

Asbury United Methodist Church

Child and Youth Protection Policy Training



Introduction

Children Matter to Jesus and Children Matter to Us

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.

Safe and secure environments:

- ▶ Protect children from incidents of abuse or neglect
- ▶ Protect our staff and volunteers from false accusations



Statement of Policy Intent

- ▶ To establish reasonable safety measures in the recruitment and selection of workers;
- ▶ To establish reasonable operational procedures for our programs and events;
- ▶ To establish a reasonable, clearly defined procedure for reporting an alleged incident of abuse or neglect, that conforms to state law;
- ▶ To educate our workers regarding the details and implementation of this policy.



Background Checks

- ▶ A criminal background check is required for all individuals 18 and older who work with children and youth in ministries sponsored by Asbury UMC.
- ▶ A background check remains current for a period of 3 years, and must be on file with the church office.
- ▶ Background check authorization forms should be submitted to the Church Administrative Secretary at least 2 weeks prior to the ministry event.



“Two Person/Open Door” Rule

The primary means for creating safe environments is to minimize opportunities for secrecy and isolation. This is accomplished through the “Two Person/Open Door” rule.

This means:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ If only one individual 18 and older is present, there should be no fewer than two children or youth with the individual, *and* doors without windows must remain open and windows must have clear view into the room.

Contact the Children’s Ministry Director or ministry event leader to resolve any questions or issues related to following this rule.

Incident Reporting

If you personally witness or have reason to believe alleged abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred:

- ▶ Call the local police at 911.
- ▶ Then, call Child Protection Services (CPS) at 800-800-5556 to make a report. Follow their instructions.
- ▶ Then, inform the pastor of the incident in person or by calling the church office (812)372-4555. (If the pastor is the alleged abuser, call the Staff Parish chair and/or the Church Lay Leader.)



Incident Reporting

If a child reports alleged abuse or neglect to you.

- ▶ Be careful to avoid alarming 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."
- ▶ Then, call the local police at 911.
- ▶ Then, call Child Protection Services (CPS) at 800-800-5556 to make a report. Follow their instructions.
- ▶ Then, inform the pastor of the incident in person or by calling the church office (812)372-4555. (If the pastor is the alleged abuser, call the Staff Parish chair and/or the Church Lay Leader.)



Incident Reporting

If another person reports second-hand alleged abuse or neglect to you:

- ▶ Direct him/her of his/her responsibility to:
 - ▶ Call the local police at 911.
 - ▶ Then, call Child Protection Services (CPS) at 800-800-5556 to make a report.
 - ▶ Then, inform the pastor of the incident in person or by calling the church office (812)372-4555. (If the pastor is the alleged abuser, call the Staff Parish chair and/or the Church Lay Leader.)
- ▶ Do NOT report second-hand information yourself.



Incident Documentation

If the alleged abuse or neglect occurs during a church sponsored event, the Children's Ministry Director, staff person, event leader, or ministry leader shall:

- ▶ Obtain information related to the event
- ▶ Complete an Incident Report Form
- ▶ Submit the completed form to the pastor, the Staff Parish chair, or the Church Lay Leader



Information to Report:

Explain, as clearly and specifically as you can, what happened or is happening to the child. Include as much 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

Everyone working with children and youth must be trained yearly. They must also understand and agree to follow the “Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy”.

Every individual will receive:

- ▶ Policy Summary Sheet
- ▶ Background Check Authorization Form
- ▶ Training Acknowledgement Form

Copies of the following are available on the church web site:

- ▶ The Asbury UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy
- ▶ This Presentation
- ▶ A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act
- ▶ Child Protection Services Hotline vCard

