

# Child and Youth Protection Policy

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH LAKELAND



# Abuse Statistics

- ▶ Approximately five children die every day because of child abuse.
- ▶ One out of three girls and one out of five boys will be sexually abused before they reach age 18.
- ▶ 90% of child sexual abuse victims know the perpetrator in some way.
- ▶ It can and does happen in churches – **we are not exempt**



# Why have a Child/Youth Protection Policy?

- To protect our children/youth
- To protect **YOU**
- When this policy is followed, it removes the opportunity for abuse
- and for sustainable allegations

# Definitions for Children and Youth

- ▶ **A child** is defined as anyone under the age of 12.
- ▶ **A youth** is anyone 12 years of age but not yet 18 years old OR anyone 18 years old or older and who is still attending high school.



# Definitions for: Adults Considered Church Personnel

- ▶ A **Paid Staff Person** is anyone employed by the church and overseen by Staff Parish Relations Committee and screened.
- ▶ A **Screened Adult** is a volunteer who has undergone the church's screening process

# Not Included in Definition of Church Personnel: Adult Guest

- ▶ **Adult Guest** is an adult who attends programming or an event as a speaker, observer or special guest in a non-supervisory role and is NOT considered Church Personnel.
- ▶ An adult guest is someone there for a specific purpose and period of time as determined by the ministry leader.
- ▶ NOTE – Adult Guests are ALWAYS to be supervised by two, non-related, screened adults.

# Not Included in Definition of Church Personnel: Youth Helpers

- ▶ Youth Helpers are defined as those below the age of 18 or older, still in high school and who assist with activities involving children/youth.
- ▶ Youth helpers must be supervised by at least two non-related screened adults at all times.

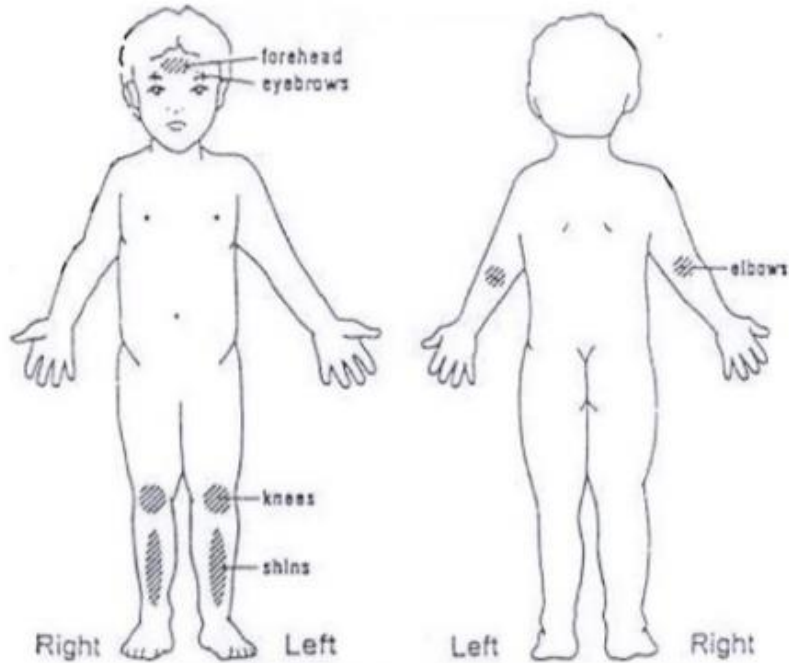
# Different Types of Abuse: Physical

- ▶ **Physical abuse** often includes striking, biting or shaking, though it may also include other violent actions.
  - Bruises, fractures, cuts, and burns may result from physical abuse.
- ▶ It is also important to note that physical abuse is not accidental.

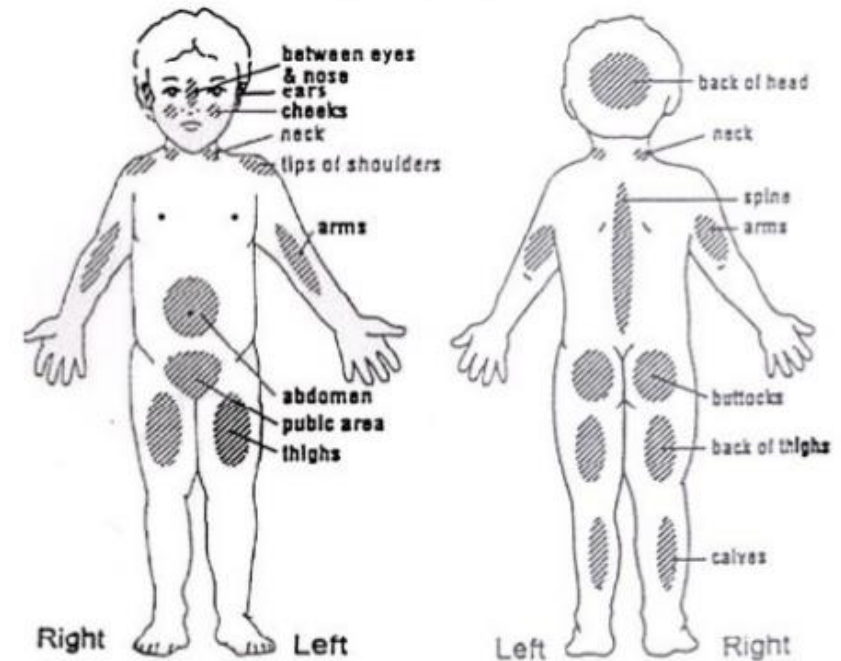


# Different Types of Abuse: Physical

## Common Bruised Sites



## Uncommon Bruised Sites



- ▶ The figures on the left show common bruise sites where children show bumps, scrapes and burns that are not associated with abuse. The figures on the right show locations that may indicate abuse. Bruising or burn patterns that show in the shape of cigarettes, lighters, or hands are not typical and may be signs of physical abuse.

# Different Types of Abuse: Sexual, Emotional and Neglect

- ▶ **Sexual abuse** is defined as *any* sexual action with a child/youth whether it be by an adult or another minor.
- ▶ **Emotional abuse** is defined as a pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a child/youth's spirit or attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating or belittling.
- ▶ **Neglect** is defined as failure to provide for a child/youth's basic needs or failure to protect a child/youth from harm.

# What is Grooming?

- ▶ A method used by offenders that involves building trust with a child/youth and the adults around them in an effort to gain access to and time alone with her/him.

## Purpose of Grooming

- ▶ To manipulate the perceptions of other adults around the child/youth.
- ▶ To manipulate the child/youth into becoming a co-operating participant which reduces the likelihood of a disclosure and increases the likelihood that the child/youth will repeatedly return to the offender.
- ▶ To reduce the likelihood of the child/youth being believed if they do disclose.
- ▶ To reduce the likelihood of the abuse being detected.

# Grooming Behaviors with Young People

- ▶ Encouraging rebelliousness
- ▶ Encouraging keeping “secrets”
- ▶ Creating tension with CYPP and its safety measures
- ▶ Creating tension with other Adult Leaders
- ▶ Provides “taboo access”
- ▶ Manipulates with gifts, words, and deeds
- ▶ Sexual joking
- ▶ Testing and accelerating physical contact

# Grooming Behaviors: With Parents/Guardians

- ▶ Constantly available for “extra help”
- ▶ Showing special interest in or playing favorites with one child/youth over others
- ▶ “Shows more interest in your child/youth than you do”
- ▶ Isolating potential victim from support mechanism
- ▶ Makes attempts to wedge themselves in between the potential victim and their parents/guardians.

# Grooming Behaviors: With the Community

- ▶ The nicest, most helpful person
- ▶ Associates with the “target” victim population
- ▶ Volunteers for opportunities and projects that will bring them recognition and favor
- ▶ Offers to take potential victims “under their wing”

# Common Characteristics of Abuse Victims

- ▶ Feelings of guilt, poor grades
- ▶ Low self-esteem
- ▶ Underdeveloped social skills
- ▶ A willingness to take blame even when inappropriate
- ▶ Feelings of powerlessness
- ▶ A lack of trust
- ▶ An inability to relax

# Inappropriate Interactions



- ▶ You should never touch a child/youth if they do not want you to touch him or her
- ▶ If a child/youth would be over-stimulated by physical contact such as when they are already very upset or angry, do not touch them
- ▶ Never embarrass a child/youth about his or her body
- ▶ Do not allow a child in Kindergarten or older to sit on your lap



# Inappropriate Actions

- ▶ Never leave a child/youth unattended in a room
- ▶ If discipline is needed with a child/youth, you are never to strike them, hit them, or threaten physical punishment
- ▶ Do not engage in wrestling or rough-housing
- ▶ Do not pick up a child/youth or give them piggy-back rides

# Appropriate Way to Interact with Children/Youth

- ▶ Give them your full attention when they are sharing
- ▶ Show the child/youth that you are interested in them
- ▶ Always make eye contact
- ▶ Put yourself on their physical level by kneeling, if needed
- ▶ Treat each child/youth fairly and do not play favorites

# Positive Verbal Interaction



- ▶ Do not raise your voice. Use calm, evenly-spaced speech patterns with extremely clear enunciation.
- ▶ Avoid making your comments to the child/youth personal.
  - Example: If they have lied, do not state or imply that they are a liar but rather address the lie itself. We want to talk about the behavior in question, not their personality.

# Positive Verbal Interaction

- ▶ Be concrete and brief in nature when addressing challenges
  - Only share basic information he or she needs
  - Do not bring up other outside issues or expectations
  - Before talking to the child/youth, decide what questions you will ask them so they might explain their behavior
  - Remember, you are to be the one in control
- ▶ Do not talk to the child/youth's peers about his or her negative behavior.
- ▶ If you need support handling a behavior issue, contact your ministry leader for assistance.

# Appropriate Physical Interaction



- ▶ It is acceptable to touch a child/youth on the hand, shoulder or upper back.
- ▶ Children younger than kindergarten may be held in laps of Paid Staff or Screened Volunteers, if needed.
  - Children are never to be held in laps of other children or youth.
- ▶ Side hugs only

# First UMC Policies and Procedures

- ▶ **Two Adult Rule** - Two, non-related screened adults must be present at all activities involving children/youth.
- ▶ **Three Year Rule** – Screened adults supervising children/youth must be at least three years older than the age group they are supervising.
  - Adults who do not meet this criteria must be under the direct supervision of an adult who is at least 3 years older than the group.

# First UMC Policies and Procedures

- ▶ **Windows/Open Doors** – Each room set aside for children/youth must have a door or wall with a window, half doors, or open doors.
- ▶ **Open Door Policy** – To visit and observe any programs or classrooms, visitors must check in with the Director, Coordinator, or Designated Lead Worker for approval.

# First UMC Policies and Procedures

## Children Check-in/Check-out Procedure

- ▶ All children grades 5 and under must be checked in and out for all church programs and activities by a parent, guardian or those adults designated by them.
  - With written permission, siblings age 16 and older will be permitted to check in/out their sibling(s) kindergarten- grade 5.
- ▶ Photo ID is required and will be confirmed for any unknown adults at pickup.
- ▶ Picking up children by unauthorized adults is forbidden.



# Youth Check-in and out Procedure

- ▶ Youth (grades 6 through 12) may check themselves in to church programming.
- ▶ Once a youth is checked into church programming, they may not leave until the end of that program.
  - Unless permission is granted from the youth's parent/guardian in person, or from the phone number/email address listed for the youth's parent/guardian on the youth's paperwork.
- ▶ Youth are free to leave once church programming has ended.

# General Bathroom Procedures

- ▶ Do not follow the child/youth into the bathroom; they have a right to privacy just as adults do.
- ▶ Children and youth should not use the bathroom at the same time.
- ▶ If a Paid Staff or Screened Volunteer needs to use the restroom they should not use the same facility that is being used by children/youth.

# Bathroom Procedures: For Children

- ▶ Always check the restrooms to make sure it is empty before sending in a child.
- ▶ If there is a restroom in the room, send children in one at a time.
  - If not, children should be escorted to and from the restroom.
- ▶ When a child is using the restroom stand near the door to monitor.

# Bathroom Procedures: for Youth

- ▶ Youth may use the restrooms without an escort.
- ▶ Church Personnel should check restrooms being used by youth periodically to monitor for safety.

# Transportation Policy

- ▶ All CYPF rules remain in effect for transporting children/youth: Two-Adult Rule and Three-Year Rule.
- ▶ Seat belts must be used by every occupant at all times.
- ▶ Hands-Free GPS (Global Positioning System) may be used as long as the device requires no input from the driver while the vehicle is in motion.
  - The second adult (the one who is not driving) should be in control of the GPS.

# Transportation Policy

- ▶ Children and youth can only be transported **from church property** to off-site church activities through a charter service or church-owned/rented vehicles.
  - The charter service being used must be approved by church staff.
- ▶ Church owned/rented vehicles must be driven by an individual approved by the church staff to operate the church vehicles.
- ▶ Youth drivers are not permitted to drive themselves or others **from church property** to an off-site church activity.

# Trips and Retreats Supervision

- ▶ The Two-Adult Rule and the Three-Year Rule still applies.
- ▶ There must be at least one screened adult for each gender present for any co-ed trips or activities.
- ▶ When participating in overnight trips that include sleeping in common areas such as a lodge or gym, two screened adults of each gender participating is required.

# Trips and Retreats Supervision

- ▶ Church personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same bed, sleeping bag, tent or room with children or youth unless the child/youth is an immediate family member of the adult.
- ▶ The person in charge must carry parental permission slips including permission for emergency medical care.



# Online Access onsite



- ▶ Church computers that are set up to permit guests of program participants to access the internet should be in high-traffic areas.
- ▶ These computers should be randomly monitored by staff or screened adults.
- ▶ Controls shall be in place to prevent access to inappropriate content.

# Electronic Communication



- ▶ Electronic communications with children/youth may only be made by church administered group emails, websites, text services or social media accounts.
- ▶ Communications must be publicly visible or parents must be aware of and give consent to all non-public electronic communication methods.

# Electronic Communications: Continued

- ▶ Church personnel may not engage in one-to-one electronic communications with children/youth.
- ▶ Church personnel may not engage in online gaming with children/youth.
- ▶ Church Personnel may not tag photographs of participating children/youth on any social media platform.

# Photo Sharing Permissions

- ▶ Church personnel cannot post photos of children/youth participating in church activities on their personal social media sites.
- ▶ Written permission from a parent or guardian must be obtained prior to photos of children/youth participating in church activities are posted to communication platforms hosted/owned by the church.
- ▶ No personally identifiable information of participating children/youth should be posted online or on any social media site.
  - No names, addresses or phone numbers should be used when posting photos.

# Time Following Programming



- ▶ As with other points of the programming, at least two screened, non-related adults should be present until all children/youth are picked up/gone from programming.
- ▶ At least one adult should be the same gender as the child/youth.
- ▶ If a situation arises in which one adult has been left with a child/youth after a program, that adult should contact the appropriate church staff to inform them of the situation.
  - They should then move with the child/youth to an outside area with clear public visibility and wait for an additional screened adult or the parent/guardian to arrive.

# Responding to an Allegation or Suspected Abuse

- ▶ Chapter 39 of Florida's Statutes basically states that anyone who knows or suspects that a child/youth is being abused, abandoned or neglected has the legal responsibility to report this knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families.
- ▶ This can be done by calling their abuse hotline. The number for this hotline is 1-800-96-ABUSE.

# How to Handle a Disclosure



- ▶ It is important to always take such information seriously.
- ▶ If the child/youth asks you to keep their statement secret, do not promise to do so.
- ▶ Make sure you ask non-leading questions to find out how serious the situation is.
- ▶ If you suspect abuse of any kind, immediately contact your supervisor or ministry leader.
- ▶ You will then be asked to write an account of the conversation and together with your ministry leader and appropriate staff (Pastor), DCF will be notified.



Questions?



# Quiz Time

- ▶ [www.firstumc.org/cypp/](http://www.firstumc.org/cypp/)
- ▶ Password: will be shared in training
- ▶ Please complete the quiz within 24 hours