

## **Safe Sanctuaries Policy First United Methodist Church**

We the congregation of First United Methodist Church recognize that there is no human being that falls outside the Psalmist's claim that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" by God; "knit together in [our] mother's womb"<sup>1</sup> by the Creator of the universe. Further, we cannot deny that humankind has been deemed "very good"<sup>2</sup> by this very same Creator. This inherent value which we possess, coupled with the Scriptures' admonition to avoid "anything that makes your brother or sister stumble,"<sup>3</sup> particularly the "little ones,"<sup>4</sup> calls us to also recognize the grievous harm present in all instances of abuse. Such incidents, whether sexual, physical, emotional or harassing in nature, are devastating to all who are involved. God calls us to make First United Methodist Church a safe place, doing all we can to protect children, teens and other vulnerable persons from the devastating effects of abuse. Thus, in covenant with one another, we adopt this policy for the prevention of abuse in our church.

### **Purpose**

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Risk Reduction/Safe Sanctuaries Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all who come under our care.

### **Statement of Covenant**

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of who come under our care. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of both staff persons and volunteers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs, ministries and events; we will provide broad education regarding our policies, as well as recognizing the signs of abuse; we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will respond immediately and compassionately to any reported or suspected abuse, again following the requirements of state law and the policies of The Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. The procedures for fulfilling this covenant can be found in the accompanying document called Ministry Covenant of FUMC Shreveport.

### **Conclusion**

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

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<sup>1</sup> From Psalm 139:13-15 NRSV

<sup>2</sup> From Genesis 1:31 NRSV

<sup>3</sup> From Romans 14:21 NRSV

<sup>4</sup> See Matt 18:6-9 or 19:13-15 or Mark 9:16-15 or Luke 18:15-17

PROLOGUE:

## Purpose and Implementation:

Sexual misconduct and abuse of any nature (physical, emotional, neglect, sexual, or ritual) is incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. Thus, it is the policy of the Louisiana Annual Conference, UMC to conduct our ministry in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of everyone - adults, youth and children - and to expect the same of every congregation and ministry serving within our purview.

By Annual Conference action in June of 2008, every local church/charge, and every United Methodist related ministry, within the bounds of the Louisiana Annual Conference shall prepare, officially adopt (by charge conference/governing board action) and implement a policy to reduce the risk of sexual misconduct or abuse by January 31, 2009. These policies will include procedures to protect adults, youth and children.

## Each policy shall:

- ◆ Include the minimum procedures outlined below.
- ◆ Reflect a critical engagement of risks unique to each ministry's setting.
- ◆ Be reviewed annually at a regularly scheduled board meeting or charge conference.

A copy of this policy will be on file in the Office of Connectional Ministries. Though this policy contains the minimum standards listed below, it should be understood that no policy can eliminate all possibility of harm or abuse. These minimum's certainly make no such guarantee, even though it represents our best effort at protecting those who have been entrusted to our care.

I. All persons who volunteer with children/teens through the ministries/activities of FUMCS shall fall into one of the following categories. All paid staff persons shall be at the Level 1 Category.

A. Level 1 personnel at FUMC Shreveport include paid staff.

- Persons at this level are required to:
  - Attend, at least annually, risk reduction policy training
  - Undergo a criminal background and reference check.
  - Undergo a criminal background check every 4 years.

B. Level 2 personnel –Every volunteer who regularly supervises, or works around, children or youth at First UMC Shreveport must be at least at level 2

Persons at this level are required to:

1. Be an active participant in the life of the congregation or ministry for at least six months prior to volunteering.
2. Attend, at least annually, risk reduction policy training
3. Undergo a non-criminal background check which will include:
  1. A personal interview with the applicant/volunteer
  2. A signed copy of the ministry's risk reduction policy
  3. Verifying the following may also be beneficial:
    - Employment history for the past five (5) years;
    - Volunteer work for the past five (5) years;
    - Church membership;
    - Former addresses for the past 10 years;

4. Complete a “Volunteer Application” form
  - The information included and verified on a volunteer application will be:
    - A. identification of work area/service to be performed;
    - B. experience and skills specifically related to the position;
    - C. personal references;
    - D. place of (former) employment, including references,
    - e. addresses & contact information etc.
    - f. a statement of disclosure of any criminal history or accusations of sexual, physical or emotional abuse, misconduct or harassment.
    - g. A statement agreeing to inform ministry of any arrest for any crime or any allegation of sexual misconduct or abuse of any nature that occurs after the completion of the above referenced statement.
    - h. a statement of consent to verify all information or obtain a criminal background check.

B. Level 3 personnel – are volunteers that are used only in emergency or occasional situations. (For Ex: drivers, snack providers, etc.) Level 3 personnel must be:

1. made aware of the risk reduction policy;
2. agree in writing to abide by the policy
3. to “work” only when level 1 or 2 personnel are present and supervising.
4. level 3 personnel must be known to, and recommended by, a level 1 or 2 person.

II. All Ministries/activities sponsored by First UMC Shreveport shall provide for adequate responsible adult supervision of teens and children.

- A. An adult must be at least 18 years of age, keeping in mind that some circumstances may be subject to a different legal definition.
- B. All classes, studies, workshops, fellowship/recreation opportunities, one on one counseling sessions, private meetings or mentoring, etc. with youth or children shall be conducted in a public space or in a space easily observable by others at all times. Thus:
  1. a minimum of two unrelated adults must be present as long as a child or teen is in a church facility or on a church sponsored activity.
  2. The presence of both male and female adult leadership (unrelated) for coed overnight activities is required.
  3. For non-overnight, coed gatherings, having both male and female adults present is recommended.

C. Transportation guidelines.

1. Medical information/release forms & Permission slips are required for any activity where children and youth are away from FUMCS’s main facilities. Additionally, Medical information/release forms & Permission slips are also required for children while on campus.
2. Guidelines for driving a church owned vehicle include the following:
  - a. Possession of a current, valid chauffeur’ driver’s license (Class D)
  - b. Drivers must be 25 years of age or older
  - c. Proof of insurance at the State minimum limits.
  - d. Not be otherwise disqualified from driving (i.e., under medication, extremely tired, under the influence of mind altering substances etc.)
  - e. Completion of Van Use Form and Log and keeping one copy in van and turning one copy in to the receptionist at the front desk.

- f. Completion of a list of passengers riding the van should be attached to the Van Use Form with a copy also given to the appropriate staff leader.
      - g. A Van Committee, reporting to the Board of Trustees, will help maintain church vans and vehicles and coordinate and enforce policies.
3. Every child/teen being transported on a FUMCS sponsored activity must be securely fastened in a seatbelt, whether a church or personal vehicle is being used. At no time shall the number of passengers exceed the number of useable seatbelts.
4. Safe driving is expected. Including:
  - a. Obeying traffic laws.
  - b. No horseplay in vehicles
  - c. A mechanically sound and inspected vehicle.
5. Two adults must ride in the vehicle when transporting children and youth. If this is not possible, another adult in the caravan has to be able to be within eye-sight of this vehicle and a 3<sup>rd</sup> party must observe and document accurate departure and arrival times.
6. Guidelines for driving privately owned vehicles with non-family passengers:
  - a. Driver must be 25 years of age or older
  - b. Driver must have a valid chauffeur's license
  - c. Driver must have adequate insurance coverage
  - d. Driver is personally responsible for any traffic violations and should notify the church business office of any accidents
  - e. Drivers represent FUMCS and are to act in an appropriate manner
  - f. A list of passengers riding the vehicle should be given to the appropriate staff leader
- D. A check in/check-out procedure for all kindergarten aged children and younger is required. This procedure shall include a system ensuring that a child will only be released to an authorized parent or designee.
  - a. All children in grades 1-4 must be picked up by a parent or designee following Sunday School or Children's Chapel.
  - b. Youth in grades 5 and above may travel to classrooms or other locations throughout the facility unaccompanied by an adult unless otherwise requested by a parent.
- E. Permission forms will be obtained from parents/legal guardians for all overnight events involving children or youth, at which the parent/guardian is not present.
  1. Forms will contain parental consent for their child's attendance, but also medical information/release, emergency contact information and a liability release.
- F. Parents will be educated on FUMC's Safe Sanctuaries Policy and on recognizing, reporting, and preventing child abuse yearly.
- G. A ratio of no less than 1 adult to every 10 children/youth will be maintained at all FUMCS activities involving teens. In the infant and toddler rooms the ratio of adults to children is not to exceed 1:4. The ratio of adults to children up to age 12 will not exceed 1:8. However, the 2 unrelated adult rules always apply.
  - a. Emergency situations would be considered if the physical structure of the facilities lends itself to a roaming adult.
  - b. disabilities should also be taken into consideration
- H. It is the policy of FUMCS that church staff members and/or trained volunteer observers

will make unannounced visits to classes, nurseries, events and gatherings held both on and off campus, for the purpose of monitoring compliance with our policies. Designated staff will be responsible for organizing, implementing and keeping a record of such visits.

- I. In addition to the above guidelines, we require at least a five-year age difference between the primary on-site supervisor and the age of those being supervised at any activity involving children or teens. The five-year difference in ages shall apply between the on-site adult in charge and the age of the oldest person supervised. Persons being closer in age to those supervised may be acceptable in assisting the primary on-site supervisor(s). The ratio of those “closer in age than 5 years” to those “meeting the 5 year rule” shall never exceed 3 to 1. Those not meeting the 5 year rule must still comply with all level 1 or 2 requirements.

### III. Ministries involving adults –

- A. Sexual exploitation within the ministerial relationship as defined below is prohibited:
  1. Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker or volunteer. Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role and exploitation of those who are vulnerable. Similarly, sexual and gender harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual or gender issue.
- B. One on one meetings between adults on behalf of the church/ministry are to be held in an observable, public place where there are others present. This may require open door policies or strategically placed windows that allow both confidentiality and observation.
- C. Language and behavior that creates a hostile environment is prohibited.
  1. Unlawful harassment is a form of discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal authority.
  2. Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on race, color, religion, sex (whether or not of a sexual nature and including same-gender harassment and gender identity harassment), national origin, age (40 and over), disability (mental or physical), sexual orientation, or retaliation (sometimes collectively referred to as “legally protected characteristics”) constitutes harassment when:
    - a. The conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile work environment; or
    - b. A supervisor’s harassing conduct results in a tangible change in an employee’s employment status or benefits (for example, demotion, termination, failure to promote, etc.).
  3. Hostile work environment harassment occurs when unwelcome comments or conduct based on sex, race or other legally protected characteristics unreasonably interferes with an employee’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Anyone in the workplace might commit this type of harassment – a management official, co-worker, or non-employee, such as a contractor, vendor or guest. The victim can be anyone affected by the conduct, not just the individual at whom the offensive conduct is directed.
  4. Examples of actions that may create a sexually hostile environment include:
    - a. Leering, i.e., staring in a sexually suggestive manner
    - b. Making offensive remarks about looks, clothing, and body parts. Telling sexual or lewd jokes, hanging sexual posters, making sexual gestures.

- c. Touching in a way that may make an employee feel uncomfortable, such as patting, pinching or intentional brushing against another's body
    - e. Sending or soliciting sexually suggestive letters, notes, emails, or images
  - 5. Other actions which may result in hostile environment harassment, but are non-sexual in nature, include:
    - a. Use of racially derogatory words, phrases, epithets
    - b. Demonstrations of a racial or ethnic nature such as a use of gestures, pictures or drawings which would offend a particular racial or ethnic group
    - c. Comments about an individual's skin color or racial/ethnic characteristics
    - d. Making disparaging remarks about an individual's gender
    - e. Negative comments about an employee's religious beliefs or lack thereof.
    - f. Expressing negative stereotypes regarding an employee's ancestry
    - g. Negative comments regarding an employee's age when he/she is over 40
    - h. Derogatory or intimidating references to an employee's mental or physical impairment
  - 6. A hostile workplace environment does not include simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not extremely serious. Rather, the conduct must be so objectively offensive as to alter the conditions of the individual's employment. The conditions of employment are altered only if the harassment culminates in a tangible employment action or is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile work environment.
- D. Sexual/Gender Harassment as defined below is strictly prohibited:
  - 1. 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 includes, but is not limited to:
    - a. the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender (Book of Discipline, par. 1611).
    - b. intimidating or coercive behavior that threatens or results in a tangible employment action.
  - 2. Gender harassment is behavior that is harassing in nature against a woman because she is a woman or against a man because he is a man.
- E. Harassment of any nature will not be tolerated. Keep in mind that though the language above intimates a working relationship, the prohibitions also apply to any group or gathering held under the purview of a congregation or ministry.
- F. Policies will include a means of reporting abuse/exploitation for volunteers and staff, including clergy and laity.
  - 1. See 'Guidelines for Protective Procedures for Misconduct of a Sexual Nature'
  - 2. Here are telephone numbers that can be used to report suspected abuse:
    - a. Any of First UMC Shreveport's clergy – (318) 424-7771
    - b. Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services – (225) 342-0286
- G. Additional Guidelines – while issues are different for adults than for children and youth, there are concerns regarding adults that need to be considered.
  - 1. All classes, studies, workshops, fellowship/recreation opportunities, one on one counseling sessions, private meetings or mentoring, etc. with youth or children shall be conducted in a public space or in a space easily observable by others at all times.
  - 2. Minimum standards for transporting adults in the name of the church are covered under Section II-C, 'Transportation Guideline'.

3. It is permissible for one adult to transport another adult in a vehicle.

#### IV. Miscellaneous Provisions to be considered.

##### A. Reporting abuse is required. (See page 10 of policy for more details)

1. Any suspicious or observed sexual misconduct or other abuse or violation of these policies should be reported immediately to the staff in charge of that ministry and a clergy who will notify First UMC Shreveport's Response Team.
  - a. Church office telephone: 318-424-7771
2. All suspected abuse shall be reported per the state of Louisiana's laws regarding the reporting of suspected abuse. (Regardless of whether or not suspected abuse occurred as a result of church/ministry.)

- a. Shreveport Office of Community Services telephone: 318-676-7622

- B. Any non-church related entity utilizing any facilities controlled by a ministry covered under these policies shall abide by the risk reduction policies of both entities. Thus policies shall include provisions for the sharing/training on these policies with any entity utilizing church/ministry facilities prior to the scheduled event or normal operations.
- C. Nothing in this policy is meant to conflict any requirements imposed by the State for the licensing of First Beginnings Child Development Center
- D. The above policies shall apply to all forms of interaction including, but not limited to, photography, computer/internet use, telephone, email, Facebook, MySpace and IM.
- E. Annual First Aid/CPR training for Program Staff members shall be required. Other staff and volunteers may attend these trainings.
- F. Periodic review (at least every 2 or 3 years) of insurance coverage is recommended to ensure proper coverage for:
  1. Misconduct
  2. Accidents & Injuries
  3. Liability
  4. Offsite activities and transportation

## Policy Statement on Sexual Harassment

FUMCS affirms The 2004 Book of Resolutions, Sexual Abuse Within the Ministerial Relationship and Sexual Harassment Within the Church, which states: "Those in positions of authority in the church, both clergy and lay, have been given much responsibility, vested with a sacred trust to maintain an environment that is safe for people to live and grow in God's love. Misconduct of a sexual nature inhibits the full and joyful participation of all in the community of God. Sexual misconduct in church and ministry settings impedes the mission of Jesus Christ. Ministerial leaders have the responsibility not only to avoid actions and words which hurt others, but also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words which cause harm." In accordance with The 2004 Book of Discipline, ¶161, all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. As the promise of Galatians 3:26-29, states all are one in Christ, we support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation, or gender.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader, or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker, or volunteer.

Sexual harassment is "any unwanted sexual comment, 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." (Book of Discipline ¶161).

Gender harassment is behavior that is harassing in nature against a woman because she is a woman and against a man because he is a man.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role, and exploitation of those who are vulnerable. Similarly, gender or sexual harassment are usually understood as exploitations of power relationships rather than as exclusively sexual or gender issues.

Sexual and gender harassment, sexual abuse and misconduct of a sexual nature within the life of the church interfere with its moral mission. FUMCS prohibits and will not tolerate these behaviors, which are sinful, demeaning, abusive, and wrong. The FUMCS commits itself to fair and expedient investigation of any complaint of sexual and gender harassment, sexual abuse or misconduct of a sexual nature within the church and to take action deemed appropriate and in compliance with the Book of Discipline. Further, the FUMCS bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free of these sins and encourages respect, equality, and kinship in Christ.

FUMCS will not retaliate against any person who brings forward a complaint. All staff leaders and members are expected to immediately report any knowledge of harassment, abuse, or misconduct to any one of these persons: Pastor, Chair SPR/PPR, District Superintendent or Bishop. Prompt and appropriate investigation and corrective action will be taken, including discipline. Persons who make false accusations will be disciplined.

While FUMCS cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality, it will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality by disclosing information about the complaint only on a "need to know" basis and as necessary to promote God's call for justice, reconciliation, and healing.

Anyone who has any questions or concerns about this policy or the issues addressed is encouraged to air those questions or concerns to the SPRC.

# Appendix

## **Who are mandated reporters for suspected or observed incidents of child abuse?**

The following information comes from the Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services. Three things should be noted:

1. The reporting required here is to Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services or an appropriate law enforcement agency. A mandated reporter simply notifying her/his supervisor is not adequate without certainty that the supervisor has reported to law enforcement.
2. Law requires these persons to report anytime they are performing their associated duties. For example, if a public school teacher is not employed by the church but volunteers as a Sunday School teacher, he/she is still a mandated reporter because of the duty they are performing.
3. Though Sunday School teachers are not specifically named, the "Teaching or child care provider" category could be widely interpreted to include our Sunday School Teachers, Bible study leaders etc.

The best practice is to always report suspect incidents of abuse to Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services. The protection of our children should be a primary concern for us whether or not we are "mandated" to report. Policies should contain statements that call for training our volunteers/staff to recognize and report child abuse.

According to the State of Louisiana, mandated reporters are any of the following individuals performing their occupational duties:

- "Health practitioner" is any individual who provides health care services, including a physician, surgeon, physical therapist, dentist, resident, intern, hospital staff member, podiatrist, chiropractor, licensed nurse, nursing aide, dental hygienist, any emergency medical technician, a paramedic, optometrist, medical examiner, or coroner, who diagnoses, examines, or treats a child or his family.
- "Mental health/social service practitioner" is any individual who provides mental health care or social service diagnosis, assessment, counseling, or treatment, including a psychiatrist, psychologist, marriage or family counselor, social worker, member of the clergy, aide, or other individual who provides counseling services to a child or his family.
- "Member of the clergy" is any priest, rabbi, duly ordained clerical deacon or minister, Christian Science practitioner, or other similarly situated functionary of a religious organization, unless the information of abuse/neglect is learned in a confidential communication.
- "Teaching or child care provider" is any person who provides training and supervision of a child, including any public or private teacher, teacher's aide, instructional aide, school principal, school staff member, social worker, probation officer, foster home parent, group home or other child care institutional staff member, personnel of residential home facilities, a licensed or unlicensed day care provider, or any individual who provides such services to a child.
- Police officers or law enforcement officials.

# First UMC Shreveport

## Safe Sanctuary Policy

### Recognizing Child Abuse & Neglect

This information comes from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm>

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family or other setting, but a closer look at the situation may be warranted when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination.

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, that these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

If these signs occur repeatedly and/or in combinations so as to warrant investigation, contact a First UMC Shreveport Clergy (424-7771), the Shreveport Office of Community Services (676-7622) or Bossier City OCS (741-7340).

#### Signs of Physical Abuse

Consider the possibility of physical abuse **when the child:**

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of physical abuse **when the parent or other adult caregiver:**

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

#### Signs of Neglect

Consider the possibility of neglect **when the child:**

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

Consider the possibility of neglect **when the parent or other adult caregiver:**

Appears to be indifferent to the child  
Seems apathetic or depressed  
Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner  
Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

### **Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse **when the child:**

Has difficulty walking or sitting  
Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities  
Reports nightmares or bedwetting  
Experiences a sudden change in appetite  
Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior  
Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14  
Runs away  
Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse **when the parent or other adult caregiver:**

Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex  
Is secretive and isolated  
Is jealous or controlling with family members

### **Signs of Emotional Maltreatment**

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment **when the child:**

Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression  
Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)  
Is delayed in physical or emotional development  
Has attempted suicide  
Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment **when the parent or other adult caregiver:**

Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child  
Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems  
Overtly rejects the child

## **II.\* PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT INVOLVING CLERGY**

- A. Assumptions underlying procedures
  - a. Allegations will be taken as worthy of full investigation.
  - b. Presumption of innocence shall be maintained until completion of the process. After that, the conclusion reached in the process will apply.
  - c. The protection of those involved, including the alleged victim or victims, the accused and the accused's family, and their congregation or institution shall be sought until all facts have been carefully considered and appropriate actions determined.
- B. Investigation when sexual misconduct is alleged.
  - a. Anytime the alleged victim is a child, it is required by law to inform the appropriate authorities immediately.
  - b. The allegation shall be brought to a District Superintendent or the Bishop by the alleged victim or by someone who had knowledge and is willing to pursue a resolution.
  - c. Both the alleged victim and the accused may bring to any meeting or hearing a person to accompany them and shall have the right to advocacy. (§454.1c)
  - d. A District Superintendent shall promptly share the grievance with the Bishop.
  - e. The Bishop or designated representative shall:
    - i. Explain to the alleged victim in the presence of another person chosen by the Bishop the process and the procedures to be followed in response to the grievance. One of these persons shall be the same sex as the alleged victim.
    - ii. Request and assist the alleged victim to provide a written grievance stating the allegations and the related facts.
    - iii. Request permission from the alleged victim to use a written grievance in discussion with accused.
    - iv. Meet with accused clergy (§454.1a) and share the allegations made:
      - 1) Share with him/her the formal written grievance where permission has been given to use it.
      - 2) Explain the process to be followed (§454) and its purpose, emphasizing the presumption of innocence and the right to fair process. (§2622)
      - 3) Request an oral or written response from the accused after informing the accused that he/she may respond to the allegations at a later date, if desired, after consultation with an advisor.
      - 4) Make available a summary of the accused's response to the alleged victim for comment.
      - 5) Seek to substantiate the allegation and ascertain sufficient reason for pursuing or not pursuing the allegations further.
- C. Determination of Sufficient Cause – When the Bishop and supervising District Superintendent determine there is a sufficient cause for a complaint of sexual misconduct, the Bishop or the designated representative shall ask the alleged victim(s) if they wish to participate in or will allow their written grievance to be shared in the Joint Review Process (§454.1c). One of three courses of action shall then be taken:

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\* To maintain the integrity of this document, the paragraph numbers refer to the 1992 Book of Discipline. For comparable paragraphs in the 2000 Book of Discipline, see §161I, §359, and §2701-§2719. One nomenclature change in the 2000 Book of Discipline must be noted. The term "Joint Review Committee" has been changed to the Committee on Investigation.

- a. If a complaint is to be filed with the cooperation of the alleged victim(s), a written signed complaint shall be filed by the District Superintendent or Bishop, with the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§454.1b);
  - b. If there is substantial evidence, but no written grievance from an alleged victim to be used, the Superintendent or Bishop may file a complaint with the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§454.1b);
  - c. If the alleged victim, District Superintendent and Bishop choose not to pursue the grievance or complaint procedure, a note to that effect and any written grievance shall be placed in the clergy person's permanent record by the Bishop in the Bishop's office that potentially serious offenses have been alleged, but were neither conclusively substantiated nor disproved. Any written statement by the accused may also be placed in the file. Any clergy has access to his/her file.
- D. After a complaint is formally filed – When a complaint is formally forwarded to the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§454.1), the following steps will occur expeditiously. The Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry calls the Joint Review Committee into session and refers the complaint thereto:
- a. In order to protect the right of the accused and to protect the alleged victim(s) and congregation from possible harm, the accused may be placed on Leave of Absence (§448.1).
  - b. The clergy person is encouraged to use fair process accorded by the Joint Review Committee. However, throughout the process, the clergy person may withdraw from membership in the Annual Conference under (§453.4 & §2628.2). If withdrawal takes place before formal charges are filed, the credential will be inscribed by the Bishop “withdrawn under complaint of sexual misconduct” and deposited with the Secretary of the Annual Conference. After formal charges have been filed, the credentials will be inscribed “withdrawn under charges of sexual misconduct”. This withdrawal is reported to the Board of Ordained Ministry for confirmation by the clergy Session of the Annual Conference at its next session.
- E. The Judicial Process of the United Methodist Church
- a. Joint Review Process – The Joint Review Committee is charged with the responsibility of seeking a resolution of complaint brought against clergy. Its duties and procedures are outlined in (§454.1c). The Joint Review Committee is not a trial procedure, but a hearing. Those against whom charges are brought and the aggrieved are urged to use the avenue of resolution.
  - b. The Right of Trial – Those against whom allegations or complaints are brought are innocent until proven guilty and may choose a trial when charged with offences. The trial procedure is outlined in (§454.1d and §2622-2627).
- F. Records – When credentials have been surrendered, the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference shall receive a report (§454.11). Full information of sexual misconduct and subsequent actions taken shall be kept in the clergy person's permanent record in the Bishop's office.

### **III. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/ABUSE INVOLVING LAY STAFF/VOLUNTEERS**

- A. Assumptions underlying procedures
  - a. Allegations will be taken as worthy of full investigation.
  - b. Presumption of innocence shall be maintained until completion of the process. After that, the conclusion reached in the process will apply.
  - c. The protection of those involved, including the alleged victim or victims, the accused and the accused's family, and their congregation or institution shall be sought until all facts have been carefully considered and appropriate actions determined.
- B. Investigation when sexual misconduct is alleged
  - a. Anytime the alleged victim is a child, it is required by law to inform the appropriate authorities immediately.
  - b. The allegation shall be brought to the pastor or his/her designee by the alleged victim or by someone who had knowledge and is willing to pursue a resolution.
  - c. Both the alleged victim and the accused may bring to any meeting or hearing a person to accompany them and shall have the right to advocacy.
  - d. The pastor shall promptly share the grievance with the District Superintendent.
  - e. The pastor or designated representative shall:
    - i. Explain to the alleged victim in the presence of another person chosen by the pastor the process and the procedures to be followed in response to the grievance. One of these persons shall be the same sex as the alleged victim.
    - ii. Request and assist the alleged victim to provide a written grievance stating the allegations and the related facts.
    - iii. Request permission from the alleged victim to use a written grievance in discussion with accused.
    - iv. Meet with accused and share the allegations made.
      - 1. Share with him/her the formal written grievance where permission has been given to use it.
      - 2. Explain the process to be followed and its purpose, emphasizing the presumption of innocence and the right to fair process.
      - 3. Request an oral or written response from the accused after informing the accused that he/she may respond to the allegations at a later date, if desired, after consultation with an advisor.
      - 4. Make available a summary of the accused's response to the alleged victim for comment.
      - 5. Seek to substantiate the allegation and ascertain sufficient reason for pursuing or not pursuing the allegations further.
- C. Determination of sufficient cause – When the pastor and supervising District Superintendent determine there is a sufficient cause for a complaint of sexual misconduct, the pastor or the designated representative shall inform the complainant and the accused of the conclusion. If the accused is a lay staff member, the following actions, either alone or in combination, may be considered:
  - a. Apology to the complainant.
  - b. Oral reprimand.
  - c. Written warning.
  - d. Counseling.
  - e. Transfer or reassignment.
  - f. Demotion.

- g. Adjustment of salary or bonus.
  - h. Suspension.
  - i. Discharge.
- D. If the conclusion is that no violation occurred or there is insufficient evidence to make a conclusion, the complainant and the accused each should be notified.
- a. The complainant should be advised that the evidence will be preserved and that another investigation will be conducted if further information is provided.
  - b. The complainant should be encouraged to report any future incidents.
  - c. Both parties should be reminded that such conduct is not tolerated, that each complaint is investigated, and, if sexual harassment is found, appropriate measures will be taken to alleviate the situation.
  - d. Each party should be reminded of the prohibition against retaliation.
- E. In the weeks following the investigation, follow-up with the complainant to ascertain whether he/she has experienced any retaliation or further inappropriate behavior from the accused.
- F. In the event discipline was imposed against the accused, follow-up to ensure that the remedial measures imposed have been carried out appropriately.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OR ABUSE INVOLVING A CHILD**

- A. Take the allegation or incident very seriously, respecting the victim's privacy, as well as providing sympathetic concern for the victim and his/her family.
- B. Notify the proper law enforcement or child protective services agency immediately. If this is a case of known abuse, protect any evidence. Be prepared to cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.
- C. Notify the parents of the victim, provide emergency care (if necessary) for the victim and provide for the safety of the victim until the parents arrive. The care and safety of the victim must be the church's primary concern. Be prepared to follow up with pastoral care for the victim and the victim's family.
- D. Listen to and record what you are being told. If the allegation is being made by the victim, do not try to elicit more information than is being offered.
- E. The accused must immediately be removed from further involvement with children or youth until the allegations are fully investigated and resolved. Do not confront the accused abuser with anger and hostility. The accused should be treated with dignity, acknowledging that he or she is a person of sacred worth, but also acknowledging that the accused must stop the abusive behavior, prayerfully repent, and turn in a new direction. Be prepared to provide pastoral care for the accused abuser.
- F. Notify the annual conference authorities (district superintendent or bishop), the church's insurance agency, and the church's attorney. Conference authorities must be kept aware of the congregation's actions throughout the process.
- G. Keep a written record of the steps taken by the church in response to the allegation. This information must be kept confidential and limited to only those who must know.
- H. Call upon your designated spokesperson to make any necessary statements or responses to the news media. The designated spokesperson should have a prepared, written statement. This person may be the pastor, another staff member, the church's attorney, or a lay member of the church. This person should answer questions honestly without adding extra or unnecessary information. The designated spokesperson should be given permission to answer questions by saying, "I don't know at this time." None but the spokesperson should be authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the congregation.
- I. 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. The statement should briefly explain the incident and the initial action taken by the church. The statement should not include the identification of the child victim or that of the accused. The statement should include the actions taken to assure the safety of all the children and assure the congregation of its continuing ability to provide ministry to children and youth. The statement should dispel rumors and innuendo and assure everyone that everything possible has been done to provide for the safety of the victim and to enable the safe continuation of the church's ministry. The statement should be made in a carefully planned Congregation Meeting.