

_____ United Methodist Church
Policy Statement Regarding Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in Our Church

The _____ United Methodist Church, in accordance with the *2000 Book of Discipline* ¶161.H, recognizes that “family violence and abuse in all its forms – verbal, psychological, physical, sexual – is detrimental to the human community.” Furthermore, this congregation affirms the *2000 Book of Resolutions* statement regarding reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church which states that “God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse.” (¶59)

Therefore, we covenant to participate in the following activities to ensure the safety of the children in our congregation during the upcoming year as outlined in ¶59 of the *2000 Book of Resolutions*.

1. Develop and implement an ongoing education plan for the congregation and its leaders on the reality of child abuse, risk factors leading to child abuse, and strategies for prevention;
2. Adopt screening procedures (use of application forms, interviews, reference checks, background clearance and so forth) for workers (paid and unpaid) directly or indirectly involved in the care of children and youth;
3. Develop and implement safety procedures for church activities such as having two or more unrelated adults present in classroom or activity; leaving doors open and installing half doors or windows in doors or halls; providing hall monitors; instituting sign-in and sign-out procedures for children ages ten or younger, and so forth;
4. Advise children and young persons of an agency or a person outside as well as within the local church whom they can contact for advice and help if they have suffered abuse;
5. Carry liability insurance that includes sexual abuse coverage;
6. Assist the development of awareness and self-protection skills for children and youth through special curriculum and activities; and
7. Be familiar with annual conference and other church policies regarding clergy sexual misconduct.

 Pastor Date

 Administrative Board/Council chair Date

Signatures of paid church staff (All paid employees must read and sign-add pages as necessary)

 Name Date

 Name Date

 Name Date

 Name Date

 Name Date

 Name Date