

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Providence United Methodist Church

I. Purpose

- A. Our congregation's purpose for establishing this policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults.
- B. To protect the employees and volunteer leaders of Providence United Methodist Church against allegations of child abuse.
- C. To help Providence UMC reduce its legal risk and liability exposure.

II. Biblical Foundation

Providence United Methodist Church (PUMC) seeks to express God's love of children and youth, and provide for their personal wholeness. This caring community of believers seeks to prevent child abuse of any form to our children and youth, and to be in ministry to our families where abuse may occur. The Bible is the foundation of our understanding upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand

And they were bringing children to him, that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it He was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" And He took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them. Mark 10:13-16

Jesus includes children as a part of the Kingdom of God He demonstrated this through blessing and touch. Our goal in response to this Biblical mandate is to do all in our power to maintain a safe, secure and loving place where children may grow, a place where caregivers, teachers and leaders (both paid and volunteer) minister appropriately to their needs.

III. Virginia's Child Abuse Law

- A. Section 63.2-100 of the Code of Virginia generally defines an abused or neglected child as any child under 18 years of age whose parent or any person responsible for his or her care (such as a child care provider, foster parent, or anyone responsible for the welfare of a child receiving residential care at an institution):
 1. Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
 2. Has a child present during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of a controlled substance or during the unlawful sale of such substance where such activity would constitute a felony violation;
 3. Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care;
 4. Abandons the child;
 5. Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development;
 6. Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person, not related by blood or marriage, who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender; or

7. Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

NOTE: Virginia law requires that mandated reporters report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to child protective services regardless of the abuser/neglector's relationship to the child.

- B. Under Virginia law, certain professionals are required to report when acting in a professional capacity. These professionals include:
 1. Teachers or other persons employed in a public or private school, kindergarten, or nursery school;
 2. Persons associated with or employed by any private organization responsible for the care, custody, and control of children.
- C. Section 63.2-1512 of the Code of Virginia protects a person, who either makes a CPS report or participates in a court hearing that results from a CPS report, from criminal and civil liability unless it is proven that the person acted with malicious intent. Mandated reporters who fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect, within 72 hours of first suspicion, can be charged with a misdemeanor and fined up to \$500 for the first incident and from \$100 to \$1,000 for any subsequent incidents.

IV. Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse

A. Definitions

1. Children and Youth: Individuals from birth through August 31 of their projected high school graduation year.
2. Vulnerable Adult: Individuals over 18 years with physical or mental disabilities.

B. Recruiting procedures

1. Volunteer leaders for children or youth ministries must have continuous active involvement in the church for at least six (6) months with the exception of Upward Soccer community volunteers.
2. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and at least 3 years older than the youth they are supervising. The exception may be in the nursery and other ministries with children where youth may be assistants while there are at least two adults present.
3. Employees and volunteers may be interviewed by the appropriate staff and/or committee representatives.
4. Volunteers will be required to complete a Volunteer Application Form.
5. Employees and volunteers will submit to a criminal background check, paid for by the church.
6. Employees and volunteers will be asked if they have ever been charged with, convicted of or pled guilty to a crime.
7. Employees and volunteers with a child abuse charge or conviction, or anyone refusing to sign the statement will not be permitted to work with children.
8. Every two (2) years of service, employees and volunteer(s) will be required to update any information on their application that has changed during that time period.

- C. Personnel records of volunteers/employees will be kept confidential and accessible only by the Senior Pastor and the Chairperson of the Child Protection Policy Committee. Should the Child Protection Policy Committee need to be consulted, the records will kept anonymous. Should there be allegations of misbehavior, it may be necessary for other persons to have access to such records, e.g. Director of Christian Education, Director of Youth Ministries, Chair of the Trustees and the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

- D. Providence Preschool Staff Positions
1. Personnel records for the Providence Preschool School staff positions will be accessible by the Director of the Providence Preschool School, the Senior Pastor, as well as the others listed above when necessary.
 2. Staffing issues/personnel records will conform to any standards required by State Licensing or the current national accrediting body.
- E. Education and Training
1. Educating the congregation is key to the success of the Child Protection Committee's efforts. Dissemination of information may include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Articles in Publications
 - b. Bulletin
 - c. The monthly newsletter
 - d. Web site
 - e. Flyers
 - f. Parent's publications
 - g. Providence Preschool publications
 - h. Employee Handbook
 - i. Pulpit announcements
 - j. Letters and e-mails to all potential volunteers with children and youth
 - l. Orientation and Training sessions for volunteers with children and youth
 - m. Parent meetings and seminars
 - n. Educational displays/bulletin boards
 2. Educating and training those working with children and youth
 - a. Each paid employee and volunteer working with children and youth will read, sign and abide by the Church's policy. This will be updated each September.
 - b. Employees and volunteers will attend periodic training sessions provided by leaders at the direction of the Child Protection Committee or the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Training may include but is not limited to:
 - 1) Information Dissemination
 - a. Occurrences in local churches as reported in the news
 - b. Statistics
 - c. Reasons for implementing Prevention Strategies
 - 2) Recognizing, naming, and defining types of abuses
 - a. Physical
 - b. Emotional
 - c. Neglect
 - d. Sexual
 - e. Ritual
 - 3) Recognizing who abusers can be
 - a. Familiar adults who are trusted by the children
 - b. Usually not strangers
 - c. From all segments of society
 - d. Anyone who is direct contact with children or youth
 - 4) What are we doing to keep children, employees and volunteers safe?
 - a. Screening workers
 - b. Training workers
 - c. Supervising workers
 - d. Reporting suspected child abuse

3. Educating non-church groups using the building
 - a. Non-church groups (where children/youth are involved) using the church building need to abide by the Standards and Procedures (Section E, Number 1) and Discipline (Section G) listed in this document.
 - b. Non-church groups will be required to read and sign the Standards and procedures portion of this document. Formal children and youth programs, such as scouting, shall maintain their own background check records.
4. Educating Parents of Children and Youth
 - a. Communicate to parents of children and youth that their children are their responsibility while on church premises when not participating in a sponsored church event. (i.e. before and after events, while parents are in a meeting/class)

F. Standards and Procedures

1. On-site programs
 - a. Two-adult rule - There will be two adults present when working with children or youth. When one adult is present with children and youth, the classroom door must remain open and another adult must be present on the same hall for the duration of the class/activity.
 - b. Windows in doors will never be blocked
 - c. All classrooms and child care rooms will be open and available for parental visit or observation by staff at all times.
 - d. When a last-minute substitute is needed, reasonable effort will be made to select one from a list of volunteers who have been cleared through an application and criminal background check.
 - e. At the conclusion of activities, and before leaving the facility, confirm all children have been claimed by the appropriate person.
2. Off-site programs
 - a. Two or more adult leaders must be present. They will be unrelated whenever possible.
 - b. Gender ratio of leaders shall be in line with gender ratio of children.
 - c. When participating in an event where other adults will be chaperoning, one adult is permitted to drive two or more youth to the event.
 - e. Drivers for off-site programs will be licensed adults.
 - d. At the conclusion of activities, and before leaving the facility, adults will confirm that all children have been claimed by the appropriate person.
3. Providence Preschool
 - a. One teacher and one assistant teacher will be assigned to every classroom. A floating assistant may be used when rooms are adjacent and the door remains open.
 - b. The Director of the preschool will be available at all times to make random, unannounced visits to the classrooms, and to assist teachers with the children as necessary.
4. Consults -- Any one-on-one consultations or meetings between an employee or volunteer and a child will be conducted in a room or area that is in plain view of others.
5. Photographs -- Any photos of a child or youth used in publications or on the website must have written consent from parents.

G. Discipline

1. No physical punishment or verbal abuse (e.g., ridicule) are to be used at any time.

2. If isolating a child or youth within the classroom or removal from the room becomes necessary, the situation will be discussed with the child or youth's parents or guardian as soon as possible.
3. Children and youth are not to be left unsupervised anywhere in the church.

V. Reporting Child Abuse

Should there be allegations of child abuse at PUMC, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. Any allegation of child abuse shall be treated seriously.
2. Pray for the church and all persons affected by the allegation.
3. Any persons with reason to suspect that child abuse or neglect has occurred shall immediately notify the Senior Pastor of the substance of the allegation, unless the allegation involves the Senior Pastor. The Pastor will begin documenting by completing the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form. (If the allegation involves the Senior Minister, the Chair of the Committee on Staff-Parish Relations will be contacted. He/She will immediately contact the District Superintendent for direction in responding to the allegations).
4. The Senior Pastor shall contact the Lay Leader, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, (and the Chair of Staff Parish Relations if the allegation involves a paid employee) to evaluate and determine whether there is a reason to suspect that child abuse may have occurred. The function of this group is not to conduct an investigation, but to determine, based upon the allegation and the information then in the possession of these persons, whether a reason to suspect exists. In making such a determination, the Committee shall avail itself of such counsel as it deems necessary and as is immediately available, including, but not limited to, consultation with an attorney, with a representative of the church's insurance company, with the District Superintendent, and anonymously with the Virginia Department of Social Services.
5. If it is determined that there is a reason to suspect that child abuse may have occurred, then the following steps shall be taken by the senior pastor:
 - a. Immediately notify the Virginia Department of Social Services of the allegation.
The
Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline number is 1-800-552-7096.
 - b. Immediately notify the parents if it is not known that they have previous knowledge.
 - c. Immediately contact the church's insurance company.
 - d. Immediately notify the District Superintendent.
6. Do not confront the accused with the allegation. If the accused has assigned duties within the life of the church, that person will be temporarily relieved of his/her duties by the Senior Pastor until the investigation is concluded
7. The pastor should extend whatever care and resources are necessary to those impacted by the allegation, but under no circumstances be drawn into a discussion of the truth or falsity of the allegation which could contaminate the investigation. Do not assign blame or take any steps that involve establishing or refuting the allegation.
8. The family of the alleged victim shall receive immediate ministerial support from the Senior or Associate Pastor. Support will also be provided for the alleged abuser and family if needed.
9. Observe confidentially for all parties involved.
10. There shall be a single spokesperson for the Church who shall be designated by the team of the Senior Pastor, Lay Leader and Chair of the Board of Trustees.

VI. Policy Review

The Child Protection Policy and Procedures of Providence United Methodist Church shall be reviewed annually in September for content and implementation by the Child Protection Committee and any changes be brought to the Church Council for approval. A verification follow-up report will be made each year at Charge Conference to insure the integrity of the policy and procedures.

Approved by the Providence UMC Church Council on November, 15, 2010

I have read, understand and will abide by the Child Protection Policy of Providence United Methodist Church.

Signature _____

Date _____

Revised 11-21-2011

Volunteer Application
Providence United Methodist Church
Confidential

This application is to be completed by all volunteers for any position involving the supervision and custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

PERSONAL

Today's date _____

Name _____
Last First Middle

Present address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ E-mail _____

Are you a licensed driver? _____ Are you insured? _____

Please indicate the type of youth or children's work you prefer _____

Please indicate the date you would be available to begin _____

Have you ever been charged, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence or theft)? No Yes If yes, please explain:

As a condition of your volunteering you will be required to have a criminal background check. Do you understand this requirement? Yes No

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

List other churches (names and city) you have attended regularly during the past five years: _____

List previous church work involving children and/or youth (list organizations, type of work performed and dates) _____

List previous non-church related work involving children and/or youth (list organization, type of work performed and dates)_____

List any gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you working with children and/or youth:_____

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize this church to verify the information I have provided on this application by contacting the references I have listed, by conducting a criminal records check, or by other means, including contacting others whom I have not listed. I authorize the references I have listed in this application to give you whatever information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the job for which I wish to volunteer.

In the event that I am accepted as a volunteer by Providence United Methodist Church, I agree to abide by and be bound by the policies of Providence United Methodist Church and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my duties on behalf of Providence United Methodist Church.

I have read this statement and the Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and I am fully aware of its contents. I sign this consent freely and under no duress or coercion.

Signature of Applicant_____

Date_____

Providence United Methodist Church Criminal Background and Sex Offender Report Request Form

Name information of the person to be searched

Full Name (first, middle, last, maiden)_____

Date of Birth_____

Social Security Number_____

Place of Birth (county or city and State or country) _____

Permission for Release of Information

I hereby give consent for Providence United Methodist Church to obtain a criminal history record and sex offender record report on me for purposes of working with children in the church.

Signature_____

Date_____

Providence United Methodist Church ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Please print all information. Provide one copy each: parent, supervising staff, and office.

Date of accident: _____ Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____ Age: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or guardian: _____ Phone: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Describe accident and the actions taken to address any injury:

Providence United Methodist Church
REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____
2. Victim's name: _____
Victim's age/date of birth: _____
3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement (give your detailed summary here): _____

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____
Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): _____

6. Reported to pastor: _____
Date/time: _____
Summary: _____

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian: _____
Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

8. Call to local children and family service agency: _____
Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

9. Call to local law enforcement agency: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Other contacts: _____

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

Signature of Reporter

Date

Note: It is imperative that the person filling out this report be familiar with the state law reporting requirements before taking any action or completing this report.