CHILD & STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

Revised July 7, 2005
Revised January 11, 2006
Revised January 18, 2006
Revised March 24, 2010
Revised November 17, 2010
Revised March 18, 2011

LIST OF ENCLOSURES

Number	Title
1.	Children, Students, and Special Needs Workers Covenant
2.	Confidential Background Information for Children, Special Needs and Student Workers
3.	Employee Authorization and Release of Information
4.	Disciplinary Action Report
5.	Auto Safety Certification for Approved Driver's List
6.	Violation of Child & Student Protection Policy Report
7.	Suspicion of Child Abuse Report

1. Overview

Faith Community United Methodist Church (FCUMC) is committed to providing a safe environment for children and students. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety and well-being of children and students, and FCUMC employees and volunteers, while they are on the campus of the church or involved in FCUMC-sponsored activities. This policy has been developed to help accomplish this important task.

2. Guiding Principles

A. All volunteers will read and sign this policy within two weeks of the beginning of service.
B. This policy will be made available to anyone who wishes to view it.
C. In the context of this policy, the words "worker" or "workers" refer to individuals who provide care and oversight of a minor in a ministry activity or event of FCUMC.
   i. Any full-time or part-time paid employee of FCUMC
   ii. Any individual contracted to provide such care and support at the church facility
   iii. Any volunteer, regardless of age, who is not compensated for their services.

3. Worker Classification

A. Regular Volunteers and Staff (who work with minors on weekly/biweekly ongoing basis [longer than 30 days], or who are permitted to work alone with minors)
   i. Signed the Children, Student, and Special Needs Workers Covenant (Enclosure 1)
   ii. Criminal background check: complete the Confidential Background Information for Children, Students, & Special Needs Workers (Enclosure 2)
   iii. Interview (with Director of Children's or Student Ministries or Discipleship Team)
B. Occasional Volunteers
   i. Signed the Children, Students, and Special Needs Workers Covenant (Enclosure 1)
   ii. Are not required to complete a Background Check or Interview
   iii. Must *never* be left alone with a minor without another Occasional or Regular Volunteer present
   iv. May become a Regular Volunteer by completing the requirements as listed above

* High school students may serve as Regular or Occasional Volunteers, but the same criteria apply (including background check requirements)

4. Worker and Screening

A. Workers who have been associated with Faith Community UMC for less than six months must provide references from their former church and or ministry leader(s). All Regular Volunteers must be part of the congregation for at least 6 months prior to being involved with children, unless they are a new employee. Applicants for paid positions will complete the Employee Authorization and Release of Information form (Enclosure 3) in addition to any job application forms.
B. All Regular or Occasional Volunteers must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but they may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens (under the age of 18) in nursery or other positions under the direct supervision and presence of an approved adult worker. Workers under the age of 21 must receive approval of the

Ministry Director before serving as spiritual leaders or teachers.

C. FCUMC conducts criminal background checks of all new Regular Volunteers and Employees to determine suitability of employment. In the event a criminal record exists, consideration will be given to the relationship between the conviction and the responsibilities of the position that is or will be held. A relevant job-related conviction is grounds for termination of employment or non-selection of an applicant. Conviction is defined as including all felonies and misdemeanors. For positions that require operation of a motor vehicle, the term conviction shall include traffic violations (except minor offenses such as parking tickets). Falsification of application materials, including failure to disclose criminal convictions, is grounds for termination of employment (or volunteer service) or non-selection of an applicant. Only the relevant staff ministry leaders will have access to the results of background checks.

5. Unacceptable Behaviors

A. Threatening or inflicting injury upon a minor, other than by accidental means.
B. Committing any sexual offense against a minor, or engaging in any sexual contact with a minor.
C. Making any kind of sexual advance, requesting sexual favors, or engaging in other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
D. Abuse in the form of ridiculing, name-calling, shaming, or abusive words.
E. The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of FCUMC or on FCUMC property.
F. The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol while leading or participating in a function of FCUMC or on FCUMC property.

(The above list is not all-inclusive, but provides guidance in defining unacceptable behaviors.)

6. Guidelines for Volunteers in Children's Programming

A. Worker Conduct
   i. Classroom doors must never be locked while occupied. Teachers must follow the Evacuation Floor Plan posted in the classroom if an emergency evacuation is required.
   ii. With nursery through second grade children, only a parent or other person specifically designated by the parent and known to the worker may pick up children, using the security nametag system currently in practice. Parents should provide the Ministry Director with any special information regarding a possible custody dispute where leadership shall pay particular attention to who picks up the child.
   iii. Workers will be able to reach the Ministry Director on church grounds by the use of a cell phone which is kept in the Director's possession at all times.

B. Touching to comfort or affirm a child in an age-appropriate manner is permitted. Workers will not touch children in genital areas except as necessary to change a diaper or to assist a child in the bathroom

C. Discipline of Children
   i. Affirmation and encouragement is always appropriate. Physical discipline, such as spanking, is never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted. The Ministry Director shall advise workers on the best age-appropriate discipline methods.
   ii. The behavior of a child who is a constant disruption to a class will be documented on a Disciplinary Action Report (Enclosure 4) and discussed with his or her parents and the

Ministry Director. If the behavior persists, the child may be removed from the class. A child who is a danger to other children shall be removed immediately.

7. Guidelines for Volunteers in Student (7-12 Grade) Programs

A. Physical Contact: massages, kissing, or similar contact is not allowed. Side-by-side or "A-frame" hugs are encouraged instead of full body contact. Touching need not be completely avoided, but staff and workers must be aware of how it looks and how the person being touched may interpret the contact.
B. Driving Rules: per insurance company requirements, all drivers must be 21 years of age or older. All drivers must complete an Auto Safety Certification for Approved Driver's List (Enclosure 5) and have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance.
C. Overnight Event Rules
    i. Proper consent forms must be completed prior to any overnight trip. Two adult leaders must be present throughout the trip, with any exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. At least one female and one male must be present if both genders of students are present.
    ii. Parent chaperons must be Regular or Occasional Volunteers.
    iii. Male and female students shall sleep in gender-specific areas.

8. Guidelines Regarding Church Website

FCUMC is committed to protecting the privacy and safety of children. FCUMC shall never use the names, pictures, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, or other information that identifies minors on the Church's website, without permission from parents.

9. Reporting and Investigations

A. An "incident of abuse" is any occurrence at a church-sponsored event in which a person:
    i. Has threatened or inflicted physical injury upon a child, student, or vulnerable adult, other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
    ii. Commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against a child, student, or vulnerable adult, or engages in any sexual contact with a child, student, or vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
    iii. With respect to any child, student, or vulnerable adult making any kind of sexual advance, or making a request for sexual favors, or engaging in sexually motivated physical contact, or engaging in other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
B. Reporting Requirements and Responsibilities
    i. All workers will immediately report any incident of alleged abuse or violation of the Child & Student Protection Policies of which they have knowledge or have observed.
    ii. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.
    iii. Report will be made to the Children's, Student, or Preschool Director.
C. Reporting Procedures for Violations of the Child and Student Protection Policy
    i. Upon receiving information indicating an alleged violation, the Ministry Director receiving the report shall document the alleged violation by completing the Violation of Child & Student Protection Policy Report (Enclosure 6) and discuss the violation with the person violating the policy.

ii. If any person refuses to comply with the policy he/she shall be barred from further student or children's work.

D. Reporting Procedures for Incidents of Abuse

i. The person reporting any alleged incident of abuse shall contact:
- The Director of Children's Ministry (children from birth through 6th grade)
- The Director of Student Ministry (students grade 7-12)
- The Director of the Preschool (weekday Preschool students)

ii. The person reporting the alleged incident will provide all relevant facts. Upon receiving a report of an alleged incident of abuse, the person receiving the report, together with the reporter, will complete the written Violation of Child & Student Protection Policy Report (Enclosure 6). However, in all cases where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom a report shall be made, he or she shall be considered absent for purposes of this reporting procedure, and the report will be made to the direct supervisor of the individual, per the FCUMC Organizational Structure.

E. Dealing with an Imminent Threat

i. In all cases where an imminent threat of continued or additional abuse exists, any witness shall immediately secure the safety of the alleged victim and contact the police, then contact the Ministry Director.

ii. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing the alleged incident of abuse shall complete a written Violation of Child & Student Protection Policy Report (Enclosure 6).

F. Responding to the Report

i. Allegations of physical or sexual abuse shall immediately be reported to the staff ministry leader, who will notify the police and/or DCFS.

ii. Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending investigation.

iii. Take all steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer is barred from further work with children or students.

Volunteer Statement of Acknowledgment

(Please read, sign and return to the Children's or Youth mailbox)

This is to acknowledge that I have received a revised copy of the Children and Student Protection Policy. I understand that it provides guidelines for me to be involved in children's and student ministries and summary information about how I am protected as well while serving. I also understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, become familiar with, and comply with the standards that have been established. I further understand that the church reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any policy from time to time, with or without notice, as the Board of Servant Leaders (BSL) deems necessary or appropriate.

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Volunteer's Name *(Please Print)*

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Volunteer's Signature

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Date