

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - LAKE JACKSON

SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a loving and safe environment for the preschoolers, children, and youth at the First United Methodist Church of Lake Jackson, Texas (FUMC-LJ). This policy is intended to prevent child abuse or other crimes against children from occurring on church property or at church sponsored events. It is not based on a lack of trust in those working with children, but is intended as a protective measure for children, volunteers, and staff.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all activities sponsored by or conducted at the FUMC-LJ. It shall apply to all persons who have any contact with children and youth who participate in such activities. This policy is not intended to apply to external groups utilizing the church facilities such as the Boy Scouts of America. It is assumed that such groups will maintain and enforce their own similar policies.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. Staff - Clergy and employees of the FUMC-LJ.

3.2. Volunteer - A person who participates without pay in FUMC-LJ ministries, programs, and/or activities involving children and/or youth (e.g., Sunday School Teachers, Youth Helpers)

3.3. Child Abuse - Generally, child abuse can be categorized in three primary forms:

3.3.1. Verbal Abuse – any verbal act designed to humiliate, degrade, or threaten a child or youth

3.3.2. Physical Abuse- any act, or omission of an act, that endangers a person's physical or mental health. In the case of children or youth, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual's caretaker. This may occur from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to the physical health or well-being of the child or youth.

3.3.3. Sexual Abuse - abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and/or more powerful youth) occurs. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and/or exposure of the child to/for pornography or prostitution.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. The Administrative Board of FUMC-LJ shall approve this policy and any future revisions.

4.2. Senior Pastor – The Senior Pastor is responsible for investigating and reporting any allegation of child abuse in the manner described in this policy.

4.3. Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) – The SPRC has overall responsibility for the implementation, maintenance and enforcement of this policy. The Chairperson of the SPRC is responsible for handling the Senior Pastor's responsibilities for any allegations involving the Senior Pastor or a member of the Sr. Pastor's family.

4.4. Staff and Volunteers – Staff and Volunteers are responsible for adhering to the provisions of this policy as they perform their duties on behalf of FUMC-LJ.

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4.5. Church Secretary – The Church Secretary shall maintain a published list of successfully screened individuals, retain the confidential records resulting from the screening process, and retain any records resulting from allegations and associated investigations. Responsibility also includes obtaining criminal background checks from the designated service recommended by the Texas Annual Conference, restricting access to files created hereunder to clergy, SPRC members, and other individuals specifically authorized by the SPRC.

5. POLICIES

5.1. Whenever feasible, at least two adults shall be present at all times during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and youth. A roaming volunteer may constitute the second person when events are being conducted in multiple nearby locations (Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, etc.). It is strongly recommended that at least 2 leaders be present in every room at events that require overnight accommodations.

5.2. Open Doors – There should never be a time when an adult is alone with a child, children, or youth in a room or office with the door closed without adequate visibility into that room or office through a window or door.

5.3. Corporal Punishment - Corporal Punishment will not be permitted by staff, volunteer, or any other agent of FUMC-LJ.

5.4. Screening of Staff and Volunteers

5.4.1. Individuals applying for employment with FUMC-LJ shall complete Forms 1 and 3 in addition to any other forms required by the SPRC (e.g. Employment Application).

5.4.2. Members wishing to become a Volunteer shall complete Forms 1, 2, and 3.

5.4.3. Screening shall consist of the following: (Enter comments for each step on Form 6.)

5.4.3.1. Staff interviews will be conducted by the Senior Pastor and at least one member of the SPRC.

5.4.3.2. Volunteer interviews will be conducted by a staff person and at least one other individual from the ministry area.

5.4.3.3. Criminal Background Check per section 4.5.

5.4.3.4. Reference Checks.

5.4.3.5. Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types will not be allowed to participate in any activities with youth: Child abuse, violent offenses, including rape, assault, or domestic violence.

5.4.3.6. Screening results shall be kept confidential.

5.5. Annual Orientation– all Staff and all Volunteers working with children and/or youth shall:

5.5.1. Read and sign the Participation Covenant Statement (Form 3) of this policy.

5.5.2. Submit, by completing Form 1, to a criminal background check.

5.5.3. Successfully complete training via TrainRight's Online Child Abuse & Prevention Training Program.

5.6. Incident Reporting

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- 5.6.1. Any church member, staff, or volunteer who observes an incident, which may constitute child abuse, as defined by this policy shall promptly report the incident in writing to the church office and to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall report the incident directly to the appropriate local law enforcement agency and/or the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Child Abuse (1-800-252-5400).
- 5.6.2. If the allegation involves the conduct of the Senior Pastor, this duty falls to the Chairperson of the SPRC.
- 5.6.3. If it has been alleged that child abuse has occurred, the Senior Pastor shall make required notifications to the Texas Annual Conference, the Houston South District Superintendent, the Staff Parish Relations Committee Chairperson, and the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Child Abuse. This policy requires faithful adherence to State laws and regulations that are in place. Record of these notifications shall be made on Form 5 and forwarded to the designated person per section 4.3 for confidential retention.

5.7. Incident Investigation

- 5.7.1. Following the report of the incident, the event leader or person in charge shall address any needs the child may have, medical or otherwise, and report to the parents or legal guardians. The person suspected of the abuse shall be removed from further contact with children until an appropriate investigation has taken place.
- 5.7.2. Any and all accidents resulting in an injury, however minor, should be reported on Form 4.
- 5.7.3. After reporting the incident per 5.6.3 above, the Senior Pastor shall defer to the investigations of outside agencies (law enforcement, Houston South District, etc.).

6. IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1. The Screening of Staff and Volunteers requirement in section 5.4 shall not apply to current staff and volunteers who have already been screened.
- 6.2. The Annual Orientation requirement in section 5.5 shall apply to all new staff and volunteers beginning with the approval of the revision by the Administrative Board. The section will apply to current staff and volunteers beginning in 2017.

7. RECORDS

- 7.1. All forms completed under this policy, except Form 7, shall be treated as confidential information. Once completed, access to Forms 5 and 6 is restricted to those with specific authorization as specified in Section 4. Access to completed Forms 1-4 is restricted to those with a valid "need to know" as determined by the Sr. Pastor or the SPRC.
- 7.2. Screening results shall be documented and retained in accordance with the FUMC-LJ document retention policy or 7 years if no retention policy exists. Screening files shall remain confidential, and shall be accessible only to clergy, SPRC members, and other individuals specifically approved by the SPRC (unanimous vote by a quorum).

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7.3. Annual orientation (section 5.5) should be documented via a list identifying the following: name of staff/volunteer submitting forms, dates Forms 1 and 3 were received, and date of TrainRight certificate, as well as the date of the criminal background check. Form 7 is suggested, but any page with the required information is acceptable. These records will be retained for a minimum of three (3) years.

7.4. Records of accidents and child abuse allegations shall be retained for a minimum of seven (7) years.

8. FORMS

8.1. Form 1-Authorization for Criminal Background Check

8.2. Form 2-Volunteer Application

8.3. Form 3-Participation Covenant

8.4. Form 4-Accident Report

8.5. Form 5-Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

8.6. Form 6-FUMC-LJ Staff/Volunteer Background Evaluation

8.7. Form 7-Record of Annual Orientation

9. REFERENCES

9.1. "Safe Sanctuaries, Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church," by Joy Thornburg Melton

9.2. Texas Family Code, Section 261

9.3. Newsletter-August 2004: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

9.4. Newsletter-Texas Annual Conference, March 2003

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - LAKE JACKSON SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

POLICY:	SAFETY & SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN & YOUTH	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	AUTHORIZATION & REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK FUMC-LJ – Page 1 of 2	FORM 1

I, _____, HEREBY AUTHORIZE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LAKE JACKSON TO REQUEST ANY PRIVATE OR PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS TO RELEASE INFORMATION REGARDING ANY RECORD OF CHARGES OR CONVICTIONS CONTAINED IN ITS FILES, OR IN ANY CRIMINAL FILE MAINTAINED ON ME, WHETHER SAID FILE IS A LOCAL, STATE, OR NATIONAL FILE, AND INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ACCUSATIONS AND CONVICTIONS FOR CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST MINORS, TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY STATE AND FEDERAL LAW. I DO RELEASE THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LAKE JACKSON AND US ONESEARCH (BACKGROUNDCHECKS.COM) FROM ALL LIABILITY THAT MAY RESULT FROM ANY SUCH DISCLOSURE MADE IN RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE **DATE** **APPLICANT'S NAME – PRINTED**

PRINT ALL OTHER NAMES THAT HAVE BEEN USED BY APPLICANT (IF ANY):

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ PLACE OF BIRTH: _____

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____

DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER: _____ STATE ISSUING LICENSE: _____

LICENSE EXPIRATION DATE: _____

REFERENCES-NAME	PHONE NUMBER
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES OF RESIDENCE SINCE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION OR AGE 18.

CITY/TOWN	COUNTY	STATE	COUNTRY
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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POLICY:	SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	AUTHORIZATION & REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK FUMC-LJ – Page 2 of 2	FORM 1

AUTHORIZED PERSON REQUESTING CHECK:

(PRINTED NAME) _____

(SIGNATURE) _____

REQUEST SENT TO: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

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POLICY:	SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	VOLUNTEER APPLICATION – FUMC-LJ – PAGE 2 OF 2	FORM 2

What is your philosophy on disciplining children? _____
(Use the back of this page for additional space.)

Would you be available for periodic volunteer training sessions? Yes No

REFERENCES:

Please list three individuals who are not related to you by blood or marriage as references. Please list people who have known you for at least three years.

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

3. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

Signature of Applicant Date

POLICY:	SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	PARTICIPATION COVENANT– FUMC-LJ – Page 1 of 2	FORM 3

The congregation of the First United Methodist Church – Lake Jackson 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 all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been charged or convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) should work with children or youth.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires 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. Staff and Volunteers who work with children and youth should observe the “Two-Adult Rule” at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children or youth.
4. Corporal Punishment is not permitted.
5. Staff and Volunteers who work with children and youth should keep informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse and attend regular training and educational events provided by the church.
6. Staff and Volunteers should immediately report any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate. Reports should be made in writing on Form 4 to (in order of preference) the Senior Pastor, or the Associate Pastor, or a member of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), or the church office.
7. FUMC-LJ does not intend to impose on your privacy or create any discomfort with the following covenants. However, the information is necessary to protect the children and church members. Your privacy will be protected.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN:	YES	NO
Do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth?		
Do you agree to ensure that whenever feasible, at least two adults shall be present at all times during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and youth? (A roaming volunteer may constitute the second person when events are being conducted in multiple nearby locations such as Sunday School or Vacation Bible School.)		
Do you agree to never hit or strike a child or youth for any reason?		
Do you agree to never be alone with a child, children, or youth in a room or office with the door closed without adequate visibility into that room or office through a window or door?		
Do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your staff/volunteer assignments?		
Do you agree to promptly report any and all injuries using Form 4?		
Do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior using Form 5?		
Do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been or ever are convicted of child abuse?		

Applicant’s Name: _____

POLICY:	SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	ACCIDENT/INJURY REPORT FORM	FORM 4

Date of accident: _____ Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____ Age: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Description of injuries: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Describe accident: _____

Reported by: _____ Date: _____

POLICY:	SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE, Page 1 of 2	FORM 5

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

2. Victim's name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth (approximate if not known): _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Victim's Statement/Observer's Account (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: _____

POLICY:	SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE, Page 2 of 2	FORM 5

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian (by pastor, if available): _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

8. Call to Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Child Abuse (by pastor, if available):
 (1-800-252-5400)

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to local law enforcement agency

Spoke with: _____ Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

10. Call to Conference & District Offices

Name: _____ Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

POLICY:	SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Rev. 4
FORM TITLE:	FUMC-LJ STAFF/VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND EVALUATION	FORM 6

******CONFIDENTIAL****CONFIDENTIAL****CONFIDENTIAL****CONFIDENTIAL******

PERSON EVALUATED: _____ EVALUATED BY: _____

SUMMARIZE RESULTS OF INTERVIEW, AND YOUR EVALUATION THEREOF:

SUMMARIZE RESULTS OF BACKGROUND CHECK, and your evaluation thereof:

SUMMARIZE RESULTS OF REFERENCE CONTACTS, AND YOUR EVALUATION THEREOF:

APPROVED FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

YES	NO

EVALUATOR'S SIGNATURE DATE EVALUATOR'S NAME – PRINTED

