

SAFE SANCTUARIES PROGRAM POLICY

*WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE OF THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH*

HOLIDAY PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
81 SANDUNE DRIVE
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15239-2713
CHURCH TELEPHONE NUMBER: 724-327-6552

Approved by the Church Council
of the Holiday Park United Methodist Church

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... Page 1

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND POLICY..... Page 2

DEFINITION OF PROTECTED GROUPS..... Page 2

SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION..... Page 3

ABUSE DEFINED..... Page 4

STAFFING POLICY..... Page 5

REPORTING ABUSE..... Page 8

REPORTING ABUSE POLICY..... Page 8

HANDLING ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING
CHURCH VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF..... Page 9

HANDLING ALLEGATIONS POLICY..... Page 9

REPORTING OTHER INCIDENTS..... Page 10

REPORTING OTHER INCIDENTS POLICY..... Page 10

OVERALL POLICY REVIEW..... Page 10

GROUPS USING CHURCH FACILITIES.....Page 10

FORMS APPENDIX..... Page 11

FORMS APPENDIX CONTENTS..... Page 12

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND POLICY

Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to our little ones; our children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church states that "children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation, and abuse" (1996, Paragraph 66C).

In accordance with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church and resolutions adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church in April 1996 aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse, the Holiday Park United Methodist Church (herein after referred to as "The Church") hereby adopts the following policy.

The purpose of this policy is to reduce to the maximum extent possible, the risk of abuse both within The Church and it's interface with the community.

This policy is intended to serve and protect not only the potential victims of abuse, but also limit the vulnerability of individuals and The Church to loss from litigation arising from such real or alleged incidents.

The Church endeavors to protect the accuser and the accused in matters of abuse, in any form, of children, youth, or vulnerable adults, by establishing and implementing methods of prevention and methods of reporting alleged abuse and by providing the means for opportunities for conflict resolution. This policy will serve to provide guidance to the Pastor(s), Staff, Staff-Parish Relations Committee, Church Council, and laity of The Church in matters of abuse.

DEFINITIONS OF PROTECTED GROUPS

Children: New-born to twelve (12) years old/Sixth Grade

Youth: Thirteen (13) years old\Seventh Grade to eighteen (18) years old/Twelfth Grade

Vulnerable Adult: Nineteen (19) years old or older who are physically or mentally challenged to any degree

SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION

Our relationship to God and our theological orientation as Christians and as United Methodists compel us to reflect on God's Word as the basis of our handling matters of abuse. All human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ.

* Whoever welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones to lose faith, 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 18:5&6).

* But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God, who chose you to be his children, is holy. And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites when he judges. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of Him during your time here on earth (1 Peter 1:15-17).

* For He will conceal me there when troubles come; He will hide me in His sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock (Psalm 27:5)

God's grace, freely given through Jesus Christ, calls us to be channels of grace, not exploitation, and to be agents of healing and redemption. In light of these understandings, when we honor the complete integrity of one another, we honor and remember the Body of Christ.

In all our ministries, The Church is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be... "surrounded by steadfast love... established in the faith, confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Baptism Covenant, United Methodist Hymnal).

ABUSE DEFINED

*** PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, club, etc.), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to the body.

*** EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Abuse in which a person exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the receiver of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved but undeserving of love and care. Children, youth, and vulnerable adults exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of affection, being constantly told that they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

*** NEGLECT**

Abuse in which a person endangers the health, safety or welfare of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the self-worth of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.

*** SEXUAL ABUSE**

Abuse in which sexual contact between a child, youth, or vulnerable adult (or older more powerful person) occurs. The victim is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often, the victim is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation and of exposure to child pornography or prostitution.

*** RITUAL ABUSE**

Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the welfare of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats to harm the child, youth, or vulnerable adult, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Any child, youth, or vulnerable adult making such reports should not be ignored.

STAFFING POLICY

1. All individuals (paid staff & volunteers) who desire to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults must have been a member of the congregation of the Holiday Park United Methodist Church for at least six months, complete an appropriate application, obtain written references from a minimum five year relationship, and receive their Pennsylvania Child Abuse Registry Clearance through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and Criminal Records Check through the Pennsylvania State Police. Only then will an individual be permitted to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. The Church will pay for all fees regarding these clearances. An applicant awaiting Criminal Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Clearance will be permitted to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults under the supervision of an adult with said clearances, but only after follow-up phone calls of personal references have been completed and the results are interpreted as falling in line with this policy.

See VOLUNTEER APPLICATION in Forms Appendix; Page 13

2. A minimum of three personal references must be returned by the applicant. The Pastor or screener (SPRC Chairperson or Nurture Chairperson) will review and call the references. They will then be placed in a confidential locking file, accessible only to the Pastor or to the SPRC Chairperson (in matters pertaining to paid staff). *See REFERENCE CHECK in Forms Appendix; Page 16*

3. Any individual who is found to have prior conviction for any form of child abuse will not be permitted to work in any area that involves direct contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Such an individual will meet with a pastoral staff member to determine how he or she can be involved in other areas of church ministry. Pastoral staff shall be defined as the Pastor, Director of Program & Evangelism Ministries, Director of Youth Ministries, and Staff/Parish Relations Chairperson.

4. The pastoral staff will have the right to reject an applicant if concerns are raised about their history of suitability to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Such individuals may be encouraged to serve in a different church ministry. The pastoral staff will discuss the matter with the applicant.

5. Youth (by definition) working with children will be required to fill out a Youth Worker Application and obtain written permission from their parents or guardians. A five year age differential between the youth worker and the oldest child is required. A youth worker must always work under the supervision of an adult with proper clearances.

See YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION in Forms Appendix; Page 24

6. Each classroom, activity area, or office used by children, youth, or vulnerable adults, should have a window with unobstructed viewing or a viewing device that permits observation of the room's interior. In rooms without windows, the door must be kept open far enough for activities to be observed.
7. During any church activity that involves a child, a single youth (single meaning only one in number), or a vulnerable adult, a two adult rule will be adopted (two adults with proper clearances). When additional adult volunteers are needed for a planned activity, parents of participating children or youth will be acceptable under the supervision of volunteers who have proper clearances.
8. Supervision of children will be maintained before and after activities until all are in the custody of their parents or a designated adult. For Sunday School purposes, parents or designated adults are required to pick up children kindergarten aged or younger. Teachers will remain in their classroom with these children until each child is in the custody of the parent or designated adult.
9. Church leaders (Pastoral Staff, Chairpersons of Church Council, Trustees, Nurture Ministry, and Staff/Parish Relations) will be informed about the issue of reducing the risk of abuse in The Church, the legal liability of The Church, and how to handle allegations.

10. All individuals working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, as well as Pastoral Staff, Chairpersons of Church Council, Trustees, Nurture Ministry, Staff/Parish Relations, and Nursery Director(s) will be required to attend a training session covering the following:

Screening procedure rationale

Civil & criminal consequence of misconduct

Abuse definitions

Symptoms of abuse

What constitutes inappropriate conduct

Risk reducing policies

Reporting procedures

Safe Sanctuaries video

Nurture Ministry will be responsible for such training.

11. All children and youth will have completed a Youth Event Registration Form that includes emergency medical information and signatures of parents or legal guardians indicating knowledge and permission for their children to participate in any church related activity that will take place off-site and require church supplied transportation.
12. All paid and volunteer staff working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be required to read The Church abuse policy and sign a form indicating that the policy has been read and that they will abide by the policy.
See YOUTH EVENT REGISTRATION FORM in Forms Appendix; Page 24

REPORTING ABUSE

Child abuse thrives when it goes unnoticed or unreported. A reporting procedure enhances our efforts to protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

REPORTING ABUSE POLICY

1. If a worker has reason to suspect that a child or youth has been abused (whether inside or outside of church programs) he or she must report his or her suspicions to the pastor or SPRC Chairperson and an immediate investigation should ensure to determine credibility of the accusation to reduce the risk of false accusations.

*See REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF ABUSE in
Forms Appendix; Page 17*

2. In the event of alleged abuse to a vulnerable adult, the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson is to be notified immediately. It is the responsibility of the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson to report this to the proper agency only AFTER an immediate "in-house" investigation to determine credibility of the accusation.

3. Once a report is made to the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson, it is his/her responsibility to take action only after determining that the accusation of abuse is credible. If there is any doubt as to whether to report to State authorities, he is to consult local Child Abuse agencies. One note of caution: if the caller is in need of advice only, he should identify himself or herself but should not identify the child or youth nor the suspect. Once a child or youth's name is given, the agency that was called for advice is required to begin their own investigation.

See REPORTING AGENCIES in Forms Appendix; Page 20

4. If an investigation of an alleged abuse is un-founded or erroneous, counseling of some substance should be provided for the person making the accusation.
5. All actions by volunteers and paid staff will be documented and kept indefinitely in a designated locking file.

HANDLING ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING CHURCH VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

An accusation of abuse may occur in any church. Inappropriate reactions can multiply the pain and liability inherent in an abuse case. Our congregation and community will know The Church takes all allegations seriously and will handle them in a forthright manner with due respect and confidentiality for the privacy of those individuals involved.

HANDLING ALLEGATIONS POLICY

1. The Pastor or SPRC Chairperson will notify the parents, in confidence of the allegedly abused child if they are not already aware of the allegation.
2. The accused should be treated with dignity. However, the worker will be relieved from his or her position by the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson until an investigation is completed with the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson leading the investigation. The Church will refrain from judging the individual as guilty or innocent and will continue to offer support and care while the investigation is proceeding. This applies to any allegation of abuse within or outside of The Church.
3. The incident will be reported by the pastor or SPRC Chairperson to the insurance company, the District Superintendent, the SPRC Chairperson, and the Church Council Chairperson if facts, AFTER an investigation, warrant this process.
4. Pastoral resources and support will be extended to the victim and the family. The care of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult is the first priority.
5. Information regarding allegations and accusations is extremely sensitive material and **MUST** be kept confidential. Therefore, this information should not be shared in inappropriate situations or with the media. If contacted by the media, the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson will issue a statement for The Church that "the Bishop is the only person that may speak to the allegations at this time." At no time should any volunteer or paid staff grant an interview to the media. All inquires should be

directed to the Pastor.

REPORTING OTHER INCIDENTS

The Church has an obligation to keep all children, youth, and vulnerable adults as safe as possible and to provide emotional care as well as physical care when necessary.

REPORTING OTHER INCIDENTS POLICY

1. Any accident that may occur (scrapes, cuts, bruises, sprains, undetermined injuries such as broken bones, etc.) should be reported and filed in The Church office.
See ACCIDENT REPORTING FORM in Forms Appendix; Page 21
2. A follow-up call should be made within twenty-four hours to the parent of the child or youth with the injury as to the status of the injury and to offer care and support to facilitate healing.

OVERALL POLICY REVIEW

The Policy and Procedures of The Church shall be reviewed annually by a committee designated by the Church Council. This committee shall always include the Pastor.

GROUPS USING CHURCH FACILITIES

The Holiday Park United Methodist Church reserves the right to continuously evaluate groups who solicit the use of church facilities for youth organizations and functions as to their procedure and policies used to reduce the risk of abuse to children, youth and vulnerable adults. Recommendations for a more comprehensive program aimed at reducing the risk of abuse may be made to such groups using church facilities. A negative response to such recommendations may result in the termination of use of church facilities.

FORMS APPENDIX

This appendix includes various forms that can be used to implement the Safe Sanctuaries Program

FORMS APPENDIX CONTENTS

FORMS APPENDIX CONTENTS.....Page 12

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION.....Page 13

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION WAVIER & CONSENT.....Page 15

APPLICATION REFERENCE CHECK.....Page 16

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF ABUSE.....Page 17

REPORTING AGENCIES.....Page 20

ACCIDENT REPORTING FORM.....Page 21

YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION.....Page 22

YOUTH EVENT REGISTRATION FORM.....Page 24

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SAFE SANCTUARIES
POLICY.....Page 25

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Holiday Park United Methodist Church
81 Sandune Drive
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239
Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zipcode: _____

Home Phone: _____

Are you over the age of eighteen (18)? Yes: _____ No: _____

Position applied for:

Date you are able to start:

QUALIFICATIONS:

Academic achievements: (Schools attended, degrees earned)

Continuing Education: (Other courses or training)

Professional organizations: (List any in which you have membership)

First aid training? Yes: _____ No: _____

CPR training? Yes: _____ No: _____

Act 33 & 34 Clearances? Yes: _____ No: _____

Date received: _____

Previous Volunteer Experience: Please list any relevant volunteer positions you have held and list the duties and responsibilities that you had with each. List the names of your immediate supervisors, the address and telephone numbers of the volunteer organizations, and the dates that you had served as a volunteer.

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child abuse, and other crimes of violence, theft, or motor violations?) Yes: _____ No: _____

If Yes, Please explain:

References: Please list three individuals who are not related to and whom you have known for at least five (5) years.

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

How do you know this reference?: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

How do you know this reference?: _____

3. Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone: _____
 Length of time you have known reference: _____
 How do you know this reference?: _____

WAVIER AND CONSENT:

I, _____, hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application to

The Holiday Park United Methodist Church
 81 Sandune Drive
 Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239-2713
 Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

for a volunteer position is true and correct. I authorize The Church to verify the information that I have provided on this application by contacting the references and volunteer organizations that I have listed.

In the event that my application is accepted and I become a volunteer at the Holiday Park United Methodist Church, I agree to abide by and be bound by The Church policies and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the course of my volunteer responsibilities and duties knowing that inappropriate behavior will result in being discharged from my volunteer position.

I have read this wavier and the entire application and am fully aware of its contents. I sign this consent freely and under no duress or coercion.

Signature of Applicant & Date:

APPLICATION REFERENCE CHECK

Holiday Park United Methodist Church
81 Sandune Drive
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239-2713
Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

Applicant Name: _____

Reference name: _____

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How well do you know the applicant?
4. How would you describe the moral character of the applicant?
5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to children and/or youth?
6. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?
7. How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities?
8. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child and/or youth?
9. Do you know of any characteristic that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children and/or youth? If so, please describe.

10. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime?
If so, please describe.

11. Please list any other comments you would like to make.

12. Is there any circumstance under which you would not hire the applicant to work
with children and/or youth? If so, please describe.

Reference inquiry completed by: _____ Date:

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF ABUSE

Holiday Park United Methodist Church
81 Sandune Drive
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239-2713
Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

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

2. Victim's name:

Victim's age/date of birth:

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

4. Victim's detailed statement:

5. Name of person accuse of the alleged abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim: (paid staff, volunteer, family member, etc.):

6. Reported to Pastor (name): _____

Date/time: _____

Summary of conversation:

Continued on next page

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian/designated family member

Date/time:

Spoke with:

Summary of conversation:

8. Call to appropriate local service agency:

Date/time:

Spoke with:

Summary of conversation:

9. Call to local law enforcement agency:

Date/time:

Spoke with:

Summary of conversation:

10. Other contacts:

Name:

Date/time:

Summary of conversation

Signature of person taking report

Date:

REPORTING AGENCIES

Holiday Park United Methodist Church
81 Sandune Drive
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239-2713
Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

ABUSE AGENCIES

Child Abuse Hotline 800-932-0313

Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth & Family Services 412-473-2000

Westmoreland County Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth & Family Services 724-830-3300

AGING SERVICES

Allegheny County Area on Aging Elder 800-344-4319
Abuse800-490-8505

Westmoreland County Area on Aging Elder724-830-4444
Abuse 800-442-8000

DISABILITIES

ARC Allegheny County..... 412-995-5000

ARC Westmoreland County 724-832-8784

ACCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Holiday Park United Methodist Church
81 Sandune Drive
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239-2713
Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

(Please PRINT all information)

Date of accident:

Time of accident:

Name of person injured:

Age:

Address of injured person:

Location of accident:

Name of parent/guardian:

Name(s) of person(s) witnessing accident:

Name: _____ Telephone:

Name: _____ Telephone:

Name: _____ Telephone:

Describe accident:

Name of person taking report

Date

YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Holiday Park United Methodist Church
81 Sandune Drive
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239
Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zipcode:

Home Phone:

Are you over the age of eighteen (18)? Yes: ___ No:

Position applied for:

Date you are able to start:

QUALIFICATIONS:

Academic achievements: (Schools attended, Awards received)

School organizations: (List those that you belong to)

First aid training? Yes: ___ No:

CPR training? Yes: ___ No:

Continued on next page.

Previous Volunteer Experience: Please list any volunteer positions you have held and list the duties and responsibilities that you had with each. List the names of supervisors and the dates that you had served as a volunteer.

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to ANY crime.

Yes: ___ No:

If Yes, Please explain:

References: Please list two adults who are not related to and whom you have known for at least three (3) years.

1. Name:

Address:

Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone:

Length of time you have known reference:

How do you know this reference?:

2. Name:

Address:

Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone:

Length of time you have known reference:

How do you know this reference?:

I give my daughter/son, _____, permission to apply for the volunteer position listed above.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date:

YOUTH EVENT REGISTRATION FORM

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EVENT: _____

PERMISSION FORM & MEDICAL INFORMATION

_____ has my permission to go with the Holiday Park United Methodist Church to the event indicated above.

You have my permission to take appropriate steps to obtain emergency medical care if necessary.

INSURANCE CO. _____ INSURANCE GROUP#

INSURANCE ID#

ALLERGIES

MEDICATIONS CURRENTLY BEING TAKEN:

PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE:

DATE: _____ **PHONE:**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

Holiday Park United Methodist Church
81 Sandune Drive
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15239
Church Telephone: (724) 327-6552

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read the Safe Sanctuaries Program Policy of the Western Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church and Holiday Park United Methodist Church, and agree to abide by the guidelines and procedures set forth in the Safe Sanctuaries Policy directed at reducing the risk of abuse to children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

I understand that if I display what is determined to be inappropriate behavior while caring for children, youth, or vulnerable adults, I will be discharged from my volunteer position.

I will do everything within my power and understanding of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy to reduce the risk of abuse to children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Signature: _____

Date: _____