

**A POLICY STATEMENT OF THE
ANN ARBOR FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
FOR THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION
OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Revised September 2002

Ann Arbor First United Methodist Church is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and youth who participate in our ministries. All volunteers and employees who are in leadership roles in these ministries are living out the vows we take in baptism to nurture our children and youth in the Christian faith. Every Child or Youth Guide* plays a key role in fostering the spiritual development of individuals and families in our church community.

In an effort to provide a safe community, this church requires all Guides* to commit themselves to the Policy Statement For the Protection of Children and Youth adopted by the Administrative Council of this church. In doing so, Child or Youth Guides* will be asked to provide personal information, review the church policy and understand that they will be under the supervision of the professional staff.

This policy is made up of five parts:

- I. Definitions
- II. Child or Youth Guide Selection & Requirements
- III. Recruiting and Selecting Child or Youth Guides
- IV. Supervising Guides and Training
- V. Reporting Procedures
- VI. Responding To Allegations of Abuse
- VII. Responding to Alleged Perpetrator
- VIII. Responding to Alleged Child Victim
- IX. Care of Documents

I. DEFINITION

Child Sexual Abuse – Child sexual abuse or molestation includes any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. The national Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse (1992) defines “any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.” Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child’s vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

*Child or Youth Guide: A Guide is any worker, paid or volunteer, who provides care, supervision, mentoring, or instruction for FUMC children or youth.

II. CHILD OR YOUTH GUIDE SELECTION, REQUIREMENTS & RECRUITING

Categories of Guides

Guides that work with any minors in the church are categorized into one of these levels according to responsibility and participation.

Level 1: Non-program responsibilities

- Provide care giving on short-term basis, generally 2 hours or less each month. Includes activities like the following:
Nursery

Toddlers and 2s
Greenhouse Assistance – Preschool and Kindergarten
Occasional Volunteer working with a level 2 Guide
Drivers for non-overnight events
Logistical help with Youth Ministry and SWP, including set-up, clean-up and food prep.

Level 2: Program and Administrative responsibilities

- Provide regular care two hours or more, each month. Includes activities like the following:
Paid Staff for the Nursery (adults and teens)
Volunteers for the Nursery, Toddlers and 2s
Shepherds for the Sunday’s Cool Disciples and the Rotation
Workshop Leaders
Greenhouse Teachers – Preschool and Kindergarten
SMYO Counselors
VBS Volunteers

Level 3:

- Provide care for Youth groups and children overnight

Child and Youth Guide Requirements:

All guides, regardless of their level of involvement will be minimally required to:

- Regular attendance for 6 months
- Complete Volunteer/Employee Application form with references
- Provide permission for Criminal Background check
- Youth under the age of 18 must have parental signature on application.

Additional Requirements:

Level 2:

- Complete interview to outline policy, procedure and responsibilities
- Sign annual covenant
- Criminal History Background Check (State Police) may be conducted.
- Youth under the age of 18 must have parental signature on application

Level 3:

- Criminal History Record check may be conducted (Protective Services).

A police background check may be required at the discretion of the church; a signed consent is required for this. A person convicted of any crime against a minor and/or any violent crime is excluded from providing care for the minors of FUMC. Results of background checks will be conducted by the designated administrative support staff and reviewed only by the appropriate Supervisor and Pastor. The Senior Pastor will determine next steps, if necessary. Results will be kept in locked employee file.

Regardless of these guidelines, the church retains the right to exclude any volunteer, at any level, if it is felt that the safety or well being of our children is at risk

III. RECRUITING AND SELECTING CHILD AND YOUTH GUIDES

Standards:

- All workers - both paid and volunteer - require screening.
- All employees will complete the Employee Information Form.
- All volunteers who work with children, and youth will complete the Volunteer Information Form (A).
- All Guides at Level 2 or 3 will be interviewed.
- References will be contacted.
- Members and participants will only be allowed to work with children and youth after they have attended the church regularly for a period of at least six months. College students interested in working with children and youth must provide references that confirm membership and active involvement from their home church and character references from their pastor, then the six-month clause may be superseded.
- Adults who have been convicted of or plead guilty to either child sexual or physical abuse will not work with children, or youth.
- All Child & Youth Guides will agree to read and follow this policy statement.

Steps in Recruiting and Selecting Child and Youth Guides

1. A basic information form will be used at all new member classes.
2. All church members, employees and constituents will be made aware of Policy Statement for the Safety and Protection of Children, and Youth
3. All Guides will be required to fill out the appropriate information form.
4. The appropriate staff members will review statements in the information forms.
5. References will be contacted and noted on the forms.
6. A check for arrest and conviction records will be made with the help of the State Police for all paid employees.
7. The church will seek to provide open lines of communication with parents and an open-door policy allowing parents access to programs at any time.
8. Child and Youth Guides will protect all children and youth from potential abuse by being willing to attend an orientation and/or training session on safety and abuse prevention.

IV. SUPERVISING GUIDES AND TRAINING

Standards:

- There are specific procedures for on-site and off-site situations.
- Specific, parental permission is required for off-site meetings.
- Specific parental permission is required for adults to go out alone with a child or youth.
- Suspicious behavior will be discussed immediately.
- The church will provide adequate personnel. (See the ratios listed below.)
- There will be a specific Nursery Identification Procedure.
- Annual training will be offered to all guides.

On-site Procedures:

1. On Sunday morning it is recommended for the nursery and toddler room to have 2 guides. When the nursery is used for childcare of multiage groups use the recommended ratios.
2. All rooms used by minors shall have a window in the door or the door should remain open. The supervisor will randomly check in on the classrooms during Sunday Morning classes. There is an open-door policy allowing parent access to programs at any time. Whenever possible 2 guides will

be present.

3. A sign in-out procedure will be mandatory for all children age, birth through kindergarten.
4. An adult must escort children under 5 years of age to the restroom. Women should handle restroom visits, if at all possible. The adult should stand by the open door, only escorting the child to the stall when assistance is requested/required.
5. Guides should not take an individual child from their designated program area to another part of the building or church grounds except to use a restroom. Under no circumstances should a child be allowed to leave the building unsupervised.
6. Displays of affection: Appropriate displays of affection between Guides and children or youth convey support and encouragement. Such displays of affection should be limited to a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or a light touch to the forearm.
7. Husband and wife teams: Husband and wife teams are welcome to serve and minister to our children. We do suggest for teams serving in the nursery through the Kindergarten Sunday school that a non-related youth Guide work with the team. In the case of Sunday school classes, the superintendent or supervisor of the day can act as the third caregiver.
8. Recommended Caregiver to child/youth ratios:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Guide/children</u>	<u>Minimum Guides</u>
0 – 2 ½	1:4	One Guide
2 ½ – 3	1:8	One Guide
3 – 4	1:10	One Guide
Kindergarten	1:12	One Guide
1 – 6 grade	1:15	One Guide
7 – 12 grade	1:20	One Adult
Multiage	The ratio for the youngest child should be used.	

Off-site Procedures:

1. At least two adults shall supervise all groups of children and youth on off-site events except as noted below.
Exceptions: When transporting children and youth to events in private cars there may be one adult in the car and the driving policy of the church will be followed. In addition, this two-adult rule does not apply in parent-child relationships.
2. Permission slips, including medical release information, shall be used for all off-site events.
3. Providing Adequate Personnel: Off-site programs that involve children and youth will always include supervisory personnel according to the following ratios:

Children ages 3–5	1:5	Two Adults
Children ages 6–11	1:6	One Adult, One Guides
Multi-age 0–11	1:10	One Adult, One Guides
Youth ages 12–17	1:10	Two Adults

When ever possible at least one adult from each gender should accompany all children ages 6 Years and over.

Church Nursery, Preschool and Kindergarten Identification Procedure:

In order to release infants, toddlers, preschoolers and Kindergarteners to properly identified and pre-authorized caregivers and to make sure that the parent or guardian can be located in case of an emergency the church will:

1. Require all parents or guardians to sign-in their infants and toddlers for every event offering childcare. The parents will complete 3-part nametags and be issued pagers. One part of the nametag is placed on the child's back; one part is placed on the diaper bag; and the parent keeps the third part. The pager number is recorded on both the child's tag and the parent's tag. The child will only be released to the person with the matching nametag and the pager. Special alert stickers are available and should be placed on the child to alert staff of special needs. These stickers are for Medical, Allergy or Security Alerts.

2. Require all preschool children, ages 2 to 4, and kindergartners, to be escorted to the classroom and be signed in. The sign-in sheet will list the child's name, any allergies the child may have, the name of the person escorting the child to class, and the name of the person pre-authorized by the parent or guardian, coming to sign out the child. The child will only be released to the person identified at the time the child was signed in.
3. Require all parents or guardians to notify the guides of their location in the Church building.

Training Procedure For Guides

Training sessions will be offered twice a year. All guides will be encouraged to attend one session each year. All guides will be given a copy of the Policy for the Safety and Protection of Children and Youth at the annual orientation program or prior to the beginning of their service. All volunteers agree to read and follow the Policy Statement and in signing Volunteer Form A, all guides agree to be bound by this policy.

Content of training session

1. Rational for the policy
2. The definition of child abuse
3. Recognizing symptoms of abuse
4. What constitutes inappropriate conduct
5. How to respond to a child's report of abuse
6. Reporting process for observed or suspected misconduct
7. Support system

V. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Standards:

- The church recognizes a legal obligation and will comply with all state and federal laws.
- The church recognizes its obligation for mutual accountability.
- The church recognizes each person's moral obligation for personal responsibility.
- The established line of reporting shall be followed in all incidents of suspicious activity, observed abuse and allegations by a victim.
- The United Methodist Discipline and any Annual Conference policies that pertain to reporting procedures shall be followed.
- The advice of legal counsel and the insurance company are to be obtained.

Reporting obligations:

- Guides should be aware of state laws that mandate the reporting of child abuse. Such a law will include specifics such as the following:
 - 1) What constitutes child abuse
 - 2) Persons who are legally responsible for reporting known and reasonably suspected cases of abuse
 - 3) Time limits to make a report
 - 4) The nature and content of the report.
- The obligation for mutual accountability includes being aware of what types of behavior are inappropriate with children and youth, warning coworkers when questionable behavior is displayed, and reporting questionable behavior to the proper individuals.
- Guides will understand that discrete and confidential reporting of suspected abuse is critical to abuse prevention. This reporting reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty. It is a moral obligation and a personal responsibility and it takes precedence over any fear of personal or legal recrimination.

Line of Reporting:

1. Any suspicious activity, observed abuse or victim allegations that are brought to the attention of a church worker must be reported immediately to the appropriate person or persons. These include one or more of the following persons, depending on the allegations:
 - a. One of the clergy
 - b. The Director of Youth and Children's Ministries
 - c. The Children's Coordinator
2. All allegations must be documented in writing by including the what, when, where, how, and the date, time and circumstances under which the report was made.
3. The person receiving the initial report will report immediately to the senior pastor who will meet with the Response Team to handle the complaint. In addition, may consult with the following: church legal counsel, the Ann Arbor District Superintendent, Office of the Bishop, the church insurer (or) the Child Protective Service Agency to obtain advice.
4. In cases of clergy sexual misconduct the policies of the Detroit Annual Conference shall be followed.
5. State law requires reporting of any suspected child abuse to authorities. CPS should be notified within 24 hours by calling 481-9110.
6. Take all allegations seriously. Be gentle and protective of both victim and alleged abuser.
7. All allegations, including anonymous reports, must be documented
8. Persons who are the object of the report will be required to refrain from all children and youth activities until it is determined if further action shall be taken. In any removal of an alleged party from any activities, care should be taken to handle this in a discrete manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.

VI. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

If it is determined that there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse, then the following steps will be taken.

1. A Response Team will be formed and will be assigned to take any further actions that are required. The Response Team will follow the advice of legal counsel and the Bishop (or the bishop's designated representative) of the Detroit Annual Conference.
2. The Response Team will include the pastor in charge, one member of Staff Parish committee, a mental health professional, and a representative of Children's or Youth Council and others who are deemed appropriate.
3. The Response Team will appoint one sole spokesperson.
4. The spokesperson must present a clear position statement of the church regarding abuse and include the policies and established procedures. This person will be the only person communicating to the press, the congregation and the authorities.
5. Suspend alleged perpetrator from service at FUMC

The Response Team may be asked to:

1. Identify appropriate supervisor to contact the alleged perpetrator.
2. Conduct initial investigations into the allegations.
3. Document all findings and all effort in the investigation.
4. Notify the parents.
5. Cooperate with local and state civil authorities.
6. Report as required to civil authorities.

The pastors may be asked to offer appropriate counseling.

A proper response plan includes the following principles:

1. Maintain adequate records.
2. Prepare a position statement that includes policies and established safeguards. This is your opportunity to influence public opinion positively. Let them know that you have taken this risk seriously, and that you have acted responsively.
3. Do not engage in denial, minimization, pre-judgment or blame.
4. Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously.
5. Use the text of the prepared public statement to answer the press and to convey news to the

congregation. Be careful to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

VII. RESPONDING TO ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

Take all allegations seriously. Be gentle and protective of both victim and alleged abuser. Don't prejudge the situation.

1. When a report of abuse is made, the alleged perpetrator will be contacted by the appropriate supervisor as identified by the Response Team and be suspended from participating in all service roles in the church until an investigation is completed by the proper authorities. This must be handled in a discrete manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.
2. If the allegations are found to be false and no criminal charges have been filed, the suspension on service will be lifted, pending the approval of the Response Team.
3. If criminal charges are made, the perpetrator must continue under the suspension on service. Response Team will be informed and a written charge shall be filed according to the guidelines of the United Methodist Discipline and any Annual Conference policies that pertain.
4. The Response Team should offer pastoral care and support to the alleged perpetrator and his/her family until such time as a criminal charge is filed. Therapeutic intervention may be recommended with a qualified therapist. A Christian therapist is recommended.

VIII. RESPONDING TO THE ALLEGED CHILD VICTIM

Make an appropriate written report, as outlined above.

Following the disclosure and during an investigation of an abuse allegation, only the Protective Service agency or the police will meet with a child abuse victim. After the abuse allegation has been reported and investigated, the Response Team or others as appointed by the Response Team, may offer appropriate pastoral care, support and guidance for therapeutic intervention for the child and family with a qualified therapist. A Christian therapist is recommended.

IX. CARE OF DOCUMENTS

All forms filled out by Child and Youth Guides working for Ann Arbor First United Methodist will only be reviewed by:

- Immediate Supervisor
- Staff CPP Administrator for contacting references or doing background checks
- Pastor(s)
- The Staff Parish Relations Committee for hired staff

In the case of a report of suspicious activity, the "Response Team" and appropriate legal authorities will have access to the information.

Storage of documents:

- All information pertaining to suspicious activity or allegations of abuse will be locked in the church safe.
- After a 25-year period, the records will be destroyed.

Paper flow:

- Each Guide will complete an application form (once, regardless of the number of positions for which they provide care), which will be given to their Supervisor. The Supervisor will provide office support staff with this information in order to contact references or complete background check, depending upon Guide level.
- The appropriate leaders will contact references before service begins. Each reference will be asked if she/he knows of any reason why the person should not work with children and/or youth.

- Documentation must be made for each reference call.
- All volunteer information forms and reference documentation will be stored in the locked files. If there is any concern following the background check, the paperwork will be given to the Senior Pastor before proceeding.
- Each Child and Youth Guide will be tracked annually to be sure they have the necessary paperwork on file. Supervisors will be notified of anyone not meeting these requirements.

Any new children or youth professional staff will be made aware of and required to review the information.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM A

This information form is to be completed by all volunteers who are applying for any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. This form will be used to help the church to provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

PERSONAL

DATE _____

NAME _____

Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic identification.

DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER (____) _____ WORK PHONE NUMBER

(____) _____

PLEASE INDICATE THE TYPE OF CHILDREN'S OR YOUTH WORK YOU PREFER:

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF, OR PLED GUILTY OR NO CONTEST TO A CRIME INVOLVING CHILDREN OR YOUTH?

___YES (If yes, please explain. Attach a separate page.)

___NO

I HEARBY GIVE PERMISSION TO FUMC Ann Arbor TO CONFIRM THE ABOVE STATEMENT WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OR REGULATORY AGENCIES.

___YES

___NO

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR VOLUNTEER WORK

NAME OF THE CHURCH OF WHICH YOU ARE CURRENTLY A MEMBER

ADDRESS _____

LIST OF OTHER CHURCHES YOU HAVE ATTENDED REGULARLY DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS. (Names and addresses)

LIST ALL PREVIOUS CHURCH WORK INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

(List name of church and address, type of work performed, dates)

LIST ALL PREVIOUS NON-CHURCH WORK INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH (organization's name and address, type of work performed and dates)

LIST ANY GIFTS, CALLINGS, TRAINING, EDUCATION, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT HAVE PREPARED YOU FOR CHILDREN OR YOUTH WORK.

PERSONAL REFERENCES (not former employers or relatives)

#1 NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM B

This information form is to be completed only by short-term volunteers (and parents) who will be working with minors. This form will be used to help the church to provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

PERSONAL

DATE _____

NAME _____

Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic identification.

DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER (____) _____ WORK PHONE NUMBER (____) _____

PLEASE INDICATE THE TYPE OF CHILDREN'S OR YOUTH WORK YOU PREFER:

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF, OR PLED GUILTY OR NO CONTEST TO A CRIME INVOLVING CHILDREN OR YOUTH?

___YES (If yes, please explain. Attach a separate page.)

___NO

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR VOLUNTEER WORK

NAME OF THE CHURCH OF WHICH YOU ARE CURRENTLY A MEMBER

LIST OF OTHER CHURCHES YOU HAVE ATTENDED REGULARLY DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS. (Names and addresses)

LIST ALL PREVIOUS CHURCH WORK INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

(List name of church and address, type of work performed, dates)

AUTHORIZATION OF APPLICANT

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I agree to be bound by the policies of Ann Arbor First United Methodist Church and to refrain from immoral, illegal, or unethical conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____ WITNESS _____

DATE _____

DATE _____

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

Goals of the interview:

1. To fill in the gaps in the information form.
2. To open paths for further discussion on the part of the applicant.
3. Observe how applicant conducts self in the process.

In conducting an interview, the interviewer should be aware when "red flags" are raised concerning the applicant. These "flags" are indicators of issues which must be explored further to be assured that all information is collected concerning a prospective employee/volunteer. Some of these "flags" might include:

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.

Wants to work with only one age group.

If someone would like to work with only one specific age group, it could indicate that person has targeted that age group for molestation. Or, it could mean that is the age group for which they are trained and that experience has shown that they do not work well with other ages. Also be aware of young adults who seem 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 Sunday School may be neglecting their own age appropriate peer relationships in order to cultivate potential victims.

Does not want/need/like close supervision.

The interview may indicate that the person does not like to be closely supervised. This 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 depart from the set of prepared questions to do so. It is helpful, therefore, if interviewers prepare for the interview by, 1. reading the information form, 2. noting areas for exploration, and 3. receiving some training in the interview process.

Sample Interview Questions

1. Why are you interested in being associated with our church?
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. When you read the job description, what appealed to you the most?
4. What specific skills do you bring to this job?
5. With what age group and sex do you prefer to work? Why? Please give examples of your work with this age group.
6. If you are trained, are you willing to work with other age groups or sex?
7. What kinds of programs or activities would you be willing to lead, supervise or conduct? If trained would you be willing to conduct other activities?
8. What do you feel are chief indicators of a successful program or activity?
9. Give a specific example of how you overcame a difficulty in job, school or family?
10. Give an example of how you overcame a problem with a youngster other than your own. How were you disciplined as a child? How would/do you discipline?
11. Under what supervision style do you work best?
12. In what types of activities or recreation do you participate?
13. What is most important about your faith?
14. When did God become more than just a word to you?
15. What would you like to tell us that hasn't been covered?
16. What questions do you have about our congregation?
17. Other questions as raised re: information given on the information form?

One might conclude the interview with one or two hypothetical situations that are typical in your organization and ask the applicant how they would respond in that situation.

POLICY STATEMENT COVER SHEET

NAME OF CHURCH; Ann Arbor First United Methodist Church

ADDRESS 120 South State Street

PHONE NUMBER 734-662-4536

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:

Pastor in charge _____

Other _____

NAME OF ATTORNEY _____

PHONE NUMBER OF ATTORNEY _____

NAME OF INSURER _____

AGENT _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

MICH. DEPT. OF SOCIAL SERVICE PHONE _____

POLICY ADOPTED September 20, 1999

POLICY REVISED September 2002, submitted for approval by

Administrative Council of FUMC, Ann Arbor, MI

REVIEWED _____

EMPLOYEE APPLICATION FORM

This application form is to be completed by all potential employees who are applying for a position involving the supervision or custody of minors. This form will be used to help the church to provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. In addition to this form, each potential employee will be interviewed and references will be checked, before they are offered any position.

PERSONAL

DATE _____

NAME _____

Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic identification.

DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER (____) _____

WORK PHONE NUMBER (____) _____

PLEASE INDICATE THE TYPE OF CHILDREN'S OR YOUTH WORK YOU PREFER

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF, OR PLED GUILTY OR NO CONTEST TO A CRIME INVOLVING CHILDREN OR YOUTH?

YES (If yes, please explain. Attach a separate page.)

NO

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR VOLUNTEER WORK

NAME OF THE CHURCH OF WHICH YOU ARE CURRENTLY A MEMBER

ADDRESS _____

LIST OF OTHER CHURCHES YOU HAVE ATTENDED REGULARLY DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS. (Names and addresses)

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Name	Phone	Address	Dates

LIST ALL PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER WORK INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH
(List name of church or group, address, type of work performed and dates)

LIST ANY GIFTS, CALLINGS, TRAINING, EDUCATION, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT HAVE PREPARED YOU FOR CHILDREN OR YOUTH WORK

ATTACH RESUME TO THIS APPLICATION FORM.

PERSONAL REFERENCES (not former employers or relatives)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

PERSONAL REFERENCES (continued)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

=====

For Office Use Only:

Name of reference and date checked

Criminal Records Checked _____

=====

AUTHORIZATION OF APPLICANT

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children and youth work. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by (Name of Church), I hereby release any individual, church, youth organizations, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind of nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the policies of (Name of Church), and to refrain from illegal, immoral or unethical conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that **I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AUTHORIZATION, UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS AND I SIGN OF MY OWN FREE WILL.**

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

WITNESS _____

DATE _____

Training session:

1. Rational for this policy; why churches are susceptible

- **Trust.** Churches tend to be trusting and unsuspecting institutions.
- **Lack of screening.** Some churches do nothing to screen workers. Complete strangers may be accepted to work with children without any investigation whatever.
- **Opportunity.** Churches provide ample opportunities for unsupervised close personal contact between adults and children.
- **Access.** Other organizations have instituted comprehensive programs to reduce the risk of child molestation. Child molesters are attracted to an institution in which they have immediate access to potential victims in an atmosphere of complete trust—the church.
- **Need.** Most church struggle to get adequate help for children and youth programs. Recruiting nursery workers, for example, can become an unending effort. A willing volunteer worker provides welcome relief.

2. The definition of child abuse

- Any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator.
- Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent.
- All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability.
- Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touch aspects.

The profile of a child molester

Research in the field of child sexual abuse currently indicates that no one profile fits the various perpetrators of abuse. Child abusers often are married and have children.

- Over 80% of the time the abuser is someone known to the victim
- Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship
- The usual offender is between the ages of 20-30 years
- 20% of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18

3. Recognizing symptoms of abuse

Physical signs may include:

Lacerations and bruises
Nightmares
Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
Difficulty with urination
Discomfort when sitting
Torn or bloody underclothing
Venereal disease

Behavioral signs may include:

Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
Sexual self-consciousness
“Acting out” of sexual behaviors
Withdrawal from church activities and friends

4. What constitutes inappropriate conduct?

The obligation for mutual accountability includes being aware of what types of behavior are inappropriate with children and youth, warning coworkers when questionable behavior is displayed, and reporting questionable behavior to the proper individuals.

Displays of affection: Appropriate displays of affection between Guides and children or youth convey support and encouragement. Such displays of affection should be limited to an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or a light touch to the forearm or a brief hug (avoid hugging when alone with a youth or child or when another adult is not present).

If a youth needs 'counsel' try to find a public place where the youth can still open up and talk. At church, the sanctuary or a hall way is better than a classroom.

It is always inappropriate to allow a child or youth (other than your own) to sit on your lap.

Guides should not take a child from their designated program area to another part of the building or church grounds except to use a restroom. When escorting a child to the restroom guides should remain in the hall, only escorting the child to the stall when assistance is requested or required.

5. How to respond to a child's report of abuse

Take all allegations seriously. Be gentle and protective of both victim and alleged abuser. Don't prejudge the situation

A proper response plan includes the following principles:

- Maintain adequate records.
- Let them know that you have taken this allegation seriously, and that you will act responsibly.
- Do not engage in denial, minimization, pre-judgment or blame.
- Be careful to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

6. Reporting process for observed or suspected misconduct

Guides will understand that discrete and confidential reporting of suspected abuse is critical to abuse prevention. This reporting reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty. It is a moral obligation and a personal responsibility and it takes precedence over any fear of personal or legal recrimination.

1. Any suspicious activity, observed abuse or victim allegations that are brought to the attention of a church worker must be reported immediately to the appropriate person or persons. These include one or more of the following persons, depending on the allegations:
 - One of the clergy
 - The Director of Youth and Children's Ministries
 - The Children's Coordinator
2. All allegations must be documented in writing by including the what, when, where, how, and the date, time and circumstances under which the report was made.
3. The person receiving the initial report will report immediately to the senior pastor who will meet with the Response Team to handle the complaint. In addition, may consult with the following: church legal counsel, the Ann Arbor District Superintendent, Office of the Bishop, the church insurer (or) the Child Protective Service Agency to obtain advice.
4. In cases of clergy sexual misconduct the policies of the Detroit Annual Conference shall be followed.

State law requires reporting of any suspected child abuse to authorities. Child Protective

Services should be notified within 24 hours.

7. Support system

- Take all allegations seriously. Be gentle and protective of both victim and alleged abuser. Don't prejudge the situation.
- The Response Team should offer pastoral care and support to the alleged perpetrator and his/her family until such time as a criminal charge is filed. Therapeutic intervention may be recommended with a qualified therapist. A Christian therapist is recommended.
- Following the disclosure and during an investigation of an abuse allegation, only the Protective Service agency or the police will meet with a child abuse victim. After the abuse allegation has been reported and investigated, the Response Team or others as appointed by the Response Team, may offer appropriate pastoral care, support and guidance for therapeutic intervention for the child and family with a qualified therapist. A Christian therapist is recommended.