

Attached to this letter are recommendations for child protection guidelines. Please review this package. Each local church must establish guidelines and inform all employees and volunteers who work with children and/or youth of the guidelines and how to implement them. Once a church has adopted guidelines it must provide comprehensive training annually. Not providing the training could be considered a breach of duty and could lead to civil liability.

As you review, please keep in mind the following concerns:

1. The main objective is to provide a documented safe and secure environment for children who are entrusted to your church.
2. The second very important objective is to reduce legal risk and liability exposure.

Keep in mind also that incidents of abuse can occur in any church. Churches that have received advice from legal, social work, and/or insurance sources to establish screening procedures, and have not done so, would have little, if any defense, in civil court proceedings. The decision not to implement, in the face of competent advice to the contrary, would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court.

In addition to this document, we recommend that you review and use the information provided in Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church: A Complete and Practical Guidebook for Prevention and Risk Reduction by Richard R. Hammar, Steven W. Klipowicz and James F. Cobble, Jr. The book is produced by Church Law and Tax Report and is available at:

Christian Ministry Resources
PO Box 1098
Matthews, NC 28106
Phone (704) 841-8039
Fax (704) 841-8039

**Child Protection Guidelines
adopted by the Church Council of**

United Methodist Church

_____(Date)

1. All adults and youth, employed and volunteer, who work with minors must be screened prior to beginning work. All persons who work with minors must undergo a Screening Process. The forms to be used in the Screening Process are labeled "Appendix A".
2. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children will not be employed and shall not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
3. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need and will receive the love and acceptance of our church family.
4. Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the "two-person rule" or the "open door policy" at ALL times. The "two-person rule" requires that employees and volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth without a partner. The "open door policy" requires the door be open at all times. The "TWO-PERSON RULE" will be MANDATORY for all employees and volunteers with our NURSERY and KINDERGARTEN AGE CHILDREN.
5. All employees and volunteers working with children and youth are required to be members or active constituents of the _____ United Methodist Church for a minimum of twelve (12) months before they begin their work.
6. Our guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse or any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate are labeled "Appendix B". These guidelines and procedures are intended to be in accord with IC 31-6-11-3 and IC 31-6-11-4. Where they might differ, the IC statutes shall take precedence.
7. Our guidelines and procedures for responding to reported incidents of abuse are labeled "Appendix C".

IMPLEMENTATION:

We recommend that these guidelines and procedures be implemented within thirty (30) days of their adoption, with the completion of the initial screening process within ninety (90) days of adoption.

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

Addendum to be incorporated into and adopted concurrently with the
_____ United Methodist Church Child Protection Guidelines:

Addendum "A" Grandparenting

I. Explanation

"Grandparenting" is a term which refers to a process of exemption of one engaged in a certain business or activity before the passage of an act regulating that business or activity, to receive license or prerogative without meeting all the criteria that new entrants into the field would have to fulfill. Grandparenting can be complete or partial, conditional or non-conditional, based upon a variety of performance specific variables.

II. Statement

It shall be the practice of _____ United Methodist Church that, upon passage and adoption of the recommended screening, reporting, and response guidelines by the _____ United Methodist Church Council, each member or friend of _____ United Methodist Church serving in any capacity working with minors upon date of passage, or who has, in the past, served either continuously or occasionally with minors, documented at least verbally by corroborated (one other church member or friend who witnessed such service) anecdotal record, shall be conditionally exempted from screening procedures. The one applicable condition is to be mandatory attendance at yearly training in State and _____ United Methodist Church guidelines regarding recognition and reporting of child abuse.

(Item II. is to be posted in an appropriate place.)

(Name of worker)

Checklist for Employees and Volunteers

____ Been an active member of our church for at least twelve (12) months.

____ Completed the screening form.

____ Stressed importance of having a witness present when dealing with children one-on-one (alternative: use open areas, leave door open).

____ Given copy of instructions for handling child abuse cases.

____ Checked references (keep written documentation).

(Checked by)

(Date)

Note: This form to be posted on the left side of each worker's file. No worker is to be assigned until completion of the checklist.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CHARGED OR CONVICTED OF OR PLEADED GUILTY TO A CRIME/SEXUAL ABUSE? _____ YES _____ NO
(if yes, please explain--attach separate page, if necessary)

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO SIGN A RELEASE WHICH WOULD PERMIT A POLICE BACKGROUND CHECK? _____ YES _____ NO (if yes, sign release)

IS THERE ANY FACT OR CIRCUMSTANCE INVOLVING YOUR BACKGROUND THAT WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION YOUR BEING ENTRUSTED WITH THE SUPERVISION, GUIDANCE AND CARE OF MINORS? _____ YES _____ NO
(if yes, please explain--attach separate pages, if necessary)

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR WORK WITH MINORS

NAME OF THE CHURCH WHERE YOU ARE A MEMBER OR ATTEND REGULARLY: _____

LIST THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF ANY OTHER CHURCH(ES) YOU WERE A MEMBER OF OR ATTENDED REGULARLY DURING THE PAST FIVE (5) YEARS: _____

LIST ALL PREVIOUS CHURCH WORK INVOLVING MINORS. LIST EACH CHURCH'S NAME AND ADDRESS, THE TYPE OF WORK YOU DID, AND DATES: (attach separate pages, if necessary)

LIST ALL PREVIOUS NON-CHURCH WORK YOU DID INVOLVING MINORS. LIST EACH ORGANIZATION BY NAME AND ADDRESS, THE TYPE OF WORK YOU DID, AND DATES: (attach separate pages, if necessary)

LIST YOUR GIFTS, CALLINGS, TRAINING, EDUCATION, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT HAVE PREPARED YOU FOR WORK WITH MINORS:

REFERENCES

THREE (3) PERSONAL REFERENCES (NOT EMPLOYERS, FORMER EMPLOYERS OR RELATIVES). AT LEAST TWO (2) REFERENCES MUST BE FROM OUTSIDE OUR CHURCH. THE FOURTH REFERENCE MUST BE AN EMPLOYER OR FORMER EMPLOYER, IF APPLICABLE.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT AND RELEASE

The information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with minors.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures of _____ United Methodist Church.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

WITNESS: _____

PARENT'S STATEMENT IF APPLICANT IS A MINOR

(A minor is a person under eighteen (18) years of age.)

If the applicant is a minor, a parent or guardian is required to also sign and affirm that the minor has not engaged in illegal activities.

To my knowledge, _____ (full name) has not engaged in any illegal activity or child abuse of any kind and I know of no reason why he or she should not work with minors at _____ United Methodist Church.

PARENT OR GUARDIAN: _____

DATE: _____

WITNESS: _____

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

I understand that this application form and all parts of this file are the sole property of the _____ United Methodist Church and are not available for the applicant to review.

SIGNATURE: _____

(applicant, or parent or guardian, if applicant is a minor)

DATE: _____

WITNESS: _____

FROM: _____
TO: Police Department

REQUEST FOR LIMITED CRIMINAL HISTORY

- ◆ Inspection (visual examination of record)
- ◆ Release (copy of record furnished)

Name of subject: _____

Address: _____ Age: _____

Date of birth: _____ Height: _____

Weight: _____ Sex: _____ Hair: _____ Eyes: _____ Race: _____

PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE INFORMATION IS REQUESTED:

- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____

I, _____, certify that the foregoing request for a limited criminal history of _____ will be used solely for the purpose specified in this request and for no other purpose.

Date

Name

Title

POLICE BACKGROUND CHECK? ____ YES ____ NO (if yes, sign release)

IS THERE ANY FACT OR CIRCUMSTANCE INVOLVING YOUR BACKGROUND THAT WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION YOUR BEING ENTRUSTED WITH THE SUPERVISION, GUIDANCE AND CARE OF MINORS? ____ YES ____ NO
(if yes, please explain--attach separate pages, if necessary)

LIST ALL PREVIOUS NON-CHURCH WORK YOU DID INVOLVING MINORS. LIST EACH ORGANIZATION BY NAME AND ADDRESS, THE TYPE OF WORK YOU DID, AND DATES: (attach separate pages, if necessary)

LIST YOUR GIFTS, CALLINGS, TRAINING, EDUCATION, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT HAVE PREPARED YOU FOR WORK WITH MINORS:

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT AND RELEASE

The information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with minors.

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I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____
DATE: _____
WITNESS: _____

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To my knowledge, _____ (full name) has not engaged in any illegal activity or child abuse of any kind and I know of no reason why he or she should not work with minors at _____ United Methodist Church.

PARENT OR GUARDIAN: _____
DATE: _____
WITNESS: _____

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

I understand that this application form and all parts of this file are the sole property of the _____ United Methodist Church and are not available for the applicant to review.

SIGNATURE _____
(applicant, or parent or guardian, if applicant is a minor)
DATE: _____
WITNESS: _____

United Methodist Church Child Protection Guidelines

REPORTING PROCEDURES

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

1. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or violation of the child Protection Guidelines of _____ United Methodist Church, the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the pastor or, in the absence of the pastor, a person designated by the pastor and approved by the Church Council (Administrative Board or Council). In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, an employee or volunteer will also immediately make a report to the local child protection service or law enforcement agency (telephone number: _____).

* Physical signs of molestation may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal disease

* Behavioral signs of molestation may include:

- nightmares
- anxiety when approaching the church building or nursery or preschool area (beyond normal separation anxiety)
- nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior
- withdrawal from church activities and friends

- * Verbal signs of molestation may include statements such as:
 - “I don’t like _____.”
 - “_____ does things to me when we’re alone.”
 - “I don’t like to be alone with _____.”
 - “_____ fooled around with me.”

- * Adapted from Child Abuse: Governing Law and Legislation by I. Sloan (1983)

- 2. Reports shall be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, and a brief synopsis of the report. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness.

- 3. All church employees and volunteers working with minor children will receive training at the beginning of each church administrative year regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.

Appendix C

United Methodist Church Child Protection Guidelines

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

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