

Trinity United Methodist Church – Smithfield, VA

Child/Adult Protection Policy & Procedures

Original: 10/07/03 Current: 10/27/10

Introduction:

It is the policy of Trinity United Methodist Church (TUMC) to have zero tolerance of any form of abuse of children, members, or guests. These procedures aim to assure the safety and wellbeing of the children and adults involved in the program ministries at Trinity. This policy emphasizes prevention through screening of all worker candidates and by providing oversight and supervisory guidelines. It further provides for actions and reporting procedures in the event of observed acts of abuse or questionable behavior.

- I. This program and related procedures apply to all church activities.
 1. *Personnel employed by the church* will undergo a background check, which will include a "criminal history record search," a "sex offender and crimes against minor's registry search," and letters of reference to be checked by follow up calls, which shall be done upon hiring. Staff Parish is responsible for ensuring this through normal hiring practices.
 2. *Volunteers working in the church's programs* must be members or regular attendees of Trinity UMC for a period of 6 months* and have background checks (which would include previous church recommendations to be checked by a call and "sex offender and crimes against minors registry search") prior to being assigned to such a program. The pastor and his staff will ensure volunteers are in compliance. Leadership roles may be assumed after a period of 1 year*. (Parent observers are always welcome!) *The above time periods may be waived by presenting documentation or prior experience, references & church council approval.
 3. Participation in community wide children's programs without meeting the requirements of #2 above is permissible providing at least two adult workers, age 18 or over and unrelated, are present and at least one of these is an approved worker from a Trinity children's program. No one under 18 years of age may work in the children's program (including nursery) except as an aide and in such cases will

always be accompanied by at least one approved adult worker.

4. All areas shall be visually accessible while children's groups are in session, either by means of Dutch doors, windows, or other appropriate means. Adults visiting our Homebound, or church visitors, need to be sure there is another adult in the house before going inside (either by calling ahead or asking when you arrive), or leave the door open to public view (i.e. front porch, or at the nursing home).
5. During Sunday school sessions the Superintendent of S.S. or his/her representative will make at least one unannounced and unscheduled tour of the church school facilities in such a manner that each class is observed.
6. The following activity requires parental notification and approval when only one adult staff member is involved: Helping toddlers who require assistance when going to the bathroom. The worker will notify a co-worker prior to lending the needed assistance. One time parental approval at the time the toddler enters the program will suffice. There is a form that parents MUST sign - available in the nursery).
7. Situations, including transportation, involving one worker alone with one child in an unsupervised area (other than stated in 5, 6, & 7 above) are not allowed.
8. A signed parental "permission slip" & liability release form will be required annually for all children under the age of 18 for trips off of the church premises. Out of town trips will also require a medical release form to be signed provided by either the conference or Trinity. At least two adults will be required on all trips. "Trips" are defined as any activity that occurs off church property.
9. Adults are a minimum of 21 years of age when chaperoning students. Under no circumstances should anyone under the age of 21 be allowed to drive children, youth, or at-risk adults. Use of the church van should follow the van policies and procedures.
10. A minimum of two adults per group are present as chaperones throughout any event.

11. Mixed gender overnight events require mixed gender supervision.

12. Supervision ratios are as follows:

- One adult to three children, zero to twelve months of age.
- One adult to four children, ages twelve months to twenty-four months.
- One adult to six children, ages twenty-four months to thirty-six months.
- One adult to eight children/youth/at-risk adults ages three to seventeen years. The specific needs of individual children, youth, or vulnerable adults may require a change to these guidelines.

II. In the event of observed or suspected abuse, receipt of an abuse complaint, or report of suspicious behavior, the church staff (paid & volunteer) will proceed as follows in the order appropriate for the unique situation.

1. Assess safety risk (contact 911 if emergency services are required or deemed necessary).
2. Notify parents of victim, (if not already involved) and take steps to assure child's safety until parents arrive.
3. Call local police department.
4. Provide care to the alleged perpetrator by removing him/her from direct supervision or involvement with youth or children.
5. Notify Pastor who will take care of items on the Pastor Checklist (next page).
6. Observer of incident is encouraged to begin a documentation process.
7. The minister or Chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee will immediately notify the District Superintendent.
8. Serious action may well become of interest to the media. At no time shall anyone release a statement or respond to inquiries on behalf of Trinity UMC other than the appointed church spokesperson. The Church Council shall appoint the spokesperson.
9. Persons knowing of the incident or accusations are not to confront or discuss it with the alleged abuser without first reporting the incident and getting professional guidance from the Pastor/Staff Parish Chair.

10. The Church Council will conduct an orientation program on these policies and procedures with all staff and volunteers annually. In the training of new Church officers and volunteers this information will be included so all will be familiar with policies and procedures, and their duties and responsibilities will be reviewed. All policies and procedures will also be reviewed during the transition of key staff (i.e. pastor, Dir. of Children's Ministry, secretary, youth director, etc.)

III. **Confidentiality:** All reasonable measures will be maintained to ensure confidentiality.

Definitions to Know

- **Worker** - an individual involved in implementing and helping with programs at Trinity UMC, whether paid or a volunteer.
- **Probationary worker** - an individual who has not been a regular attendee or member of TUMC for at least 6 months.
- **Sex offender** - where a complaint has been substantiated by Child Protection Services, or a person who has been found guilty in a court of law of a sexual offense and is still under penalty of law for such an offense. This shall be considered active as long as the Virginia State Government maintains published records in accordance with Section 19.2 - 390.1, (D), of the Code of Virginia.
- **Shepherd - Escort for known abusers:** The known abuser must agree to and sign a covenant with the church.
- **Alleged perpetrator** - Individual accused of inappropriate behavior, action, or abuse against another individual or group of individuals, be it sexual or otherwise.

As one who works with programs at Trinity UMC, I have a copy of "The Child/Adult Protection Policy and Procedures," dated _____, have read it carefully, and understand the policies and procedures dealing with abuse and its prevention and will follow the policy as written.

Name & Office/Job: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

APPROVED/ Pastor Signature: _____

Trinity United Methodist Church
Primary Screening Form for Children or Youth Work

(Confidential) Original: 10/07/03 Current: 10/14/10

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. Persons seeking a position in the church as a paid employee will be required to complete an employment application in addition to this screening form. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. *Applications will be stored securely & confidentially by the church secretary in the church office. They will be maintained for a period of 7 years after a paid staff person terminates a position & 3 years following the departure of a volunteer.*

Personal

Date: _____

Name: _____

(First)

(Middle)

(Last)

Date of Birth: _____

Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic id.

Present Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Home phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

Day time phone if different than home: () _____

Please Circle One

Volunteer Service

Compensated Service

1. Are you a member of this church? *(Please circle one)*

Yes

No

If yes, please indicate how long you have been a member:

___ years ___ months

2. If not a member, how long have you attended this church (if less than one year, please give approximate date.)

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

4. Are you 18 years of age or older? *(Please circle one)*

Yes

No

5. Have you ever been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to a crime other than a minor traffic violation, or are you now under charges for any criminal offense? A criminal conviction will not necessarily disqualify you from consideration. *(Please circle one)*

Yes

No

(if yes, explain fully on an additional sheet)

Training, Experience, Professional Certification, or Licenses

6. List any additional training or experience you have had that qualifies you for the position you are seeking, including any professional license or certification, & work in previous churches. Use a separate sheet to write any additional comments that you would like to make about your background.

References

7. List below two personal references, preferably within our church, who are well acquainted with you. Do not list relatives.

A. _____

B. _____

INTERVENTION CHECKLIST

1. Assess safety risk. (Contact 911 if emergency services are required or deemed necessary).
2. Notify parents of victim, (if not already involved) and take steps to assure child's safety until parents arrive.
3. Call local police department.
4. Provide care to the alleged perpetrator by removing him/her from direct supervision or involvement with youth or children.
5. Notify Pastor (See Pastor Checklist Below) If the Pastor is the suspected abuser or if he/she can't be contacted the Chair of the Staff Parish Committee will be notified. If that person can't be reached the District Superintendent should be notified.
6. Observer of incident is encouraged to begin a documentation process.

PASTOR'S CHECKLIST

- A. Provide pastoral care for all parties involved: victim and their family, alleged perpetrator, and observer of incident.
- B. Notify District Superintendent
- C. Notify Attorney
- D. Notify Insurance Company
- E. Make sure that persons knowing of the incident or accusations are not to confront or discuss it with the alleged abuser without first getting professional guidance from you/Pastor Parish Chair.
- F. Make sure EVERYONE understands that at NO time should anyone release a statement or respond to inquiries on behalf of TUMC other than the appointed spokesperson. The Church Council shall appoint the spokesperson.
- G. Provide care for the congregation/community (long term):
Develop a brief statement to the congregation that does not give details, place blame, interfere with victim's privacy, or violate confidentiality. Organize and plan for dissemination of information to your congregation as necessary.

Shepherding Procedures

These instructions address the management and care of "shepherded members" (SM) within the Church. The attached *Letter of Understanding* is to be used for sex offenders attending Trinity.

Overseeing the Shepherded Member

The known and confessing offender must comply with the rules shown. These rules may be altered only by petitioning by the Pastor and/or "shepherd" to the Church Council.

Pastor's Responsibilities

The Pastor will provide spiritual council to the member and ensure that all staff and officers potentially impacted by the presence of the shepherded member are fully informed of the matter. Once every six months the Pastor shall set up a meeting with the shepherded member and the "Shepherd" to review progress and any potential issues arising from the agreement.

In the event of an infraction to the agreement the Pastor shall review the issue with the (SM) and Shepherd. If the infraction did not create any adverse consequences and was deemed inadvertent, no action shall be taken other than corrective measures to ensure such an infraction does not reoccur.

If an infraction is intentional and yielded adverse consequences, restitution and confinement measures shall be immediately taken and termination of the agreement shall be recommended to the Church Council.

Shepherd Responsibilities

The Shepherd shall see that the intentions of the agreement are fulfilled. He or she shall be with the SM at all times as prescribed. This includes the use of the restrooms. The Shepherd will arrange for a previously approved alternate to fill in when he or she is unavailable. He or she shall immediately report any infractions by the SM to the Pastor for action. Under no circumstances may the Shepherd alter or relax any terms of the agreement. He or she may recommend changes to the agreement in the course of a six month review.

Church Council Responsibilities The Council will approve the agreement annually. It will approve any modifications. It will appoint all Shepherds & alternates. It will issue termination actions if required.

Letter of Understanding

I acknowledge and confess that I have sinned, and that this includes the sin of sexual abuse. I am truly and earnestly repentant of these sins. I intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking henceforth in His holy ways.

I have asked God's mercy, and ask the mercy of this Church, I seek to grow in faith through worship and study. I pray for forgiveness and ask this congregation's help in strengthening me in all goodness and bringing me to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I freely accept the following procedures of maintaining my membership as a part of this congregation. I also understand that if I fail to abide by these rules/procedures that I must immediately terminate my membership.

Agreed to Rules of Conduct

- I will be accompanied at all times while at the Church or Church functions by an assigned Shepherd.
- I will maintain a schedule with my Shepherd so he/she is informed in advance of my attendance intentions. ~ I will meet once every six months with my Shepherd & the Pastor for a review. ~ Should my Shepherd be unavailable an alternate will be assigned.
- I will limit my participation to the Worship service, Sunday school, & Bible study.
- I shall not seek any church office or accept any, and will not participate in other activities such as the choir, teaching, etc.
- I will be ever mindful of the sensitivity of others toward my presence and will do everything in my power to respect their feelings and will do nothing to aggravate the situation.

The terms of this agreement will be reviewed annually, or renewed upon the assignment of a new Pastor or Shepherd.

Shepherded Member Signature _____

Date: _____

Pastor: _____

Date: _____

Shepherd: _____ Date: _____