



# **Northbrook United Methodist Church**

## **Safe Sanctuary Policies and Procedures 2024**

# Policy Overview

## Policy Authors

Lorin Tate, Director of Children’s Ministry  
Rev. Kena Newkirk, Associate Pastor

## Professional Policy Consultation

The Georgia Center of Child Advocacy - Prevention Division  
Rev. Joy Melton, Esq.

## Trustee Approval

Comer Train – Chairman  
Nan Richards  
Bruce McFarland  
Ed Sircy  
Joe Daniel  
R.T. Evans  
Anice Foster  
Bill Noethling  
Bill Newton  
Craig Smith  
Sara Almstedt

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These policies must be reviewed annually and re-approved by the Trustees and be presented to the annual Charge Conference. The Northbrook staff shall review the policies each May. If changes are needed, they should present these to the Trustees who will review the policy, make any necessary changes, and approve the policy by August. These policies may be altered at any time with the approval of the Trustees.

# **POLICIES**

## **Introduction**

Northbrook United Methodist Church believes that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults is imperative. We must do all that we can to nurture and protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy is intended to provide a guide for that protection, as well as the protection of our adult workers and the church. This policy is enacted to ensure that the parents, members, volunteers, and staff of Northbrook UMC have a clear understanding of what the policies and procedures are regarding the safety of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The leadership of Northbrook UMC requires the cooperation of all in our church, as they must abide by the guidelines of this policy.

## **Policy Standards and General Christian Moral Standard**

Staff and volunteers that work in any area of children and youth ministries or with vulnerable adults at Northbrook UMC, including but not limited to Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Parents' Time Out, Northbrook Preschool, Choir, and other community groups who meet on our campus (such as Scouts, CBS, MOPS), are required to adhere to these policies and standards. Those in outside groups meeting on our campus shall provide proof of their screening policy and procedures, completion of those screenings and training with their leaders or complete the screening and training through Northbrook UMC, and sign the *Northbrook United Methodist Church Community Partnership Agreement*. These records shall be maintained by the Office Administrator in coordination with their staff liaison.

## **Supervision of Children and Youth Workers**

The church staff and volunteers who supervise children and youth workers and workers with vulnerable adults are charged with enforcing this policy. Any violation of these policies or persistent failure to follow this policy can result in immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment to another area of work at the discretion of the Staff Parish Relations Committee. If a volunteer violates these policies or the Code of Conduct, he or she can be released from their duties at the discretion of the ministry leader. Anyone who suspects this policy is not being enforced should bring it to the attention of the person who is deemed the "person in charge" of the specific program or event. This person must take immediate action on this violation.

## **Supervision of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy**

The Senior Pastor will appoint the person with the responsibility of the oversight of the Safe Sanctuary Policy. These policies govern all activities held by the church that involve children and youth under the age of 18, and any adult with a mental age under 18 or any vulnerable adult whether on or off campus.

These policies must be reviewed annually and re-approved by the Trustees and be presented to the annual Charge Conference. The Northbrook staff shall review the policies each May. If changes are needed, they should present these to the Trustees who will review the policy, make any necessary changes, and approve the policy by August. These policies may be altered at any time with the approval of the Trustees.

## **Screening and Training**

All paid staff and volunteers must complete Safe Sanctuaries screening and training prior to working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults as outlined in the procedures below.

## **Mandatory Reporting**

As mandated reporters according to Georgia State Law and for good moral causes, any suspicion of abuse must be reported to the Department of Family and Children Services or local law enforcement within 24 hours of reasonable cause and/or disclosure. Please see the procedures for reporting below on pages 8-9.

## **DEFINITIONS**

The following are definitions of abuse:

**Physical abuse** is deliberate or intentional bodily harm done to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult that is non-accidental by the person responsible for care for that person.

**Sexual abuse** is defined as, but not limited to sexual contact, between two minors, and/or a minor and adults. It may include fondling, intercourse, incest, pornographic exploitation, or exposure.

Georgia Code 19-7-5 states, "Sexual abuse shall include consensual sex acts when the sex acts are between minors if any individual is less than 14 years of age; provided, however, that it shall not include consensual sex acts when the sex acts are

between a minor and an adult who is not more than four years older than the minor. This provision shall not be deemed or construed to repeal any law concerning the age or capacity to consent.”

**Emotional abuse** is the infliction of mental anguish by threat, intimidation, or humiliation. It may be spoken and/or unspoken. It may include violence or emotional cruelty.

Child Welfare Information Gateway defines emotional abuse as, "injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child as evidenced by an observable or substantial change in behavior, emotional response, or cognition" and injury as evidenced by "anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior." (Child Welfare Information Gateway. "Definitions of Child Abuse." 2019)

**Neglect** is endangering an individual's health, safety, or welfare. It is the failure of the parent or caretaker to see that the child is adequately supervised, fed, clothed, housed, or provided medical care.

**Ritual Abuse** is the regular, intentional physical, sexual, or psychological violation of an individual to appeal to a higher authority or power.

**Financial Abuse** is the unauthorized or misuse of funds or property or assets belonging to a vulnerable adult by force, misrepresentation, or illegal means.

### **Vulnerable Adults**

While much of this policy addresses the need to protect our children and youth, Northbrook UMC recognizes that abuse of impaired and older adults is a major concern. Many older adults are also subject to financial abuse. We must be vigilant for signs of abuse in our adult membership and report any suspected abuse, following the process outlined below. The local Department of Family and Child Services has a division with responsibility for supervising elder care. For suspected abuse of vulnerable adults and/or elder adults committed in a community setting, contact Adult Protective Services (1-866-552-4464- Press 3). For abuse to vulnerable adults and/or elder adults in a long-term care facility, contact the Department of Community Health (404-657-5738 or 404-657-5276).

# WORKER SCREENING AND TRAINING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## Classification of Workers

Northbrook UMC uses the following classifications of its workers:

1. **Primary Workers:** All paid staff and volunteers in a supervisory role with greater responsibility or risk shall be classified as primary workers and will be required to meet "primary worker " responsibilities. Primary workers have the primary responsibility for, interaction with, and greater access to youth, children, and vulnerable adults. A primary worker must be a minimum of 21 years of age and pass a background check. Examples are Sunday school teachers and youth counselors.

2. **Secondary Workers:** Secondary workers are paid staff or volunteers who have occasional contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. These persons work with the supervision of a primary worker. A secondary worker must be a minimum of 18 years of age. Examples are parents helping with a class or program such as VBS or helpers in Sunday School.

## Guidelines for Volunteers

All volunteer workers must be at least 18 years of age. Youth under the age of 18 may assist with the Children's Ministries, under the leadership of a primary worker, but adherence to the Two Worker Rule is mandatory (see page 10).

All volunteer workers must be at least five years older than the children or youth with whom they will be working.

Any person wishing to work with the youth, children, or vulnerable adults must have been a member of the church or have been a regular visitor for a minimum of six months before being allowed to volunteer. If a potential worker comes from another congregation, a worker may submit references from another church or previous ministry experience. This policy can be waived by the Senior Pastor or his/her designee, on a case by case basis, when needed after completing a personal interview with the potential volunteer.

Northbrook Preschool Volunteers shall complete the Fulton County School's Child Abuse Report Training.

### **Background Checks**

All volunteers and staff working with the youth, children, or vulnerable adults of Northbrook UMC must undergo a national criminal background check, using the church's approved partner, Trak-1, which is accredited through the Professional Background Screening Association and recommended by the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

A new background check should be done at least every five years, provided they have maintained regular involvement in the ministry program. If there is a gap of more than a year in their involvement, a new background check should be completed prior to them re-engaging in the ministry program.

An invitation to complete the background check will be sent via the Trak-1 online program by the office administrator.

The office administrator will keep the records of who is applying to volunteer and their screening status. They will review all background checks and ensure that there are no red flags.

The Finance and Office Support staff member maintains the background checks of staff members through E-verify.

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by the result of the criminal background check, a conviction of a crime against a child, a violent crime, or a crime of a sexual nature will automatically disqualify a volunteer or staff from participating in the leadership, sponsorship, or supervising of any activities or programs with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

All other convictions or charges of any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the Senior Pastor. The office administrator will notify the Senior Pastor of any background checks that need review. The Senior Pastor will review the background check and follow up with the applicant if deemed necessary. The Senior Pastor will make a final decision on if the applicant can work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

In the event that a volunteer or staff member is disqualified from working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, the worker will be notified by the Senior Pastor.

Workers may request a copy of their background check through Trak-1. If the applicant disputes information that appears in his/her criminal history record, they may appeal through the appropriate legal authority.

Paid staff and volunteers will not be allowed to chaperone an event off of church grounds until the background check has been completed and the report has been cleared by the Senior Pastor or his/her designee. A volunteer awaiting results may participate in on-site activities as long as they are supervised by another primary volunteer/staff.

These documents shall be securely stored in the online Trak-1 program and only those persons necessary in reviewing the documents (Office Administrator and Pastor) shall have access to them. They shall hold this information in extreme confidence.

## **References**

Any volunteer or paid staff with children, youth, or vulnerable adults must include two non-familial references as part of their background check screening. A volunteer may have a maximum of one reference from a Northbrook UMC staff member. Northbrook UMC reserves the right to request additional references.

These references must be checked prior to a leader volunteering. References can complete the form through Trak-1 or a Northbrook staff member can complete the questionnaire over the phone or through email. If it is completed over the phone or via email, the document should be uploaded into the worker's profile in Trak-1. These references shall remain confidential. Please see the attached reference form.

## **Training**

All volunteers and paid staff must complete Safe Sanctuary training prior to working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. The church will provide training that will provide information on child, youth, and vulnerable adult abuse and explain any changes made to the Safe Sanctuary Policy. This may or may not be held in conjunction with First Aid and CPR training. All volunteers and paid staff must participate in training every two years.



It is preferred that the training is done in-person but a virtual option is available. A worker should complete the Safe Sanctuaries training presentation from the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church and take the online Safe Sanctuaries Evaluation from Northbrook UMC. They must score 80% or higher to pass. The Office Administrator will maintain these records. This record will be uploaded into their Trak-1 profile.

All paid staff, whether they work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults or not, must complete training. Everyone who completes Safe Sanctuaries training must complete a form to indicate their completion and have it uploaded into their profile in Trak-1.

### **Code of Conduct**

All volunteers and paid staff must review and sign the *Code of Conduct* for their ministry each year. This form should be uploaded into their Trak-1 profile. See the attached *Code of Conduct* for reference.

### **Exemption**

Guest speakers approved by the Pastor of Children and Family Ministry are exempt from the security background check and training requirements. It is expected that a guest speaker would not be with children, youth, or vulnerable adults without an approved primary worker present.

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Northbrook UMC regards any form of abuse and evidence thereof as unacceptable and has a strict policy regarding the reporting of such abuse. This is a serious criminal allegation and will be taken seriously.

### **Mandated Reporting**

As people who work with children and youth, we are mandated reporters according to the law. A report of suspected child (0-18 years old) abuse must be made to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) within twenty-four hours of the original disclosure or suspicion of abuse. If a volunteer becomes aware of suspected abuse (witnessing the suspected abuse, noticing signs of abuse, or receiving a disclosure of abuse from the person themselves), they must report it to the staff person in charge IMMEDIATELY. If there is not a staff member on the grounds, then the Senior Pastor or their designee should be contacted. Please do not hesitate to contact a staff member if you feel there is abuse occurring.

For all suspected abuse, a report MUST be filled out and turned into the Senior Pastor as soon as possible (see attached). If any further reporting is needed, the staff member in charge who received the report along with the Senior Pastor and/or their designee will make the report to DFACS or local law enforcement within the 24 hour range. The report should also be provided to the insurance administrator and Chairman of the Trustees.

Should a report need to be made, a worker should complete the following procedures:

- Secure the safety of the child, youth, or vulnerable adults, if possible.
- If the child, youth, or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Do not ask leading questions of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Mirror back what they are saying to you.
- You do not need to investigate suspicions. You only need a reasonable cause to believe that abuse is happening. Let the professionals do the investigating.
- Do not touch the child, youth, or vulnerable adult in any way as to examine them.
- Do not discuss the situation with others outside of those who need to be notified.
- Stay calm and be supportive to the child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- Make an oral report immediately to the supervising ministry leader or the Senior Pastor. If the Senior Pastor is the accused party, notify the District Superintendent and the Chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
- Complete a Mandating Reporting Form and turn it in to the supervising ministry leader or Senior Pastor.
- The Ministry leader who receives the report along with the Senior Pastor will be responsible for meeting the 24-hour requirement for reporting and will notify the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS), the Adult Protective Services (APS), or the Roswell Police Department's office.

**If the suspected abuse occurs at the church:**

- Separate the child, youth, or vulnerable adult from the accused. The accused adult must not be confronted until the safety of the alleged victim is secured.
- Complete a report as outlined above.
- If the accused is a church member or volunteer, that person shall be relieved of their duties until the investigation is completed by the Response Team (Senior Pastor, SPRC Chair, Trustees' Chair).
- If the accused is a staff member, their income can be suspended at the discretion of SPRC.
- The Senior Pastor shall notify the insurance administrator.
- A report shall be turned into the District Superintendent.

### **Responding to an Allegation:**

- Confidentiality shall be maintained.
- The Senior Pastor shall communicate to the congregation the fact that an incident has occurred, that the appropriate authorities as required by law have been contacted, and that steps to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults have been taken. All communications must be transparent as possible without violating the rights of privacy of those involved and without interfering with law enforcement's investigation of that incident.
- The Senior Pastor shall be the only one to speak to the media.
- The Response Team (Senior Pastor, SPRC Chair, and Trustees' Chair) shall complete an internal review of the screening/training data on the accused and how the policy and procedures were being followed.
- Cooperate fully with law enforcement officials if they become involved.
- Inform the victim and the victim's family of the steps that are being taken and continue to advise them on the status of the investigation.
- The Response Team shall secure a lawyer for the church.
- If abuse is confirmed, ask the victim and the victim's family what action they would like to take in the matter and fully cooperate to address their request within the bounds of a legal and prudent response.
- In instances where the abuse is confirmed involving a staff member, the church should immediately dismiss the staff member from their position, their personnel file will reflect such, and they will be considered ineligible for re-hire. A report will be made with the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- Work with local agencies to provide care for the victim and the accused.

## **SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

### **First Aid and CPR**

Since the safety of our children and youth is a top priority, every volunteer shall be offered training in both First Aid and CPR. All staff, including nursery workers, must be certified in CPR and AED training. The church will hold training classes at least once a year and it is the worker's responsibility to sign up for the class.

### **Two Worker Rule**

There must be both one primary worker and one secondary worker or two primary workers in the room when there is a child, youth, or vulnerable adult present. This rule is for the protection of the students as well as the adults. The two adult workers should not be related or there should be a floater to check in on them.

## **Floater**

This rule allows for only one primary worker to be in a classroom when you have another primary worker floating the hall regularly. When using this rule, the classroom door must remain open at all times. This should only be done if two workers are not available.

## **Classroom Windows/Half Door**

All classrooms will have at least one window in the door or half door (also referred to as a dutch door). The window must not be covered at any time with decorations, etc. The half-door should remain open unless there are two non-related adults in the room supervising the children, youth, or vulnerable adults. We recommend covering windows if there is an intruder.

## **Open Door Counseling**

Any one-on-one counseling session with a child or youth will be done with the door open. If at all possible, it should be done when another adult is nearby but not necessarily within hearing distance. If no other adult is available, the supervisor should be notified about when the session will begin and end. It should never be done in an isolated one-on-one location.

## **Check-in/Check out Procedures**

Every event or programming involving children and youth should include a check-in/check-out procedure that ensures the parent or designated approved adult checks out the correct child or youth. This can be done through sign/in out sheets, nametag number system, or through built relationships in the ministry. Children and youth shall not be allowed to leave the designated meeting area without permission/supervision.

On occasion, a child may need to be removed from a group for behavioral or social reasons. If a child and the worker move to a separate space, the door must remain open and the other leader and ministry supervisor should be notified.

## **Diapering/Restroom Policy**

There should be two adults present when changing a diaper.

When using a restroom, a child should go in by themselves and adults should remain outside. If the child needs assistance, the door should be propped open and the best practice is to have two adults present.

For older children and vulnerable adults, an adult should accompany the person to the restroom. They should check to make sure no other adults are in the restroom and then let them go in by themselves and wait outside. Propping the outside door to be able to listen out is acceptable.

### **Physical Contact**

Those working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults should follow these guidelines to ensure safe and healthy touch.

- Touch shall be open rather than secretive and visible to other adults.
- Touch should be in the response to the need of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult and not the need of the worker.
- Touch should be short in duration.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child, youth, or vulnerable adult rather than the worker.
- It should be with the permission of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult and any resistance should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect.  
Touching any area covered by a bathing suit is unacceptable unless changing a diaper which should be done with a wipe.

There may be the occasion when a “buddy” or caregiver of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult with a disability will need the structure and care that appropriate touch can provide. Such touch should be supportive, caring, and with the intent of helping the child return to a safe, secure, and calm state.

### **Discipline and Correction**

Physical discipline such as hitting or spanking is unacceptable. Workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults should use positive reinforcement and redirection as the primary form of discipline. If a child, youth, or vulnerable adult is beyond correction and is a danger to themselves or others, a parent or guardian can be contacted at the staff’s discretion.

### **Minors in a primarily adult ministry**

If a minor (child or youth) wants to join a primarily adult ministry, then that ministry must also comply with the Safe Sanctuaries policies and there shall be adult leaders who are screened and trained in Safe Sanctuaries. These designated leaders within that ministry shall ensure that these policies are being followed and the minor is protected.

## **Parent Permission and General Release Form**

Written parental/guardian permission shall be obtained through registration or separate form when children, youth, or vulnerable adults are leaving church property or staying on church property overnight. Further, the *Northbrook United Methodist Church Emergency Medical Information and Release Form for All Ages* shall be completed and obtained for all children who will be on campus while parents or guardians are off campus and for children, youth, and vulnerable adults when staying on campus or leaving campus overnight.

## **Transportation**

Transportation to and from activities held at the church is not the church's responsibility. Church-approved volunteers may provide transportation to and from church-sponsored activities held away from campus. There should never be one child and one adult in the car. Acceptable transportation includes:

- Two non-related adults and one child/youth or more in a car
- Two adults and children/youth on the church bus or on a rented bus
- One adult and multiple youth aged children

If there are multiple cars traveling to a location, one adult and several children are allowed in a car, and the cars must caravan and stay close to each other on the way to and from the off-site location. Anyone who is transporting a child should complete a background check and normal Safe Sanctuaries training/screening. It is required to do the full MVR background check screening for drivers. Church-approved volunteers must have a valid driver's license and an insurance card on file in the Church office. All traffic laws and child seat safety recommendations should be followed. Drivers must be 25 years or older.

When there is an offsite trip that is not overnight, there must be at least one adult worker of each gender represented per 10 participants.

Youth will not be allowed to drive anyone outside their immediate family to or from an event. Once at the event, youth must stay for the duration unless permission is given by their parent or guardian to leave early. The primary adult supervising the event must be informed by that parent. A signed note is acceptable, but verbal confirmation from the teenager is not sufficient.

## **Sleeping Arrangements**

On church-sponsored overnight trips, where hotel-type rooms are used, all youth and children will be assigned to same-gender identity rooms, and adults will be

assigned to their own same-gender identity rooms. The adult rooms should be in between the youth/children rooms if at all possible. The adults should check on the youth/children at random times throughout the night.

If a cabin-type accommodation is being used, there should be two adults in the cabin with the children/youth. If there is an overnight at the church, there should be two non-related adults in the room with the kids or the adults should stay right outside of the door with it open.

It is recommended that only children and youth within a year or two of the same age should share a room.

An adult and a minor should never share a bed unless the adult is the guardian of that minor.

For overnight events, there must be a minimum of two chaperones consisting of one chaperone of each gender per eight children/youth.

### **Websites, Photos, and E-mail**

Email addresses, cell phone, and social media accounts of youth and children should be protected and not given out. Any photos on websites, social media, posted in classrooms or posted on bulletin boards should not identify individual minors. Written permission must be received from parents before any photo of children or youth is posted on a church-sponsored websites, in classrooms, or on bulletin boards. Disclaimers should appear in places photos are being taken which might appear online or in church communications.

With Children 5th grade and under: a parent or guardian should be included on any email or messages or phone calls. If a child initiates an email, message, or social media post with church staff or volunteers, the church staff or volunteers have the duty to include the parent or guardian in the messaging thread.

With Youth 6th grade and above: communication regarding church-sponsored events must be communicated with parents and teenagers. However, we understand that youth come to expect some kind of pastoral relationship with youth volunteers and staff. We recommend utilizing texting, email, and other messaging services that keep records of conversations. Interaction with teenagers outside of regular church events must take place in a public space (restaurant, sporting event). For teenagers, there is an expectation of SOME confidentiality from parents. This confidentiality does not apply to dangerous behavior, threats of self-harm, or harming others. Mandatory reporting of abuse still applies.

## **Social Media**

There shall be at least two adults, including one staff member with administrative rights to each social media platform that the church utilizes. Every time administrators change, passwords will be changed. Should a ministry or program wish to establish a social media channel on a given platform that is separate from the main church social media channels, they must do so with the permission of the Senior Pastor, in coordination with the Director of Communications, and must comply with all church social media policies.

## **Web Conferencing**

Any web meeting with minors shall continue to use the “two-adult rule” or the web meeting should be recorded, including the chat, and saved for at least two years. Web meetings with minors should be invited and initiated with church-based accounts instead of individual (staff or volunteer) accounts. Staff and volunteers will utilize real names on web conference calls, identifying themselves as staff or volunteers.

## **Parent and Family Education and Communication**

The approval of this policy will be communicated to the church at large with special emphasis on communicating to all parents of our children and youth. Copies of the policy will be available for all parents and other interested parties. A copy of the policy will be available to the congregation. Any revisions to the policy must be communicated to the congregation as soon as possible.

From time to time, educational events will be made available to parents and other interested parties. These events will provide information on the Safe Sanctuary Policy, child abuse, and any other information that will enhance parenting skills. Parents will be provided with advance notice of all regularly scheduled and special youth and children's activities. Written permission will be required for participation in activities that are not on church grounds.

## **Forms**

Please see the attached forms which include:

- Mandatory Reporting Form for Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect
- Accident or Incident Reporting Form
- Medical/photo waiver (Language from this form can be embedded in digital registration forms.)
- Reference Form
- Code of Conduct



**Northbrook United Methodist Church**  
**Mandatory Reporting Form for Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

By law in the State of Georgia, any suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Family and Children's Services or DFCS [OCGA 19-7-5(c)(1)]. While there is a legal obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect, we also believe there is a moral responsibility to prevent it whenever possible.

A report must be made within 24 hours of the discovery of suspected abuse or neglect:

- By phone 1-855-GACHILD (1-855-422-4453)
- Or online at <https://cps.dhs.ga.gov/Main/Default.aspx>

If the child is in immediate danger, report to law enforcement (911).

A person should report if they have "reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused." Always err on the side of reporting. Suspicions alone are enough of a reason, even if there is no direct evidence. Make the report even if you do not have ALL the information.

A person cannot be held legally at fault for making a "good faith report," even if it is a violation of confessional. If it is a staff member or volunteer and the alleged abuse is found to be a false accusation, he/she will not be held legally at fault for making a "good faith report."

The adult to whom the child reveals the abuse is considered the ideal reporter. However, a designated director/supervisor may call on behalf of that person or keep their name anonymous. DFCS does not release the information of the reporter except through a judge's order. Failure to report is considered a misdemeanor.

If a report is made, accurate documentation should be kept by Northbrook UMC and must be provided to the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church and appropriate District Superintendent. This is not a substitute for reporting to DFCS. A reporter will not be kept "in the loop" during the investigation, nor will they always be alerted to the outcome.

When reporting with DFCS, a reporter is entitled to documentation that the report has been made. Send that documentation immediately to the District Superintendent.

The reverse side of this form is to be used to provide details to the proper authorities should an investigation arise.

# To Keep on Record with Northbrook UMC and the District Superintendent

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report to DFCS: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reporter (if not anonymous): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number of Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of Children or child in danger:

Location of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and Phone Numbers of Parents/Guardians:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Suspected Abuser (if known):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

"Reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused." (Suspicion are reasons to report. You do not have to have direct evidence. Please be as detailed as possible.

Any other information the reporter believes might help establish the cause of the injuries and the perpetrator's identity?

Names and contact information of relatives, friends, etc., who can intervene in the interim if the child needs to be relocated temporarily.

Who else should we contact about this?

Name of Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

When the report was received:

Report made to insurance coordinator Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report Made to Authorities:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

## Northbrook United Methodist Church Accident or Incident Reporting Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date & Time of Accident/Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Completing Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians of Person Involved (if minor) and Contact Phone:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) notified of accident/incident and time:

\_\_\_\_\_

Who notified persons or parents (if minor involved) and time:

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Accident/Incident:

\_\_\_\_\_

Description of Accident/Incident— condition leading to accident/incident, description of person including any injuries and responsiveness of person involved.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Actions taken in response - including first aid and pastoral response.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Referred to Doctor/Hospital: Yes    No    If so please describe:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Witness name & phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name & phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person completing report: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Head Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

# Northbrook United Methodist Church Emergency Medical Information & Release Form for All Ages

Date turned in: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Goes By Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date of Birth M/D/Y: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of Northbrook UMC? Yes No If not, please list (if any)

**Complete if the participant is under 18 years of age:**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, call: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Medical Information

Any current medical conditions, allergies or problems?

Taking any prescribed medication? If so, describe:

Emotional/mental health concerns we should be aware of:

### Insurance Information

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Group #: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_

FORM IS INCOMPLETE UNTIL COMPLETION OF WAIVERS ON THE SECOND PAGE

### Medical Waiver

Should *I/my child* need medical attention and I cannot be reached,

I hereby give permission to the medical personnel selected by Northbrook United Methodist Church's staff or church leaders for any treatment deemed necessary. In the event of an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician or other health care professional selected by the Northbrook staff or church leaders to hospitalize, secure proper treatment, order injections, and/or anesthesia and/or surgery. I further authorize the release of the listed medical information to appropriate medical personnel and the health coverage insurance company. I will pay for any medical expenses so incurred. I will also notify the church of any relevant health considerations.

**Signature of Participant/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Media Release

I grant permission to Northbrook United Methodist Church to take photographs and videos of *me/my child* for the following uses **(please mark all that apply)**.

- For internal use in printed church-related publications, newsletters, display boards, and password-protected photo sites like Dropbox used for personal download.
- For external use on websites, social media, and other promotional material used online or in print visible to the public.

I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs or receive compensation arising from or related to the use of the photograph. I will not hold Northbrook UMC liable for any damages associated with the use of the photographs in the manner I have specified.

**Signature of Participant/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Safe Sanctuaries Reference Form

Applicant Name:

Reference Name:

Phone Number of Reference:

Email Address of Reference:

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. In what capacity are you acquainted with the applicant?
4. What words would you use to describe the applicant?
5. Would you recommend this applicant to work with children and/or youth? Why or why not?
6. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults as a team member?
7. How would you describe the applicant's leadership ability?

8. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer with your children or youth?

9. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime?

10. Please list any other comments you would like to make.

# **Code of Conduct for Safe Sanctuaries at Northbrook United Methodist Church**

## **What is a Code of Conduct?**

All staff and volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are expected to interact with them in a mature, capable, safe, caring, responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. This Code of Conduct describes how adults will interact with minors and vulnerable adults and the boundaries they are expected to observe. By being vigilant in following the Code of Conduct, we will help protect minors and vulnerable adults from abuse. The most effective way to reduce abuse is to be vigilant.

## **Accountability**

All adult staff and volunteers are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others in order to maintain our high level of professionalism. It is our expectation that you understand your responsibility to observe the interaction between workers and minors or vulnerable adults and when you see interaction that is questionable, inappropriate or crossing boundaries, you will intervene on behalf of the minor or vulnerable adult. Such intervention may include:

- Remaining present with the minor or vulnerable adult in order to provide him/her a sense of security;
- Redirecting the minor or vulnerable adult to join others in a different area;
- Speaking to the worker and stating the boundary violation you have observed and reminding them of the responsibility to abide by this Code of Conduct

In all cases, violations of this Code of Conduct shall be reported to the ministry leader. Such a report shall be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality.

You also give permission to the other adults in our programs to take these intervening actions if you are seen crossing safe boundaries or violating this Code of Conduct.

## **Visibility and Supervision**

All work with minors and vulnerable adults shall be planned and carried out in a way that minimizes risks as much as possible. This includes being visible to other adults.

Two Adult Rule: There must be two unrelated adult workers present when working with minors or vulnerable adults.



**Floater Rule:** This rule allows for only one primary worker to be in a classroom when you have another primary worker floating the hall regularly. When using this rule, the classroom door must remain open at all times. This should only be done if two workers are not available.

**Open Door/Window:** All classrooms will have at least one window in the door or half door (also referred to as a dutch door). The window must not be covered at any time with decorations, etc. The half-door should remain open unless there are two non-related adults in the room

supervising the children, youth, or vulnerable adults. We recommend covering windows if there is an intruder.

**Counseling:** Any one-on-one counseling session with a child or youth will be done with the door open. If at all possible, it should be done when another adult is nearby but not necessarily within hearing distance. If no other adult is available, the supervisor should be notified about when the session will begin and end. It should never be done in an isolated one-on-one location.

**Buddy System:** If a minor or vulnerable adult with a disability is in need of assistance for personal hygiene or safety for the person or others there may be the need for the assigned “buddy” or caregiver to provide what the person needs. Such interactions should be as visible as possible. The worker should also inform a leader or another worker that they need to assist or care for the person and ask that someone remain nearby to provide as much accountability as possible.

## **Technology**

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation. Volunteers and staff shall not engage in social networking, texting or any other means of private communication with children and youth without the permission of the parents or guardian. All electronic communication must not be erased or deleted and made available for review upon request by the ministry leader or pastor.

**Photographs and Social Media:** Pictures of minors shall not be posted in the church building, on the website, or on social media without parental permission. Ministry leaders shall maintain those records. Only staff shall post pictures once permission is confirmed. Names of minors shall not be posted with the pictures.

**Web Conferencing:** Any web meeting with minors shall continue to use the “two-adult rule” or the web meeting should be recorded, including the chat, and saved for at least two years. Web meetings with minors should be invited and initiated with church-based accounts instead of individual (staff or volunteer) accounts. Staff and volunteers will

utilize real names on web conference calls, identifying themselves as staff or volunteers.

## **Discipline**

Discipline should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. Physical discipline such as hitting or spanking is unacceptable. Workers with children and youth should use positive reinforcement and redirection as the primary form of discipline. If a child or youth is beyond correction and is a danger to themselves or others, a parent or guardian can be contacted at the staff's discretion.

## **Touch**

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children, but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch shall be open rather than secretive and visible to other adults.
- Touch should be in the response to the need of the minor or vulnerable adult and not the need of the worker.
- Touch should be short in duration.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the minor or vulnerable adult rather than the worker.
- It should be with the permission of the minor or vulnerable adult and any resistance should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect.
- Touching any area covered by a bathing suit is unacceptable unless changing a diaper which should be done with a wipe.

Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for minors or vulnerable adults that they are able to do for themselves, including personal hygiene and bathroom breaks, dressing, bathing, etc.

Diapering/Restroom: There should be two adults present when changing a diaper. When using a restroom, a child should go in by themselves and adults should remain outside. If the child needs assistance, the door should be propped open and the best practice is to have two adults present. For older children and vulnerable adults, an adult should accompany the person to the restroom. They should check to make sure no other adults are in the restroom and then let them go in by themselves and wait outside. Propping the outside door to be able to listen out is acceptable.

Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. Some children with special needs may exhibit more aggression than other children as part of their developmental progress. When such

aggression is exhibited by a child with a disability the behavior is likely not intentional or willful. Care will be given in these situations to make sure all children are safe and cared for.

There may be the occasion when the “buddy” or caregiver of a child with a disability will need the structure and care that appropriate touch can provide. Such touch should be supportive, caring and with the intent of helping the child return to a safe, secure and calm state.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts: verbal praise, side hugs, shoulder to shoulder hugs, pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate). For smaller children, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders, hugs, or holding them when others are present.

The following behaviors between staff or volunteers and minors or vulnerable adults are inappropriate and shall not be engaged in: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs; showing affection in isolated areas or when alone; sleeping in bed with the minor or vulnerable adult; inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development; flirtatious or seductive looks; any form of affection that is unwanted; showing sexually-suggestive videos or playing sexually-suggestive games; any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.

Adult members shall monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

### **Showing Favoritism**

Adults shall avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to a particular child or youth to the exclusion of others.

Adults shall not give gifts to any child or youth without requesting and receiving permission from a parent or legal guardian.

For children and adults with disabilities it is more natural that a child will form meaningful attachments to 1 or 2 individuals. The interaction or attention given by the adults a child has made a connection with could appear to be showing favoritism or singling out these children. When such attachments are created it is important to monitor those interactions to make sure proper boundaries are maintained.

### **Verbal Interaction**

Words can also be used to support and encourage, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following: shaming, belittling, humiliating, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate, cursing, or making derogatory remarks.

Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling off-color or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires.

## **Transportation**

At times, transportation to and from church-sponsored activities held away from campus will be necessary. Safe Sanctuaries shall be followed in this context as well. There should never be one child and one adult in the car. Acceptable transportation includes:

- Two non-related adults and one child/youth or more in a car
- Two adults and children/youth on the church bus or on a rented bus
- One adult and multiple children

If there are multiple cars traveling to a location, one adult and several children are allowed in a car, and the cars must caravan and stay close to each other on the way to and from the off-site location.

## **Reporting of Abuse**

When anyone has reason to suspect, receives a disclosure of, or has knowledge of abuse, they must make a report according to our Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures. This includes abuse that happens while engaged in church activities or abuse that takes place outside the church, such as at school or a youth serving organization.

As mandated reporters according to Georgia State Law and for good moral causes, any suspicion of abuse must be reported to the Department of Family and Children Services or local law enforcement within 24 hours of reasonable cause and/or disclosure.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times. Therefore, parents shall be informed of planned activities. Parents shall be encouraged to make unannounced visits to program activities as a way of reducing isolation and monitoring the interaction between adults and minors.

# Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to follow the Northbrook UMC Code of Conduct. I have read and agree to abide by the Northbrook UMC Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures. In addition, it is my responsibility to read and comply with any future updates to any and all of our Safe Sanctuaries documents.

I affirm that I have never engaged in any inappropriate activity with a child, including child abuse. I affirm that if I have been accused of and/or investigated for child abuse, I will disclose this to the ministry director or the pastor of the ministry and will provide documentation of the outcome of the accusation and investigation. I understand that this disclosure will be shared with the session as confidential information. I agree not to engage in any such behaviors.

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct and conduct myself in a mature, capable, safe, caring, responsible manner, with a high level of accountability for the protection of the children, youth and vulnerable adults at Northbrook United Methodist Church.

I further agree that as an individual who has engendered trust from a minor or vulnerable adult, I will not tolerate physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, ritual abuse, or financial abuse.

I understand the importance of accountability to the other adult workers. Therefore, I give my permission for anyone who observes any inappropriate or questionable interaction between me and a minor or vulnerable adult to speak to me regarding their observation. I will not take offense when approached by someone with concerns about my interaction, because I understand that the protection of each minor or vulnerable adult must be my first priority.

I agree to immediately report to the appropriate leadership any reasonable suspicion of or disclosure of inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse in accordance with our Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_