



Oak Ridge
United Methodist Church

*SAFE SANCTUARIES
FOR EVERYONE
POLICY AND PROCEDURES*

JANUARY 2009

KNOW CHRIST'S LOVE SHOW CHRIST'S LOVE
GROW IN CHRIST'S LOVE

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Introduction:

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, and the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, in June 2004, adopted resolutions aimed at reducing the risk of abuse of children and youth in the church. This would include sexual, emotional, physical, and ritual abuse, and neglect. The adopted resolutions include 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 and sexual exploitation, and abuse."

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 sexual abuse and exploitation in their 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-
2000; pages 180-81.*

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Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we, at Oak Ridge United Methodist Church and Weekday School, adopt this Safe Sanctuaries for Everyone policy.

Purpose:

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Children and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth.

Statement of Covenant:

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and adults, as well as all of the workers with children, youth and adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children, youth and adults regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods. We have a 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. The procedures are designed to prevent abuse, neglect or exploitation as defined by the General Statutes of North Carolina. These can be specifically found in Chapters, 7a, 7b, and 14 of the North Carolina Criminal Law and Procedure. Nothing in this policy or procedure is designed to hinder or prevent the investigation of suspected, reported or confirmed violations of any North Carolina Criminal Laws.

Conclusion :

In all of our ministries with children, youth and adults, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child and youth will be "...surrounded by steadfast love, ...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (From "Congregational Pledge 2," "Baptismal Covenant II," in *The United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 44).

*PROCEDURES FOR HIRING AND SCREENING OF STAFF, TEACHERS
AND VOLUNTEERS OF OAK RIDGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH*

1. All compensated staff and teachers of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church and Weekday School shall complete an Application and Screening Form for Staff (attachment 1) and a Request for Criminal Records Check and Authorization form (attachment 2). Due to additional State regulations, Weekday School Compensated staff are required to complete additional forms, which will be presented prior to employment.
2. All uncompensated volunteers for programs sponsored by Oak Ridge United Methodist Church and Weekday School shall complete the Church Application and Screening form for Volunteers (attachment 3) and a Request for Criminal Records Check and Authorization form (attachment 2).
3. Reference checks will be conducted and documented by phone and mail. Criminal records checks will be done at random on all volunteers, with the exception of volunteers who are responsible for off site events mandatory records checks will take place for these volunteers.
4. The confidential personnel files of all compensated staff and teachers shall include the completed application, Application and Screening Form (attachment 1), Request for Criminal Records Check and Authorization form (attachment 2), with the results of any investigations or inquiries made pursuant to an applicant's response of this form.
5. Confidential files for all volunteers shall include the Church Application and Screening form for Volunteers (attachment 3) and the Request for Criminal Records Check and Authorization form (attachment 2), with the results of any investigations or inquiries made pursuant to an applicant's responses on this form.
6. Confidentiality of the completed and signed forms utilized to implement this policy shall be maintained by limiting access to these forms to the Senior Pastor, Office Manager, Director for Christian Education, Director for Student Ministries and the Director for the Weekday School.
7. All volunteers of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church, even in a limited capacity, are required to be active members for a minimum of six months or be active families within the Oak Ridge United Methodist Church or Weekday School for a minimum of six months and to complete the application process. Prior to the six months, these individuals may participate in activities as a visitor.
8. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual, emotional, physical abuse or assault are not permitted to be volunteers for children or youth activities.
9. Other organizations using the Oak Ridge United Methodist Church facilities for programs for children, youth and adults must agree to abide by this policy in addition to operating under the policy issued by that organization. The outside organizations policy must be filed with the Senior Pastor or their designee each year prior to usage of the facilities.

Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Abuse/Assault of Children, Youth or Adults.

1. Incidents of abuse/assault or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse/assault of children, youth or adults shall be reported as soon as possible (and at least within 24 hours) to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or to the Department of Social Services of Guilford County at 336-373-3795 and to the Senior Pastor of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church. The Senior Pastor will make a report of the conversation and follow-up as deemed appropriate.
2. Questionable or inappropriate behavior, when observed, shall be reported to the Oak Ridge United Methodist Church staff person directly responsible for the area of ministry. If the observed behavior in question includes a staff member, it shall be reported to the Senior Pastor and/or the Administrative Council Chairperson.
3. All adult members of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church staff and other adults participating in programs on the property of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse/assault of children, youth and adults. They shall be encouraged not to hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are, or may appear to be, inappropriate and may be reported to the proper authorities.
4. Organizations that use the Oak Ridge United Methodist Church facilities that have a reporting process and procedures of their own shall follow those established policies and procedures. In addition, to following the organization's own procedures, any incident or suspected incident involving any person affiliated with the organization shall be reported to the Senior Pastor of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church as soon as possible (and within 24 hours) about the incident or suspected incident.
5. Any report regarding the Senior Pastor or another member of the Oak Ridge United Methodist Church Ministerial staff shall be made to the Administrative Council Chairperson and to the District Superintendent at 336-288-3070.

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF
ABUSE/ASSAULT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH OR ADULTS

1. All the facts and circumstances of an incident or a suspected incident of abuse or assault shall be documented by the Senior Pastor or designee. Concurrently with the notification to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Social Services (refer to reporting procedures), the Senior Pastor or designee shall be notified of the incident or the suspected incident of abuse/assault.
2. The Senior Pastor or designee shall be responsible for ensuring the safety of the potential victim in cases where the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Social Services are not yet responsible for the potential victim. In addition, the Senior Pastor or designee shall provide immediate notification to the parents/guardian of the potential victim and for notification of the person accused of the abuse/assault. The safety of the alleged victim must be safeguarded before contacting the person accused of abuse/assault.
3. Official Investigation shall be conducted by the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Social Services and not by church personnel. If the incident occurred on Church Property or during a Church sponsored event, a separate investigation shall also be initiated by the Senior Pastor in conjunction with the Administrative Council Chairperson.
4. Persons accused shall be immediately relieved of further responsibilities involving direct contact with children, youth and adults until the investigation is completed and the allegations are cleared or charges are formally brought against the accused.
5. The Senior Pastor or his designee shall report all incidents or suspected incidents to church legal counsel. In addition, all confirmed incidents shall be reported to the church liability insurer as soon as practicable.
6. Reports of incidents, witness statements, results of investigations, and all procedures followed in the course of any investigation are to be documented by all involved parties and such documents are to be maintained securely within the church office.
7. All parties involved, including the accuser, the accused and the victim shall be treated with dignity, supported in Christian love in accordance with the Mission statement of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church. Confidentiality of all persons shall be safeguarded to the extent possible.
8. The Senior Pastor or designee shall be the sole spokesperson for the church insofar as media inquiries are concerned. Confidentiality by the Senior Pastor or designee of all persons involved in the investigation shall be safeguarded to the extent possible.

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Oak Ridge United Methodist Church staff member accountable for any programs that involve children, youth or adults to insure that appropriate practices are implemented within those programs and activities to reduce the risk of abuse/assault.
2. The specific programs/activity and the circumstances surrounding it will be taken into consideration in the development of those program-specific practices.
3. An education program will be offered annually to all staff and volunteers of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church and Weekday School including, but not limited to, addressing the following goals:
 - Protection of children, youth and adults at Oak Ridge United Methodist Church and Weekday School programs and activities.
 - Protection of volunteers from exposure to “high-risk” situations and false accusations.
 - Abuse/assault awareness
 - Understanding of the reporting procedures and the procedures for responding to the incidents/reasonably suspected incidents of abuse/assault.
 - Demonstration of appropriate/expected communication between our Christian family and communication styles that will enhance healthy communication and relationships.
4. This educational program is available to all adult members of Oak Ridge United Methodist Church and the Weekday School and is required for all compensated staff. All compensated staff must participate in a yearly review of the program and sign a release yearly for an updated Request for Criminal Records Check and Authorization form (attachment 2).
5. All volunteers must complete the educational program at the initial onset of their volunteering application and sign an updated yearly acknowledgement of the policies form. All volunteers will be encouraged to participate in a two-year cycle review of the program.
6. Volunteers and compensated staff shall observe a “two adult or open door” rule at all times. This requires either (1) an adult working with youth or children to be accompanied by another non-related adult or (2) an adult working alone with youth or children to maintain visual access to the room by keeping the door open at all times.
7. Volunteers shall have no “one-on-one contact” with any child, youth or adults without prior parental approval or approval of one of the pastoral staff.
8. “Two Non-related adults” rule is in effect for all areas of ministry. No two related adults will be left alone in charge of any activities; a non-related adult must always be present for all activities.
 - “Two non-related adult rule” applies to vehicles used to transport children and youth to and from activities. In those situations where two adults are not present in each vehicle, in no case shall only one youth be present in the same vehicle to prevent the “one adult-one youth situation”. Solo drivers must establish a “caravan” with at least one other non-related driver with the understanding that the two or more vehicles are always within eyesight of each other. This is intended to prevent a solo adult from getting “lost” or placed in a high-risk situation.

9. Completed Yearly Medical Release for Treatment Forms, and Parent Permission forms for each trip taken must be stored in vehicles during trips. If more than one vehicle is used, each vehicle must maintain a completed copy of all participants' forms.

10. All vehicles must maintain a complete First Aid Kit, and each driver must carry a cell/mobile phone in case of emergency. Drivers will exchange cell/mobile phone numbers for the extent of the trip in case of emergency. The First Aid Kits must be checked prior to each trip by the compensated staff member in charge of the area of ministry using the vehicles.

11 A parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring that his/her own child is not left in an unsupervised area prior to the start of activities or programs nor allowed to remain past the time for pick-up of children/youth from activities or programs.

12. Transportation of children and youth in any church related program or activity shall only be done by the parent or guardian unless written, signed notification is provided for other arrangements.

13. The compensated staff will make recommendations to the Trustees and Church Council for facility modifications that could further reduce the risk of abuse/assault occurring on the church grounds.

14. Whenever nursery services are provided by the church, the following procedures will be followed:

- Every child in our nursery to two year old room will be signed in by a parent or guardian and issued a numbered pager. The parent or guardian must complete an "All About Me" form. The child will only be released to the person bearing the numbered pager.
- All bags and bottles will be numbered to match the child's numbered pager.
- Only compensated staff and adult volunteers will be "in charge" of the nursery. Age 16 and older will be allowed to assist in the nursery. Volunteers age 13 -15 who have completed the American Red Cross Babysitting program and have provided documentation may also assist other adults in the nursery room. No youth volunteer may take a child out of the nursery room without direct compensated staff supervision. Adults are defined as 21 years of age or older.

15. All organizations using the Oak Ridge United Methodist Church or Weekday School must agree to abide by these policies in addition to operating under similar training and supervision procedures issued by that organization. Each organization must submit a copy of its procedures to the Oak Ridge United Methodist Senior Pastor in advance of any facilities usage.

16. All forms aforementioned may be obtained through the Church Office by calling 643-4690 or by visiting during regular church office hours. Reviewing personal information may only be done with the Pastor present.

Our Church Staff

Our Church Staff

Ministers: All Members

Missionaries: All Members

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Michael Kurtz, ext. 205

mkurtz@oakridgeumc.com

Associate Pastor of Congregational Care: Rev. Karen Kurtz, ext.206

kkurtz@oakridgeumc.com

Director of Christian Education: Mrs. Dana Hanlon, ext. 203

dhanlon@oakridgeumc.com

Director of Student Ministries: Mr. Jonathan Spangler, ext. 204

jspangler@oakridgeumc.com

Choral Director:

Accompanist: Mr. Keith D. Maxey, ext. 210

Crosswalk Worship Leader: Mr. Terry Fritz

crosswalk@oakridgeumc.com

Business Manager: Mr. Glenn Carihfield, ext 219

gcrihfield@oakridgeumc.com

Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Phyllis Rowe, ext. 202

prowe@oakridgeumc.com

Office Assistant: Mrs. Pam Jordan, ext. 201

pjordan@oakridgeumc.com

Weekday School Director: Mrs. Nora Koran, ext. 208

nlkoran@aol.com

Nursery Coordinator: Misty Royal

Parish Nurses: Mrs. Jerry Chance & Mrs. Sylvia Haley

nurse@oakridgeumc.com

Visit our website at www.oakridgeumc.com

Church: (336) 643-4690 Fax: (336) 643-2065

Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm

Weekday School Hours: Monday - Friday 7:00am - 6:00pm

VISION

Oak Ridge United Methodist Church exists to make followers of Jesus Christ through inspiring worship, Christ-like hospitality, vibrant children, youth and adult ministries, nurturing Christian education, and servant outreach in local, national, and global communities.

Visit our website at www.oakridgeumc.com