

# Child and Youth Protection Policy Training

January 2021

# HISTORY

- Policy was updated in November 2018
- All churches required to implement by April 2019
- More than 20 Youth and Children's ministry workers along with Conference Staff and Lawyers worked on the new policy
- Lawsuits are becoming more and more prevalent when an issue arises in Children and Youth Ministry

# IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS – Page 4

- **CHILD** – under the age of 12 years.
- **YOUTH** – anyone at least 12 years of age, but not yet 18 years of age or anyone older who is still attending high school.
- **ADULT** – anyone 18 year of age or older who has finished high school.
- **SCREENING** – Background checks which include:
  - National Criminal Background Search
  - National Sex Offender Search
  - Identity Confirmation
  - Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Search (\$24.00 fee per name checked)



# CHURCH PERSONNEL – Page 4

- **PAID STAFF PERSON** – anyone employed by the church, including all appointed clergy and all other staff on the payroll.
- **ADULT VOLUNTEER** – Any adult not paid by the church who serves in a position involving the supervision or custody of minors, including volunteers in the nursery, daycare, schools, Sunday School, VBS, drivers, and chaperones.
- **SCREENED ADULT** – volunteer or paid staff person who has undergone the church's screening process.
- **Regularly Work With or Around Children/Youth** – for purposes of this policy these are included.
- **Not included in the definition of "Church Personnel" are "Youth Helpers" or "Youth Staff."** These areas are anyone below the age of 18 or 18 or older and still in high school.

## WHO NEEDS SCREENING – Page 4

- **ALL CLERGY** whether appointed or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- **All paid staff persons**, except those whose duties are performed entirely when children/youth are not present – unless they have a key or code. **MUST IF THEY HAVE A KEY OR CODE.**
- All paid staff persons whose living quarters are **ON THE GROUNDS** of the church or related entity.
- **Adult volunteers** whose service regularly takes them throughout the church facility or grounds or **WHO HAVE KEYS OR CODE TO CHURCH BUILDINGS.**

## WHO NEEDS SCREENING – Page 4

- **Adult volunteers** who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs, or activities **MORE THAN THREE TIMES** per year.
- **Adult volunteers** who transport children/youth without other adults in the vehicle **MORE THAN THREE TIMES** per year.
- **Adult volunteers** who participate in overnight activities with children/youth **MORE THAN TWO TIMES** per year.
- **Adult volunteers** who assist in the nursery **MORE THAN FOUR TIMES** per year.

# SCREENING & SELECTION OF CHURCH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS - Page 5

## ALL WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH REGULARLY

Must comply with the following:

- Application form with three reference checks
- Background check consent form
  - Receive appropriate clearances from all reference checks and background check
  - Renew background check **EVERY THREE YEARS**
- Undergo a personal interview
- Attend training on child/youth policy once per year; sign a statement/participation covenant
- Undergo a motor vehicle records check if transporting children/youth in personal vehicle or by church owned vehicle

# SCREENING & SELECTION OF CHURCH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS – Page 5 - 6

## Related Screening and Selection Procedures for the Church (Forms pages 14, 15, 18,20)

- Interview the applicant (Guidelines pages 16 -17) and contact references (at least three)
- Background check
  - Receive appropriate clearances from all reference checks and background check
  - Renew background check **EVERY THREE YEARS**
- Confidentiality and Storage of all documents.
- Information reviewed by authorized personnel



# SCREENING & SELECTION OF CHURCH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS - Relates to Page 6

## Related Screening and Selection Procedures for the Church

- Anyone whose background check indicates a conviction or plea of guilty or *nolo contendere* for any offense listed in Appendix XI shall not be approved unless or until the arrest has been resolved in such a way that does not result in a conviction or plea of guilty or *nolo contendere*.
- If your church knows of or is informed, either by someone or a background check, that a person who attends or wants to attend your church has any disqualifying convictions/arrests, please contact the office of Ministry Protection for further instructions. The person may be required to sign a covenant with the church in order to attend or participate in any worship services or activities at your church or on behalf of your church. This is a legal issue and there can be unintended consequences for the church, leadership, and pastors if the covenant is not signed and the process not followed.
- Contact at the Office of Ministry Protection is Helen Mitchell. She can be reached at 1-800-282-8011 x 129 or by e-mail at [hmitchell@flumc.org](mailto:hmitchell@flumc.org). Also notify the District Office.

# Ongoing Education of Persons Who Work Regularly or Occasionally with Children and Youth – Page 6

The Pastor and the SPRC Committee is responsible for ensuring that regular trainings that focus on current issues of child protection is available to and received by those working with children and youth.

- Attendance is required by all paid staff, screened adult volunteers, and non-screened adult volunteers who work with children and/or youth.
- CYPP Florida Conference Template page 6
  - Training to include at minimum
  - A couple of the many sites that provide training resources

# SUPERVISION – Page 7 - 9

- General Rules
- Supervision of Classroom Activities
- Open Door Policy
- Sign-in/Sign-out Procedure
- Supervision of Non-Classroom Activities
- Mentoring Programs
- Counseling of Youth and Children
- Time Following Group Events

# TRANSPORTATION – Page 9 - 10

- **Driver Requirements**

- **MUST** be known to the leader of the event.
- Solo driver **MUST** be the parent/guardian or a screened adult or paid staff person at least 21 years old. Recommend at least one other adult.
- In a church-owned vehicle, driver **MUST** be at least 21 years old with a motor vehicle records search and have a valid driver's license for vehicle being operated.
- Youth drivers are not permitted to drive from the church to an off-site church activity.

- **Approved Driver List**

- Complete required form and submit for Motor Vehicle Records Check through the conference office. Visit our website at [www.flumc.org/atlanticcentral](http://www.flumc.org/atlanticcentral) and click on AC Resources for more information.



# SUPERVISION: TRIPS AND RETREATS – Page 10 -11

- Requirements
  - Form – see Appendix VI
- Guidelines

# USE OF CHURCH BY OUTSIDE GROUPS – Page 11

- Must adhere to the Child/Youth Protection Policy regulations.
- If anyone in their group has a key or the code, they must be trained, and background screened.
- If regular usage (by another congregation) their volunteers and staff must be screened.
- For weddings and other events that may involve children, the parents are responsible for oversight, unless there is a designated room for childcare. Then the policy must be enforced.

## ONLINE SAFETY – Page 11 - 12

- In this policy, there are requirements, guidelines, and recommendations. Read this area carefully.
- Learn about the online options for communications and the risk involved with using any online platform. Work with your staff and volunteers who communicate with youth/children to ensure church policies are strictly followed.
- Required forms:
  - Consent form for Electronic Communications with Children/Youth (Page 25)
  - Photo Permission Form (Page 24)

If you have specific questions about this area, please contact the District Office.

## Recommended SOCIAL MEDIA (not exhaustive)

- **FACEBOOK** – reaches majority of older millennials and up. Great all-in-one communication. Very few younger millennials and Gen Z use it though.
- **INSTAGRAM** – Highly used by millennials and Gen Z. Some use by older gens but not much.
- **REMIND** – Great mass texting platform for youth groups to look into if they don't already have a platform. Allows teacher/leader to directly send a text to everyone in the group and will receive a single one-to-one text not as a group text. The app also keeps records of all text conversations made on it.
  - Be sure to include screened adult leaders in the groups that contain child/youth so that you have adults receiving the same content as the child/youth.



# BE AWARE SOCIAL MEDIA (not exhaustive)

- **TIK TOK** – New, recent app popular with Gen Z and young millennials. Share short videos on the app and get likes/shares from community. No friending feature. No pics, comments or private messaging. Could be a good app for reaching younger church members but does have inappropriate content on it.
- **SNAPCHAT** – Popular with Gen Z, millennials and some Gen X. Send videos/photos to friends/followers. All content automatically deletes in 24 hours. There is no way to preemptively screen what gets sent to each youth. Church should avoid using this with child/youth groups.
- **STORY FEATURE ON FB** – Should be used with caution. A minor of FB can post something in their story this is sensitive or explicit, you would then be logged as “seen” for that post to the owner and can be implicated as a viewer of said content Adults should avoid viewing minors videos on all social media.
- **TWITCH OR OTHER ONLINE GAMING COMMUNITY CHAT BOARDS/VIDEO SERVICES** – Functions like AOL instant messenger but for gamers. Predators find their way into these boards. Minors should not use without parent supervision. Easy way for leaders to get into unsafe conversations with minors.

# CHILD/YOUTH ABUSE – Page 5 and 12 - 13

- **Definitions**

- **Physical abuse** – violent non-accidental contact which results in injury.
- **Sexual Abuse** – any form of sexual activity whether at the church, at home, or any other setting.
- **Emotional Abuse** – a pattern of intentional conduct which crushes the spirit of or attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.
- **Neglect** – failure to provide for basic needs or failure to protect from harm.

- **Reporting**

- When child abuse is suspected or observed, the moral imperative and potentially the legal requirement is to call the CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE – 1-800-96 ABUSE. (1-800-962-2873)
- Contact Senior Pastor OR District Superintendent if Senior Pastor is not available.

# OTHER – Page 13

- **Media for Any Circumstance**

- Pre-Determined spokesperson selected by the appointed clergy and supply pastors
- Contact Brittany Jackson in the Conference office for guidance
  - 1-800-282-8011
  - [bjackson@flumc.org](mailto:bjackson@flumc.org)

- **Implementation**

- Unless otherwise specifically stated, it shall be the responsibility of the Staff Parish Relations Committee to implement this Policy, to ensure that training pursuant to this policy is conducted at least annually, and to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this Policy.

- **Application**

# LOCAL CHURCH CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

- **Adoption**

- It is required that every local church in the Florida Annual Conference create and adopt a Child and Youth Protection Policy.
- The Florida Conference template is to be used as a minimum standard. Your church may add to the policy or adopt stricter standards but cannot remove or lower the standard for any part of the policy.
- Make the policy your own. Add your church name and logo to all areas that apply, including forms to complete.
- Review the policy on an annual basis to be sure it still meets the minimum requirements and make any updates.
  - Send the updated policy to the District Office by uploading to E-Bridge. Contact our office for instructions.



# NEXT STEPS

- **Meet with your teams to go over the policy**
  - What are you doing well?
  - Where is the policy not fully implemented?
  - Who will lead trainings?
  - Make decisions around who is responsible for ensuring the various areas are implemented and enforced.
  - Create an action plan – MAP
  - Schedule the next training for your Local Church
  - Submit the Annual Adoption paperwork to the District Office no later than March 31, 2021.

# CONTACTS AND WEBSITE LINKS

- **Atlantic Central District Office | [www.flumc.org/atlanticcentral](http://www.flumc.org/atlanticcentral)**
  - 772-299-0255
  - [flumc-ac@flumc.org](mailto:flumc-ac@flumc.org) (Paula) or [flumc-ac4@flumc.org](mailto:flumc-ac4@flumc.org) (Marilyn)
- **Florida Annual Conference Website**
  - [www.flumc.org/ministryprotection](http://www.flumc.org/ministryprotection) (Vehicle and Driver Safety)
  - [www.flumc.org/calendar-of-reports-due-2021](http://www.flumc.org/calendar-of-reports-due-2021)(Child/Youth Policy Renewal due March 31, 2021)
  - [www.flumc.org/chilyouthprotection](http://www.flumc.org/chilyouthprotection) (Policy template and Renewal Document)
- **Background Screening**
  - ScreeningOne – this company is offering a discounted rate for the churches of The Florida Conference.
    - Representative: Paul Craddock
    - Phone: 888-327-6511 x70646
    - E-mail: [Paul.Craddock@screeningone.com](mailto:Paul.Craddock@screeningone.com)



QUESTIONS

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ANSWERS