immediately reported to the Director of Children’s Ministries or Youth Pastor. If the Director of Children’s Ministries or Youth Pastor is unavailable, it should be reported immediately to a Staff Pastor. The Response Team will then be called together to respond appropriately. The Response team will include: Senior Pastor, Director of Children’s Ministries, Youth Pastor, Staff Parish Relations Chair, Juniper Tree Counseling Center Counselor, and anyone else deemed necessary by the team. The District Superintendent will be notified and invited to consult with the Response team. All volunteers are state appointed mandated reporters and should be aware of their rights and responsibility to report all potential abuse not only to the FUMC staff but also to the Child Line at 1-800-932-0313.

1. The safety of the victim must be the church’s primary concern. The child must be immediately removed from an abusive situation and their needs evaluated and met.
2. Upon receiving a report of suspected abuse, the Director of Children’s Ministries, Youth Pastor, or the individual who has received the report, shall in consultation with the Pastor, file the ***Suspicion of Child Abuse Report Form*** as required by Pennsylvania state law within the 24 hour time limit.
3. A formal written report should be completed to document for liability reasons. This report can be completed by the reporting individual or their staff contact. This report should include: information regarding all who were involved or witness to the event, the time, place, and details regarding what occurred.
4. The Response Team will be called into immediate action.

**Accidents:** Following medical attention and parental notification, an accident report should be completed and filed with the Director of Children’s Ministries or Youth Pastor within 24 hours. This will be followed by a review of the safety conditions to prevent the accident from reoccurring.

**Illness:** All workers should report any unhealthy symptoms (such as vomiting, open sores, bleeding). Medical attention and parental notification shall be made immediately. All reports should be brought to the immediate attention of the Director of Children’s Ministries or Youth Pastor. The report should be noted in writing. Measures to insure that other children are not contaminated will be taken.

## Biblical and Theological Foundation

We read in the book of Genesis that all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God. God created us as embodied beings and there is no separation between body and spirit. In Deuteronomy we read that God calls us to honor the integrity of our neighbors, and their authority over their own personhood. The gospels contain stories of Jesus ministering to both men and women, teaching and healing all who came to him, treating them with dignity and respect. Jesus embodied the image of God as agape (unconditional love) when he spoke of a new commandment stated in 1 John 4:7-8. “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

Wrapped within this love ethic is the command to do no harm to another person, which is the foundation of John Wesley’s Doctrine and Discipline in the Christian Life as found in *The Book of Discipline* ¶101. Agape is the antithesis of power when power is used to dominate, coerce or manipulate another for one’s selfish desires. Sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual abuse are evidence that the love ethic is replaced by a power ethic showing our inability to live in the light of God’s love.

The Social Principles specifically state, “We call upon women and men alike to share power and control, to learn to give freely and to receive freely, to be complete and to respect the wholeness of others” (*The Book of Discipline* ¶161F). “We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only the sexual expression which enhances that same humanity” (*The Book of Discipline* ¶161G).

Persons serving within a local church in a pastoral role often deal with individuals who are emotionally fragile or personally vulnerable. Thus they are always responsible for the emotional, spiritual and physical protection of those persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Persons serving within a local church in a pastoral role are responsible for knowing appropriate professional boundaries and ministering to persons without using those relationships to meet their own needs.

## Definitions

**Complaint:** A written and signed statement claiming misconduct.

**Intervention Team:** Persons appointed by the Bishop to facilitate the process of healing following a written complaint of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct.

**Person filing the complaint:** The person filing a written allegation of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct.

**Respondent:** The person against whom a written allegation of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct is filed.

**Sexual misconduct** may include sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person serving in a pastoral role takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person to whom the inappropriate, professional behavior(s) is directed by causing or allowing that person to engage in sexual behavior with the person serving in a pastoral role within the professional relationships. Sexual contact between a person in a ministerial role of leadership and a recipient, counselee, employee, student, staff member, co-worker, or volunteer, is unethical and unprofessional behavior and is a betrayal of a sacred trust and an abuse of power..



During the above process every effort will be made to protect confidentiality. In certain circumstances, however, the investigation may disclose the identity of the individual making the complaint, as well as other individuals involved.

Senior Pastor:	Dennis Keller
Chairman, Staff Parish Relations Committee:	Dave Florey
Chairman, Administrative Board:	Barry Eaton
District Superintendent:	Barry Robison

## **POLICY STATEMENT & PROTOCOL ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE**

**((This revision is intended to replace “POLICY STATEMENT & PROTOCOL ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE (Adopted 1995),” “POLICY STATEMENT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ABUSE (Approved 1996),” “PROFESSIONAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT (Approved 1998),” and “ADDENDUM TO POLICY STATEMENT ON CLERGY/DIACONAL MINISTER PROFESSIONAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT.”**

### **SEXUAL ETHICS POLICY OF THE CENTRAL PA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

#### ***Introduction***

The Central Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church affirms the Resolutions adopted, revised and readopted by the General Conference regarding “Sexual Abuse Within Ministerial Relationships” and “Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the United Methodist Church and Society.”

Sexual abuse, harassment or misconduct by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing.

Recognizing that sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct are chargeable offenses (*The Book of Discipline* ¶2702), this policy statement addresses the process to be followed when a written complaint is filed.

This policy applies to all those persons under the care and appointment or assignment of the Resident Bishop of the Central Pennsylvania Conference: all who are ordained, consecrated, commissioned, licensed, or assigned.

Part of the rationale for this policy is found within the Social Principles of *The Book of Discipline*, particularly ¶161, The Nurturing Community: F - Women and Men; G - Human Sexuality; and I - Sexual Harassment.

## **RESPONDING PROCEDURES**

Upon the receipt of a suspicion of abuse report, the Response team will be brought into action.

- The safety of the victim must be the church’s primary concern. The child must be immediately removed from an abusive situation and their needs evaluated and met.
- The Response Team will be prepared to fully cooperate with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.
- All information surrounding the suspicions of abuse and the circumstances leading to the report will be kept confidential. Unless it is deemed appropriate by the Response team to share it as part of a response to abuse plan.
- Keep a written record of all steps taken by the church in response to the allegations.
- Appropriate efforts will be made to continue to minister to the needs of those involved in the allegations, both victims of abuse and the alleged abuser. This includes assisting all parties and their families in finding appropriate counseling and support throughout the investigation of the alleged abuse.
- Treat the alleged abuser with dignity, but immediately remove him/her from further involvement with children.
- One person will be designated as a media spokesperson.
- At the appropriate time, prepare a brief and honest statement that can be made to the congregation without giving unnecessary details, placing blame, interfering with the victim’s privacy, or violating any confidentiality concerns.

## **TRAINING**

All workers with children will be encouraged to attend training sessions regarding child abuse, communicable diseases, child/infant CPR, and emergency preparedness. Workers need to have ongoing awareness of the following:

CPR and health related procedures

The definition of child abuse

Sexual and physical abuse symptoms

What constitutes inappropriate conduct

Church policies that govern working with children

The civil and criminal consequences of misconduct

State laws regarding mandated reporting

Rationale behind screening procedures

## CYBER SAFETY: ELECTRONIC GUIDELINES

The internet, apps, social media and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Excellent ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry, there are inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. **Assume anything and everything in cyberspace is public information.** Here are some recommendations.

- **Obtain advance written parent/legal guardian permission.** In addition to general permission to participate in a conference ministry or event, obtain written advance parent/legal guardian permission for children and youths, and personal permission from vulnerable adults or their guardian if applicable, for:
  1. Taking and using photos or videos of participants, for example, posting on sites, sending by email or by cell phone, reproducing photos in brochures, posters or newspapers.
  2. Communicating or transmitting data electronically with children, youths or vulnerable adults sharing any full name or contact information.
- **Never post identifiable information.** For example:
  1. Do not use “broadcast” emails. 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 prayer requests. When placing a child, youth, or vulnerable adult on a prayer list, use only first names and only if you think a name is necessary.
- **Use caution when sharing photos.**
  1. Consider using stock or purchased photos.
  2. Obtain all necessary legal permission to use photos or other content (poems, songs, etc.).
  3. If sharing photos, refrain from using names, and never use last names or other personally identifiable information.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

We are committed to the providing a positive and safe environment for worship and education, as well as maintaining high standards of conduct when interacting with fellow members, visitors, and the public. All Pastoral staff, lay staff, volunteers, and members play an important role in achieving our commitments by conducting themselves appropriately, and when appropriate, by bringing any concerns of wrongdoing to the attention of the Pastoral Staff or Staff Parish Committee.

First United Methodist Church (FUM) endorses the Policy Statement & Protocol On Sexual Harassment And Abuse adopted (1995) by the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church. A copy of the Policy Statement is attached to this document.

(FUM) will not permit any form of retaliation against an individual who has brought any concerns of wrongdoing to the attention of the Administrative Board, Staff Parish Committee or Pastoral Staff.

Individuals who have concerns are invited to first bring them to the attention of a member of the Pastoral Staff in written form, where most issues may be resolved before serious problems develop.

Should a situation persist the individual may follow the steps listed below:

1. Request a meeting with the Senior Pastor, providing the opportunity for an investigation to be conducted, considering all the facts surrounding the matter. The Senior Pastor shall hold a meeting with the individual within 14 days of the receipt of the request. The Senior Pastor shall then conduct an investigation and review and provide a written response to the individual within 14 days of the meeting.
2. If the individual is not satisfied with the response from Senior Pastor, or if the situation involves the Senior Pastor, the individual may prepare a written summary of the concerns, and request that the Staff Parish Committee review the matter. The Staff Parish Committee shall conduct an investigation and review and provide a written response to the individual within 30 days of receipt of the written correspondence.
3. If the matter is not resolved by the Staff Parish Committee, the individual may make a written request for the involvement of the Administrative Board and/or the District Superintendent to render a final decision on the matter.

**Restroom procedure:** We encourage parents to take their children to the bathroom prior to class and worship. If at all possible, never be alone with a child in the bathroom. Never go into a bathroom stall with a child and shut the door. Workers may have to assist small children with their clothing and hand washing. If feasible, a volunteer should take two or more children to the bathroom. If, for some reason this is not possible and just one child must go and needs assistance, the teacher must prop the bathroom door open. There should be an adult within earshot of the bathrooms to ensure that children do not linger in the bathrooms and make it back to class safely.

**Dismissing Children:** All children in fifth grade and below should be dismissed only with an approved adult or guardian. The child may have escorted themselves to class, however, once in our care the child is our responsibility until safely entrusted back into the care of their parent or guardian. Children from the United Methodist home should be escorted to the designated pick-up spot by their teacher or assigned child worker. Older siblings are discouraged from picking up children. Please have parents identify who will pick up the child, especially if it is different from the parent leaving the child with you. Release children only to the individual that the parent has designated as the pick-up adult.

Supervision and Safety guidelines apply to *all* children's department activities.

4. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure they uphold your mission.
  5. Check to make sure nametags are not distinguishable.
  6. Use low-resolution photos whenever possible and slightly blur/pixelate photos.
  7. Block "save photo as" options on websites.
  8. Limit access to photos by employing the use of a password.
- **Social media sites (Facebook, Blogs etc.)** Do not use your personal social media presence for ministry. Use a group social media site that is monitored by senior leadership, for example a Facebook site for the specific group.
    1. Include a code of conduct/terms and conditions for the site that expressly states expectations for posts and a clear expression of how violations, offensive and objectionable material will be addressed.
    2. Monitor the site and remove inappropriate comments, photos, links, etc.
    3. Restrict who can be a friend.
    4. Do not post anything that you would not want printed in the newspaper, church newsletter or bulletin.
    5. Be familiar with, and comply with, social media provider policies, restrictions and terms and conditions. For example, according to Facebook's own terms, children under 13 years of age may not sign up for a Facebook account.
    6. Encourage children, youths, and vulnerable adults to follow these same guidelines as appropriate.
  - **Do not collect online, or allow third parties to collect online, 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 specific permissions and privacy policies if a website or online service collects, or allows third parties to collect, personal information if the service is directed to children under the age of 13. Restrictions also apply if the site is directed to a general audience and the organization has actual knowledge that it collects personal information from children under 13 years of age.

## CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

When considering the need for discipline, it is important to view the situation, as an opportunity to teach and to mold the child as God would desire us. All interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider a child's dignity and self-esteem. Moments in which we, as teachers and volunteers with children, feel a need for greater discipline, can provide us chances for growth and personal insight. Many discipline issues stem from restlessness and may be redirected without taking disciplinary action. When considering disciplinary action there are several guidelines to remember. For further assistance regarding discipline issues review the *Suggestions for Classroom Management* sheet available from the director/youth pastor.

- Physical punishments (i.e. spanking, slapping, etc.) or verbal humiliation or threats **will never** be tolerated.
- Do not withhold snacks for behavior control.
- Boundary setting and options are the domain of the teachers.
- Do not leave the child alone outside the classroom or alone in another room. Keep in mind the Two-Adult Rule.
- It is acceptable for a child to choose not to participate.
- Parents will be kept informed of any destructive behavior or behavior which is highly irregular for the child. It is not acceptable for a child to disrupt the entire class, or to hurt or endanger another child.
- Parent involvement is sought as deemed necessary.
- If the child's behavior problems persist, a behavior plan will be designed and implemented during the activity. The parents and the teacher or activity leader will create this plan in conjunction with the Director of Children's Ministries or Youth Pastor.
- The Director of Children's Ministries or Youth Pastor will provide support to the volunteer children/youths department staff as they attempt to deal with the children in the program. Report concerns to the Director/Pastor as they arise.

**Restroom procedure:** We encourage parents to take their children to the bathroom prior to class and worship. If at all possible, never be alone with a child in the bathroom. Never go into a bathroom stall with a child and shut the door. Workers may have to assist small children with their clothing and hand washing. If feasible, a volunteer should take two or more children to the bathroom. If, for some reason this is not possible and just one child must go and needs assistance, the volunteer must prop the bathroom door open. There should be an adult within earshot of the bathrooms to ensure that children do not linger in the bathrooms and make it back to class safely.

Supervision and Safety guidelines apply to *all* children's department activities. Nursery Guidelines also apply to Wee Worship and Kids Worship.

### Sunday School Guidelines Pre-school and Grade School

**Arrival:** All Sunday School teachers need to arrive in their class 15 minutes before the start of the Sunday school. Please keep in mind that parking at this time is sometimes at a premium and plan accordingly. Frequently older grade school children come to class unescorted. An assigned adult should be present to supervise these children until the beginning of class or the activity. Please arrive early to greet children. Children should not be in an area of the church unsupervised. Parents of younger children become anxious when there is no one there to welcome their child.

**Attendance:** Please remember to take attendance this is an important record of the child's participation.

**Sign-in Sheets:** Remind parents to complete the Student Information form. This will enable teachers know parents' plans for pick-up, their location during Sunday school, and if the child has any special needs. This information will also help you to keep in touch with a child if they are absent from Sunday school.

**Wee Worship and Kids Worship**  
**Wee Worship (Ages three and four)**  
**Kids Worship (Ages five and up)**

**Arrival:** Volunteers assigned to serve in Wee Worship and Kids Worship should sign in with the greeter as soon as they arrive at church. Parents may register their children, at the greeter desk at any time during the morning. Following the end of the children's message, parents may escort their children to the program area through the greeter desk. Children are to remain in class with Adult supervision until their parent at the completion of the service picks them up. Kids Worship participants will enter and be dismissed from the program through the greeter. We ask all childcare leaders and helpers to check in with the greeter when they arrive. This is how the greeter will know if all areas are fully staffed. Please arrive and check in by 10:25 AM for the crib and toddler rooms. Please check in by 10:45 for Wee Worship and Kids Worship.

As Kids Worship is held upstairs it is essential we meet the two-adult rule. Just a reminder about how we should be escorting and dismissing children to Kids Worship. A Kids Worship leader or helper should be waiting at the greeter desk to welcome the children and escort them upstairs. At that time, the adult meeting the children needs to let the greeter know if there are indeed two adults present for Kids Worship. If Kids Worship needs an additional adult helper to meet safe sanctuary requirements then the greeter has the option of asking a worship childcare helper from another area if available or asking a parent with their clearances to substitute as the second adult. If there is not an adult willing to serve as the second adult then there are two ways the greeter may choose to proceed.

1. The Kids Worship program may be moved downstairs to room 123 with the greeter serving as the second adult. Or
2. The greeter may cancel Kids Worship and instruct parents that children will need to return to the sanctuary with them for the rest of the service.

Please remember that an adult serving in Kids Worship should escort the children downstairs to the greeter area at the conclusion of the program. All children need to be dismissed back to their parents through the greeter desk. To know when worship will be ending the Kids Worship leader may get a pager from the greeter and ask the greeter to page them when the final hymn has begun in the service.

**Note:** Parents are permitted to be in class or in any program with their child at any time. However, at no time are parents allowed to be alone with any child except their own unless they have their clearances on file with the church.

For many families the child caregiver is the first person they meet and last person they encounter leaving the church. When a family leaves First Church with a positive impression from the child caregiver they will know our commitment to sharing Christ's love with children.

**CHILDCARE GUIDELINES**

**Nursery Guidelines**  
**For Worship and Sunday School (Nursery, Birth – Age Two)**

**Our Mission:** Children develop their first impressions of church and God while in the nursery. Babies and toddlers learn to trust other caring adults will take care of their needs at church. Happy times playing with new friends at church builds a desire to do and learn more. This soon expands to associating God and Jesus with the good feelings they have being at church. This is a vital children's mission within our own church family. The worship childcare team's service providing the most safe and loving environment for babies and toddlers gives their parents peace of mind so they can fully hear the word of Christ while in worship.

**Arrival:** Nursery workers need to arrive in the nursery 15 minutes before the start of the service. However, we ask that those providing care for the 10:45 service to arrive at 10:25 AM to allow the Sunday school staff to pick up their own children in a timely manner. Please keep in mind that parking at this time is sometimes at a premium and plan accordingly.

**The Greeter:** All children sign in and sign out, as they arrive and leave the nursery area, at the greeter station. The greeter monitors the pager system and is the back up person for anything the childcare providers may need while on duty. This allows childcare providers the ability to devote their attention to the children. The greeter has the ability to check on children for parents, deliver forgotten diaper bags, and make sure each room is staffed properly. Once a parent has said goodbye to their child, we encourage only the greeter entering the room during the hour. It can be upsetting for young children, adjusting being in the nursery, when parents are in and out of the room. Gently remind parents that although this might not be upsetting to their child, it may be for other children in the room. The greeter may want to consider using the back door between the two-year-old room and the toddler room to enter the toddler room. Children look for their parents to return at the door from which they left the room.

Older siblings are discouraged from picking up children in the nursery. Please have parents identify who will pick up the child, especially if it is different from the parent leaving the child with you. Release children only to the individual that the parent has designated as the pick-up Adult. Please remind parents that only one adult is permitted to escort a child in and out of the nursery area. Also, folks should only be coming past the gate if they are reporting for volunteer service, or leaving or picking up a child.

**Pagers:** Pagers are available for parents at the greeter station. Please encourage parents to get a pager if they are at all concerned about how their child will respond to being in the nursery. Be sure that parents give you a guideline for how long they feel is appropriate for their child to fuss. Please check that pagers are turned off when they are returned.

**Clean and Healthy:** The mouthing behavior of preschoolers naturally exposes them to a higher rate of infection than other children. In order to minimize the spread of any infectious disease within the preschool area and to ensure the health and safety of all children and their caregivers, the following procedures must be followed.

- Always wear disposable gloves and following the diaper changing procedure as posted.
- Strict hand washing is of the utmost importance in the prevention of the spread of infection. Wash hands after each diaper change, after accompanying child to the bathroom, after nose wiping, and before food preparation. Hand sanitizer is also available.
- Wash child's hands after toileting, after use of tissues, and before eating.
- When child is seen to put an object into his/her mouth, clean object with disinfecting solution.
- Wipe all spills, changing tables, and clean all surfaces and toys as needed. Lysol wipes are available within the room for this purpose.
- Have a designated snack time at the table. Wash or wipe hands before and after. Please do not let children walk around the room with food and cups. Small vacuum is in the cupboard for quick clean ups.

**Diaper reminder:** Is it time to sniff? All children should be routinely checked approximately every 15 minutes. Please follow the diapering procedure posted in each class when changing a child's diaper. There are disposable gloves and extra diapering supplies available. All children should be checked every service. You may want to routinely double check approximately 15 minutes before the end of the service. Please note diaper checks so they can be reported to parents.

**Youth Helpers:** Youth helpers are assigned to serve as helpers to all nursery rooms during the 10:45 service and in the toddler room at the 8:15 service. Encourage your helpers to play, read stories, color, or draw with the children. A youth helper does not qualify as the second adult to meet the two adult rule requirement.

**Communication:** Be sure to ask parents their wishes regarding:

- Special feeding instructions
- Comforting or care concerns
- How long they will allow their child to cry before being notified

Please remember to be sensitive to the feelings of parents. It is very hard to leave a child with someone you do not know well. Reassure moms and dads that you will locate them if their child has not stopped crying within the time frame they set. Please be sure to keep parents informed about their child's experience while in the nursery. Keep comments brief and informative.

**Supplies:** Please feel free to use any items stored in the cabinets/drawers labeled Sunday School or worship supplies. If you notice that supplies are low please ask the greeter to pass along a note to the Children's Director.

- There are snacks available in the supply cupboard. Additional snacks are available in the labeled cupboard in room 122.
- Additional supplies for arts and crafts are located in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, room 212.
- First Aide supplies are located in the crib room, welcome desk, and multi-purpose room.
- Additional cleaning supplies are on the bathroom shelf.

**Labels:** Encourage the three-part label system. Have the parent complete the label. One sticker is the child's nametag. The other sticker is for their diaper bag. The third is for the parent to keep. Please make sure that all items the children bring with them are labeled (i.e. cups, diaper-bags etc.). If these are not labeled please use the white labels provided in the supply box. If necessary, make nametags using these labels and place them on the child's back. Use special reminder labels for potty training and food allergies if needed.

**Stewardship:** First Church has many programs, which use the nursery classroom spaces. Please make every effort to clean up and leave the space better than you found it. There are many bins and containers for toys. Please look for the labels on containers. Little Friends Preschool is a ministry of First Church. Please have the children respect any artwork or projects that may be on display or in reach.