


First United Methodist Church of Madisonville
Safe Sanctuary Policy
March 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

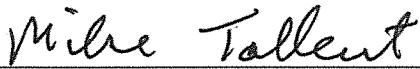
Approved 2/25/2022



Chris Black, pastor



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Safe Sanctuary Policy of First United Methodist Church of Madisonville, March 2022

Policy renewal: June 2023

Policy to be reviewed and updated as needed to comply with local, state, and federal laws and the needs of First United Methodist Church of Madisonville.

Introduction

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes 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 (§ 162C).

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse (“ritual abuse” refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be) 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 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. (From *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church* – 2016, pp. 183. Copyright ©2016 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.)

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for reducing the risk of abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults in our church.

Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuary policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our strong and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to engage in the ministry of the Gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as all of the workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding the use of appropriate policies and methods; we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Procedures

Policy and procedures renewal

The Board of Trustees will initiate the annual review of the Safe Sanctuary policy and accompanying procedures for the First United Methodist Church of Madisonville. A Staff-Parish Relations Committee representative, a staff representative, the church attorney and the pastor will participate on the review panel. Updates will be made by June 15 of each year.

All chaperones, teachers, and volunteers will receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuary policy for First United Methodist Church of Madisonville.

Definitions

- Types of abuse
 - Physical abuse: Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
 - 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 child, youth or vulnerable adult that he or she is worthless, bad, unloved, and undeserving of love and care.
 - Neglect: Abuse in which a person endangers the health, welfare, and safety of a child, youth or vulnerable adult through negligence. It may include withholding food, medical care, affection, and even education to destroy the sense of self-esteem and self-worth of the child, youth or vulnerable adult.

- Sexual abuse: Abuse that occurs when sexual contact between a child, youth or vulnerable adult and an adult (or older, more powerful youth) happens. The child, youth or vulnerable adult victim is not capable of consenting to such contact or resisting such sexual acts.
- Ritual abuse: Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violence is inflicted on a child, youth or vulnerable adult, intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone (or multiple persons) with responsibility for the victim's welfare. Typically, the perpetrator appeals to some higher authority or power to justify his or her abuses.
- Financial abuse: Abuse that takes financial advantage of its victims. This is more common with senior adults.
- Victim: Child, youth or vulnerable adult who is never capable of consent to abusive behavior, either legally or morally.
- Abuser: Abusers are people who have greater power in relation to a child, youth or vulnerable adult, and they use that power to harm the child, youth or vulnerable adult.

Recruitment Screening and Selection of Workers

The following forms are included in the First United Methodist Church of Madisonville recruitment/screening/selection process for volunteer and hired workers with children and youth:

Position Descriptions

- Position Application form
- Volunteer Application Form (See Appendix A)
- Personal Reference form
- Consent to Criminal Background Check Form (See Appendix B)
- Personal Interview Summary Form
- Personal Reference Interview Form (See Appendix C)
- Participation Covenant Statement (See Appendix D)
- Youth Ministry Event Registration & Covenant (Appendix G)
- Child/Youth Activity Registration & Agreement (Appendix H)

Everyone working with children, youth and vulnerable adults must fill out the required forms, including full-time, part-time, paid, volunteer, clergy and lay members of the church.

The policy is the same for all those involved in children, youth and vulnerable adult ministries. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

With the implementation of this Policy and Procedure, all current and future volunteer and hired workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults will be required to complete the Consent to Criminal Check form and either the Position Application form or the Volunteer Application form. Volunteers and new applicants for paid positions will be required to complete the entire procedure which consists of the following forms: Position

Application or Volunteer Application, Personal Reference, Criminal Records Check and Participation Covenant Statement before being considered for a position working with children or youth.

Volunteer and hired workers will pay for their criminal background check, which shall be conducted and then renewed every three years through Trac-1 or an equivalent service unless there are financial constraints in which case First United Methodist Church of Madisonville will cover the costs of the criminal background check. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee chair will designate the person responsible for the background checks.

Once a volunteer or worker is selected, they must complete and sign the Participation Covenant Statement and turn it in. All of these forms and records will be maintained in a locked, fire-proof file cabinet by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee representative or designee. Access to the files must remain limited to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee chair and designee, the church's legal counsel, the Board of Trustees chair and the church's pastor. All information obtained through the background check must remain confidential. Any criminal background check information that raises concerns of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee chair or his/her representative will be discussed with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and pastor and appropriate action will be taken. It is the intent of this Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures that any actions will err on the side of protecting our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Prior to beginning work as a volunteer or paid staff with our children, youth and vulnerable adults, each volunteer or staff member must complete appropriate Safe Sanctuary training as designated by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee in cooperation with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. This training will be documented and records of this training will be kept by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

Six-month hospitality policy

New members and regular non-member attendees to First United Methodist Church of Madisonville will have a six-month hospitality period to visit the different ministries offered by the church and discern the ministry that fits them best. They are welcome to participate in the ministries but not take on an unsupervised leadership role. If after six months of consistent attendance and participation in church activities and not before six months have passed, the new member or regular non-member attendee chooses to become involved with children, youth or vulnerable adult ministries, he/she will need to complete the requirements to participate in such ministries.

System to report abuse

- State laws
 - It is mandatory to report suspected children, youth and vulnerable adult abuse
 - Clergy are required to report suspected children, youth and vulnerable adult abuse

- You can report suspected abuse anonymously; however, you will not hear the results of the case. Anonymous reporting becomes an issue if it is chronic false reporting.
- Prepare responses to the following:
 - The victim
 - The conference
 - The insurance company
 - The media – One person, typically the pastor, will serve as the designated spokesperson to respond to the media. ONLY the designated spokesperson may make comments on behalf of the church regarding any allegations of abuse.
 - Possibly the alleged abuser
- Plan to comply with state laws and respond to agencies, congregation and media

Steps to take to report an incident of suspected abuse:

The following plan is in place to respond properly to alleged reports of child, youth or vulnerable adult abuse:

- Notify the proper law enforcement or department of family services agency. The individual who witnessed the abuse will contact the child abuse hotline for Monroe County, Tenn., at 423.442.3641 and then the Pastor.
- Notify the parents of the victim/alleged victim and ensure the victim's safety until the parents arrive as soon as possible. The safety of the victim shall be the primary concern of First United Methodist Church of Madisonville.
- The accused abuser shall not be confronted with anger or hostility. He or she will be treated with dignity but immediately removed from further involvement with the children, youth and vulnerable adults until the individual is cleared of wrongdoing.
- The Pastor (or a member of the Incident Report Team in the Pastor's absence) will notify the district superintendent and annual conference authorities.
- The Pastor (or a member of the Incident Report Team in the Pastor's absence) will notify the church's insurance agent.
- The Pastor (or a member of the Incident Report Team in the Pastor's absence) will notify the church's attorney.
- The Pastor (or a member of the Incident Report Team in the Pastor's absence) will keep a written record of the steps taken by the church in response to the allegation.
- The Pastor (or a member of the Incident Report Team in the Pastor's absence) will call upon a designated conference spokesperson to make any necessary statement or responses to the news media.
- The Pastor (or a member of the Incident Report Team in the Pastor's absence) will prepare a brief statement that can be made to the congregation without giving any unnecessary details, placing blame, interfering with the victim's privacy, or violating any confidentiality concerns.
- Church officials will be prepared to cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protection services.

- Any allegation will be taken seriously and needed pastoral resources will be extended.
- If the Pastor is the accused abuser, the District Superintendent will take responsibility for the investigation.

Every volunteer and paid worker with children, youth, and vulnerable adults must be trained to know Tennessee's requirements for reporting abuse to law enforcement authorities and child protection services. With any incident at the Church, the following shall be notified:

- Madisonville Police Department at 423.442.2268
- For children and youth, TN Department of Children Services for Monroe County at 423.442.3641
- For vulnerable adults, Adult Protective Services at 865.594.5685.

If an alleged incident of abuse happens away from the Church but involves Church activities, then the incident must be reported in that jurisdiction. If a volunteer or staff member suspects abuse of a child, youth or vulnerable adult in a non-church situation, they are also obligated to report the alleged incident to the appropriate authorities.

When an allegation of abuse is made, the Incident Response Team will be immediately convened to investigate the allegation. The Incident Response Team will be composed of the following people:

- Pastor
- Attorney for First United Methodist Church of Madisonville
- Board of Trustees Chairperson
- Lay Leader
- Staff-Parish Relations Committee Chairperson

If the Pastor is absent, contact the person in the order listed above. The Incident Response Team will not wait for a time when everyone can be present but will initiate its meeting as soon after the alleged incident as is possible, but no more than 24 hours after the initial report.

The Incident Response Team will first assure the alleged abuser has been removed from contact with the alleged child, youth, or vulnerable adult victim. The Committee will next assure that all reporting requirements have been met. The Committee will take action to gather all necessary information regarding the incident but will take all necessary precautions not to interfere with any official investigation.

The Pastor or his/her designee will serve as a spokesperson for our Church in addressing the congregation, the media and the public. In the Pastor's absence, the District Superintendent will serve as the spokesperson. We will always protect the rights of the victim and the accused.

With guidance from a legal professional, the Pastor will initiate appropriate ministries and actions over a long period to enable healing by all effected people.

Safety

The following rules will be a part of the prevention strategy in the implementation of the Safe Sanctuary policy for First United Methodist Church of Madisonville:

The Two-Adult Rule

As a matter of safety for both the student and the adult, it is required that no fewer than two adults be present at all times for any church sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This is inclusive of the nursery area. For the purpose of this rule married couples and those in the same family or household working with the same age group are considered one adult.

The Age Eighteen Limit Rule

Persons hired to work as fully responsible staff in the Nursery, Child Care Center, youth or any other program areas of the church must be at least eighteen years of age. Any person serving as helper should be at least sixteen years of age and must work under adult staff supervision at all times.

The Five-Year Rule

It is required that any worker, youth or adult, volunteer or paid, be at least five years older than the group they are to work with. For example, if a junior (20-21) in college is recruited to work with youth as a "leader" they must be at least five years older than the group they are to lead.

The Two-Driver Rule

Where practicable, it is required that there be two drivers in vehicles transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults for any church-sponsored event, program, or ministry. There may be instances where there are not enough vehicles or adults to satisfy the Two-Driver rule. In those instances, one youth and one adult shall not be assigned to a vehicle, unless there is a parent/child relationship. In those instances, there may be multiple youth and one adult in a vehicle.

Advance Notice Rule

Ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall always give the parents advance notice and full information regarding the event(s) in which their children, youth or vulnerable adults will participate. Parents must give authorization for participation by completing and signing the Youth Activity Registration (Appendix H)

Youth (sixth grade and up) cannot leave a youth event early without written parental permission, or parents will be contacted.

Parents will always be given advance notice and full information regarding the events in which their children will be participating. For activities held away from the First United

Methodist Church of Madisonville campus when a parent will not be present, a signed Event Registration form (Appendix G) will be required.

State Reporting Rule

All workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults are required by law to report any suspected cases of abuse to the proper authorities. First United Methodist Church of Madisonville will use the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form (See Appendix F) to capture the necessary information regarding allegations of abuse.

Classrooms

Classrooms, childcare rooms and any church activity may be visited at any time by parents, church staff, or chaperones/teachers.

All classrooms where events, programs, or ministries occur with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will have a window in the door or wall or will have half doors where the top half remains open. If the door does not have a window or is not a half door, the full door must remain open at all times when children, youth, or vulnerable adults are present.

Appropriate equipment and supervision

Arrange for the ministry to take place in an appropriate setting. For example, when children are on the playground, an adequate number of adults should be with them at all times.

Open-door counseling

Before any session begins, it should be determined if you are actually qualified to address the needs of the child, youth or vulnerable adult.

At any counseling session with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, the door of the room used should remain open for the entire session if the door has no window. The session should be held at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance.

It is prudent to determine a limited number of counseling sessions (two or three) and then refer the child, youth, or vulnerable adult to another counselor if the problems have not been resolved.

Pastoral review

The pastor will periodically review the chaperones working with children and youth at minimum twice a year. Documentation of the review must be completed and filed with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

Picking up children from the nursery

Nursery Log: All children, infants and toddlers using the nursery must be signed in and out by a parent or guardian unless there is written permission on file in the nursery for an

approved designee to sign them out. Upon first visit to the nursery, parents will fill out an information sheet with contact information, allergy/medical information and diaper/toileting preferences.

Camping, Lock-ins, overnight trips

- Registration should include all the necessary parental contact information and medical information for the participant - see Youth Ministry Event Registration & Covenant (Appendix G)
- In the event of illness, the participant's parents should be notified immediately.
- Ensure settings – facilities, camp sites, cabins – do not provide an opportunity for isolation
- Ensure all staffers are properly trained in first aid and the camp activities

Discipline procedures

- Appropriate discipline procedures which focus on the behavior and not the child will always be used.
- If a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child the specific behavior that is unacceptable and state what the acceptable behavior is. For example, "We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building". (Use of verbal direction)
- If this measure is not effective the child will be guided to another activity. (Redirection of activity)
- If the inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be placed at the table to work alone away from the other students.
- If the child's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, or if other children or adults are at risk, the child's parent will be located to sign the child out of the activity.
- Physical punishment or verbal abuse will never be used at any time.

Bathroom procedure

- Children will be allowed to go to the bathroom one at a time. Bathroom assistance will only be provided in the event of an emergency, or if assistance is authorized by the parent/guardian on the Youth Activity Registration form (Appendix H).

Appropriate interpersonal boundaries

Model respectful and nurturing behaviors that do not interfere with another's privacy

- Appropriate dress
- Appropriate language
- Demonstrations of affection and encouragement
- Adult leaders should not initiate a hug and should always be the first to end the hug.

Online and Social Media safety

All participants (children, teens, parents, ministers, staff, and volunteers) are expected to follow the social media principles and best practices guidelines issued by the church and posted on the church website.

Illegal activity policy (drugs and alcohol)

For children and youth, the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs will not be permitted at church programs, events or ministries. If the policy is violated, parents will be called to remove the child or youth from the activity as soon as possible.

Staff/volunteer home

At no Time should children, youth or vulnerable adults be in a staff member or volunteer's home outside of a scheduled and church sponsored youth event, program, or ministry unless:

1. the child's/youth's/vulnerable adult's parent or legal guardian has given written permission for attendance, and
2. at least two responsible, non-family member adults are present.

Communications and Monitoring of Activities

There should be an adult supervising hallways and other areas during major use periods in the children's areas. That adult should have a functioning cell phone and a means to contact other support staff or emergency personnel.

Education

The following procedures will be used as a part of the strategy in the implementation of the Safe Sanctuary Policy for First United Methodist Church of Madisonville:

Annual orientation

There will be an annual orientation for hired and volunteer workers, staff, and parents regarding the Safe Sanctuary procedures. This orientation should occur at the beginning of each new school year. Parents of youth and children and vulnerable adults and their caregivers should receive a brief statement of the policy, along with guidelines as a part of the visitation packets or when they join the church between orientation periods.

The orientation should include information regarding the church's policies for

- a. The prevention of abuse
- b. Procedures to be used in all ministries with children, youth and the vulnerable adults
- c. Appropriate steps to report an incident of abuse
- d. Details of the state laws regarding specific age level abuse.

First Aid/CPR training

There shall be First Aid/CPR training offered or provided on an annual basis for all church workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults and available for all other church staff and workers as well as parents. A first aid kit will be maintained on each floor of the church and in the main church office.

Reporting an accident or emergency

When there is an accident or emergency of any type that involves a child, youth or vulnerable adult, the lead person should complete the Accident & Emergency Report Form (See Appendix E). This Accident & Emergency Report Form should be completed when there is an accident resulting in an injury, the accident has the potential for resulting in a serious injury, or an emergency requires medical attention.

An Accident & Emergency Review meeting should be convened by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee chairperson or his/her representative as soon after the accident as possible. The review should focus on developing steps that would prevent the accident/emergency from reoccurring. The Accident & Emergency Report Form and the minutes from the Accident & Emergency Review meeting should be filed with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Training resources

Training resources will be available to all staff and volunteers of children, youth and vulnerable adults. This training may be in the form of articles; district, conference or nationwide training; podcasts; training videos; or local speaker.

Participation plan

- Convicted sex offenders who wish to participate in church ministries will be required to agree to and sign a formal Participation Plan. If the convicted sex offender violates the Participation Plan, his/her membership at First United Methodist Church of Madisonville will be revoked.
- Pastor will contact the convicted sex offender's parole/probation officer to determine restrictions of parole/probation
- The convicted offender's participation in a professional counseling program for the entire time of his/her participation and/or membership in the church
- There must be an adult "covenant partner" or covenant shepherd, who is present with the convicted offender at all times that he or she is on church property or attending any church activity that is off of church property
- The action plan must clearly identify areas of the church property and facilities that are off limits to the convicted offender, including all areas used by children and youth and the restrooms
- The convicted offender's participation in worship, or leadership in any capacity in the church, must be specifically detailed
- The convicted offender will be prohibited from having any role whatsoever as a leader, volunteer, or member, that would involve contact with children or youth

Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults, this congregation 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)



Volunteer Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Current Job Responsibilities and schedule:

Previous Work Experience: _____

Special Interests, Hobbies, and Skills: _____

How many hours per week are you available to volunteer? _____

_____ Days _____ Evenings _____ Weekends

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

Do you have your own transportation? _____

Do you have a valid driver's license? _____ Chauffeurs? _____ CDL? _____

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

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?

How were you parented as a child?

How do you discipline your own children?

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, motor vehicle violations)? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please explain fully: _____

Have you ever been exposed to an incident of child abuse or neglect? Yes ___ No ___

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

Would you be available for periodic volunteer training sessions? Yes ___ No ___

References: Please list three personal references (people who are not related to you by blood or marriage and provide a complete address and phone information for each. References are confidential.

1-Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

2- Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

3 -Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date _____



AUTHORIZATION TO OBTAIN BACKGROUND CHECK

The following is accurate and complete information required in order for First United Methodist Church, Madisonville, TN to request PeopleFacts to perform a background check on you and, in the process, obtain a complete background check about you:

Full Legal Name: ¹_____ ²_____ ³_____

(First Name, Full Middle Name, Last Name)

All Previously Used Former or Other Names: (AKA, Maiden Names, Married Names, Surnames, Etc.) _____

Current Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Prior Street Address 1: _____ Dates Resided Here: _____ to _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Prior Street Address 2: _____ Dates Resided Here: _____ to _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Prior Street Address 3: _____ Dates Resided Here: _____ to _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Current Email Address*: _____ Gender**: M / F Race**: _____

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth**: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ Issuing State: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Your signature below indicates the following:

- 1) You authorize, without reservation, PeopleFacts or any third party to obtain and/or furnish to First United Methodist Church, Madisonville, TN any records or information referenced in the provided disclosure statement for employment or volunteer related purposes.
- 2) You authorize ongoing procurement of any records or information, reports, and records at any time during your relationship with First United Methodist Church, Madisonville, TN to the extent allowed by law.
- 3) You authorize the use of a fax or photocopy of this authorization as having the same authority as the original.
- 4) You authorize and request, without reservation, any present or former employer, school, police department, division of motor vehicles, or other entity, person or agency having knowledge about you to furnish First United Methodist Church, Madisonville, TN and/or PeopleFacts with any and all background information in their possession regarding you for these stated employment or volunteer purposes.
- 5) You understand and agree that in connection with your employment or volunteer application information, whether investigative or otherwise, may be shared with and/or reviewed by all applicable parties involved in the hiring process.
- 6) You have read and fully understand the foregoing disclosure and this authorization.
- 7) You certify that all the information you have provided on this form is true, complete, correct, and accurate.

Authorization/Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Your email address will be provided to notify you when any adverse public record information is being reported.

** This information will be used for background screening and record matching purposes only.



Personal Interview Summary Form - Reference Check

Applicant name: _____

Reference name: _____

Reference address: _____

Reference phone: _____

What is your relationship to applicant? _____

How long have you known applicant? _____

How well do you know applicant? _____

How would you describe applicant? _____

How would you describe applicant's ability to relate to children and/or youth?

How would you describe applicant's ability to relate to adults?

How would you describe applicant's leadership ability?

How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child or youth?

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.

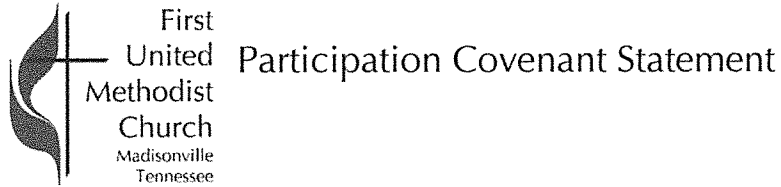
Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.

Please list any other comments you would like to make:

Reference inquiry completed by:

Signature

Date



The congregation of First United Methodist Church of Madisonville is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place that all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) should volunteer to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults in any church-sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.
3. All adult volunteers involved with children, youth and vulnerable adults of our Church must have been members of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
4. Adult volunteers with children, youth and vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children, youth and vulnerable adults.
5. Adult volunteers with children, youth and vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
6. Adult volunteers shall immediately report to the pastor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults?
 Yes No
2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult Rule"?
 Yes No
3. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to abide by the six-month rule before beginning a volunteer assignment? Yes No
4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events? Yes No
5. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? Yes No

6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse? (Answering yes to this question does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering with children or youth.)
_____ Yes _____ No

7. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse? _____ Yes _____ No

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print Full Name



Accident & Emergency Report Form

Please print all information

Date of accident/emergency: _____ Time of accident/emergency: _____

Name of person (child/youth/adult) injured: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident/emergency: _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident/emergency:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Description of accident/emergency:



Report of Suspected Incident of 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 observation/conversation with/report from victim:

4. Observation/victim's statement (Give your details here):

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____
Relationship of accused to victim (Paid Staff, Volunteer, Family Member, Other):

6. Reported to Pastor, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee chairperson or Board of Trustees chair:

Date/time: _____
Summary: _____

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian: _____
Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

8. Call to local children and family service agency: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to local law enforcement agency: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Other contacts: _____

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

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



Youth Ministry Event Registration & Covenant

Event Name: _____

Event Date: _____

Event Location: _____

Participant Information:

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Gender: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Church: (if not 1st UMC) _____

Parent/Guardian Information

Name: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Street Address: _____

MEDIA AND PHOTO RELEASE AGREEMENT

The undersigned parent/guardian agrees to grant First United Methodist Church of Madisonville permission to record on film, video tape or audio tape participant's participation at the youth event, and further agrees that any or all of the material recorded may be used in any form, as part of any future production(s) made by First United Methodist Church of Madisonville, and that such use shall be without payment of fees, royalties, special credit or other compensation. This form shall be valid until such time that it is revoked by the undersigned.

I agree to the Youth Media and Photo Release: Yes _____ No _____

TRANSPORTATION & EMERGENCY TREATMENT RELEASE AGREEMENT

The undersigned parent/guardian grants the undersigned participant permission to be transported by drivers in compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of the First United Methodist Church of Madisonville to or from programs related to First United Methodist Church of Madisonville. The undersigned parent/guardian agrees to indemnify and hold harmless First United Methodist Church of Madisonville and the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church or any of its Advisors from any claim for damages resulting to the participant, unless said injuries were proven to be the result of the negligence of the First United Methodist Church of Madisonville, the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church or its Advisors or agents, and furthermore agrees to allow participant to receive medical treatment that might result from injuries received, providing such treatment is advised by a licensed physician. I accept full responsibility for all cost of such emergency treatment.

I agree to the Transportation Release Agreement: Yes _____ No _____

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH YOUTH MINISTRY COVENANT

In order to create a positive and healthy atmosphere we expect that each participant (student, counselor, and staff) to live within the framework of our Youth Ministry Covenant.

As a gathered community in Christ, we agree to:

- Share God’s love by always speaking in a positive and encouraging manner.
- Become visible reflections on Christ in our relations with one another, and all with whom we come into contact during our time together.
- Respond to God by participating in and promptly being on time for all scheduled group programming.
- Value God’s people by respecting the authorities God provides for us (local and state officials, FUMC staff, adult counselors, young adult leaders and junior counselors, or any other event staff)
- Exercise humility and self-control by being modest in our choices of clothing and appropriate in relations with others.
- Exemplify Christ as we honor all rules, regulations, and safety guidelines of any hired charter companies or accommodations.

I agree to the First UMC Youth Ministry Covenant: Yes _____ No _____

Participants Guidelines (while participating in Trips, Retreats, and Special Events):

- Male/Female Rooms: Whenever participating in overnight events which include designated room for males and females, no person (including adult counselors, interns, and staff) may enter a room occupied by a member of the opposite sex.
- Traveling Trios: Whenever participating in an offsite event where multiple activity options are offered, all participants need to be in groups of three or more, and have the approval of an adult.
- Offsite Travel: If, for any reason, a participant needs to travel off-site during a regularly scheduled event, permission must be received from the FUMC staff, and there must be at least one responsible adult FUMC sponsor, counselor, or staff member travelling with them.
- Nighttime Travel: While travelling with FUMC Youth Ministry on a bus or airplane, all participants (including adult counselors, interns, and staff) need to be seated, where possible, next to a person of the same gender after dark.
- Tobacco and Alcohol: Out of respect for those younger, it is requested that anyone of legal age refrain from tobacco use and/or drinking while on the event (it is understood that those under legal age are restricted from tobacco and alcohol consumption by state law.)
- Firearms and Weapons: no firearms or weapons of any kind are permitted on FUMC Youth Ministry trips, retreats, or events.

I agree to the FUMC Youth Ministry Participation Guidelines: Yes _____ No _____

I/We understand that not acting in accordance with this covenant may result in disciplinary actions of the director’s discretion, up to expulsion from the event, suspension from the next two FUMC Youth Ministry events, and the assumption of legal or financial liability for having not acted in accordance with this covenant. By our signatures on this form, we are indicating that we have read this covenant, and accept our end of the agreement.

Participant’s Signature, Date

Parent/Guardian’s Signature, Date



Child/Youth Activity Registration & Agreement

- Nursery
- 1st Steps
- UMYF

Participant Information:

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
 Gender: _____ Cell Phone: _____
 Email: _____ Church: (if not 1st UMC) _____

Parent/Guardian Information

Name: _____ Cell Phone: _____
 Home Phone: _____ Email Address: _____
 Street Address: _____

Person(s) authorized to pick-up/check-out child/youth

 (For infant or small children) does the responsible adult have permission to change participant's diaper/assist with toileting needs? Yes Call Me N/A

MEDICAL INFORMATION

If snacks are offered during the activity, may participant partake? Yes No

Does the participant require a special diet? Yes No

If yes, please explain the dietary restrictions.

Does the participant have any allergies? Yes No

If yes, please list the allergies.

Is the participant taking any medication or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs? Yes No

If yes, can the participant self-administer his or her medication? Yes No

If no, please contact the event or activity leader directly.

List all prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medications the participant is taking.

Does the participant have a chronic or recurring illness? Yes No

If yes, please explain.

Has the participant had surgery or a serious illness in the past year? Yes No

If yes, please explain.

Identify (below) any other limits, restrictions, or disabilities that could prevent the participant from fully participating in the event or activity (attach additional pages if needed).

I grant the above participant permission to participate the above noted activity, which is conducted within the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of the First United Methodist Church of Madisonville. The undersigned parent/guardian agrees to indemnify and hold harmless First United Methodist Church of Madisonville and the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church or any of its Advisors from any claim for damages or injuries resulting to my child, unless said injuries were proven to be the result of the negligence of the First United Methodist Church of Madisonville, the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church or its Advisors or agents. Furthermore, I agree to allow my child to receive medical treatment that might result from emergent illness or injuries received, providing such treatment is advised by a licensed physician. I accept full responsibility for all cost of such emergency treatment. I authorize the adult leader(s) of the activity to act in my stead in approving necessary medical care should I be unavailable. This authorization shall cover the time between arrival and dismissal for the activity.

The participant is responsible for his or her own conduct (appropriate to age) and where age-appropriate, is aware of and agrees to abide by rules, and other pertinent instructions. Participants' conduct and interactions should abide by Church standards and exemplify age-appropriate Christ-like behavior. Parents, guardians, and participants should understand that participation in an activity is not a right but a privilege that can be revoked if the participant behaves inappropriately or if he/she poses a risk to her/himself or others.

Parent/Guardian's Signature, Date

Parent/Guardian's Written Name



Electronic Media Safety Guidelines

Courtesy of UMC Discipleship Ministries

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Some incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. However, following basic Safe Sanctuaries procedures can help to minimize those risks. There is no such thing as privacy on the Internet. Consider anything and everything on the internet as public information. Here are some recommendations:

Receive Parental/Guardian Permission

1. In addition to general permission to participate in a FUMC ministry, it is advisable to receive advance parental permission for children and youth, and personal permission for vulnerable adults in writing for:
2. Posting photos of participants on any websites or sending them e-mail or cell phone messages or making videos for any use;
3. E-mailing, Instant Messaging, calling, texting, or sending data to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by computer, cell phone; and
4. The sharing of any full name or contact information.

Never Post Easily Identifiable Information Online.

1. If you communicate by email, do not use "broadcast" emails. Use the "BCC" (blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.
2. Be cautious when transmitting easily identifiable information like event dates, times, locations, or participants.
3. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests. When placing anyone on an electronic prayer list, consider using only first names.

Limit individual communications with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner. (Even though you may be a sounding board for a person having a bad day, the reverse is not true.)
2. Save all confidential cyber-communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (i.e., instant messages (IM's) chat room conversations, emails, etc.). An electronic paper trail can be important.



Best Practices of Social Media

Courtesy North Georgia Conference's Young Clergy Task Force on Social Media

1. When using social media, observe Wesley's General Rules and the great Commandments:
 - a. Do no harm
 - b. Do good
 - c. Attend to the ordinances of God
 - d. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, strength, soul
 - e. Love your neighbor as yourself
2. Claim, maintain and monitor your faith community's social media profiles and websites. Take care to keep them current.
3. If you are not sure about appropriate use of social media, ask for help. If you're not sure about a post, do not post it.
4. Be respectful, collegial, and intentional of other's privacy including the announcing of prayer concerns and where location services are concerned.
5. Be professional and maintain the integrity of pastoral leadership through social media.
6. Protect the safety of congregants, minors, vulnerable adults, and yourself.
7. Be friendly and fair – allow others to friend you instead of vice versa.
8. When posting photos, allow others to identify themselves.
9. Take care to adhere to Safe Sanctuary guidelines, adapting them to social media practices.
10. Remember your Christian witness and allow your use of social media to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.