



Asbury United Methodist Church (UMC)
Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy

History

Version	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Changes Made
0	08/03/2013	Doug Sunkel	Staff-Parish Relations Committee	Revision of original policy.
1	09/01/2015	TJ Anderson	Staff Parish Relations Committee	Revised to include input from CMO and changes deemed necessary.
2	06/07/2016	Gloria Curry	Staff Parish Relations Committee	Revisions and annual approval.
3	05/05/2017	Paul Schultz	Staff Parish Relations Committee	Revisions and annual approval.
4	03/13/2018	Dennis Stone	Staff Parish Relations Committee	Revisions, Clarifications, Procedural Details transferred to Another Document



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1. Introduction

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. The resolution includes the following statements:

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes (a) child ... welcomes me" (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

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). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that "children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse" (§ 162C).

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. [From *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church-2000*, pp. 180-181. Copyright © 2000 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.]

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, Asbury UMC adopts this resolution as the basis for the prevention of child and youth abuse at Asbury UMC.

2. Purpose

Asbury UMC seeks a safe and secure environment for children who participate in our programs and activities. Our goal is to protect children from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting staff and volunteers from false accusations.

3. Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, Asbury UMC will:

- Follow safety measures in the recruitment of workers
- Implement prudent operational procedures in programs and events
- Educate workers with children and youth regarding appropriate procedures
- Have a clearly defined procedure for reporting suspected incidents of abuse
- Conform to federal, state, and local laws
- Respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs

4. Background Checks

All individuals 18 and older working with children and youth in ministries of Asbury UMC must have a limited criminal background check at least once every three (3) years. A full criminal background check may be required at the church's discretion.

- 4.1. No individual may work with youth or children in any ministry of Asbury UMC without an approved limited criminal background check prior to their initial participation in the ministry
- 4.2. The responsibility for the initial limited criminal background check rests with the leader of each individual ministry. Forms are available in the church office
- 4.3. The church secretary maintains a list of all the children and youth ministries of Asbury UMC, the names of the workers in each ministry, and the date of their most recent background check
- 4.4. The leader of each children and youth ministry is responsible for the church secretary having a current list of all workers in their ministry



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5. Two Person/Open Door Rule

To protect children, youth, parents, volunteers, and leaders, Asbury UMC practices the "Two Person/Open Door rule":

- 5.1 It is the intent of Asbury UMC that at least two (2) adults to supervise all children and youth church activities
- 5.2 It is the intent of Asbury UMC that reasonable adult supervisors will make the best choice(s) at any time in their supervision of children and youth activities in situations when they find that they are temporarily unable to meet the intent in Section 5.1
- 5.3 Activities are to be conducted in areas that minimize secrecy and isolation

6. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's or youth's physical, psychological or emotional health.

7. Incident Reporting

This section outlines the procedures for reporting when you have reason to believe abuse or neglect may have occurred. All leaders of ministries involving children or youth are expected to know, understand and follow these procedures.

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? If so, follow the "Reporting Procedure" outlined below in Section 8.

Has another person reported a 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 that individual to the "Reporting Procedure" in Section 8. **DO NOT** report second-hand information yourself.

Has a child reported a situation to you?

Sometimes children will unexpectedly or 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." If a child has reported a situation to you, then you must follow the "Reporting Procedures" in Section 8.

8. Reporting Procedure

8.1 Any person who observed abuse or to whom alleged abuse is reported should IMMEDIATELY report the incident by three phone calls in the following order:

- A. Call the local police at 911
- B. Call Child Protection Services at 800-800-5556
- C. Call the Senior Pastor

8.2 The person reporting the incident shall provide, during their three phone calls, as much of the necessary information listed in Section 9 "What to report"

8.3 The Senior Pastor is the only person who will address a media inquiry about an alleged incident of abuse on behalf of Asbury UMC

8.4 If the pastor is the alleged abuser, The Staff Parish Chair and the Church Lay Leader are to be notified so they may immediately contact the District Superintendent by phone and follow his or her instructions



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9. What to report:

Explain, as clearly as you can, what happened to the child. Be as specific as possible. Report as much of the following information as you can:

- Name of child and approximate age
- Name of child's parents or guardian(s) and approximate ages
- Address of parents and child
- The issue
- When and how often the issue occurred
- Where the issue occurred
- Name, approximate age, and description of the person who caused issue
- Location, if known, of the person who caused issue

10. Policy Training

The ministry leaders will ensure all adults working with children or youth in their ministry receive a copy of "The Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy" and are trained yearly in the policy and its associated procedures.

Every individual worker will receive a 5x7 training overview card and a business card with incident reporting number. Each individual worker will be given a signature form with the date of their most recent annual training, acknowledging receipt of these training materials, a copy of the Child Protection Policy, and a copy of associated Child Protection Procedures. The person's signature on this form indicates they have received the materials, understand the contents of the materials, and agree to follow the policy and procedures.

11. Policy Administration Responsibilities

The key person(s) and their responsibilities for the administration of this policy are:

A: Leaders of Children and Youth Ministries

- Ensure all adults working in their ministry have a current background check every three (3) years.
- Ensure all suspected incidents are reported immediately to the proper authorities

B: Church Secretary

- Initiates the limited criminal background checks
- Maintains dates of background checks for workers with children and youth

C: Staff Parish Relations Committee

- Review The Asbury Child and Youth Protection Policy every year
- Review The Asbury Child and Youth Protection Procedures every year

D: Senior Pastor

- Ensure the proper authorities are notified of suspected incidents
- Respond to media inquiries about incidents

12. Use of Children and Youth Photographs

The use of children and youth photographic images is covered in the Asbury UMC Media Use Policy which is available in the church office or on-line.

13. Appendix

Included in the Appendix are copies of the following documents important to the administration of this policy.

- Background Check Authorization Form



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- Incident Reporting Form
- Policy Signature Form
- Asbury UMC Child and Youth Protection Policy
- Asbury UMC Child and Youth Protection Procedures
- Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy Training Kit
- Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy Training Card
- Asbury UMC Child and youth Protection Policy Business Card
- Asbury united Methodist Church Media use Policy