Safe Sanctuaries is about being prepared and thinking ahead.

It is not about limiting ministries.

It is about doing ministry safely with children and the adults who work with them.
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I. 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 invitation - 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, both 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. Many annual conferences can cite specific incidents 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 who 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 and strong. (From The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 1996. Copyright © 1996 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission, [pp.384-386])

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

A. 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.

B. Statement of Covenant
Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, Aldersgate United Methodist Church (hereafter referred to as AUMC) pledges 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 Paid/Volunteer Staff with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of Paid/Volunteer Staff; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our Paid/Volunteer Staff over children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

C. 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)
II. DEFINITIONS
A. Child Abuse - any act committed by a person in a position of trust (Parent, Teacher, Caregiver, or other) which harms or threatens to harm a minor child’s welfare, physical, spiritual or mental health.

We recognize child abuse may fall into these categories:

1. Physical Abuse - Inflicting bodily harm to minors constitutes physical abuse. Instances of physical abuse include any physical act of undue force such as assault with a knife, strap or other implement; burns, fractures and bruises resulting from being beaten, pushed down, shaken, pinched, slapped or thrown. Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks.

2. Sexual Abuse - Any time a minor is used for the sexual stimulation of an adult or older minor, abuse has occurred. The minor is powerless either to consent to or resist such sexual acts. This includes fondling, sexual intercourse, participation in sexual acts, incest, exploitation for the purpose of pornography or prostitution and/or exposure to adult sexual activity.

3. Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse deeply affects a minor’s self-esteem by submitting him/her to verbal assault or emotional cruelty. It does not always involve injuries we can see. The minor receives the message that he/she is not good and never will be. Emotional abuse can include closed confinement (being shut in a small area), making racial remarks, excessive punishment, use of profanity, knowingly permitting drug or alcohol abuse, ignoring or encouraging peer abuse.

4. Neglect - Not hearing or addressing a minor’s basic needs for health, welfare or safety resulting in harm to the minor. It can include any of the following acts of negligence or maltreatment:
   a. Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing
   b. Abandonment
   c. Refusal to seek treatment for illness
   d. Inadequate supervision
   e. Health hazards in the home, school, or church
   f. Ignoring a minor’s need for affirmation and nurturing

5. Ritual – abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violence is inflicted on a child or youth, intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone (or multiple people) with responsibility for the victim’s welfare. It can include cruel treatment of animals or repetitious threats of sexual or physical violence to child/youth or people related to the victim.

Adults who have been convicted of abuse or neglect of children/youth or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children will not be employed and shall not volunteer service in any Aldersgate Academy or Church-sponsored activity or program for minors.

Indiana Child Protective Services: 1-800-800-5556
III. STANDARDS: for Staff in Aldersgate Academy programs for children

A. Leadership Role Definitions

The Aldersgate Academy adopts the following standards for Authority Figures and Assistants.

1. AUTHORITY FIGURES (Lead Teachers as well as Team, Assistant and Substitute Teachers)
   a) Primary classroom leaders of children’s activities.
   b) Work with children (infant-5th grade)
   c) Must be a minimum of 18 years of age
   d) Must be able to supervise volunteers
   e) In the judgment of the Aldersgate Academy Director/Assistant Director, be competent to lead activities.

2. ADULT ASSISTANTS (Caregivers, Student Teachers and Volunteers)
   a) Lend aid to an Authority Figure
   b) Must be a minimum of 18 years of age
   c) Volunteers must be with an Authority figure at all times.
   d) Work under the direction of the Authority Figure, Director/Assistant Director
   e) In the judgment of the Aldersgate Academy Director/Assistant Director, competent to assist in activities.

B. Staff to Child Ratios

1. May combine two or more groups as long as ratio of younger age group is met.
2. Director or person in charge shall correct child/staff ratios immediately.
3. The Academy must have at least two adults present during all hours of operation.
4. The Academy shall make arrangements so that if only one adult is supervising a group of children, that adult has means available to communicate with other caregivers and summon assistance without leaving children unattended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Youngest Child In the Group</th>
<th>Max Number of Children Supervised by 1 Caregiver</th>
<th>Max Number of Children in 1 Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Years and Older</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Children With Special Needs
The Aldersgate Academy accepts one special needs child per class. The above ratios may be adjusted depending on the nature and degree of a participant’s special needs.
C. Appropriate Interpersonal Boundaries and Staff Interactions with children
Academy Staff must always be above reproach in their words and conduct. They are to behave in a godly manner demonstrating Christian conduct, respect, honesty and trustworthiness and these are the ways they should act.

1. Academy Staff should never initiate physical contact, such as a hug, and should always be the one to end the contact.
2. Academy Staff must not in any way initiate any of the following activities with children: extended hugging, kissing, sitting on a lap, inappropriate touching or being alone with a child.
3. In the event that a child approaches an Academy with the intent to hug or kiss, or unexpectedly does so, the Academy Staff should accept the affection, but should as quickly as possible, in a non-rejecting manner, encourage a more appropriate form of physical contact.
4. Appropriate physical contact for ages 0 – 3 years include picking up the child, comforting the child, holding the hand of child, changing diapers.
5. Appropriate physical contact with children ages 4+ could include a handshake, pat on the back, quick hug of encouragement with hands located in shoulder area, and a ‘high five’.

D. Discipline
1. Academy Staff treat children with respect. Keep in mind “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
2. Academy uses positive discipline to teach children right from wrong, which behaviors are acceptable and which are not and how to respect the rights of others.
3. Academy Staff shall not use corporal punishment or humiliating or frightening discipline techniques.
   - Discipline is never punishment. Discipline is teaching, done positively and with respect and is appropriate to the situation and age of the child.
   - In extreme circumstances, for example fighting, physical restraint may be necessary and must be reported immediately to the Director or Assistant Director.
4. Food or beverage is never withheld as a form of discipline.
5. Academy Staff are aware that children may display a variety of emotions. Academy Staff help children indentify these emotions and teach them appropriate ways to express them and help build a trusting relationship with each child that provides both emotional and physical security.
6. Academy Staff model and encourage social behavior such as helping, sharing and cooperating.
7. Academy Staff offer guidance and encourage communication during problem solving and conflict resolution.
8. Academy Staff are encouraged to request advice from the Director/Assistant Director if repeat behaviors arise.
9. Director shall ensure that all State Licensing guidelines are followed concerning discipline.

E. Emergencies
1. Academy Staff shall follow all Medical, Fire, Weather Emergency and Evacuation guidelines as outlined at annual staff training and based on Indiana state licensing procedures.
2. Academy Staff shall be trained in First Aid and CPR based on the Indiana State Licensing Guidelines. (470 IAC 3-4.7-33 and 470 IAC 3-4.7-34)
3. Academy Staff shall follow all procedures, as outlined in annual training, for Injury reporting.
4. First Aid boxes and Defibrillators are accessible throughout the church and all Academy Staff should be familiar with their locations.
F. Field Trips
1. All outings must have a signed and dated parental waiver from each parent/guardian. The waiver must state the nature of the outing, the time of departure and return, the destination (including the name of the host, address and phone number) the mode of transportation and the cost to the child, emergency contact information and medical information.
2. When an outing involves transportation, the Authority Figure should leave a list of the drivers’ names, license numbers, names of occupants in each vehicle, emergency information and copies of permission forms with the Academy Director/Assistant Director.
3. The Director shall insure that the vehicles are properly functioning, the vehicles have up to date insurance, and the adult drivers who will be driving are properly insured.
4. Every person in the vehicle must wear a seatbelt or use an age appropriate car seat at all times when the vehicle is moving.
5. Once a child has been assigned to a particular vehicle, he/she is not to switch vehicles.
6. Authority Figure will all have copies of permission slips and emergency contact information.
7. Director shall ensure that all Field Trip guidelines are followed based on Indiana State Licensing. (407 IAC 3-4.7-72)

G. Health and Safety Licenses
1. Any operating licenses and/or certificates of inspection relating to health and safety from the state, as well as any that the local county or city requires, are available through the Academy office.

H. Policy Instruction
1. Aldersgate Academy Safe Sanctuaries Policy, protecting children, is accepted by the Aldersgate Academy Council, implemented, and publicized to both the Academy staff and families.
2. The Aldersgate Academy Director shall schedule yearly training for all staff.
   a. All Academy staff are required annually to review this policy, to attend a policy instruction session and to sign a new participation statement kept on file with the Academy.
   b. All Academy Staff are required to attend Safe Sanctuaries policy instruction before working with children. In the case that this is not possible, the staff member may only serve as an assistant with another trained adult and under the stipulation that they attend the next training session.
   c. Questions regarding this policy and possible exceptions should be sent to the Academy Council, in writing, for review. Changes and exceptions to the policy may be made by the Academy Council, in appropriate circumstances that do not violate state licensing guidelines.
3. The Academy Council shall review the policy yearly for changes and updates and will inform the Academy Director of any such changes before yearly training begins.

I. Written Record of Non-Compliance
Academy staff are expected to provide a written record/report any non-compliance of this policy, within 48 hours of their occurrence, to the Academy Director and Academy Council.
IV. HIRING SCREENING PROCEDURES (used by Academy Human Resources Committee)
An essential component of preventing abuse by staff is careful screening. Although we recognize the integrity of an overwhelming number of the persons with discerned calling to ministries with children we realize that abuse may occur in the school. Therefore, we believe that all staff must be properly screened. It will be the responsibility of the Academy Human Resources Committee to ensure compliance. The following steps are used for screening applicants:

A. Complete an application form
A completed Academy application form will be required for all staff and will be kept on file.

B. Conduct an interview with applicants
An interview will be conducted with all applicants. The interviewer should not ask for information about marital status or handicapping conditions as stated in Federal/State discrimination guidelines. The interviewer should also be sensitive to age and sex discrimination guidelines; however adequate information may be requested to ensure compliance with this policy’s minimum standards. The interviewer should be aware of red flags. These are indicators of issues that must be explored further in order for the Academy to be assured that all information is collected concerning a prospective staff member. Red flags might include but are not limited to:

1. Many addresses over a short period of time
   - This could indicate that a person is trying to be anonymous, but it could also indicate that they were a college student who moved a lot to keep rent low.

2. Wants to work with only one age group
   - If someone would like to work with only one specific age group, it could indicate that the person has targeted that age group for abuse, or it could mean that is the age group for which they are trained and that experience has shown that they are not as gifted with other ages. Also be aware of anyone who seems overly committed to one age group. For example, someone who simultaneously leads a scout troop, coaches Little League, serves as a Big Brother and now wants to teach may be neglecting their own age appropriate peer relationships in order to cultivate potential victims.

3. Does not want/need/like close supervision
   - The interview may indicate that the person does not like to be closely supervised which might raise questions about motivation for applying for this work.
   - The interviewer needs to be able to explore issues as they arise during the interview and to depart from the set of prepared questions to do so.

C. Complete Reference Checks
A minimum of two references must be contacted on all paid applicants.

D. Complete Background Checks
Background checks, with written authorization, must be conducted on all Academy staff that have contact with children and shall include, but are not limited to:

1. National Criminal Database Check
2. National Sex Registry Database Check
3. Academy staff background checks will be initiated by the Academy Human Resources Committee and be accessible to the HR Committee and the Academy Council.
4. Written authorization from employee/volunteer shall be kept in their file.
5. Concerns will be reported to the Academy Human Council who in turn will decide how the situation shall be handled.

E. Complete Checklist for Paid/Volunteer Staff
Checklist for Paid/Volunteer Staff shall be completed and placed in applicant’s file. These should be updated yearly upon review of background checks and annual review of the Safe Sanctuary policy. Checklist can be found on page 17 of this policy book.

F. Federal and State Law
The requirements of any and all Federal laws or State laws affecting or relating to employment or child abuse must be complied with, and in any case where there is a conflict between such laws and the procedure outlined in this document, said laws shall prevail and the procedure outlined in the document shall be modified to the extent necessary to eliminate such conflict. This policy is subject to all Federal and/or State laws relating to employment and child abuse.
V. REPORTING ACCIDENTS/INJURIES
1. Occasionally during the course of regular program activities accidents and injuries occur.
2. After appropriate support and assistance is given to the injured child or adult, the Academy Director/Assistant Director shall be notified. A written Accident Report (found on page 14 of this policy and in the Director’s office) should be filled out by the adult in charge when the accident occurred. A description of the incident, contributing factors and the treatment given should be noted. Witnesses to the incident should be listed with addresses and phone numbers for follow-up purposes.
3. The Incident Investigation Reports will be reviewed by the Academy Council, semi-annually. A member of the Council should be appointed to investigate the incident and bring recommendations back to the Council to help prevent a recurrence of the accident. These reports are to be kept in the Academy office for future reference.
4. An accident report form is attached to this policy and copies are available in the Academy office.

VI. REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT
In the event of suspected abuse or neglect the Academy staff member shall immediately notify the Academy Director. The Academy staff member shall also make a report to Indiana Child Protection Agency (1-800-800-5556). In the event the victim feels uncomfortable reporting to the Academy Director or if the suspected abuse involves the Director, Assistant Director or another Academy staff member, reports may also be made to the Academy Human Resources Committee. The Academy HR may be reached by contacting the Academy office (260-432-4507).

A. STATE LICENSING RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. The Academy shall at all times maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained regarding the suspected abuse or neglect of a child.
2. During the first two weeks of employment, all staff shall receive documented training in recognizing and reporting children abuse and neglect. The Director shall update this training annually.
3. The Academy shall not employ or utilize the services of a person known by the division and reported to the center as a substantiated perpetrator of children abuse or neglect.
4. The Director and all staff shall refrain from questioning children and suspected perpetrators beyond gathering information to report the suspected abuse or neglect to child protective services.
5. Staff shall immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect as follows:
   a. If the alleged abuse or neglect occurred while the child was under the care of the Aldersgate Academy or the Academy receives a complaint from anyone regarding possible abuse or neglect of a child by a staff member, they or the Director must immediately call the Indiana Intuitional Abuse Hotline (1-800-562-2407) or Law Enforcement Agency and self-report the suspected abuse or neglect.
   b. If the alleged abuse or neglect occurred while the child was not under the care of the Aldersgate Academy, staff shall immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to the county child protective services (1-800-800-5556).
   c. Reporting suspicions to the Director or other supervisory personnel does not relieve the individual staff of their responsibility to report directly to child protective services.
   d. Aldersgate Academy shall dismiss an employee or volunteer if the child protective services investigation substantiates the abuse or neglect.
B. REPORTING GUIDELINES
1. Believe the child’s story. Don't deny the problem or blame the child. Stay calm. Intense emotions will frighten the child. A quiet, unhurried conversation conveys calmness. Tell the child he/she is safe and will not be harmed.
2. A child abuse report form (found on pg 15 of this policy manual and in the Director’s office) should be initiated and given to the Academy Director and/or a member of the Aldersgate Academy Human Resources Committee.
3. In cases of questionable abuse or neglect the Academy staff member should immediately discuss the situation with the Academy Director to review the signs of abuse and begin steps to report abuse/neglect, if necessary. The Academy Director shall document the discussion and resolution and immediately contact the Academy Council.
4. After appropriate investigation, abuse or neglect is suspected, the Academy staff member shall be responsible for making a report to child protective services (1-800-800-5556) or law enforcement.
5. If a child protective services caseworker or law enforcement official comes to the Academy to interview a child, the Academy Director or designee will be present.

C. INVESTIGATION
1. The Academy Director shall conduct or direct an investigation into the suspected abuse (in addition to Child Protection Services investigation). Interim measures may be taken during the investigation to safeguard the potential victim or victims. At the conclusion of the investigation, appropriate actions shall be taken which may include the dismissal of employee.
2. The Academy Council Chairperson shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse or neglect to the Aldersgate Academy insurance carrier and the Pastor of Aldersgate UMC.

D. RESPONSE PROCEDURES
If a report is made to the authorities reporting suspected abuse or neglect the following guidelines will be followed:
1. The official spokesperson for Aldersgate Academy shall be the Director or in the absence of the Director, a designee appointed by the Director.
2. All inquires or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other parties shall be referred to the official spokesperson.
3. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson.
4. The care and safety of the victim is our first priority. We will not confront the accused without the approval of the Child Protection Service or law enforcement authorities.
5. We will not prejudge any person accused, but we will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim’s family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed.
6. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of child abuse.
7. We will treat the accused with dignity and respect.
8. All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
9. All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Director or, in the absence of the Director, by the designee, and maintained in a secure and confidential file.
Aldersgate Academy
Major Injuries Reporting Record
(Person can not immediately resume program activities)

Name of Injured Person ____________________________________________  Age _______  male  female
Name of Parents (if injured is a minor) ____________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________ Phone # ___________________

Date of Accident: ____________________________________________ Time of Accident: ___________ am/pm
Event accident occurred at: ____________________________________________
Location of accident: _______________________________________________________________________
How did the accident happen: _________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Nature of injury: _________________________________________________________________________
Witness(s) to injury: Name: ________________________________________ Phone #: ________
  Name: ________________________________________ Phone #: ________

Was injured person given first aid?  Yes  No  By whom: ____________________________
Type of First aid given: _________________________________________________________________
Was family notified?  Yes  No  Notified by whom: _______________________________
Name of person notified_________________________  Relationship to injured person ________________
Reaction of parent(s), if injured is a minor:___________________________________________________
Was doctor contacted? Yes  No
Was injured person taken to hospital?  Yes  No  By Whom:__________  Name of Hospital: __________
Resolution: _____________________________________________________________________________

Reporter Name (print) and Signature: ____________________________________________ Date:__________
Staff/Director Name (print) and Signature: ____________________________________________ Date:__________
Parent Name (print) and Signature, if person is a minor: ____________________________ Date:__________

Follow Up Report by Director of Event: ________________________________________________

Staff/Director Name (print) and Signature: ____________________________________________ Date:__________

Safe Sanctuaries Committee Follow Up Report:
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Safe Sanctuaries Representative Name (print) and Signature: ____________________________ Date:__________
Report of Suspected Child Abuse  1-800-800-5556

(Please print all information)

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

______________________________________________________________

Victim’s name:

______________________________________________________________

Victim’s age/date of birth:

______________________________________________________________

Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim:

______________________________________________________________

Victim’s statement (give your detailed summary here):

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Name of person accused of abuse:

______________________________________________________________

Relationship of accused to victim (Paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

______________________________________________________________

Reported to pastor: __________________________ Date/Time: _______________________

Summary:

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Call to local children and family service agency:

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Spoke with: __________________________ Date/Time: _______________________

14
Summary:
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Other contacts: ______________________________________________________________________________________________

Name: ________________________________________________   Date/Time:  _____________________

Summary: ___________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________
_________________________________

Signature   Date
Aldersgate Academy
Child Protection Guidelines

Yearly Checklist for Staff Members

☐ Has received annual review of the Academy Safe Sanctuaries policy.

☐ Has been given copy of instructions for handling child abuse cases.

☐ Has a complete and up-to-date background check and disclosure form on file.

☐ Has a complete Aldersgate Academy job application.

☐ Has had references checked and has had a personal interview conducted (keep written documentation).

________________________________________
Employee or Volunteer Signature

________________________________________
Checked by

________________________________________
Date

Note: This form to be posted in each paid and volunteer staff’s file. No worker is to be assigned until completion of the checklist.