

CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Safe Sanctuary Initiative

United Methodist Church of Hudson
301 Washington Street
Hudson, Iowa 50643
319-988-3776
hudumc@msn.com

INTRODUCTION AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution including 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 inspiration. 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, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse” (paragraph 162C).

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse**...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. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation within 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. (*The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church – 2000, pages 180-181*)

The *Child and Youth Protection Policy* of the Iowa Conference of The United Methodist Church states:

Our conference’s purpose for establishing this Child and Youth Protection Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of the children and youth involved in conference and district ministry settings.

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as an annual conference in The United Methodist Church, we pledge to:

- Conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth;
- Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers;
- Implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events;
- Provide educational opportunities to all our employees and volunteers who work with children and youth regarding relevant conference policies and procedures;
- Have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse; and
- Be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs. (*Note: Any requests from the media should be directed to the Conference Director of Communications*).

Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children and youth, the Iowa Conference 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).

The Iowa Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, in June 2005, adopted the following:

Local Church Safe Sanctuaries Initiative

The Iowa Annual Conference requires that each local church conduct a Safe Sanctuaries process and establish a child and youth protection policy by July 1, 2007. (*2005 IAC Journal*)

Thus, in covenant with other congregations of The United Methodist Church in Iowa, we adopt this policy for the prevention of abuse of children and youth in our church.

(These signatures are on file in the pastor's office from the original signing, February 22 and 24, 2009)

Travis Stevick
Pastor/Date

Robert Chittenden
SPRC Chairperson/Date

William Munchoff
Trustees Chairperson/Date

Dennis Strayer
Lay Leader/Assistant Lay Leader/Date

Donna J. Ricks
Church Council Chairperson/Date

Douglas Coonrad
Legal Advisor/Date

1. This policy shall be posted in the church nursery, youth room, and Wesley Room. The complete policy with Appendix will be filed in the church office. Up-to-date complete copies will be kept by the SPRC, Church Council, and Trustees Chairpersons as well as the Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Fellowship Coordinator, and pastor. All workers with children and youth, whether employed or volunteer, will be given a copy plus the appropriate Hudson UMC Job Description.
 - The total policy (not Appendix) will be discussed during an orientation session for employees and volunteers.
 - Nursery workers' job descriptions will be posted in the nursery.
 - Youth Fellowship Coordinator's job description will be posted in the youth room.
2. *This complete policy with Appendix and two job descriptions (determined by SPRC) will be re-evaluated at the end of each calendar year by the Church Council of the Hudson United Methodist Church.*
3. In the event that situations arise which are not covered in this policy, the pastor, SPRC chairperson, and Church Council chairperson, after researching, may jointly give consideration to said situation. Final decisions rest with the Church Council, if time allows.

***Definition

Ritual abuse is generally used to mean repeated or extreme abuse especially of children or those with disabilities, within a group setting. The activities may be kept secret from society at large, as they violate what is morally expected.

Behavioral Policies

1. Adults or youth who have been identified as having committed sexual or physical abuse or having a criminal record involving violent crime to another person will not knowingly be employed by the church or accepted as a volunteer with programs or activities for children or youth.
2. Prohibited behaviors for all employees and volunteers include but are not limited to:
 - a. Using verbally or emotionally abusive or derogatory language
 - b. Using sexually implicit or explicit language or behavior
 - c. Physically striking, hitting, or spanking
 - d. Fondling, kissing or unwelcome physical contact
 - e. Touching or tickling in an inappropriate or sexual manner
 - f. Inappropriate or intimidating actions or body language
3. At least one of those working with various ages of children and youth must be trained in CPR and first aid.
4. The use of alcohol or tobacco will be disallowed while working with children and youth.
5. Windows in classroom doors will be left uncovered. All activities should occur in open view in the classroom. Should the children or youth be involved in an outdoor activity or an outdoor setting (such as camping), the person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure the setting suits the activity, and the children/youth are properly supervised.

General for ALL Workers with Children and Youth

1. At least two persons of at least age sixteen (16), one of whom must be an adult, will be present in all settings involving children or youth. Multiple Sunday School classes constitute more than one such person. A roaming qualifying person (such as Sunday School secretary or superintendent) is also acceptable. *An adult is defined as a person of at least age eighteen (18).*
2. All persons with any significant contact with children or youth shall have been cleared by the *supervising person* in accordance with the Application and Screening Procedures described in this Policy.
 - a. Volunteer Sunday School teachers shall be cleared by the Superintendent or Pastor (if there is no Superintendent).
 - b. Salaried Nursery attendants shall be cleared by the SPRC. Specific Hudson UMC Job Description will be provided to hiree.
 - c. Salaried Youth Fellowship Coordinator shall be cleared by the SPRC. Specific Hudson UMC Job Description will be provided to hiree.
 - d. Volunteer Youth Fellowship workers and nursery attendants shall be cleared by the Superintendent or Pastor (if there is no Superintendent).
 - e. Volunteer Nursery attendants shall be cleared by the Nursery Chairperson or Pastor.
3. Youth employees and youth volunteers (under the age of 18) must present a signed Parental Permission form before they can be authorized to work with children. (See Appendix page 9)

4. An annual orientation (or more often as needed) for all workers with children and youth (whether paid or volunteer, clergy or lay) will inform them of all church policies outlined in this packet.
5. Whether paid or volunteer, at least one person on the team working with children or youth must follow the “**five-years-older**” rule. This requires that they be at least five years older than the oldest child or youth participant.
6. Parents involved with HUMC activities must be given advance notice and full information regarding the event(s) in which their children/youth will be participating if that event deviates from the norm. This information will be given in writing and will require a signature from the parent/guardian. This is a guiding principle in the church’s ministries with children and youth. (EX: overnight retreat, etc.)

Church Nursery Specific Guidelines

(See additional job description pertinent to Hudson UMC)

1. No workers under the age of eighteen will be allowed sole supervision in the church nursery.
2. Nursery workers are not permitted to allow unscreened friends or family to assist in the nursery.
3. Parent(s) or responsible adult designated by parent must sign-in the infant/child(ren) and indicate on the form where they can be reached for an emergency.
4. Sign-in registry should include both a place to note adults who have permission to pick up the infant/child(ren) and a place to note if there are persons who **should not** pick up the infant/child(ren), e.g. non-custodial parent.

Hired Nursery Attendants or Youth Workers

1. Applicants must provide three positive personal (non-relative) references.
2. Applicants will be given an Employment Application, Reference Form, and Authorization and Request of Criminal Records Check. Applicants 16-18 years will also need a Parental/Guardian Permission Form.

Volunteers in the Nursery or Youth Program

1. Volunteers shall have been a regular part of the church body (regular attendance for at least six (6) months) prior to working with children or youth.
 - ✓ Exceptions may be made with a positive written reference from an immediately previous church and/or pastor and deemed adequate by the hiring supervisor.
2. New volunteers to the church may need to provide three positive personal (non-relative) references.

Outside Groups Who Use Church Facilities

1. Other outside groups/leaders (Scouts, 4-H, etc.) who work with children or youth must conform to the policies of the Hudson United Methodist Church. Copies of their background checks must be provided to the church.

Conducting Background Checks

1. The web site *www.iowacourts.state.ia.us/* will be the initial source for performing background checks on all workers with children and youth at the Hudson UMC. It will be the main source for current church members of at least six months who volunteer.
2. Current members who have had background checks elsewhere are encouraged to submit those forms.
3. Background checks using *Safe Churches Project Services* will be conducted on paid employees working with children and/or youth.
4. The Pastor of the United Methodist Church of Hudson will be responsible for conducting these background checks and keeping information as confidential as possible.

Accident/Injury Report

1. In the case of an accidental injury a report shall be kept on file by the pastor of any incident resulting in injury or complaint of injury to a child or youth, or of any treatment of any ailment or health condition. (See Appendix page 20)

Insurance

1. Appropriate insurance will be carried for all events by the church. Drivers will also need proof of their insurance coverage if asked.

Transportation

1. Drivers must have a valid Iowa driver's license and must adhere to applicable laws.
2. Without exception, all drivers must be at least 21 years of age.
3. Owner of the vehicle must have adequate insurance.
4. To the extent reasonably possible, in vehicles carrying more than four children or youth, there should be an adult in addition to the driver in the vehicle.
5. If cars are to caravan, an established route for all vehicles must be determined in advance.
6. Passengers are required to wear seatbelts and use child safety restraints/seats as required by Iowa law.
7. No smoking while in the vehicle or consumption of alcohol at any time by a driver or adult passenger while traveling to, from, or during a United Methodist Church of Hudson sponsored child or youth activity.
8. Driver of the vehicle should refrain from cell phone usage or any other distraction (i.e. dvd players, ipods, or other electronic devices) while driving.

Application and Screening Procedures

1. Applicant, or Volunteer who is new to the church, completes an application form, including references. (See Appendix pages 10-12 for applicant or 13-14 for new volunteer to church)
2. Applicant or Volunteer signs an Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check for Employees (See Appendix page 15) or an Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check for Volunteers (See Appendix page 16) permitting the church to conduct reference checks, talk with representatives of a former church, and conduct criminal background checks.
 - a. A background check will be conducted on all applicants or volunteers.
3. An in-person interview is conducted for salaried applicants.
 - a. An *ad hoc* Interview Committee from the SPRC, and/or Sunday School staff, and/or Church Council will be enlisted as the interviewers.
 - b. The same interviewers will conduct all interviews if multiple applications.
 - c. The background check and receipt of personal references will follow the interview.
 - d. At least two interviewers plus the pastor, whenever possible, will conduct the interview.
 - e. The pastor will be informed, however, of interviews prior to their occurrence.
4. References will be checked and documented.
5. New volunteers must be known by the supervising person or recommended by someone whose judgment is trusted by supervising person. (See Appendix page 17)
6. The following background records may be checked and documented: criminal records, sex offender registry and child abuse registry.
7. Salaried applicant is cleared for contact with children or youth by the *ad hoc* Interview Committee.
8. Volunteers new to the congregation will be cleared by the supervising person (Pastor or Sunday School Superintendent).
9. All records will be confidential.

Reporting of Child Abuse

1. **Once an incident of child abuse occurs or allegation of an incident is made, it is vital that it be dealt with speedily and in a clearly outlined manner.**
2. Any incident or accusation of abuse will immediately be reported to the supervising person or pastor. The accused will be treated with dignity, but will be immediately removed from further involvement with children or youth.
3. In the case that the alleged perpetrator of abuse is the supervising person/pastor or a family member of the supervising person/pastor, report will be made to the SPRC Chairperson or designee.
4. In the case of an allegation of abuse, a Report of Suspected Incident of Youth/Child Abuse should be filled out as soon as possible. (See Appendix page 18-19)

Response Guidelines for Child Abuse

ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL.

1. A quick and compassionate response is expected if child abuse is suspected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases, the entire staff of the activity will be at the service of all official investigating agencies.
2. The Pastor will be notified immediately who will directly gather the Response Team: the Pastor, SPRC Chairperson or designee, Lay Leader or Assistant Lay Leader, Church Council Chairperson or designee. *No one related to the accused will be part of this team. All information is confidential.*
3. In the case of an allegation of abuse,
 - ❖ **The safety of the child/youth must be the church's primary concern.**
 - ❖ Parents will be notified immediately.
 - ❖ Law enforcement will be contacted followed by
 - ❖ Consultation with insurance carrier and
 - ❖ The Northeast District office of the United Methodist Church.
4. In the case of an allegation of abuse, whether by paid staff person or volunteer, the Northeast District Office of the United Methodist Church will be informed as soon as possible.
5. A written record will be kept of all steps taken by the church in response. (See Appendix pages 18-19)
6. In most cases, the Pastor is the key person to lead the response.
7. **Support will be available to all persons involved with the incident.**

APPENDIX

Forms

CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

for the

United Methodist Church of Hudson

Parental/Guardian Permission Form	9
Employment Application (Youth Worker or Nursery Attendant)	10-11
Reference Form	12
Volunteer Application	13
Reference Form	14
Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check for <u>Employees</u>	15
Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check for <u>Volunteers</u>	16
Reference Form Check (for church use)	17
Report of Suspected Incident	18-19
Accident / Injury Report Form	20
Addendum: Job Description for Nursery and Youth Worker	Blue (if needed)

Hired Staff receivepages 9 (if under 18), 10-12 and 15

Volunteers receive.....pages 9 (if under 18), 13-14 and 16

Volunteer staff who have not been involved with the church for at least six months, will fill out all forms indicated for Volunteers.

Current church members fill out just page 16.

In no case should applications be sent via e-mail as there are privacy issues involved.

Previous Work Experience: Please list your previous employers from the past five years. Include the job title, a description of position duties and responsibilities, the name of the company/employer, the address of company/employer, the name of your immediate supervisor, and the dates you were employed in each position.

Previous Volunteer Experience: Please list any relevant volunteer positions you have held and list the duties you performed in each position, the name of your supervisor, the address and phone number of the volunteer organization, and the dates of your volunteer service.

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, other crimes of violence, theft, or motor vehicle violations)? No Yes

If yes, please explain:

Note: A background criminal check will be performed.

References: Please list three individuals who are not related to you by blood or marriage as references. List people who have known you 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: _____

Note: Please inform the references they will be contacted by the Church.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of birth: _____

Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Position applied for: _____ Date available to begin: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Current job responsibilities and schedule: _____

Work experience: _____

Previous volunteer experience: _____

Special interests, hobbies, and skills: _____

Can you make a one-year commitment to this volunteer role? _____

Do you have your own transportation? _____

Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children and/or youth?

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children and/or youth?

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

If yes, please explain fully:

Note: A background criminal check will be performed.

References: Please list three individuals who are not related to you by blood or marriage as references. List people who have known you 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: _____

Note: Please inform the references they will be contacted by the Church.

AUTHORIZATION & REQUEST

For CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK for EMPLOYEES

I, _____ hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application for employment is true and correct. I authorize this church to verify the information I have provided on this application by contacting the references and employers I have listed, by conducting a criminal records check, or by other means, including contacting others whom I have not listed. I authorize the references and employers listed in this application to provide whatever information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the job for which I have applied. Furthermore, I waive any rights I may have to confidentiality.

I do release said police /sheriff's department from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

In the event that my application is accepted and I become employed by the Hudson United Methodist Church, I agree to abide by and be bound by the policies of the Hudson United Methodist Church and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my duties on behalf of the Hudson United Methodist Church.

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

Print applicant's full name: _____

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: _____

Signature of Applicant

Date

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Request sent to: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Signature of person making contact: _____ Date: _____

**AUTHORIZATION and REQUEST
for CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK for VOLUNTEERS**

I, _____, hereby authorize the Hudson United Methodist Church to request the police/sheriff's department to release information regarding any record of charges or convictions containing 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 said police /sheriff's department from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

Signature of Applicant Date

Print applicant's full name: _____

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: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Request sent to: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

I concur in my child's decision to sign this form.

Signature of Parent/Guardian if Applicant is under age 18

REFERENCE CHECK FORM

Applicant name: _____

Reference name: _____

Reference address: _____

Reference phone: _____

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 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 characteristics 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.

Reference inquiry completed by _____ Date _____

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF YOUTH/CHILD ABUSE

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 statement (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: _____

7. Reported to victim's parent/guardian: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

8. Reported to insurance carrier: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to District Office: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Call to local law enforcement agency: _____

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

11. Other contacts: _____

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Signature of person making contacts

Date

Note: It is imperative that the person filling out this report be familiar with the state law reporting requirements before taking any action or completing this report.

