

Safe Sanctuaries

A

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

**Adopted
February 2008
Revised November 2010**

Harrisburg United Methodist Church

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This policy was adopted by the Administrative Council in February 2008 and revised on November 2010, and shall be periodically reviewed and changes made after consultation with its prime administrator, the Staff Parish Committee and the Administrative Council of Harrisburg UMC. Approved:

Introduction

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

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 and sexual exploitation and abuse."

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse (ritual abuse refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites: ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be) occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. It is real and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidences of child sexual abuse and exploitation in their churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma. Such incidents are devastating to all that are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

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. Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church.

Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Child Abuse Prevention Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth. Be it known that we will not tolerate any violence (physical, emotional, verbal) in any form amongst any age within our church.

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers. Any materials gathered during the selection process and screening will be confidential and only selected persons of a set number will have access to this information for the sole use of safeguarding our church and congregation. We will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events. We will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all-appropriate policies and procedures. We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law. We will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs. We commit ourselves to education, to ongoing assessment of church ministry environment and continuous evaluation of policy and procedures.

Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child will be "...surrounded by steadfast love,...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal."
(“Baptismal Covenant II”, United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44)

Policy on Misconduct and Abuse **For Harrisburg United Methodist Church**

“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” 1 Cor. 4:1-2

Preface:

The impact of misconduct and abuse within the ministerial relationship is far reaching. A survey by the Alban Institute found that unethical behavior, including sexual misconduct, was among the leading factors related to involuntary termination of pastors in U.S. Protestant denominations. Incidents of abuse have legal, financial, physical, emotional and spiritual ramifications affecting a wide web of relationships. There is an impact not only on the victims and their families, but also on the perpetrators and their families, congregations, communities and annual conferences. In situations involving clergy or ministerial leaders, consequences include the potential loss of faith by victims and congregations, as well as the loss of integrity in ministerial leadership. When the church has not been faithful to its ministry of grace and justice, victims often seek recourse from courts. It is imperative that we as a church institute measures to insure justice, wholeness and healing.

*“Learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.”
- Isaiah 1:17 -*

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from any and all kinds of abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults can grow safe and strong. Therefore the following policy has been implemented to reflect the commitment of our congregation to preserve Harrisburg United Methodist Church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others. In order to provide a safe place for children, youth and adults from the possibilities of misconduct and abuse, the Harrisburg United Methodist Church adopts the following plan to provide for a risk free environment. We endorse this policy, set of procedures and educational plan for prevention.

Statement of commitment:

Be it known that Harrisburg United Methodist Church will not tolerate any form of misconduct, harassment and abuse within the ministerial relationship, child abuse or sexual abuse of children or youth by church leaders, paid staff, teachers, youth workers, volunteers or anyone else!

In particular, Harrisburg United Methodist Church ascribes to the beliefs and values of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (2004) which states:

“We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity. We believe that sexual relations where one or both partners are exploitative, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families, and the social order.” Para. 161 pp. 100-101 Book of Discipline

“We deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sex, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. We call for strict enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible. We call for the establishment of adequate protective services, guidance, and counseling opportunities for children thus abused. We insist that all persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured.”

“To keep a safe environment, “sexting”, or sending of messages or pictures with a sexual innuendo is not a behavior that will be tolerated by HUMC. Cyber-bullying, defined below, is another activity that will; not be tolerated. Should incidents become known at any event sponsored by HUMC, including such things as Mission Trips, Youth Rallies, Lock-ins, or camps, inappropriate content on a phone/mobile device will be reported to Parents and/or Guardians involved and the Staff Parish Committee Chairperson. While this will be a teaching moment for minors involved, law enforcement should then be contacted to determine if any legal charges may be made, and for advice and help in removing such messages or pictures from the phone or network systems. Persons involved with such events will be encouraged to receive professional counseling services. When it has been determined that adults initiated an incident, they will not be permitted to work with children or youth.”

Each year students and staff should review and understand the meaning and implications of “inappropriate messages” to help prevent the occurrence of such events.

Plan of Action:

We hereby initiate into policy that all Harrisburg United Methodist Church employees (including clergy) and all **NEW** volunteers who work with youth, children, and/or adults in any capacity, will undergo the screening procedure set forth in this document. The intention of this screening procedure is to make an effort to insure that those whom we entrust with the supervision, care, and mentoring of others would not compromise these relationships with unethical and/or unlawful behavior.

Note: Definitions of misconduct and abuse are provided on the final pages of this policy document.

The screening procedure may include but is not limited to the completion of an application form, a personal interview, an authorization and request for criminal background checks, a reference check, and a signed commitment to providing a safe environment for everyone participating in church activities (on or off site). This material and its content will be kept confidential and only authorized personnel will have access to this information for the sole purpose of safeguarding our church and congregation.

Applicants may be required to:

- Complete an educational/training session on understanding state law and federal law regarding abuse; how to carry out our policies and procedures to prevent misconduct and abuse.
- Become familiar with misconduct and abuse reporting obligations and procedures.
- Attend an annual refresher and retraining session at which time policy and procedures will be reviewed, re-evaluated and revised as necessary.

Harrisburg United Methodist Church will also have within the procedures a process to:

- Have available a clearly defined manner in which to report a suspected incident of misconduct and/or abuse.
- Have a specific response strategy to use if an allegation of misconduct and/or abuse is made at our church.
- Have a specific response strategy to use for media inquiries if an incident occurs.

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test!

I hope you will find out that we have not failed. But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong – not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.

For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

- 2 Cor. 13:5-8 –

Harrisburg United Methodist Church is committed to:

- Promptly investigating any and all allegations of misconduct and abuse.
- Providing prompt and due process, concern for safeguarding the confidential nature of the process, protection of potential victims, and intolerance of retaliation.
- Actively pursuing strict consequences for offending person/s if a grievance is substantiated.
- Continuing education, ongoing assessment of church ministry environment, and to continuous evaluation of policy and procedures.

Note: Some instances of misconduct can be resolved easily and informally between the parties involved. In all other instances, misconduct and/or abuse will be reported to the chair of the Staff-Parish Committee and the pastor in charge. If the conduct involves a clergy person, it will be also reported to the district superintendent or the presiding bishop.

Definitions of misconduct and abuse:

Sexual Misconduct is sexual behavior, which includes sexual exploitation, clergy/ministerial sexual misconduct, any form of criminal sexual conduct and sexual harassment.

Clergy/Ministerial Misconduct is a betrayal of sacred trust and violation of the fiduciary responsibility of an ordained minister, local pastor, or lay minister. When this violation involves sexual contact or “sexualized behavior”, it may be called **clergy sexual misconduct**. Clergy sexual misconduct or sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs, when a person in a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker, or volunteer. Some relationships between so-called “consenting adults” within the context of the Church may be clergy/ministerial misconduct.

Sexual Exploitation refers to unethical behavior by clergy, staff, or volunteers in a leadership role through sexual contact with another person. Any sexual contact made by clergy, staff or volunteers is considered an exploitation of their role and responsibility to others attending the church and church activities. Consent by the person/s involved is not a legal defense for sexual exploitation.

Sexual Abuse is a sexual invasion of the body by lack of consent. Sexual abuse may be: rape, sexual assault, incest, indecent exposure, statutory rape, involuntary or voluntary deviate sexual intercourse with a child, promotion of prostitution, pornography with children, indecent assault, and aggravated indecent assault. Sexual abuse is also an internal assault, a deliberate violation of emotional integrity; a hostile, degrading act of violence.

Sexual Assault is a sexual act against one's will.

Sexism is any attitude or institutional structure that systematically subordinates persons or groups because of their sex (gender). It is a social and spiritual illness manifested in assimilation, socialization, harassment, discrimination, and oppression.

Sexual Harassment (according to The United Methodist Church) is a sin. It is defined as "any unwanted sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive." It is not an exclusively sexual issue, but rather an exploitation of a power relationship. It includes creation of a hostile or abusive working environment.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines, any unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct constitute **sexual harassment** when the following conditions exist:

- When submission to such conduct is a term or condition of employment; when submitting to sexual harassment is an implicit or explicit provision of attaining or maintaining employment;
- When submitting to or rejecting such conduct is a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual's promotions, transfers, job assignments, and/or performance appraisals;
- When the harassment unreasonably interferes with the employee's work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

The primary criterion in determining "hostile environment" is whether the conduct "unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance" or creates "an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment."

Gender Harassment is unwelcome or unwanted conduct, which is gender specific. Although not specifically "sexual", gender harassment may be recognized in patterns of behavior creating hostile or abusive working environments. Both sexual harassment and gender harassment are exploitations of power, and considered discrimination by law.

Sex Discrimination is disparate treatment based on gender. Both sexual harassment and gender harassment are forms of sex discrimination.

Physical Abuse is abuse by an individual deliberately and intentionally causing bodily harm. For example, violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, etc.), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and other non-accidental injuries.

Emotional Abuse is abuse by an individual exposing another person to spoken or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message of worthlessness to the victim. Emotional abuse may include such things as being locked in a closet, being deprived of signs of affection, constantly being told they are bad or stupid, being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs.

Ritual Abuse is abuse in which an individual responsible for the welfare of another person inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological violations regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way. The abuser may appeal to a higher authority to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats to harm other persons and/or animals.

Neglect is abuse by an individual endangering a person's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, or affection and affirmation of self-worth.

Sexting. Sexting is the inappropriate use of a mobile device or computer to send messages or pictures with sexual innuendos. It is a form of bullying and harassment. Anyone who possesses pictures of a child on their phone or mobile device or computer can be held legally responsible for possession of child pornography and may be prosecuted by law.

(In South Dakota, [sexting can result in state felony charges](#), including crimes against a child. If charged, defendants must automatically register in the South Dakota sex offender database. Juvenile defendants ages 15 and older are included in automatic sex offender registration)

Bullying: There are many types of bullying. Among the most prevalent are verbal, physical, indirect, social alienation, intimidation, and cyberbullying. Following are some bullying facts that are related to each type mentioned.

Verbal bullying – This is the most common type. It includes name-calling, offensive remarks or consistently making the person the butt of jokes.

Physical bullying – Although usually portrayed as the most common type in the movies, it only comes second to verbal bullying. Any aggressive hitting, pulling or shoving is classified under this type.

Indirect bullying – Usually common among girls, it involves back-biting and spreading false rumors about a certain person.

Social alienation – We usually see this in teenage films wherein the main character, typically a demure type, is excluded from groups by pompous girls

Intimidation – Any type of verbal threat with the purpose of making the victim give in to the bully's demands is considered under this category.

Cyberbullying – Since the advent of the Internet and the introduction of the cell phone, a host of new and diverse bullying facts have manifested. All of these are classified under cyberbullying. It involves destroying or smearing the victim's reputation via emails, blogs, forum posts, text messages, etc.

**“Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits
sin.”
-James 4:17-**

**Please direct all inquiries regarding this Policy for Misconduct and Abuse
to:**

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Response Strategy

Staff Parish Committee will designate 2 of its members to form a Response Team. These individuals will have gone over the necessary procedures and forms ahead of time and will be prepared to take action.

The following steps will be taken whenever an incident of misconduct, harassment or abuse is suspected, witnessed or reported.

1. Contact and inform Clergy and/or a representative of Staff Parish Committee, at which time an incident report will be completed. A copy will be provided for the person reporting the incident. (Incident report form with contact names and telephone numbers will be attached to this set of procedures.)
2. Clergy and/or Response Team will contact the alleged victim/s and determine what immediate action can be taken to insure their immediate safety and well being.
3. If the alleged incident is suspected to be of an unlawful nature, Clergy and/or Response Team will contact law enforcement authorities, the annual conference authorities, the church's insurance agent, and the church's attorney
4. Response Team will keep a detailed written account of each of the steps they take.
5. Clergy and/or Staff Parish as well as Response Team will refer all inquiries from the media to the designated person/s who will be authorized to present a prepared statement and respond to questions. (Lay Leadership will identify this person ahead of time.)

Prepared Statement to the Media:

On behalf of the Harrisburg United Methodist Church I have been authorized to report that our clergy and church leaders have been informed of a possible incident of misconduct or abuse. Be assured that we take any and all allegations of this nature very seriously and the incident in questions is under investigation. It is indeed our policy to not tolerate any form of misconduct, harassment and/or abuse within church activities. Any situation of this nature, of course, must be treated with the utmost sensitivity, therefore it is necessary to respect the need to keep the names of those involved confidential at this time. Our primary concern is to insure safety of our church family and friends visiting our church. We are committed to pursuing this matter in a manner that is fair and thorough. At this point, the proper authorities have been notified and we ask for everyone's prayers, patience, and support as we endeavor to resolve this very serious matter placed before us."

a. Report to the Congregation:

The congregation will be informed of the incident by clergy and/or the Response Team in a concise and honest manner by letter; announcement in worship; and a special meeting to allow discussion and input from congregation members. Clergy and Staff Parish will encourage the congregation to maintain a Christian attitude that assures justice for all and healing for those who are suffering.

6. Clergy, Response Team and/or Staff Parish Committee will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.
7. Clergy and Response Team will determine ministerial care for those involved in the alleged incident and their families.
8. Clergy and Staff Parish Committee will evaluate policy and procedures regarding misconduct, harassment and abuse and make any necessary changes.
9. On-going education will be maintained to prevent further incidents from happening.

Checklist of things to record after reported incident of child abuse.

Check list – part 1	Status
State victim's name, age, birth date (if available) and when and where the initial conversation/report was given.	
Give your detailed summary of the victim's report.	
Name of the person accused.	
Relationship of accused to victim (church volunteer, paid staff, family member, other)	
Who else was present when you talked to the victim?	
When did you talk to others about this? To whom did you talk?	
When did you report to pastor/staff parish committee member?	

Check list – part 2	Status
<p>When did you talk to the victim's parents/guardian? Who else was present? Did you speak in person or on the phone? Give date, time and summary of conversation.</p>	
<p>When did you inform social services? To whom did you speak? Give summary of conversation.</p>	
<p>When did you call law enforcement? With whom did you speak? Give summary of conversation.</p>	
<p>To whom else did you speak? When? Give summary of each conversation, stating also, who all was present.</p>	

Check list – part 3	Status
<p>Write down any other actions you took, whether in order to assure the safety and well being of the victim or in order to investigate the accusation. Any action you took is important. Keep a detailed record of dates, time, who was there, what was being said.</p>	
<p>Remember to keep this record safe. It is an important yet confidential record for you and may be of help to you and the church in procedures to come.</p>	

Transportation Safety Procedures

Harrisburg UMC is committed to providing an all around safe Program for all people who participate in our ministries. In regards to the transportation of passengers on any church sponsored activity, including church chartered or hosted scout groups, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Drivers are expected to know and abide by the official rules of the road.
2. Drivers are expected to refrain from transporting any passenger on church sponsored activities if they (the driver) have any medical or physical condition which may hinder their abilities to provide safe passages for their passengers. Any driver who has been convicted of DUI or has a Special Vehicle Starting device installed on a vehicle due to DUI convictions, may not drive our youth or children. This includes our scouting programs chartered by Harrisburg UMC.
3. Drivers must submit a copy of their drivers license to the church office prior to transporting passengers in any church owned vehicle.
4. A report of your driving record may be requested from the State Department of Transportation by our insurance carrier.
5. Drivers who will be using a POV to transport Passengers on any church sponsored activity, must have for presentation, a copy of their driver's license and proof of insurance on the vehicle which they will be driving. These forms may be photo copied by the person in charge of the event before the transporting of passengers occurs. When driving a POV, the liability insurance on that vehicle will be the primary insurance in case of an accident.
6. Drivers are responsible for any traffic tickets issued to them while they are driving a church owned vehicle or a POV during a church sponsored event.
7. All drivers of church owned vehicles must be 21 years of age.
8. Transportation of passengers who leave from the church on a church sponsored activity will be provided by an approved adult (21 years of age or older) driver. Likewise transportation for passengers returning to the church at the conclusion of any activity will be provided by an approved adult driver.
9. The "Two-Adult-Rule" applies during transportation. No single adult should transport youth or children in one vehicle; two adults should be present.
10. "When children or youth are being transported by vehicles the driver shall not text or talk on a cell phone until the vehicle is stopped and it is safe to do so."
11. "Drivers who will be using POV (Personally Owned Vehicle) to transport passengers on any church sponsored activity, must have for presentation, a copy of their driver's license and proof of insurance on the vehicle which they will be driving. Drivers of a POV on a Church sanctioned trip, shall verify if the liability insurance on that vehicle will be the "secondary" or

primary insurance in case of an accident. Prior to long distance trips such as Mission trips, leaders shall obtain a "Certificate of Liability Insurance" from the church insurer.

Education

In order to keep this policy updated and everyone educated, HUMC shall adhere to the following plan of action:

1. The availability of this policy will be published in the church newsletter once a year, every year. The policy is available upon request.
2. Church leadership will once a year review and discuss this policy, educate itself on changes of the law and review the practical consequences for this church.
3. Group leaders, staff and volunteers, who work with youth will have an educational session once a year where child abuse and prevention is discussed, as well as this policy reintroduced.
4. Every "new members" class will get an introduction to this policy and to the topics of abuse and harassment.
5. Sunday School teachers will have an educational session once a year, before the start of the new school year, where the policy and our procedures are explained.
6. Teenagers should have a Sunday School lesson on the subject once a year.

For a list of educational materials, addresses and lesson plans see Appendix.

Screening and Selecting Church Workers

HUMC depends on both paid youth workers and a large number of congregational volunteers.

The goal of screening anyone, who wants to work with our youth, is to identify those, who should not be doing so.

Therefore, before a person begins work at our church, we will:

- Interview the applicant
- Have the applicant fill out our application form (see appendix)
- Check references
- Check the records section in the Public Safety Building for the list of registered sex offenders

Before a volunteer can participate as helper with the youth program:

- Have the volunteer fill out our form for volunteer workers
- Wait for a period of 6 months for newcomers to become familiar

- **APPENDIX**

Application Form 1 for Hired Workers

The information obtained in this form is for internal use of Harrisburg UMC only.

Last Name:

First Name:

Date of Birth:

Telephone Number:

e-mail address:

Address:

1. Tell us about your background in working with children and youth.

2. List your previous residencies (last five years)

City	State

3. List your current memberships (community, business, labor or professional organizations)

4. Please give us references. List those who are familiar with your character as it relates to working with youth. References will be checked when necessary.

5. Additional information:

a)	Do you use illegal drugs?	Yes	No
b)	Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? If yes, please explain.	Yes	No
c)	Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?	Yes	No
d)	Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?	Yes	No
e)	Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people? If yes, please explain.	Yes	No

I understand that:

- The information that I have provided may be verified, if necessary by contacting persons of organizations named in this application or by contacting any person or organization that may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless United Methodist Church, Harrisburg United Methodist Church and the employees and volunteers thereof.
- In signing this application, I affirm that the information I have given is true and correct.

Signature of applicant

Date

Application Form 2 for Volunteers

The information obtained in this form is for internal use of Harrisburg UMC only.

Last Name:

First Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

e-mail address:

Additional information:

a)	Do you use illegal drugs?	Yes	No
b)	Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? If yes, please explain.	Yes	No
c)	Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?	Yes	No
d)	Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?	Yes	No
e)	Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people? If yes, please explain.	Yes	No

I understand that:

- The information that I have provided may be verified, if necessary by contacting persons of organizations named in this application or by contacting any person or organization that may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless United Methodist Church, Harrisburg United Methodist Church and the employees and volunteers thereof.
- In signing this application, I affirm that the information I have given is true and correct.

Date and Signature

Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of Harrisburg United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) should volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.
3. All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been active participants of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
4. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children or youth.
5. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
6. Adult volunteers shall immediately report to their Pastor/supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth?
 Yes No
2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times? Yes No
3. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to abide by the six-months rule before beginning a volunteer assignment? Yes No
4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment? Yes No
5. As a volunteer to this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? Yes No

6. As a volunteer to this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse?

Yes No

(Answering yes to this question does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering with children or youth.)

7. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse?

Yes No

I have read this **Participation Covenant**, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print full name

Child Sexual Abuse Knowledge Inventory

Please indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1. Child sexual abuse always involves physical contact with children.
2. Most child molesters are male.
3. Child molesters are usually strangers.
4. Victims of sexual abuse suffer no long term effects.
5. One out of five molesters begin their activity before age 18.
6. Only a small percentage of victims are male.
7. Most churches screen workers for potential molesters.
8. Church leaders can not be held liable for child sexual abuse.
9. Some child sexual abuse victims have won settlements of over \$ 1,000,000 from churches.
10. A child molester who has experienced a religious conversion no longer presents a threat to children.
11. Child sexual abuse is a criminal offense in all 50 states.
12. A child molester may have over 500 victims in a lifetime.
13. Churches have in the past been supportive of victims of child sexual abuse.

PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE CONGREGATION IN GENERAL NEW MEMBERS AND OLD

1. Begin the meeting with a prayer.
2. Have a short devotional about our church's need to model God's caring and protective love to all children, who attend our church.
3. Take the "Child Sexual Abuse Knowledge Inventory."
4. Explain what child abuse is (for example use video "Hear their Cries")
5. Explain:
 - Why are we addressing this group?
 - To gain endorsement and support for efforts at risk reduction. A congregation that understands the various concerns and issues inherent in the problem of child sexual abuse will help.

Why does child abuse present a problem to our church?

- The church is vulnerable (show illustration # 3)
- The church may be sued (show # 2)
- The church does not want "the impact" (#1)

What do we do about it?

- Introduce our Policy and Response Strategy
- Introduce questionnaire and it's purpose
- Introduce Covenant Statement
- Introduce Awareness Program
 - o Leaders have educational session once a year
 - o Sunday School teachers have educational session before the start of the school year each year
 - o All volunteer and hired workers have an educational session once a year
 - o New members get an introduction

End with a personal commitment, responsive reading, prayer or some other personal devotion to solemnize the commitment to provide a safe place for the children.

II.

Education for Parents

Follow Plan I.

Add:

Explain

- the two adult rule, in church and out, in cars and on location
- ongoing supervision at all events; give examples, ask for participation in establishing helper groups
- talk about trips and outings; good parent participation needed to keep up standards of supervision
- emphasize how helpful it would be if parents could communicate to their children that they have to help with being supervised. No leaving the church in the middle of a program, unless they are under proper supervision (i.e. parents picking them up or the like)
- explain about the mentoring program – if two adult rule is to be followed and mentoring is to be continued, we need consent forms signed by the parents for the individual case.

III.
Education for Sunday School Teachers, Youth Workers and Volunteers with
Youth

Follow Plan I and II

Add: Detailed information on the “Response Strategy”.

Every teacher and helper needs to know in advance, what is to be done in case of an alleged abuse or in case something has been witnessed or observed.

Everyone has to have a copy of the “Response Strategy” and be familiar with the checklist of things to do. Explain, why there is a checklist.

Explain confidentiality and legal risks as well as ethical point of view on reporting.

Go over different scenarios with participants.

Guidelines for “Review Committee” (for Staff Parish Committee)

Churches, as well as individuals in leadership positions, are legally most vulnerable to litigation when they are perceived as indifferent or slipshod in their approaches to investigation and remediation of a complaint of sexual harassment or misconduct. If victimized persons feel that their church won't listen to them, they are far more likely to seek a secular court that will. Persons who are involved in investigating these complaints should keep in mind two key objectives – first to provide just process that is fair to the complainant and the accused, and second, to be sure to document the process to be able to demonstrate its fairness in the event of subsequent scrutiny of the process.

I. Preliminary Considerations

Consider using a team of two unbiased investigators

- Greater reliability in gathering facts
- Check on each other's conduct during the investigation
- Collective decisions more probative than unilateral ones: Two heads are better than one
- Corroboration of each other's testimony, in the event of a subsequent trial.

Create a separate file on the investigation for notes, statements taken, the report of the investigation and any disciplinary actions taken

- Avoid editorial comments or personal opinion
- Record facts leading to conclusions
- File access confidentiality

II. Gathering Facts

Be acquainted with existing conference sexual harassment and/or misconduct policies as well as our church policy, General Conference resolutions, relevant provisions in the Book of Discipline, pertinent Judicial Council decisions, and document the review of existing policies.

Interviewing the alleged victim (complainant)

- Take the complaint seriously
- Consider the use of a victim advocate
- Explain at the outset what the investigation/complaint process will involve
- Do not promise complete confidentiality, but do not indicate those with knowledge of the complaint and the investigation will be limited by the investigator's best efforts.

- Listen and find out what happened from the complainant. Remember this may be your best opportunity to hear the complainant's story in a non-adversarial setting.

Note specific facts and ask open-ended questions – in particular what it was that happened? When? Who? Where? Welcome or unwelcome? Who did complainant tell? Witnesses?

Find out the effect of the conduct on the complainant from the complainant.

Ask, what he/she wants to happen and whether they will give their permission to be identified.

Explain what procedures are available and how complainant can access them.

- Third party mediation
- Grievance/complaint process

Evaluate the complainant's credibility

- Demeanor
- Believability – motive to lie?
- Refusal to provide information such as witnesses, specifics as to the misconduct – DOCUMENT

Obtain a written statement from the complainant. Make it concise and specific (date, place, specific events).

Type up interview notes for file.

Interviewing the accused perpetrator (respondent)

Explain the purpose and indicate that no decision has been reached concerning the truth of the allegation.

Identify the alleged victim (if permission has previously been obtained) and the specific basis of the complaint.

Warn against any retaliation or reprisal against either the alleged victim or any witnesses.

Elicit response to the allegations – ask follow up questions, determine who are corroborating witnesses.

If cooperation with the investigation is refused, document the refusal.

Assess credibility (see above).

Take statement, if warranted and/or offer the opportunity to submit a written statement.

Type notes for file.

Interviewing Witnesses

Find out what witnesses know, get specifics.

Distinguish between firsthand (eyewitness) and secondhand (hearsay, rumor) information.

Assess credibility (see above)

Take statement if warranted (dates, places, specific events)

Inquire whether witness may be willing to testify

Type notes for file

Evaluate the facts from the perspective of the alleged victim – the “reasonable person” standard for objectionable and offensive conduct.

Determine if the sexual conduct was “voluntary” or “unwelcome.” Take into account the relationship of the parties. Be wary of finding “voluntary” conduct in counseling situations.

Draft thorough, even-handed report

- Describe the process chronologically (dates, places, events)
- Provide the exact details of complaint (specific events)
- Note that documents, if any, were reviewed and when relevant, attach copies.
- Describe interviews, noting where information received was firsthand as opposed to rumor and hearsay.
- State conclusions reached and justification for them – be specific
- Recommend corrective action or actions which will
 - o Prevent further misconduct
 - o Avoid punishing complainant for coming forward
 - o Be consistent with practices under policies in place
 - o If resources available, offer counseling, other assistance

Follow up with complainant and accused perpetrator

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

I, (NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN) am the parent or legal guardian of (NAME OF MINOR), hereinafter "my child", and I am informed of the activities offered by Harrisburg United Methodist Church, specifically the mentor program.

As the parent or legal guardian of my child, I hereby consent for my child to participate in the activities of the mentoring program and to spend time with her/his mentor (NAME OF MENTOR) alone .

As a parent or legal guardian of my child, I hereby consent for my child to ride in a vehicle, alone, for the purpose of transporting them to or from an event within a 30 minute radius of HUMC or the greater Sioux Falls area with any of the following named persons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

(DATE)

(SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN)