

# **Northbrook United Methodist Church**

## **Safe Sanctuary Policy & Procedure Manual**

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# **Northbrook United Methodist Church**

## **Safe Sanctuary Mission**

**Northbrook United Methodist Church is a spiritual community, which takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children, youth and vulnerable adults who participate in our ministries. In keeping with our covenant relationship with God, we honor our Lord and all who seek Him, by doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with Him. (Micah 6:8). All volunteers and employees who are in leadership roles in these ministries are living out the vows we take in baptism to nurture our children and youth in the Christian faith. Every church worker plays a key role in fostering the spiritual development of individuals and families in our church community.**

**The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The following statements reflect the commitment of Northbrook United Methodist Church to provide a safe environment for all children, youth and vulnerable adults and church workers who participate in church sponsored ministries.**

**In an effort to provide a safe community, this church requires all church employees and volunteers to commit themselves to the Safe Sanctuary Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults adopted by the Administrative Council of this Church. As members and participants in the programs and undertakings of this household of faith, we pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner consistent with the teachings of Christ and that we will guard our thoughts and tongues, will refrain from any behaviors which corrupt our witness for Christ, and that our actions and choices will reflect prudence, purity of heart, and an earnest love for the will of God. Children and youth are defined as minors that are anyone under the age of 18. A vulnerable adult is an individual, age 18 or over, who, because of age, developmental disability, mental illness, or physical handicap requires supervision or personal care and lacks the personal and social skills required to live independently. Commitment to this policy will require church workers to provide personal information, review the church's Safe Sanctuary policy and understand that they will be under the supervision of their respective leaders.**

**The Safe Sanctuary Policy is a comprehensive effort for the benefit of the entire Northbrook congregation and to all visitors and participants in our programs and events. Every staff member will be expected to conduct his/her duties with strict adherence to the guidelines outlined within this manual. The Manual will be maintained and updated by the designated member of the Trustees, who will also be responsible for conducting periodic, random compliance audits. The Trustees will also formally review this Manual once a year, to verify that all materials have been appropriately updated. While verification of training will be the responsibility of each staff department head, the recruitment of trainers and the oversight of the training function will remain the responsibility of the Trustees.**

**Definition: Abuse is defined as any sexual contact, indecent exposure, or communication for immoral purposes, as well as physical abuses such as corporal punishment or physical assault.**

**The law recognizes that no minors can consent to sexual contact or physical abuse because of their age and vulnerability. The church affirms this position and will not tolerate any abuse.**

**This policy does not preclude the reporting of suspected abuse occurring outside the parameters of this policy.**

## **Safe Sanctuary Committee**

Each position listed below will be a standing appointment on the Safe Sanctuary Committee (*ex officio*):

### **Clergy/Staff**

**Director of Christian Formation**

**Director or Associate of Youth Ministries**

**Director of Youth/Children's Music Ministries**

**Director of Children's Ministries**

**Director of Nursery Scheduling/Programs**

### **Committee Representatives**

**Trustee Designee**

**Designee from Staff Parish Relations Committee**

### **Parent Representatives**

**Children's Council Representative**

**Youth Ministry Representative**

**Preschool Board Representative**

**Children's/Youth Music Ministry Representative**

### **Member at Large**

**Professional Volunteer (lawyer, social worker, counselor, law enforcement professional or other member in relevant vocation)**

The Committee will meet at least annually to update members on policy or program changes and to verify that the Committee is fulfilling its obligations to the congregation. The Committee may be assembled for emergency purposes at anytime, but as soon as practicable, following any reportable incident and as often as necessary to revise procedures, provide instruction/assistance to clergy, staff or volunteers and to keep members of the congregation properly informed of NUMC Safe Sanctuary Program and its ongoing administration. The Committee will also be responsible for coordinating the training for all staff and volunteer workers in these policies and procedures in either verbal or written form (See Section on Volunteer Training).

## **Hiring, Placement & Training of Compensated Workers & Volunteers**

## **Employees of Northbrook UMC**

- 1. Prior employment**
- 2. References and screening**
- 3. Background Check for Criminal Record and Driving Record**
- 4. Record Confidentiality**

No applicant that is found to have been involved in any activity, in which the applicant abused, exploited, or neglected children or youth will be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children or youth shall disqualify any applicant. The SPR reserves the right to also disqualify applicants that have been convicted of other violent offenses or have been convicted of behaviors which indicate that the applicant is ill-suited to work with children or youth (drug related convictions, DUI/DWI convictions within past five years, or other convictions for offenses such as rape, murder, assault, domestic violence, theft, etc...)

## **Volunteers**

A volunteer is an individual

(Note: while this is understood in the applicant screening process, it may not be appropriate to include in this document. Although Georgia is an employment-at-will state, this language should be discussed with counsel before printing in final document.)

# Nursery/Children's Division Protection Procedures

## I. Nursery Division

These procedures cover the activities in the Nursery/Children's Division of Northbrook United Methodist Church. The Nursery division age is from birth up to 3 years of age and the Children's division age is 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### A. Drop-off and Pick-up:

1. All parents or custodians leaving children in the nursery division shall follow these procedures to assure proper claiming of children.
2. All parents or custodians are to complete a Church School Registration Form for their children that shall be kept on file with the Nursery Director or Minister of Children and Family Life. The form will ask for the child's name, parent or custodian name, home address and medical information, which should include allergies and medical conditions.
3. It is the responsibility of the parent or custodian to indicate to the Nursery Director or Minister of Children and Family Life if there are any custody concerns regarding the release of the child, and, if that is the case, the parent will provide a copy of the custody order.
4. All children will wear a nametag for identification.
5. The parent/custodian shall fill out the daily roster with his/her full name, the child's full name, where the parent/custodian will be while the child is in the nursery division, also what time he/she will return to pick-up the child.
6. Beepers will be available to parents/custodians who feel it might be necessary for the workers to get in touch with them while the child is in the nursery division.
7. The Northbrook nursery division will be using a specific Nursery Identification procedure for the drop off and pick up of children.
8. The only person allowed to pick-up a child will be the parent/custodian who dropped off the child unless other arrangements were made when the child was dropped off. In this situation, if the person picking up the child is unknown to the nursery division workers, he/she will need to show a pictured identification to the workers.

### B. Restrictions:

1. Only trained, assigned workers/volunteers will be allowed in the nursery division areas. No other individuals will be allowed in these areas without an identified need and the approval of the nursery division supervisor.
2. No worker/volunteer may take a child to an unsupervised area without permission from the parent/custodian.

C. Providing Adequate Personnel:

1. **On-site** programs that involve Nursery and Elementary age children will include supervisory personal according to the following ratios:

Children Infant through 2 Years of age	2: max of 8 3: max of 12 4: max of 16, etc.
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Children Pre-School Age 3-5yrs	2: max of 16 3: max of 24 4: max of 32, etc.
--------------------------------	--

Children Kindergarten – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2: max of 24 3: max of 36 4: max of 48, etc.
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2. **Off-site** programs that involve Elementary age children will include supervisory personal according to the following ratios:

Children Pre-School Age 3-Kindergarten	2: max of 10 3: max of 15 4: max of 20, etc.
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Children 1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2: max of 16 3: max of 24 4: max of 32, etc.
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**II. Rules of Behavior – Nursery/Children’s Division**

A. *Two Adult Rule* -Whenever practicable, a minimum of two teachers shall be present during any children’s activity. We will strive to never have a teacher working alone with any children.

B. *Open-door-policy* - All children’s classrooms will have either a viewing window that will remain free of covering or a dutch door where the top door will remain open at all times. If the classroom does not have a dutch door or viewing window, the door must remain open at all times. The teachers/volunteers shall never be in a closed-door situation with any children.

C. *Visible Presence*: A Sunday School coordinator or staff person will be in the hallways whenever volunteer teachers are teaching children. This person will act as a visible presence in support of teachers, as well as a deterrent of any potentially harmful situations for our children.

D. *Restroom Policies*: In situations where an escort is needed for a trip to the restroom, a teacher will stand outside the restroom and only assist the child if needed. Whenever a teacher is in the restroom with a child the door will remain open. The teacher shall never be in a closed-door situation with a child. If a child soils themselves during the Sunday School, every attempt will be made to locate a parent. If a parent is unable to be located, two adult volunteers will be present while cleaning up the child.

E. *Discipline*: Corporal punishment, of any kind, is never appropriate. Teachers are asked to redirect a child in they should display inappropriate behavior.

F. *Staff and Administrators*: As appropriate, a staff member or administrator will supervise ongoing programs and may make unannounced visits into classrooms or other program sites.

*\*These policies cover all children's activities while on the premises of Northbrook UMC.*

### **III. Training**

A. All staff and volunteer workers will receive training in these policies and procedures in either verbal or written form.

B. These policies and procedures will be made known to the congregation and to all new members.

C. Background checks will be completed every two years.

# Youth Division Protection Procedures

These procedures cover the activities of the Youth Division at Northbrook United Methodist Church. Children are placed in the Youth Division beginning 6<sup>th</sup> grade through the summer after 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

## I. Supervision of Youth

### A. Supervision Ratios of Youth and Adults:

1. *For safety purposes*, with high school and middle school students there will be, whenever possible, one adult for every seven youth.
2. *For purposes of supervising youth*, an adult is defined as anyone who is at least 23 years old. Anyone under the age of 23 must be screened and approved by the Youth Staff before allowed to be used in a leadership position.

### B. Responsibility Times for Youth Ministry Workers:

1. The youth ministry assumes responsibility for supervision of youth from 15 minutes before a scheduled event until 15 minutes after a scheduled event.
2. The youth ministry is not responsible for youth at times when no youth ministry offerings are scheduled and also not responsible for youth when youth are choosing not to participate in the youth ministry offerings which are scheduled. Youth parents will be contacted to pick up their child if they choose not to participate.

## II. Guidelines for Youth Counseling in Informal and/or Individual Settings

A. Same sex counseling is encouraged. However, ministry priorities and immediate circumstances may make same sex counseling unfeasible. When occasions of other than same sex counseling occur, a youth worker should seek to abide by the two adult rule.

B. In a situation where the two adult rule is not feasible, a youth worker is expected to move him/herself and the youth he/she is counseling towards the rest of the group, in hope of finding a second adult.

C. The youth ministry has an interest in helping youth and youth ministry workers maintain appropriate boundaries. Youth workers need to communicate the message that I am your friend, but I am not your peer clearly at all times, not only in the midst of crises, but also before any crises emerges.

D. *Non-parental Adults*: Youth workers under the age of 23 need to maintain the distinction between leader and peers. They will not have authority over students, but will be invited to lead by example. When they are in this leadership position their prior relationship becomes secondary. Youth workers over the age of 23 must also be aware of the distinction between leaders and peers.

### **III. Guidelines for Youth Counseling in Formal and/or Group Settings**

A. In Sunday School or a small group setting, the goal is to have two adults in every room; if not the open door policy will be in effect.

B. In Youth Fellowship, the goal is to have one adult for every seven youth in attendance. If possible, when dividing into small groups, we would like to have two adults, per group.

## **Transportation Procedures for Children/Youth Activities**

The following procedures are for providing transportation for Children/Youth to and from activities sponsored and/or supervised by Northbrook United Methodist Church and affiliates. These procedures relate to transportation provided by the church, parents of youth, and youth workers to and from activities off the church property.

### **A. Vehicle Requirements:**

1. These vehicle requirements pertain to vehicles owned by Northbrook United Methodist Church, those provided by parents of participating children/youth, those provided by youth workers and any external commercial vehicles provided for transportation of children/youth.

2. All vehicles shall be in good running order, have a current valid license plate, and passenger restraints. The passenger restraints must be used while transporting children/youth.

3. All vehicles shall have insurance coverage as required by Georgia law. A copy of a current insurance card must be on file with the appropriate program director.

4. All vehicles will be multi-passenger vehicles. No motorcycles, scooters, or mopeds will be allowed. No vehicle will be allowed to carry more than the passenger capacity as specified by the vehicle manufacturer.

### **B. Qualification of Drivers:**

1. All drivers will be workers (as qualified by the Safe Sanctuary Policies and Procedures), parents of participating youth or licensed commercial drivers. The appropriate administrator will pre-approve all drivers.

2. All drivers will have a current valid driver's license with the classification for the vehicle being driven and be at least 25 years of age, unless he or she is a staff member of the Church, including staff summer interns (this is to accommodate summer programming and activities).

1. All drivers who are staff workers will be subject to periodic checks of their motor vehicle record.

2. A minimum of two adults shall supervise all groups of children and youth on off-site events.

### **C. General Rules for Transportation:**

1. Unless otherwise approved by the administrator and the parents/custodians, all transportation subject to these procedures will begin and terminate at the church property.

2. All drivers will obey all traffic laws. Failure to do so may disqualify them from driving for church related activities.

3. For overnight church functions, signed parent permission forms will be obtained from each child/youth prior to being allowed in any of these vehicles. If the youth does not have a completed permission form he/she will not be permitted to participate in the transportation arranged by the church. The permission forms are to be collected and checked by the group leader prior to leaving the church property. Upon return to the church, the forms will be provided to the appropriate administrator.

4. No driver is to transport any child/youth alone, without written or verbal permission from the youth's parents. If possible, there will always be more than one youth in the vehicle. In the event there is one child or youth in the vehicle the minor must be seating in the rear seat of the vehicle. The two-adult rule does not apply in the parent-child relationship.

## V. Procedures for Children/Youth Overnight Activities

A. These procedures cover youth activities which require an overnight stay and are sponsored and/or supervised by Northbrook United Methodist Church and affiliates. This includes, but is not limited to camping, lock-ins, hotels/motels, and overnight stays in a personal dwelling.

B. Approval - A signed parent permission form will be required of each child/youth prior to the activity. These will be collected and approved by the group leader prior to the activity. Following the activity, the forms will be provided to the appropriate administrator.

C. All overnight or off church property activities require the prior permission of the appropriate administrator or director.

D. Providing Adequate Personnel:

**On-site** programs that involve children and youth will include supervisory personal according to the following ratios:

Children 1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grades	2: max of 24
	3: max of 36
	4: max of 48

Youth	2: 14
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**Off-site** programs that involve children and youth will include supervisory personal according to the following ratios:

Children 1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2: max of 16
	3: max of 24
	4: max of 32, etc.

Youth	2: max of 28
	3: max of 35
	4: max of 42, etc.

## **VI. Rules of Conduct for Children/Youth Overnight Activities**

A. All persons are to abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policies and Procedures, including the team approach for supervision.

B. None of the children/youth will be allowed away from the designated overnight area without prior permission of the group leader and the parent's signed permission.

C. No members of the opposite sex will be allowed to sleep in the same room unsupervised.

D. Child/ Youth covenant must be signed by the child/youth and their parents before being allowed to participate in overnight activities.

E. Adults will not be allowed to sleep in the same bed with a child/youth unless the child/youth is their child and of the same sex. (this rule allows for rare instances when this is necessary on Youth ski trips or other similar events).

## **VII. Training**

A. All staff and volunteer workers will receive training in these policies and procedures in either verbal or written form.

B. These policies and procedures will be made known to the congregation and all new members.

C. Background checks will be completed every two years.

# **Volunteer Training**

## **Frequency of Scheduled Training**

Training will be provided to each and every eligible NUMC volunteer, who will teach, work with, coach, counsel, transport, supervise, chaperone, lead or direct any member, visitor or participant under the age of 18, or vulnerable adult. Eligible Northbrook volunteers are defined as persons who have been members of the Northbrook United Methodist Church for at least six months or are actively participating at NUMC, have never been convicted of any child abuse offense, and are willing to undergo our Covenant Safe Sanctuary Training Program and consent to a background investigation every two years. Exceptions to this will only be made by the appropriate program director.

In order to make training available to all eligible volunteers, training sessions will be offered monthly. Volunteers must complete the training course and submit a completed volunteer application and signed Covenant form with the Program Director **before** serving as a volunteer. On the rare occasion and only when extreme situations dictate, will an exception may be made to this policy.

We anticipate that these exceptions will only be necessary at the onset of the initial administration of our congregation-wide program and the Trustees reserve the right to terminate these exception provisions at will. Such revocation will be documented in the contents of the Safe Sanctuary Manual.

## **Trainer Credentials and Continuing Education**

Trainers will be recruited from the congregation, but will mainly comprise of individuals who have served as Stephen's Ministers and those skilled in the vocational areas of counseling, teaching, healthcare, social work, risk management and/or law enforcement. All trainers must commit that their participation as leaders of the Safe Sanctuary program is a function of their sincere desire to serve the Lord in this ministry. Trainers will be trained under the leadership of the Associate Pastor or Pastor with the appropriate Program Director or by a Conference Trainer and will be required to attend periodic refresher courses and continuing education as determined necessary by the Safe Sanctuary Committee.

## **Sample Covenant & Administration of Signed Covenants**

A sample Covenant is provided in Appendix B. Each Program Director or his/her designation committee representative will be responsible for maintaining copies of signed covenants along with the volunteer applications. Trustees will periodically conduct random audits of the files of each Program to validate proper record keeping compliance.

# Incident Reporting

## Incidence or Suspicion of Incidence Report

### A. Reporting:

Do not ignore any reported incident of abuse. Any suspicious activity, observed abuse, or victim allegations that are brought to the attention of a church worker or volunteer must be reported immediately to the persons identified below:

1. Allegations against volunteers
  - The accused adult should never be confronted before the safety of the child or youth is secured.
  - The volunteer will be relieved of duties by the appropriate program director until accusations are determined.
  - The report shall be made to the appropriate program director.
  - The Director shall, in turn, report to the Pastor.
  - The Pastor and Director shall determine if the District Superintendent shall be notified.
2. Allegations against Employees
  - For any employee, other than the Senior Pastor, the report shall be made to the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the Pastor and/or Associate Pastor
  - The Pastor and/or Associate Pastor and the Chairperson of the SPRC shall determine if the District Superintendent shall be notified.
3. Allegations against any Pastor
  - The report shall be made to all of the following
    1. The Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee
    2. The Chairperson of the Church Council
    3. The District Superintendent

### B. Responding to Allegations of Abuse:

If it is determined that the allegation has a factual basis, then the following steps shall be taken:

1. A response team shall be formed and will be assigned to take any further actions that are required. The Response Team shall follow the advice of legal counsel and the District Superintendent (or the Superintendents representative)
2. The Response Team shall be made up of the Senior Pastor, The Staff Parish Relations Committee Chairperson, the Church Council Chairperson, and a mental health professional.
3. The Response Team shall appoint one sole media spokesperson. The Response Team shall determine the appropriate means of communicating with the congregation.
4. The Response Team will:
  - A. Inform the employee or volunteer of the accusation and discuss the accusations
  - B. Suspend with pay (for paid employees) the alleged offender while the confidential investigation is being conducted.

- C. Consult with church attorney for advice regarding compliance with reporting laws – then file the necessary report with the appropriate agency within the time frame required by the State of Georgia.
- D. Together with the agency official, meet with the child’s parents and, in their presence and with their permission, with the child. Your purpose for meeting is to learn more fully the nature of the allegations, including when and where the alleged offense took place. Reassure the child that he or she has done nothing wrong and that it was right to report the incident. Allow the child to speak freely. Do not coach responses from them and do not become defensive to any statements. Seek the truth and protect the child’s well-being. If the nature of the alleged abuse is such that any physical injury could have their child examined immediately by a qualified physician.
- E. Notify the liability insurance company. Do not wait for the investigation to be concluded unless your attorney advises you to. Do not wait until criminal charges are filed or until you are faced with a civil suit. Involving the insurance company is not an admission of negligence. It is a wise protective measure and may be the means by which legal counsel may be retained to provide a defense for the church and, possibly for the accused. Besides making a coverage determination, the insurance company can also offer advise and assistance in addressing the incident.
- F. Cooperate in the investigation conducted by the insurance company and Child Protective Services.
- G. Provide ongoing spiritual and counseling support for the victim and his/her family.
- H. Consider the spiritual needs of the accused and seek assistance from the District Superintendent and Conference personnel in providing the proper counseling and response for the accused and the accused’s family.

**Notification Contacts:**

Child Protective Services:

Cherokee County	770-720-3610
Cobb County	770-528-5015
Dekalb County	404-370-5066
Forsyth County	770-781-6700
Fulton County	404-699-4399
Gwinnett County	770-995-2122

Insurance: Church Mutual Insurance Company

Law Enforcement: in accordance with local law as instructed by Child Protective Services and legal counsel.

Legal Representative

- 1) As provided by insurance company and/or
- 2) Legal representative for church (if not same as 1. above)

## Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

Name of church worker observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

\_\_\_\_\_

Victim name \_\_\_\_\_

Victim age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date /place of initial conversation with or report from victim: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Victim's statement: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person accused of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Reported to Program Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Reported to Senior Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Call/meeting with victim's parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date/time of call to Child Protective Services: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date/time of call to law enforcement: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Safe Sanctuaries, reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church* by Joy Thornburg Melton, 1998, Discipleship Resources, reprinted 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Before taking any action or completing this report, it is required that any person completing this form be familiar with the laws of the state of Georgia regarding the reporting of incidence of child abuse (see copy of **O.C.G.A § 19-7-5(c), (d), (e)** provided in Appendix).

## Post Reporting Procedure

NUMC acknowledges that there are many victims who may be affected by an incident or of suspicion of child abuse or neglect. We are mindful that the following persons will require the proper response, care, counseling and support following any such event:

- Family members of the harmed child, youth, or vulnerable adult
- Peers of child, youth or vulnerable adult
- Peers of the child's or youth's or vulnerable adult's parents
- Remaining workers of children, youth, or vulnerable adult programs
- Congregation as a community of faith
- Family of the accused abuser

We believe that failure to address the issues of suffering, anger, fear, and grief that occur within the church after abuse can have extended and unnecessary consequences for everyone. We will not hide or shrink away from our responsibility to promptly and appropriately address any incident of abuse and that as a congregation we are committed to the prevention of and termination of behaviors which contribute to the cycle of abuse. The following represents the steps we will take to assure that the congregation and those affected may be restored to a feeling of well-being and justice.

**First:** Truth telling is the most important component in post-loss recovery. Our communications will be honest, measured, and respectful of all parties involved. Written communication will be factual and will work to dispel rumor and innuendo and to assure the congregation of the effects take to secure the safety of the victim and to resume the functions of the ministries and programs.

**Second:** Senior clergy will host a planned congregational meeting so that members can attend to learn about the church's response to the allegation of abuse. The meeting will be led by appropriate senior clergy, lay leaders and the District Superintendent. A non-member Counselor will be available to address attendee questions and feelings.

**Third:** A task force will be established to determine how NUMC will adapt its ongoing ministries to appropriately acknowledge and recover from the incident. Educational programs in various forums (Wednesday night classes, Adult Sunday School Curriculum, MOPS programming, Thursday Women, Men's Club, UMW, Rainbows, etc..) will be implemented to promote healing, justice, education and restored worship.

**Fourth:** The Safe Sanctuary Committee will work closely with the Task Force and clergy to modify any procedures and policies based upon incident outcomes and to diligently engage in every effort to prevent further incidents of abuse and neglect.

## **Documentation (Record keeping, Storage and Purging)**

The Pastor or appropriate Church staff will be responsible for maintaining the following documents and assuring the confidentiality of same:

1. Staff background checks
2. Motor vehicle reports
3. Suspicion of incidents
4. Incidence reports
5. Incident meeting notes/correspondence
6. Instructions from law enforcement/Child Protective Services
7. Insurance claims records and correspondence
8. Litigation files and associated documents/correspondence

Copies will be produced only as required by law, insurance or as deemed appropriate by mutual agreement by the Senior Pastor. Documents necessary for employment at NUMC will be secured by the Chair of the Staff-Parish-Relations Committee in the employment folder for hired workers, vendors, and staff. Background checks for prospective applicants who are not hired will be destroyed within 60 days. All information acquired during the recruiting of volunteers and employees shall be treated in a confidential manner. Paid staff records will be destroyed after a 20-year period. For volunteer church workers records will be purged after the volunteer has transferred membership or otherwise left the congregation or 24 months after the volunteer's last active participation in a Children's or Youth Program (including music ministries).

The Safe Sanctuary Committee will meet annually to review records of volunteers and Senior Pastor and SPRC will meet periodically to review paid staff records, at this time they will purge outdated documents. It is particularly important to have a routine method to properly dispose of anything discovered in the employment or volunteer application process that is not public record. Such files must be maintained under the strictest confidence and locked in a cabinet to assure that they are not seen by unauthorized parties.

Because liability insurance policies are largely written on an occurrence basis, these policies and other related insurance records and any claims files will be kept indefinitely.

# Appendix A

## Volunteer Information Form

Northbrook United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe environment for children, youth and vulnerable adults who participate in our programs. This information form is to be completed by all personal intending to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the following capacities: Sunday School Teachers, Shepherds, Activity Leaders, Adult Volunteers in the Church Nurseries, Vacation Bible School Directors, Vacation Bible School Classroom Teachers, Vacation Bible School Activity Leaders, Confirmation Class Teachers, Small Group Leaders, any Adult that helps on a weekly basis with Children's, Middle School, or High School groups and Supervisors of overnight, church sponsored activities for children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First
Middle
Last

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street / P.O. Box
City
State
Zip

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
State Issued

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

Volunteer Ministry Position in which you wish to serve: \_\_\_\_\_

### Church History and Prior Work with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

1. Are you a Christian? Yes No
2. How Long have you been a member/active participant at Northbrook UMC? \_\_\_\_\_

3. List names and address of other churches you have attended regularly during the past 5 years:  

Church Name	Address	City	State	Zip
_____				
_____				

4. List all previous church work involving children, youth or vulnerable adults:  

Type of Work / Age-Level	Dates of Service	Church Name & Address
_____		
_____		
_____		

5. List all previous non-church work involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults:  

Type of Work / Age-Level	Dates of Service	Name & Address of Organization
_____		
_____		
_____		

6. List any special gifts, talents or training that you have that would help you work in the area of ministry in which you are volunteering to serve:

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7. List three references. References, as well as any other information given to us will be kept complete confidential. We reserve the right to do a complete background check on all volunteers.

Name/Relationship	Address	Phone Number
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8. Have you at any time every:

Been arrested for any reason? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, any crime? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Participated in, or accused, charged or convicted of child abuse, molestation, or any improper conduct involving a minor? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Are you aware of:

Having traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Any reason why you should not work with children, youth or others? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If you answered Yes to any of the above questions, please explain in detail: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Applicant Verification and Release:

I recognize that Northbrook United Methodist Church is relying on the accuracy of the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest that all of the information that I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize Northbrook United Methodist Church to contact any person or entity listed in this application, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide Northbrook with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release Northbrook United Methodist Church and any such person or entity listed herein from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize Northbrook UMC to conduct a criminal background investigation.

I have carefully read the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures of Northbrook United Methodist Church, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children, youth and vulnerable adults of Northbrook UMC.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Volunteer Covenant

Northbrook 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 this church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of worship, safe and secure for all who enter and as a place which everyone can experience God's love through fellowship and growth in Christ.

- 1) Persons who have been convicted of child neglect or abuse (sexual, physical, and/or emotional) shall not volunteer to work with children or youth in any Northbrook sponsored activity or in any activity to which Northbrook is providing volunteers or participants;
- 2) Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of the Northbrook congregation. Any adult survivor of child abuse or neglect who desires to volunteer in some capacity in working with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of the Northbrook ministers before accepting any assignment.
- 3) All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been a member or active participant of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
- 4) Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" (as defined in the Safe Sanctuaries manual) at all times so that no adult is ever alone with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- 5) Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse and neglect.
- 6) Adult volunteers shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer the following:

- 1) As a volunteer in the Northbrook United Methodist congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all the church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
- 2) Do you understand and agree to observe the Two-Adult Rule at all times?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
- 3) Do you understand and agree to observe the six-month membership (or active participation) rule required before beginning volunteer service? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
- 4) Have you been trained in NUMC's Safe Sanctuary program and agree to abide by its dictates, expectations, and requirements? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
- 5) Do you agree to promptly report to your supervisor any observance, awareness or suspicion of abusive or inappropriate behavior as defined in your training?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
- 6) As a volunteer of NUMC, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

I have read this Covenant and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed Training: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix C

## Authorization and Request for Criminal Record Check

**Northbrook United Methodist Church  
11225 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA 30075**

We welcome you application to volunteer with Northbrook UMC. We are proud of our success and recognize it is the result of the quality and caliber of the volunteers in our organization. In pursuit of that excellence we require, as a condition to working with children, youth and vulnerable adults, that all volunteers consent to and authorize reference and criminal background checks.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize Northbrook United Methodist Church to request information regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in any criminal file maintained on me, whether said file is a local, state, or national file. Including, but not limited to accusations and convictions for crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law. I do release police and sheriff's departments or any agency NUMC uses to obtain information from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Print applicants full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Print all other names that have been used by applicant (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Current address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street / P.O. Box City State Zip

Previous Address if less than 7 years: \_\_\_\_\_

Street / P.O. Box City State Zip

Previous Address if less than 7 years: \_\_\_\_\_

Street / P.O. Box City State Zip

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number: \_\_\_\_\_ State issuing license: \_\_\_\_\_

License expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_

All information acquired during the recruiting of volunteers shall be treated in a confidential manner. All information obtained will be kept confidential and locked away in an appropriate manner. All information will be destroyed after the volunteer has transferred membership or otherwise left the congregation or 24 months after the volunteer's last active participation in a children's or youth program.

# Appendix D

## The Georgia Code (O.C.G.A.) for reporting Suspected incidents of Child Abuse

Ga. Code Ann. § 19-7-5(c), (d), (e) (WESTLAW through 2000 Gen. Assem.)

### INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Any **mandated reporter** having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made as provided by statute.

If a person is required to report abuse pursuant to the reporting laws because that person attends to a child pursuant to such person's duties as a **member of the staff** of a hospital, school, social agency, or similar facility, that person shall notify the person in charge of the facility, or the designated delegate thereof, and the person so notified shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with the statute. A staff member who makes a report to the person designated pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to have fully complied with this subsection.

Any other **person**, other than any specified mandatory reporters, who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is abused may report or cause reports to be made.

An **oral report** shall be made as soon as possible by telephone or otherwise and followed by a **report in writing**, if requested, to a **child welfare agency** providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

### DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITY

If a report of child abuse is made to the **child welfare agency** or independently discovered by the agency, and the agency has reasonable cause to believe such report is true or the report contains any allegation or evidence of child abuse, then the agency shall immediately notify the appropriate police authority or district attorney.

### CONTENT OF REPORTS

Such **reports shall contain** the names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or caretakers, if known, the child's age, the nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries, and any other information that the reporting person believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the perpetrator.

Photographs of the child's injuries to be used as documentation in support of allegations by hospital staff, physicians, law enforcement personnel, school officials, or staff of legally mandated public or private child protective agencies may be taken without the permission of the child's parent or guardian; provided, however, that any photograph taken pursuant to this Code section shall, if reasonably possible, be taken in a manner which shall not reveal the identity of the subject. Such photograph shall be made available as soon as possible to the **chief welfare agency** providing protective services and to the appropriate **police authority**.

Ga. Code Ann. § 16-12-100(c) (Supp. 1998)

### INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

A **person** who, in the course of processing or producing visual or printed matter either privately or commercially, has reasonable cause to believe that the visual or printed matter submitted for processing or producing depicts a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct shall immediately report such incident, or cause a report to be made, to the **Georgia Bureau of Investigation** or the **law enforcement agency** for the county in which such matter is submitted.