

St John the Apostle United Methodist Church Abuse Prevention Policy

5450 Mansfield Road, Arlington Texas 76017

- I Biblical Reference: Matthew 18:5-6 “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. ⁶“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, 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. “
- II Purpose and Implementation. This Policy shall:
- a. be a guideline for all Events involving Children, Confirmands, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults
 - b. take effect on April 26, 2011.
- III Definitions:
- a. Abuse: Physical, emotional, mental, sexual, or other kinds of injurious conduct directed at, or observed, or occurring with or to a Child, Confirmand, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult, including the definition of “Abuse” set forth in Section 261.001 of the Texas Family Code.
 - b. Child, Children: All persons from birth through 5th grade.
 - c. Confirmand: All persons in 6th grade.
 - d. Youth: All persons in 7th through 12th grade. A person becomes an adult for purposes of this policy when the person attains age eighteen regardless of the grade level at the time of a person who is a student.
 - e. Adult: Individuals who are age eighteen or older.
 - f. Vulnerable Adult: An adult who has one or more mental, physical or emotional impairments that render the person incapable of self-care and/or independent living.
 - g. Staff: Individuals that are compensated by any United Methodist Church entity or any entity sponsored by the St John the Apostle United Methodist Church and who performs specific services that are related to St John the Apostle United Methodist Church.
 - h. Volunteer: An adult who participates as a leader or assists a leader in activities relating to any Event or Ministry without compensation.
 - i. Event or Ministry: St John the Apostle United Methodist Church controlled and approved events or ministries directed at the Children, Confirmands, and Youth of SJA UMC
 - j. Background Investigation: Use of a qualified risk assessment service to evaluate the criminal history as well as any other relevant background information of Staff and Volunteers for an Event or Ministry.
 - k. SJA UMC : St John the Apostle United Methodist Church
- IV Statement of Policy:
- a. Abuse of a Child, Confirmand, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult is prohibited in any SJA UMC Event or Ministries.
 - b. A member of Staff or a Volunteer for any SJA UMC Event or Ministry who observes or suspects that Abuse has occurred concerning a Child, Confirmand, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult must immediately report such observed or suspected Abuse to the Staff or any on site Volunteer, and any required report in compliance with the Texas Family Code must be made.
 - c. Reports of observed or suspected Abuse may be made verbally and/or in writing to a Ministry Official and such official shall document the report if it is made verbally.

- d. Reporting Abuse:
 - i. Reporting Requirements: The reporting requirements of this policy and the State of Texas must be complied with. Each policy shall reflect this requirement.
 - ii. SJA UMC Reporting Requirement:
 - 1. At each Event or Ministry, there shall be at least one adult that is the primary Staff or on-site supervising Volunteer who shall receive any reports and shall document it if the report is received orally and any report required by Texas Family Code shall be timely made.
 - 2. In addition given to the report required by item 1 above, any person who observes or suspects Abuse of a Child, Confirmand, Youth or Vulnerable Adult shall report it to the following hotline number (1-800-252-5400) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or to their local law enforcement agency.
 - 3. On SJA UMC Church premises there shall be a written statement of this policy posted prominently in a clearly accessible and readable form in English.
 - iii. It is very important that all parties be sensitive to the alleged victim and his or her family as well as to the accused. Pastoral care should be available to all in the time of crisis.

V. Implementation of Policy.

- a. Screening of all Staff and Volunteer members who work with Children, Confirmands, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults
 - i. General: For the purposes of this policy, persons who work with Children, Confirmands, Youth and Vulnerable Adults are those who have direct contact with and supervision of Children, Confirmands, Youth and/or Vulnerable Adults. This does not include those persons who are employees of independent contractors who are involved in events, such as bus drivers of contracted bus lines and the like.
 - ii. Background Investigations: ALL employees and volunteers must have a nationwide criminal background check done for them by SJA UMC personnel. This requirement applies to all volunteers who work with minors.
- b. Responsible Adult Supervision:
 - i. General: It is the requirement of this policy that SJA UMC shall provide adequate adult supervision at all Events and Ministries attended by Children, Confirmands, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.
 - ii. Except in the case of Events and Ministries involving Vulnerable Adults, a five year difference in ages of the primary on-site supervisor and the oldest supervised participant is required. Persons closer in age to those supervised may be acceptable in assist the primary on-site supervisor(s).
 - iii. Miscellaneous provision: Coed overnight activities require both male and female adult leaders without exception.