

United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY



Policies & Procedures for the Prevention of Abuse among Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

MISSION STATEMENT

*“Through Jesus, we strive to **GROW** in our relationship with God through Worship, Prayer and Study. Guided by the Holy Spirit we seek to make Christ’s love known as we **CONNECT** and **SERVE** others.”*

(Revised-June 5, 2023)

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PURPOSE

It is an important purpose of the members and staff of United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak (the "Church") to provide a safe and secure environment for preschoolers, children, youth and differently abled persons entrusted to our care. We do this to encourage those preschoolers, children, and youth and their families to grow in their relationship with God and one another.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family at the Church.

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising, directing, coordinating, teaching and/or assisting the activities of preschoolers, children, youth, and differently abled persons.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

1. "Preschooler," "child," "children," "youth," and "minor" shall be defined as any individual *under* the age of eighteen (18) (or whose mental capacity is that of a minor).
2. "Adult" shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. "Worker" shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.
4. "Employee" for purposes of this policy shall be all persons who are paid by the Church, whether full or part time, and whether employee or independent contractor, and all unpaid volunteers who work with children and youth in a supervisory (staff) capacity such as Sunday School and Youth program coordinators, administrators or superintendents, and the chairperson(s) of the Church committee(s) that oversee those programs.
5. "Teenage Worker" shall be defined as any worker at least fourteen (14) years old or older, but under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors.
6. "Child Abuse" shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth, or minor. For a legal definition, see Child Abuse Prevention Reporting instruction sheet.
7. "Criminal Background Check" ("CBC") is the procedure used to perform a national check of the background of adult employees and volunteer workers for criminal activity using the online product of Intellicorp, or another national criminal records research service recommended by the United Methodist Church New York Annual Conference.

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

“Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a church, 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 action.

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

WORKER ENLISTMENT

1. All employees of the Church (both paid and unpaid as defined above) desiring to work with minors will be required to complete an Employment Application and Confidential Screening Form
2. After an application is received, prior employment and volunteer service and personal references will be checked. It is suggested that, at a minimum, personal references be telephoned and a written memorandum be made of the contents of those telephone conversations, and that prior employment and church service references be contacted in writing.
3. Any prospective worker that has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse should not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they would have contact with minors unless exception be made by the unanimous decision of the Confidential Screening Committee.
4. Criminal background checks *will* be performed on each employee (as defined above) after the applicant has signed a Background Investigation Consent form, and prior to being enlisted as a worker. Criminal background checks will be performed on any volunteer worker. Annual criminal background checks will be performed on employees and workers, randomly or as deemed necessary. After every three to five years a new criminal background check will again be performed.
5. Only members of the Confidential Screening Committee of the Church will have access to the criminal background check report. Each applicant will be given a signed copy of the Church Privacy Statement disclosing those officials who serve on the Confidential Screening Committee. Recommendations will be given by the Confidential Screening Committee to the Staff Parish Relations Committee, the Committee on Lay Leadership or other appropriate individual or committee as to the qualification of applicants.
6. Standard interview questions will be developed and used in personal interviews with employee and volunteer worker applicants, after reviewing the applications of the applicant, checking all references, and receiving a criminal background check report. These interview sheets will be filled out with the results of the interview and kept in a

- secure, confidential supervisory file, together with the reference checks, the applications and the criminal background check report, if any. A separate supervisory file will be maintained permanently on each employee and worker, whether paid or a volunteer.
7. All programs for children and youth will at all times observe the Church's Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth, and all employees and workers must agree to abide by the Church's Code of Ethics.
 8. When an employee (as defined above, including volunteers working in a supervisory capacity) is engaged to work with minors, they will be photographed and the picture(s) will be kept in the person's file. Photographs will be updated every five years or as deemed necessary.
 9. At the applicant's request, the Church shall allow the applicant to review his/her criminal history record transcript at the Church, but in no event shall the Church allow the applicant to retain and/or copy the transcript of his/her criminal background check.
 10. The Church shall immediately notify the Confidential Screening Committee or other qualified church official if an internal grievance (applicant disputes) is filed by an applicant because of incorrect information or other reasons related to criminal histories provided by the agency. The Church shall submit in a reasonable time period the "Criminal History Record Resolution Request" or similar document to the appropriate governmental agency.

WORKER TRAINING

Each new worker will be given the legal definition of child abuse in writing which are contained in the Child Abuse Prevention Reporting instruction sheet with their Application. All workers will sign the Code of Ethics and agree to follow the Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth. New workers will also be required to view child abuse prevention video(s) and read the written materials made available on this subject to help them gain an appreciation for the reality of the concern. This will help workers identify child abuse in the future if they see signs of it. Upon request, each worker will be given these Policies and Procedures for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORMS

Employees, teachers of minors, and volunteers of activities or programs for minors of the Church will be required to complete Application and Screening Forms providing personal and confidential information necessary to perform security background checks and reference checks on each individual worker. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background and reference checks or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

APPLICATION FORMS

Adult worker application forms shall include the following:

- Volunteer Application and Screening Form with Attachments
 - Code of Ethics
 - Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth
 - Application Form
 - Confidential Screening Form
 - Background Investigation Consent
 - Church Privacy Statement
 - Worker's Authorization and Release of References
 - Child Abuse Prevention Reporting

Teen assistant worker application form shall include the following:

- Screening Form for Teens
 - Code of Ethics
 - Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth

WORKER DISQUALIFICATION

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the security background check, the following items will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership, sponsorship or supervising of any activities or programs with minors:

Any conviction for:

- Criminal homicide;
- Aggravated assault;
- Crimes related to the possession, use or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault (rape);
- Aggravated sexual assault;
- Injury to a child;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a child;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to children;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a child;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure;
- Enticing a child.

All charges for these crimes or charges or convictions for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the members of the Confidential Screening Committee who shall be trained for reviewing and interpreting criminal history record transcripts and approved by the Church for reviewing applicant transcripts. Only qualified persons (as stated above) may view information obtained on the criminal history record transcript, and the Church's Privacy Statement shall be faithfully followed.

SPECIFIC ACTS AND OMISSIONS IN VIOLATION OF THE POLICY

The following acts and omissions are violations of this Policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any activity or program and are to be immediately reported to the designated program staff after the safety of the child, children, youth, or minor involved has been assured.

- ❖ Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
- ❖ Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
- ❖ Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
- ❖ Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.
- ❖ Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of the Church.
- ❖ Mental or emotional injury to a minor.
- ❖ The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of the Church.
- ❖ The presence, possession, consumption of or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors at the Church.

WORKER SUPERVISION

1. The Church will follow the Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth as they shall be adopted and amended from time to time. In particular, the Church will follow the "two adult" rule, which means no adult shall be left alone with a child, (a minimum of two-unrelated, non-cohabitating adults) and requires a reasonable ratio of adult workers to be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of children.
2. Church staff and volunteer directors will supervise on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time. Supervisors shall complete a log to show which rooms, activities, time and date the classes or activity was visited.
3. An identification system shall be adopted for kindergarten aged children and younger so that the adults who drop off a child are the same adults who pick up the child.
4. A door without windows shall remain open at all times: In counseling sessions with minors, parental permission shall be obtained prior to a minister meeting privately with a minor, or the two adult rule shall be used in that instance. Prior permission may be

granted by parents to cover a particular time period (i.e., a school year) for their child to receive counseling from a particular minister.

5. Lists of the name of the approved workers on duty shall be posted near each classroom or area where programs for minors are functioning.
6. Educate all volunteers and paid workers with minors as to the Church's policies and procedures concerning this matter annually.

OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEER WORKERS

1. Those who only volunteer occasionally must go through the entire volunteer screening process. There are to be no exceptions for anyone not to go through the complete process.
2. Teenagers under eighteen (18) wanting to serve as teen workers in any capacity with activities, studies, or programs for preschoolers or children will need to fill in a Teen Volunteer Information Form and go through the training. The only step in the process they are exempt from is the criminal background check. Teenagers must be assigned in accordance with the Five-Years Older Rule (see Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth).

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION REPORTING

Both New York and Connecticut have law requiring reports to a child abuse hotline when a caregiver has cause to suspect that child abuse or neglect has occurred. These laws focus on situations when the alleged abuser is a family member or other responsible persons (such as a church worker). When the alleged abuser is not a family member or other responsible person, the matter is not reportable to the hotline, but rather is for the criminal justice system. Determining whether or not an incident is reportable requires an investigation (which must be conducted immediately and a decision made virtually immediately and in no event longer than 24 hours after the first report of the incident. Detailed procedures for handling reporting can be found in the attachment: Child Abuse Prevention Reporting – New York/Connecticut.

ACTIVE SHOOTER THREAT

An active shooter is an individual who is engaged in attempting to kill people in a confined, populated area. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Per the department of HLS remember: **RUN / HIDE / FIGHT**. If a threat is perceived at the UMC at Shrub Oak the first step is to:

RUN- escape if safely possible. Leave belongings behind. Then call 911.

HIDE- If you can't run then hide in an area out of site of the shooter. Block the entry by blocking or locking the door. Silence mobile communication. Help others if you can do so safely. If you are in a safe location stay there until law enforcement or church administration inform you the threat is contained.

FIGHT- If you it is your last resort and you are in immediate danger you need to defend yourselves. look around for makeshift weapons such as chairs, fire extinguishers, scissors. Commit to your action and be aggressive to stop the shooter.

INSURANCE

The Church shall obtain a sufficient level of liability insurance coverage that is available and would cover child abuse and sexual misconduct claims as set by the New York Annual Conference. If available, the Church should have the levels of coverage which are required for limited immunity.

CONCLUSION

Churches need to be prepared! This is the legal reason for creating safety policies, but there's a deeper, more significant reason – to protect the children. Policies are only printed expressions of the value placed on children. If the only reason for safety policies is to protect the organization, the Church has missed God's love for children.

Some people may think that our Church is too small or that our Church “knows” everyone to worry about these safety problems. Remember it's much easier to make plans and develop safety policies as a means of prevention, rather than wait until they are needed as a reaction to an abuse case.

Some churches tend to take the biblical concept of trusting God to an extreme. They think nothing bad can happen to Christians. We must not be unwise regarding children's safety. There is no automatic protection from evil for the faithful. We're to watch and be ready. Accidents will always happen. There will always be unforeseen circumstances that need to be handled. But the Church should build into its organization sturdy, safety-policy fire blocks into the walls of its ministry to protect children.

Our Church desires to be a “Safe Sanctuary” for children and youth through the implementation of the above policy. Adoption of these provisions will enable the Church to provide a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our Church family and its guests.

**CHECKLIST FOR RESPONSE
TO ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL ABUSE
TO BE COMPLETED BY CLERGY/PROFESSIONAL
STAFF PERSONS**

In the case of an allegation of child/youth sexual abuse, the volunteer or clergy staff person who observes or to whom the information is given is required by the Church and by the state law to complete the tasks listed below. Date and initial as each step is completed. Note: If allegation is against the Senior Minister, the report should go to the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent.

Date: _____	Initial: _____	1. For clergy and paid professional staff: remove the accused from the situation and suspend the accused from duties involving children/youth.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	2. For volunteers: Remove the accused from the situation and immediately notify the closest available clergy/professional staff person who will suspend the accused. If the clergy/professional staff person to whom the allegation is reported is not the direct supervisor of the accused, the person reporting will inform the supervisor as soon as possible.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	3. Make written documentation of everything done and said. If the person reporting the allegation is a volunteer, both the volunteer and the clergy/professional staff to whom the volunteer has reported will document the procedures taken.

The procedures after this point will be administered by ministerial staff persons only.

Date: _____	Initial: _____	4. Immediately notify the parents/guardians of the alleged victim and respond to their questions and concerns.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	5. Determine whether the incident requires immediate notification to state authorities.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	6. Immediately notify the minister in charge.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	7. Make written documentation of persons contacted and action taken to this point.

Date: _____	Initial: _____	8. The clergy/professional staff person will immediately establish a small response team to begin the internal and pastoral care process.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	a. notify the insurance carrier of the incident immediately and comply with its investigation, if any;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	b. cooperate with legal and state authorities in their investigations, if any;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	c. prepare a written statement and designate a spokesperson to respond to media inquiries;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	d. provide assistance to the alleged victim and his/her family in obtaining counseling or referral to a mental health professional, if needed; determine whether the alleged victim's counseling expenses can be reimbursed by the Church or the insurance carrier;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	e. respond to the needs of the families of the alleged victim and the accused to seek a redemptive solution for all involved;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	f. inform the affected volunteer(s) and paid staff members of the need for confidentiality, and;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	9. Consider and respond to the concerns of other parents.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	10. The director of the affected ministerial area will respond to the pastoral care concerns of persons within the department.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	11. Make written documentation of persons contacted and action taken.

ABUSE INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Reason for report _____

Date of incident _____ Class _____

Title _____

Name(s) and Age(s) of Minor(s) _____

Quote the child's first words verbatim: _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

What action did you take? _____

Has the incident been resolved? Yes No

Explain: _____

Were there any witnesses? Yes No

Names: _____

Signatures of witnesses (if possible): _____

Report submitted to: _____

PAID AND VOLUNTEER CHILD WORKER ENLISTMENT CHECKLIST

NAME OF APPLICANT: _____

TASKS TO COMPLETE:	<u>DATE</u>	<u>INITIALS</u>
Receive Copy of Policies and Procedures Manual	_____	_____
Application and Screening Form	_____	_____
Signed Code of Ethics	_____	_____
Signed Background Investigation Consent	_____	_____
Received Criminal Records Check Privacy Statement	_____	_____
Signed Worker's Authorization and Release of References	_____	_____
Received Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry	_____	_____
Driver Information Form (as needed)	_____	_____
References Checked	_____	_____
Church Status (Minimum 6 months involvement)	_____	_____
Criminal Background Check ("CBC") Performed	_____	_____
CBC Reviewed by Approved Staff	_____	_____
Interview After Checks Are Made (if needed)	_____	_____
Review Background Transcripts with Applicant (if requested)	_____	_____
Photograph	_____	_____
Worker Training		
Definition of Child Abuse	_____	_____
Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry	_____	_____
Procedure on Reporting Abuse	_____	_____
View Video(s)	_____	_____
Written Material(s)	_____	_____

PROFILE ON A CHILD ABUSER

SEXUAL ABUSE

Men 18 and up

- Low self-esteem
- Need for power and control
- Poor family relationships, though the relationships often look okay from the outside
- Difficulty in interpersonal relationships . . . relates to others immaturely both socially and emotionally . . . may not be involved with peers or engage in adult group recreational activities.
- Difficulty with impulse control
- History of past physical/sexual victimization . . . 80-95% of child molesters were themselves molested as children
- Primary interests are in children
- May be involved in youth activities such as group leaders or coaches
- May be single or married . . . if married, they are often experiencing marital difficulties . . . they have difficulty in developing satisfying, supportive, intimate relationships with adults
- May have a specific age of children they prefer to work with
- May be of any sexual orientation or preference
- May have been insecure in childhood with frequent moves, early physical illnesses and marital difficulties between parents
- Many are less of a team player
- Difficult time asking for help with his problems
- Don't admit to stress or recognize a need to have a plan to deal with it
- Use children to fulfill their needs or validate their sense of competence and well-being
- Highly skilled at gaining the trust and confidence of children
- Sensitive to children's needs and have a way of putting children at ease
- Move frequently and unexpectedly
- Seeks opportunities to be alone with children
- Has an idealistic perspective of children . . . may refer to them as objects
- Often good at convincing others about their competence and caring

Adolescent

- Lack of contact with peers
- Few or no extracurricular activities
- Generally feels powerless and inadequate
- May feel more comfortable with children younger than themselves
- Males, in particular, may be frequently chosen to baby-sit because they make themselves available and relate well to young children
- May come from a family where there has been physical or sexual abuse
- May seem socially immature for their age
- May lack a close relationship with a father figure

Women

- May have married young
- Reared in a very strict home
- Her family was/is very religious
- Her husband is gone frequently and is not very supportive
- Is sexually naïve and immature
- Is very dependent of the father figure
- Frequently the victim of physical abuse
- Has low self-esteem
- The husband exaggerates his masculinity in dress, work, and with peers and usually has drug or alcohol problems that affect his sexual performance
- Is lonely
- Does not have much tenderness in her life

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Negative attitude about life and people
- Labeled as having a “hot” temper
- Blames others: “he made me,” “it was her fault”
- History of child abuse as a child
- Uses harsh, age inappropriate discipline
- Offers illogical or unconvincing excuses for what occurred
- Exhibits out of control behavior

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Blames and belittles children
- Cold and rejecting
- Withholds love

CAUTION: A profile list such as this can be misleading because many of the characteristics here can describe men/women who do not molest. Having more than one or even all of these items does not necessarily increase the odds of that person being a molester. Although this profile has some value in pointing out particular needs of people and risks associated with them, great caution should be used when assigning this profile to any one individual. Few molesters ever report the characteristics listed here. Neither are interviewers trained to properly elicit this information. Individuals with abusive personalities are often more subtle and skillfully manipulative in their approach to their employers, as well as their approach to children. This makes it essential for those responsible for hiring or enlisting volunteers to gain information from collateral resources such as past employers, friends, families, and criminal background checks.

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POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE

NEGLECT

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is truant or tardy often or arrives early and stays late.
2. Begs or steals food.
3. Attempts suicide.
4. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs.
5. Is extremely dependent or detached.
6. Engages in delinquent behavior, such as prostitution or stealing.
7. Appears to be exhausted.
8. States frequent or continual absence of parent or guardian.

Physical Indicators

1. Frequently is dirty, unwashed, hungry, or inappropriately dressed.
2. Engages in dangerous activities (possibly because he/she generally is unsupervised).
3. Is tired and listless.
4. Has unattended physical problems.
5. May appear to be overworked and/or exploited.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is reluctant to change clothes in front of others.
2. Is withdrawn.
3. Exhibits unusual sexual behavior and/or knowledge beyond developmental age.
4. Has poor peer relationships.
5. Either avoids or seeks out adults.
6. Is pseudo-mature.
7. Is manipulative.
8. Is self-conscious.
9. Has problems with authority and rules.
10. Exhibits eating disorders.
11. Is self-mutilating.
12. Is obsessively clean.
13. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs.
14. Exhibits delinquent behavior such as running away from home.
15. Exhibits extreme compliance or defiance.
16. Is fearful or anxious.
17. Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide.
18. Is promiscuous.
19. Engages in fantasy or infantile behavior.
20. Is unwilling to participate in sports activities.
21. Has school difficulties.

Physical Indicators

1. Has pain and/or itching in the genital area.
2. Has bruises or bleeding in the genital area.
3. Has venereal disease.
4. Has swollen private parts.
5. Has difficulty walking or sitting.
6. Has torn, bloody, and/or stained underclothing.
7. Experiences pain when urinating.
8. Is pregnant.
9. Has vaginal or penile discharge.
10. Wets the bed.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is overly eager to please.
2. Seeks out adult contact.
3. Views abuse as being warranted.
4. Exhibits changes in behavior.
5. Is excessively anxious.
6. Is depressed.
7. Is unwilling to discuss problems.
8. Exhibits aggressive or bizarre behavior.
9. Is withdrawn.
10. Is apathetic.
11. Is passive.
12. Has unprovoked fits of yelling or screaming.
13. Exhibits inconsistent behaviors.
14. Feels responsible for the abuser.
15. Runs away from home.
16. Attempts suicide.
17. Has low self-esteem.
18. Exhibits a gradual impairment of health and/or personality.
19. Has difficulty sustaining relationships.
20. Has unrealistic goal setting.
21. Is impatient.
22. Is unable to communicate or express his/her feelings, needs, or desires.
23. Sabotages his/her chances of success.
24. Lacks self-confidence.
25. Is self-deprecating and has a negative self-image.

Physical Indicator

1. Has a sleep disorder (nightmares or restlessness).
2. Wets the bed.
3. Exhibits developmental lags (stunting of his/her physical, emotional, and/or mental growth).
4. Is hyperactive.
5. Exhibits eating disorders.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is wary of adults.
2. Is either extremely aggressive or withdrawn.
3. Is dependent and indiscriminate in his/her attachments.
4. Is uncomfortable when other children cry.
5. Generally controls his/her own crying.
6. Exhibits a drastic behavior change when not with parents or caregiver.
7. Is manipulative.
8. Has poor self-concept.
9. Exhibits delinquent behavior, such as running away from home.
10. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs.
11. Is self-mutilating.
12. Is frightened of parents or going home.
13. Is overprotective of or responsible for parents.
14. Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide.
15. Has behavioral problems at school.

Physical Indicators

1. Has unexplained* bruises or welts, often clustered or in a pattern.
2. Has unexplained* and/or unusual burns (cigarettes, doughnut-shaped, immersion-lines, object-patterned).
3. Has unexplained* bite marks.
4. Has unexplained* fractures or dislocations.
5. Has unexplained* abrasions or lacerations.
6. Wets the bed.

(* Or explanation is inconsistent or improbable).

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OTHER TYPES OF HARM

Most of us think that liability arise only out of tangible harm, such as bodily injury or property damage. Unfortunately, increasing numbers of lawsuits involve situations where physical injury is not involved. These exposures may arise out of:

1. Libel and slander – untrue statements about members of the congregation or other faiths. Emotional distress may be caused because of statements made or actions taken, even if they are well founded in truth.
2. Public demonstrations against individuals, groups, or organizations if improperly conducted.
3. Discharge of students or expulsion of members of congregations.
4. Invasion of privacy – investigations into the private lives of church members may cause liability, as may acts such as searching lockers, desks, or personal property of employees or students.
5. Publications – accuracy of facts should be carefully determined. Accusations should not be published. Groups or classes of individuals should not be charged with guilt by association.
6. Counseling by insufficiently trained or unskilled counselors.

IMPROPER OR INADEQUATE SUPERVISION

You can't over-supervise. Most states or local governments have specific requirements on the minimum ratio of supervisors to participants. Probably more litigation results from "failure to properly supervise" than any other cause. If negligence cannot be found for any other reasons, attempts are made to find inadequate supervision.

Instances where improper or inadequate supervision will likely be alleged are:

1. Accidents on the playground
2. In Sunday School
3. Church outings
4. Sporting events
5. Field trips
6. Swimming
7. In the classroom

Proper location of supervisors on playgrounds or at swimming pools is as important as the number of supervisors. Governmental authorities should be contacted prior to events on public property to determine any safety requirements and to place authorities on notice of the type of activity planned. Parents should be informed in writing of the exact nature of the planned event,

describing the supervision to be given at church or school. Parental consent should be obtained in writing of any special event.

Qualifications required for supervisory personnel should be determined for each event. You need people of mature judgment who are experienced supervising groups of children or young people. The supervisor should not have a history of problems with assigned groups.

A thorough check should be made on an individual's background, especially where supervisors are employees of the church or school. All states have standards for hiring employees in charge of children. Church officials should be informed of state and local requirements. This would include "certification of teachers".

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION REPORTING

For

NEW YORK

Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report the person's belief in accordance with this procedure¹. Non-accusatory reports (reports that identify the victim of abuse or neglect whether or not the person responsible for the abuse or neglect is known) shall be made to the local or state law enforcement agency (police) by calling 911 (in an emergency) or the Yorktown Police.

In addition, it is the policy of the Church to voluntarily report all reportable incidents of suspected child sexual or physical abuse to the child abuse hotline regardless of whether such reports are mandatory or voluntary under New York state law.

In cases where the alleged abuser is *a parent, guardian, member of the victim's household or other responsible person*², reports go to the NYS Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (see below). New York Social Services Law Section 413 does *not* specifically name clergypersons as mandatory reporters in such cases. Local church leaders, including church program staff, Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders and Christian education coordinators that work with church Sunday schools and youth groups, whether paid or volunteer, have no mandatory duty to report under the statute but may make voluntary reports. However, personnel of day care centers or nursery schools located on church property that run during weekdays other than Sunday only (whether or not run by the church) *are mandatory reporters*:

NYC Public (voluntary) Hotline Number: 800-342-3720

NYS Mandated Reported Hotline Number: 800-635-1522

¹ An "abused child" is defined as a child under age 18 whose parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care either inflicts or creates a substantial risk of non-accidental physical injury, or who commits or allows a sexual offense against, by or with the child. A "neglected child" is one who has been impaired by inadequate food, shelter, clothing, education or medical care, or who lacks proper supervision because of excessive corporeal punishment, drug or alcohol abuse, or similar serious acts.

² An "other responsible person" is anyone legally responsible for the victim at the time of the alleged abuse. For the Church this would mean, for example, anyone involved in running the Sunday school including a teacher or assistant.

United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak
Application for Church Workers with Minors

Name: _____

(As shown on the Application for Church Workers)

Address: _____

Number of years at this address: ____ (If less than three years, please add your past address on the back.)

Email Address: _____ Web Sites _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Current job responsibilities and schedule:

Describe your work experience: _____

Do you have a driver's license: Yes No

Number _____ State _____

Do you have liability insurance? (List policy limits and name of carrier)

Would you like to volunteer as a worker with children or youth? Yes No

What qualities do you have that would help you in working with children and youth?

How were you parented as a child?

If you were a parent of teenagers, how would you discipline them?

Have you ever been exposed to an incident of abuse of a child or teenager?

Yes No

If yes, how did you feel about the incident? _____

Have you ever been exposed to an incident of violence of a child or teenager?

Yes No

If yes, how did you feel about the incident? _____

Would you be available for periodic Volunteer training sessions?

Yes No

List all other volunteer work and employment involving youth: *(Use back for more entries)*

Organization	Address	Type of Work	Dates
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Two Non-Personal References (Do not list relatives or friends)

1. Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Daytime phone: _____
4. Evening phone: _____
5. Relationship to reference: _____

1. Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Daytime phone: _____
4. Evening phone: _____
5. Relationship to reference: _____

Two Personal References (Do not list relatives or friends)

1. Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Daytime phone: _____
4. Evening phone: _____
5. Relationship to reference: _____

1. Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Daytime phone: _____
4. Evening phone: _____
5. Relationship to reference: _____

I, the undersigned, do provide this information willingly, completely and honestly to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL SCREENING FORM

The Safe Sanctuaries Committee will review this form. *Please answer each question candidly and completely. A "yes" answer will not necessarily disqualify a person from serving as a volunteer.* The form will be kept in a confidential file to protect your privacy.

Full Legal Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Day Number: _____

Please check "yes" or "no". If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, please attach an explanation noting the date, nature and place of the incident involved, where the case was litigated or is pending, and the outcome or present status of the case. Please provide complete answers. Additional paper can be made available.

1. Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to or no contest to a criminal charge in this state or any other state or country?

Yes No If Yes, please explain.

2. Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to or no contest to a criminal charge of sexual abuse, child abuse, child molestation, or child neglect, in this state or any other state or country?

Yes No If Yes, please explain.

3. Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to or no contest to any other crime, whether a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child abuse, any crimes of violence, theft, or motor vehicle violations)?

Yes No If Yes, please explain.

4. Are there *any criminal proceedings* pending against you?

Yes No If Yes, please explain.

5. Are you the subject of an indicated child abuse or maltreatment report in this state or any other state or country?

Yes No If Yes, please explain.

6. Have you ever had a lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or sexual misconduct, physical abuse or child abuse filed against you which resulted in a judgment entered against you, or was settled out of court, or was dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired?

Yes No If Yes, please explain.

7. Have you ever been terminated from your employment or service in a volunteer position, or had your employment or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated, for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, or sexual misconduct, physical abuse, child abuse, discrimination or harassment?

Yes No If Yes, please explain.

8. Are you willing to provide transportation for children or youth?

Yes No If Yes, please answer the following questions:

a. Has your driver's license ever been revoked or suspended?
Yes No

b. In the past three years, have you been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, any offense involving a moving vehicle violation in this state or any other state?

Yes No

c. Do you experience seizures of any kind? If you answered yes, please indicate whether the seizures are controlled by medication.

Yes No

d. Do you regularly take any medication that could affect your ability to drive?

Yes No

9. Do you take drugs? Yes No (Non doctor prescribed) If Yes, what?

Have you been arrested or convicted for selling or having possession of any illegal drugs?

Yes No If Yes, what and when?

The information contained in this form is true to the best of my knowledge. I recognize my duty to update this information if I become aware that any answer I have given at this time becomes inaccurate in the future while I am volunteering to work with the children or youth of the United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak (“the Church”).

I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to respond to any inquiries from the Church regarding my fitness to work with children and youth, and I give my permission for the Church to conduct a background check. I further authorize the Church to question the churches and references I have listed regarding my character. To encourage them to speak freely and in consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application, I hereby release any individual, church or reference, including record keepers and ministers, from any and all liability and responsibility arising from their actions made in good faith and without malice in response to inquiries from the Church.

To allow the Church to attain its goal of providing a safe environment for all who come to it, I authorize the church to share information from this application, my references, and former churches on a need to know basis.

Signature

Date

United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak
BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT

I, _____ (print applicant's legal name), hereby authorize the United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak (the "Church") and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, criminal, or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information, which may be material to my qualifications as a volunteer or for employment now, and if applicable, during the tenure of my volunteering or employment with the Church.

I release the Church and/or its agents, and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims, or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

Full legal name (printed): _____

Maiden name or other names used: _____

Present street address: _____

How long have you lived here? _____

Former street address: _____

How long have you lived here? _____

Email Address: _____

Date of birth: _____ Social Security #: _____

Driver's License #: _____ State of License: _____

_____ Date: _____

United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak
SCREENING FORM FOR TEENS WORKING WITH MINORS
OR DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS

This form is to be completed for any position (paid or volunteer) involving the supervision or care of minors or persons differently abled. This is being used to provide a safe and secure environment for the activities or programs of the Church.

Name: _____

Last

First

Middle

ID # (If available): _____

Present address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

I understand that in serving as a volunteer or in a paid position at the United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak that I am willing to abide by the (1) Code of Ethics and the (2) Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth to reduce the risk of child abuse in this Church. I understand that child abuse is a serious matter and will do my part in the prevention of child abuse while serving the youth of our Church.

Signature of Teen Worker: _____ Date: _____

I do not know of any reason why my child should not serve as a teen Worker with Minors. He/she does not demonstrate any signs of being a potential risk to the Church or the minors of the Church.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak

CODE OF ETHICS

1. A Worker of the Church must possess a good understanding of God's teachings through our Lord, Jesus Christ, and conduct their (his/her) actions in accordance with those teachings.
2. A Worker of the Church must obey all laws of the Land as well as the principles and resolutions set forth by the CHURCH at all times while working within or representing the Church.
3. A worker of the Church may not discriminate unfairly by favoring any one Participant over another Participant with the intent of denigrating a Participant.
4. A Worker of the Church may not abuse any Participant or Worker.
5. A Worker of the Church may not harass any Participant or Worker.
6. A Worker of the Church may not act violently, take part in violent acts, or condone violence within the Church toward any Participant or Worker.
7. A Worker of the Church may not use, possess, sell or encourage illegal drugs or excessive use of alcohol.
8. It is expected that a Worker's behavior will reflect the Church's respect, worth and dignity of each child, youth and adult.
9. Workers must not engage in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children or youth.
10. Workers must not encourage sexual, seductive or erotic behavior in children or youth.

11. Workers may not use abusive, sexual or violent language with children or youth or in the presence of children or youth.
12. Workers may not harass (including, but not limited to, sexually harass, physically harass, verbally harass) children, youth or adults, nor encourage harassing behavior of any type in children, youth or adults.
13. Workers may not exploit (including, but not limited to, sexually, physically or emotionally) children, youth or adults, nor encourage exploiting behavior of any type in children, youth or adults.
14. A Worker of the Church may not have any conflicts of interest in working for the Church. If any conflicts of interest arise, the Worker is required to notify all other committee members and the Pastor of the conflict and excuse themselves from any process involving the conflict. If any conflict of interest arises with the Pastor or any Employee of the Church, the Staff – Parish Relations Committee must be notified and the individual with the conflict must excuse themselves from any process involving the conflict. Any Worker knowingly withholding knowledge of a conflict of interest will be subject to disciplinary action.
15. All persons leading others (leading an Activity, program, committee or task) should seek to ensure that those they are leading understand the importance of the Code, observe its provisions, and feel free to raise questions about any possible violations of the Code by contacting any of the parties listed in the procedures of this document as if it were their conflict of interest.
16. A Worker of the Church may not retaliate against any individual who reports an infraction of the Code or a Church policy or participates in an

investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting a Code infraction or for participating in an investigation of a claim of a Code infraction is a serious violation of this Code and, like any other infraction will subject the Worker to disciplinary action.

17. Any Worker witnessing any violation of this Code must report the violation within twenty-four hours or be considered a participant within the activity.