

Asbury United Methodist Church

Child and Youth Protection Policy Training



Introduction

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes (a) child ... welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5).

Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones ... it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).



Purpose

Asbury United Methodist Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for children who participate in our programs and activities.

By implementing the practices discussed in this training, our goal is to protect the children from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.



Statement of Covenant

- ▶ We will follow reasonable safety measures in the recruitment and selection of workers;
- ▶ we will implement prudent operational procedures in programs and events;
- ▶ we will educate our workers with children and youth regarding the use of appropriate policies;
- ▶ 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 to media inquiries if an incident occurs.



Background Checks

All individuals 18 and older working with children and youth in ministries sponsored by Asbury UMC must have at a minimum, a current limited criminal background check on file with the church office.

- ▶ A full criminal background check may be required at the church's discretion and must be performed at least once every 3 years.



Background Checks

- ▶ Background check forms are collected by the ministry leaders and returned to the Children's Ministry Director or Church Administrative Secretary. (Allow two weeks for processing.)
- ▶ No individuals 18 and older works with or presides over children or youth on church property or at a church function without having an approved criminal background check.



“Two Person/Open Door” Rule

Activities are to be conducted in areas that minimize opportunity for secrecy and isolation.

To protect youth, parents, volunteers, and leaders, Asbury UMC practices the following “Two Person/Open Door rule”:

- ▶ It is our goal that at least two unrelated individuals 18 and older or at least 1 individual 18 and older with a supervised minor at least 14 years of age are required at all child and youth church sponsored activities.
- ▶ In the event that only one individual 18 and older is present there should be no fewer than two children or youth with the individual. In this instance, doors without windows to the classroom must remain open and any windows must have clear view into the classroom.
- ▶ If only one individual 18 and older and one child or youth are present, then immediately contact the Children’s Ministry Director or ministry leader to resolve any one-on-one situations.

Incident Reporting

- ▶ Reporting procedures when you have reason to believe alleged abuse or neglect involving a church ministry occurred. You are expected to know, understand and follow these procedures.
- ▶ “Child abuse” and “neglect” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child or youth’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development.



Incident Reporting

- ▶ **Did YOU personally witness or have reason to believe a situation occurred?**

Did you directly observe a situation where a child was in risk of harm by another person or where you had reason to believe alleged abuse or neglect was occurring?

- ▶ **Follow the “Reporting Procedures” outlined in the following slides.**



Incident Reporting

- ▶ **Has a child reported a situation to you?**

Sometimes children will unexpectedly or innocently speak about behavior or an event that resulted in the child being abused, afraid, or touched in an inappropriate way.

Do not alarm the child. Do not ask leading questions that may put words or ideas in the child's thoughts. Instead, say something such as "I think you were upset by that" or "Thank you for sharing with me."

- ▶ **Follow the "Reporting Procedures" outlined in the following slides.**



Incident Reporting

Has another person reported second-hand alleged abuse or neglect to you?

If another person has reported a second-hand alleged abuse or neglect involving children or youth to you, you must direct the individual to the Asbury UMC Child and Youth Protection Policy, “Incident Reporting” and advise the individual their responsibility to follow the policy. Do NOT report second-hand information yourself.



Reporting Procedures

1. Any person who observed alleged abuse or neglect or to whom such alleged abuse or neglect is reported should **IMMEDIATELY** call the following:
 - A. Call the local police at 911.
 - B. After calling the local police, **IMMEDIATELY** call Child Protection Services (CPS) at 800-800-5556 to make a report and follow their instructions.
2. After calling CPS, **IMMEDIATELY** inform the pastor of the incident in person or by calling the church office (812)372-4555.



Reporting Procedures

3. The Children's Ministry Director, staff person, event leader, ministry leader or individual of the child or youth involved in the incident shall obtain the necessary information and complete the Incident Report Form. Refer to "What to report" slide for additional information.
4. The Children's Ministry Director, staff person, event leader, ministry leader or individual involved in the incident are to communicate with the pastor to ensure that they remain informed.



Reporting Procedures

5. If the pastor is the alleged abuser, the Child Protection Services must be called IMMEDIATELY. The Staff Parish chair and/or the Church Lay Leader are to be notified and they will then contact the District Superintendent by phone and follow his or her instructions.

Note: per Indiana code 2015, if you report to the pastor and/or event leader, then the responsibility for reporting it to authorities passes from you to the individual who has taken it from you.

Ref: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2015/ic/titles/031/articles/033/chapters/005/> However, the Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy requires that you contact authorities first.



What to Report:

Explain, as clearly as you can, what happened or is happening to the child. Describe the nature of the safety issue. **Be as specific as possible.** It is helpful to report as much of the following information as you can. *Even if you do not know all of this information, report what you do know:*

- ▶ Name of birth parents or guardian
- ▶ Date of birth (or approximate age) for parents and child(ren)
- ▶ Address of parents and child(ren)
- ▶ The safety issue
- ▶ When and how often the safety issue occurred
- ▶ Where the safety issue occurred
- ▶ Name, date of birth or description, and location, if possible, of the person who is suspected of causing harm.



Policy Training

All people working with children and youth are trained yearly in the policy and receive a copy of, understand and agree to follow the “Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy”.

Every individual will receive:

- ▶ A criminal background check authorization form
- ▶ A training acknowledgement form

The following optional items are available from the church office:

- ▶ A business card with incident reporting phone numbers
- ▶ A copy of the Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy*
- ▶ A copy of “A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act”*

*Also available on the Asbury web site



Policy Training

Thank you for participating in the Asbury UMC Child and Youth Protection Policy Online Training. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Children's Ministry Director or Church Office for more information.

