

# **TIMONIUM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

## **SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY**

**EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2009**

In April, 1996, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. The adopted resolution calls upon all churches to welcome the children and also to make our churches safe places for children to grow and learn. It is our responsibility to be proactive in our recruiting and training to find people with a gift for caring for children and also to protect those volunteers from false accusations. It is also our responsibility to oversee all programs involving children to make sure there is a safe environment and to have a plan of response in place should an accusation arise. The General Conference resolution affirmed that every local church shall have in place a policy for protecting children.

Accordingly, as a Christian community of faith committed to a safe ministry to and with children, and for all of its parishioners, TUMC pledges to:

1. Conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth;
2. Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers;
3. Implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events;
4. Educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods;
5. Establish and implement a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and
6. Be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Throughout the Policy, reference is made to different types of workers.

When "Supervising Worker" is used, it means a church staff member or an adult volunteer who works with children or youth in a supervisory capacity on a part-time or full-time basis and is a member of the Church or has been affiliated with the Church for at least six (6) months and is well known by the Church community to be responsible and of good moral character.

When "Occasional Worker" is used, it means a church staff member or an adult volunteer who works with children or youth on only an occasional basis in a non-supervisory capacity.

When "Youth Worker" is used, it means a volunteer under the age of eighteen (18). A Youth Worker cannot be a Supervising Worker or Occasional Worker.

When "Visitor" is used, it means an adult who is visiting a church activity involving youth/children as a guest speaker, observer, or one-time helper.

## **PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR**

The following behaviors are prohibited by all workers (including staff, volunteers and visitors) with respect to their interaction with children and youth:

1. Threatening to inflict, or intentionally inflicting, emotional or physical injury
2. Committing any sexual offense or engaging in any sexual contact
3. Making any kind of sexual advance or making a request for sexual favors
4. Engaging in verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature
5. Physical discipline, such as spanking

Touching to comfort or affirm a child or youth in an age-appropriate manner is permitted, but is acceptable only in public. Workers shall be aware of how it looks and how the person being contacted may interpret the contact.

The following are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at any Ministry:

1. Tobacco;
2. Alcohol;
3. Illegal drugs;
4. Firearms or other weapons;
5. Foul or offensive language;
6. Pornographic material;

The above examples are not "all inclusive." Any behavior that contravenes this Policy shall be considered prohibited behavior.

## **SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Obviously, our Church could not function without the valuable work of its staff and the numerous volunteers. The church especially counts on the commitment of time, energy and creativity of its volunteers for without them the church could not maintain the programs and services it provides to its parishioners and the community.

However, for the safety of the children and youth who partake in the church's activities and programs, the church must establish appropriate procedures and safeguards in selecting its staff and volunteers. Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children and youth. Although it may be time consuming and expensive, it will be well worth the effort in peace of mind that the most reliable, committed and experienced staff and volunteers are in place for every program that involves children and youth.

Under the Safe Sanctuary Policy, TUMC now requires that:

1. All individuals applying for a staff position are required to complete an Employment Application. All references listed on the Employment Application will be contacted. All staff are required to be fingerprinted.
2. All staff and adult volunteers (regardless of type but not including visitors) are required to undergo a criminal background check. The expense of this check will be paid by TUMC except in the case of an employee applicant who must initially pay this expense, but will be reimbursed if cleared by the reviewing committee and hired.
3. Background checks will be conducted once every three years.
4. The results of the background check will need to be received, reviewed and cleared by the Church before the staff person or volunteer individual will be permitted to work with the children or youth. Without exception, a (potential) staff person or volunteer who has a criminal history child abuse (whether physical, emotional or sexual), child neglect, or violent offenses (such as murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.) shall not be permitted to work with the children or youth. All other criminal incidents will be reviewed and assessed on case-by-case basis.
5. All Staff and volunteers (regardless of age and type but not including visitors) will be photographed.
6. All staff and adult volunteers (regardless of type but not including visitors) are required to complete, on an annual basis, a Questionnaire regarding their past behavior.

7. All staff and volunteers (regardless of age and type but not including visitors) are required to complete, on an annual basis, a Participation Covenant Statement.
  
8. With any church activity that calls for any children or youth to be driven from the church as a group, all drivers shall have, within two years of said activity, submitted to the Church a copy of their current driver's license, proof of adequate auto insurance and a three year driving history (from the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration or similar State agency if from another State). All shall be reviewed and cleared by the SPRC subcommittee. The church shall pay the expense of the required driving record report. All drivers must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age. Without exception, a staff person or volunteer who has a criminal history of a DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to be a driver. All other criminal incidents will be reviewed and assessed on case-by-case basis.

## SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Consistent and specific supervision procedures will also help to reduce the possibility of abuse of children and youth in our Church. Additionally, such procedures will help to protect staff persons and volunteers from unwarranted accusations of child abuse.

Under the Safe Sanctuary Policy, TUMC now requires that:

1. Training is a requirement for all Staff persons and volunteers (but not visitors) working with children and youth at our Church. Training sessions will be available on, at least, an annual basis.
2. All activities involving children and/or youth will follow the **"Two-Adult Rule."** This rule requires that no matter the size of the group, there will always be two adults present and:
  - a. The two adults must be unrelated in that one cannot be the spouse, parent, child or sibling of the other;
  - b. No person shall be considered to be one of the two adults unless he/she is at least eighteen (18) years of age and is at least five (5) years older than the oldest child being supervised. This does not prevent that person from helping but he/she will be classified as a Youth Worker;
  - c. At least one of the two adults must meet the definition of a Supervising Worker;
  - d. A "roamer," who moves from room to room, can be counted as one of the two adults; and
  - e. A visitor, or visitors, who may be present cannot be counted toward the minimum "Two-Adult Rule."
3. While there may be times when the Pastor, or other staff member, needs to meet privately with a child or youth, such a meeting should be with the knowledge of a least one other adult church member or staff person, and should be held in an open setting to the degree possible and appropriate for the situation at hand. There shall never be an one-on-one meeting behind a closed door if said door does not contain a window. Additionally, whenever possible the Pastor or other staff person shall obtain a permission slip from the child/youth's parent before any one-on-one meetings take place.
4. No child will be left unsupervised while attending a children's activity.

5. Each room or space where children are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open such as a restroom. All activities should occur in open view.
6. The Two-Adult Rule is applicable in the transporting of children and youth for any church activity. The Supervising Worker must determine whether the act of transporting children to/from a church activity is being coordinated by the church, and therefore that "activity" requiring adherence to the church's Safe Sanctuary Policy.
7. With any overnight church activities, the two-adult rule should be expanded to a three-adult rule with, for co-ed events, at least one male and one female worker. Wherever possible and safe, adult workers should sleep in a space that is separate and apart from the space where the youth sleep. Although some overnight activities may be in one room, each youth participant should have his or her own sleeping space and the adult workers should sleep in a space that is as far apart from where the youth are sleeping as is possible and safe. Male youth should sleep in an area separate from the female youth.
8. Should the children's activity be an outdoor program or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this Policy, the Supervising Worker in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure that the setting suits the activity, and the children are properly supervised.
9. Registration materials for activities in which children are outside of the direct supervision of their parents/guardians shall require signed written permission forms.
10. Accurate participation records shall be maintained for all children's activities. At a minimum, these records should list the date and hours of the activity, its location, the names of the children participating (including whether any were dismissed early and the times of such dismissals), and the names of the adults involved directly in the activity and other supervisors on site that day.

**REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO  
SUSPECTED INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Once an incident of child abuse occurs or allegation of an incident is made, it is crucial that it be dealt with speedily and in a clearly outlined manner. However, while it is critical that the Church respond immediately to such an incident, it must be remembered that, under the law, all are innocent until proven guilty. The rights of all must be acknowledged and protected. The confidentiality of the parties involved is of utmost importance.

Under the Safe Sanctuary Policy, TUMC, in conjunction with Maryland Law, now requires that:

1. The staff person or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect shall report the incident immediately to the Supervising Worker in charge of the children's activity. If the Supervising Worker is the alleged offender, the staff person or volunteer shall report the incident directly to the Pastor.
2. The Supervising Worker shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information such as the name of the alleged victim and his or her address and family information.
3. Upon receiving such information, the Supervising Worker shall immediately report the incident to the Pastor and provide all available information. If the Pastor is the alleged offender, the Supervising Worker shall report the incident to the Chair of the SPRC.
4. The staff person or volunteer identified above shall be available to assist, and assure, that the appropriate oral or written report is submitted to the local Department of Social Services and/or law enforcement agency. Under the law, the staff person or volunteer has the legal requirement to make the necessary report, but TUMC will assist with this matter.
5. Any person who is the object of the report will be required to refrain from all children's activities until the incident reported is resolved.



6. In any removal of a person from any children's activities, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.
7. Any statements to be made to the congregation and media will be done so by the Pastor or SPRC Chair (as may be applicable).
8. The staff person or volunteer should, to the degree possible, write down the events that have transpired for future reference and to avoid a possible misremembering of events.



Former Address:

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates  
Street / P. O. Box City State Zip Code County

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State of Issuance: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender \_\_\_\_\_

## TUMC SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

### QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please check the appropriate box.  
If more space is needed, please use an additional sheet of paper.)

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer : \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with a child or youth?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
2. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with an adult?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
3. Have you ever been dismissed from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of accusations of sexual misconduct on your part?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
4. Have you ever resigned from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of an accusation of sexual misconduct on your part, or to avoid being dismissed because of an accusation of sexual misconduct on your part?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
5. If your response to any of the foregoing questions (1 through 4) is "yes", please provide on a separate sheet of paper all details regarding each accusation of sexual misconduct that has been made with respect to you, including a description of the alleged conduct, the name of the person who made the accusation, the date of the alleged misconduct, and the name of your employer at the time of the alleged misconduct.

6. Have accusations of sexual misconduct on your part ever resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings at any level (e.g., indictment, arrest, trial, etc.)?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, please provide the complete details of those proceedings (including dates, circumstances, the jurisdiction where the proceedings occurred, the nature of the accusations, and the result of the proceedings) on a separate sheet of paper.

6a. Have accusations of sexual misconduct against you resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings on more than one occasion?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

7. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

8. Please provide three adult references (names, addresses, phone numbers) of persons Who are not related to you by blood, marriage or other family relationship and are not Employed or supervised by you, who can, to the best of their ability, provide statements in support of your good character and clean record in regard to sexual misconduct with children, youth and adults.

Name	Address	Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

I VERIFY THAT THE ANSWERS I HAVE PROVIDED ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE ARE TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY. I UNDERSTAND THAT FALSE ANSWERS, AS WELL AS FAILURE TO SIGN THIS RESPONSE FORM, WILL RESULT IN MY BEING DENIED THE POSITION FOR WHICH I AM BEING CONSIDERED.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

## TUMC SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

### PARTICIPATION COVENANT STATEMENT

The congregation of Timonium United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) should volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with our church minister before accepting an assignment.
3. All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church, and defined as a Supervising Worker, must be a member of the church or have been affiliated with the church for at least six (6) months and be well known by the church community to be responsible and of good moral character.
4. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall observe the Two-Adult Rule at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children or youth.
5. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
6. Adult volunteers shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

#### PLEASE ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
3. As a supervising volunteer in this congregation, if applicable, do you agree to abide by the six-month rule before beginning such an assignment?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
5. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with the minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
7. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform the minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

I HAVE READ THIS PARTICIPATION COVENANT, AND I AGREE TO OBSERVE AND ABIDE BY THE POLICIES SET FORTH ABOVE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

## TUMC SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

### MARYLAND REPORT OF SUSPECTED ABUSE/NEGLECT

#### INSTRUCTIONS

##### REQUIRED REPORTERS:

Every health practitioner, educator, social worker, or law-enforcement officer, who contacts, examines, attends or treats a child and who believes or has reason to believe that the child has been abused/neglected is required to make an oral and written report to either Social Services or the Police.

##### TIMELINES:

An oral report of suspected child abuse and neglect must be made immediately. A written report must also be submitted by mandated reporters within 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention, or treatment that caused the individual to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect. It is not necessary to observe outward signs of injury to the child. Neither is it necessary for the reporter to establish proof that abuse/neglect occurred. Protection of the child is paramount. If abuse/neglect is suspected, a report must be submitted.

##### DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND CHILD NEGLECT:

###### "Child Abuse" means: (COMAR 07.02.07.02)

Physical injury, not necessarily visible, or mental injury of a child by a parent, other individual who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by a household or family member under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed;

Any sexual abuse, meaning an act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation, whether physical injuries are sustained or not by a parent, other individual who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by a household or family member; or

Mental injury, meaning the observable, identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function, that is caused by the act of a parent or other individual who has permanent or temporary care, or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child, or by a household or family member.

###### "Child Neglect" means: (COMAR 07.02.07.02)

"Child Neglect" means the failure to give proper care and attention to a child, including the leaving of a child unattended by the child's parent, or other individual who has permanent or temporary care or custody, or responsibility for supervision of the child, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm or

Mental injury to a child, meaning the observable, identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function, or a substantial risk of mental injury that is caused by the failure to give proper care and attention to a child by the child's parents, or other individual who has permanent or temporary care or custody, or responsibility for supervision of the child.

##### COMPLETING THE FORM 186:

Respond to each item even if reply is "unknown" or "none". Use additional paper if necessary to complete any given section.

1. Name of Local Department Being Notified: For suspected child abuse/neglect an oral report must be made to the Local Child Protective Services unit in the jurisdiction where the incident allegedly took place. This written report must be filed within 48 hours after making an oral report.
2. Person Making Report (Name): This should always be the person who witnessed or has first hand knowledge of the incident. Any person including a health practitioner educator, social worker, or law-enforcement officer, participating in the making of a good faith report, or participating in an investigation or in a judicial proceeding resulting therefrom shall in no way be immune from any civil liability or criminal penalty that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result.
6. Type of Referral: Please check only one box per report being submitted.
7. Name of Child: Identify only one child per report.
11. Address where child can be seen should include both daytime and after normal working hours.
29. Report Taken: There are some types of referrals that are inappropriate for child abuse/neglect investigation. The Local Department is available for consultation when there is uncertainty regarding a situation. If your concerns do not meet the criteria for investigation, you will be referred to alternate resources, when possible. When contacting the local department record the name of the person you spoke with and the outcome of the conversation in your records. If the oral report of abuse/neglect is not taken by the local department still send in the written report and keep a copy for your records.



State of Maryland-Child Protective Services  
**REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**  
(see instructions on reverse side)

1. NAME OF LOCAL DEPARTMENT BEING NOTIFIED		ADDRESS		ZIP
2. PERSON MAKING REPORT (Name)			3. POSITION/TITLE	
4. NAME OF DEPARTMENT/ORGANIZATION		ADDRESS	ZIP	5. TELEPHONE
6. TYPE OF REFERRAL <input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL ABUSE <input type="checkbox"/> SEXUAL ABUSE <input type="checkbox"/> NEGLECT <input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL INJURY-ABUSE <input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL INJURY-NEGLECT				
7. NAME OF CHILD		8. SEX	9. BIRTH DATE	10. RACE
11. ADDRESS (Where Child Can Be Seen)		CITY	STATE	ZIP
		12. GRADE	13. SCHOOL	
14. NAME OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD'S CARE		14A. AGE/D.O.B.	14B. ADDRESS	
14C. TELEPHONE				
PARENTS/GUARDIAN		AGE/D.O.B	ADDRESS	
MOTHER:				
FATHER:				
GUARDIAN (Specify Relation):				
15. NAME OF SUSPECTED ABUSER/NEGLECTOR	16. RELATION	17. AGE/D.O.B.	18. ADDRESS	
18. TELEPHONE				
20. STATE NATURE/EXTENT OF THE CURRENT ABUSE/NEGLECT TO THE CHILD IN QUESTION: EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE SUSPICION THE CHILD IS AN ABUSE/NEGLECT VICTIM. DESCRIBE ANY INJURY OR RISK. DESCRIBE HOW REPORTER KNOWS INFORMATION.				
21. LIST INFORMATION CONCERNING PREVIOUS ABUSE/NEGLECT TO THE CHILDREN/OTHER CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY, INCLUDING PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN. HOW DOES THE REPORTER KNOW THIS INFORMATION?				
22. DESCRIBE INFORMATION KNOWN ABOUT FAMILY FUNCTIONING, RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT, CARETAKER, OTHER ADULTS IN HOME AND CHILDREN AND LIKELY RESPONSE BY FAMILY TO DISCLOSURE. HOW DOES THE REPORTER KNOW THIS INFORMATION?				
23. STATE ANY OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION THAT WOULD AID IN ESTABLISHING THE CAUSE OF THE ALLEGED ABUSE/NEGLECT				
24. ARE WEAPONS IN THE HOME OR KNOWN TO BE CARRIED BY THE FAMILY OR ACCUSED ABUSER? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown		25. IS THERE A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE, DRUGS, MENTAL ILLNESS OR RETALIATION IN THE FAMILY? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown		26. IF YES TO EITHER, DESCRIBE IN DETAIL ON SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER
27. SIGNATURE OF PERSON REPORTING		DATE	28. DATE / HOUR ORAL CONTACT IN LDSS	
29. REPORT TAKEN <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		30. NAME OF LDSS STAFF PERSON TO WHOM ORAL REPORT WAS MADE		