

## SAFE SANCTUARY POLICIES OF HIGHLAND PARK UMC

“Safe Sanctuary” is an effort of the United Methodist Church to insure that all ministries involving children and youth are appropriately supervised. All United Methodist Churches are expected to have in place policies and procedures for providing leadership and safety for children and youth.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE: With God’s grace and for God’s glory, Highland Park UMC will implement and follow policies and procedures that are reasonable, preventive, and accountable in order to provide for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual welfare of its children and youth in all aspects of their participation in the church; and for the protection of all leaders/workers in the church.**

A **Children’s Ministry Handbook** of appropriate guidelines, procedures, and forms will be kept in the main office. Each staff member will get a copy of it and be expected to review and follow it. Copies of the Handbook will be made available to all volunteers, parents, and church members.

These guidelines are to be **applied in all ministries involving children and youth** including but not limited to childcare, Sunday School, UMYF, Confirmation, music, sports, etc.

**Basic Guidelines** for any children/youth ministry setting, formal or informal are:

- 1) Two-Deep Nursery Rule: There must be two leaders/workers of which one must be an adult.
- 2) Children are to be supervised in any setting (Preschool age children or older must have at least one adult leader of 21 years of age or older).
- 3) The adult must be in charge.
- 4) No one under the age of 18 years old may handle an infant.
- 5) All paid employees will be screened and have a background check.
- 6) All volunteers seeking to serve will be asked to fill out a volunteer application form with references that will be checked out before serving.
- 7) Training will be offered to educate our leaders/workers about our guidelines and procedures and how to carry them out (including first aid & CPR).

### Child Abuse Policy

We wish that we lived in a world where children are safe and protected at all times. Because this is not so, we have developed the following policy for preventing and reporting child abuse:

1. No person with known prior incidents of physical or sexual misconduct with minors shall be permitted to serve in any capacity involving custody or supervision of children.
2. At least two adult workers shall be present at all activities involving nursery children and at least one adult present at all activities involving preschool, elementary, and preteen children. At no time shall only one worker/volunteer be allowed to be alone with one child, unless the door is open.
3. All new volunteers will be required to fill out a new volunteer form.
4. If a teacher suspects abuse of any kind, the following steps must be followed:
  - Report suspicions (confirmed or unconfirmed) to nursery coordinator.
  - Report suspicions to the Director of Christian Education.
  - Contact the appropriate civil authorities. Contact Child Protective Services at 843-669-3354.
  - Notify the parents unless they are the ones suspected of abuse.
  - Do not confront the accused. Our priority is securing the safety of the child.

*Approved at Charge Conference on 12/3/07*