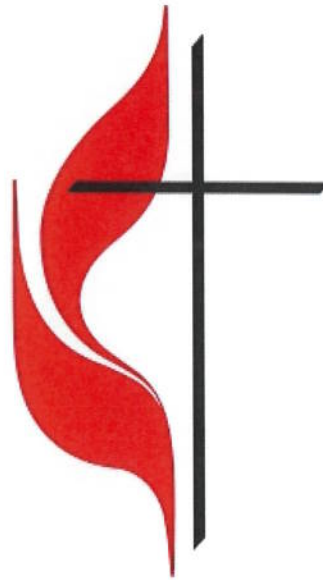


# Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures

Reducing the Risk of Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult  
Physical, Emotional, and Sexual Abuse in the Church



First United Methodist Church

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## *Statement of Purpose*

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*As mandated by the United Methodist Church, the congregation of First United Methodist Church Dothan establishes this Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Training Guide to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all who enter. This policy is designed to give clear boundaries and guidelines that will provide for the safety and protection of all children, youth, vulnerable adults, volunteers, and employees of First United Methodist Church.*

## *Our Mandate*

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The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, beginning in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

*Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes (a) child... welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, and our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.*

*Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck, and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6) Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that "... children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse." (§162C)*

*Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation within churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.*

*Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.*

*God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from all abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. (From The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church – 2012, page 240)*

Therefore, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of abuse to children, tweens, youth, and vulnerable adults in our church.

## *Statement of Covenant*

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This Safe Sanctuaries policy was established to demonstrate our absolute, unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all our children, tweens, youth, and vulnerable adults. We will follow safety measures in the selection, recruitment, and training of all approved staff and volunteers. FUMC Dothan is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ as we fulfill our covenant made at each child's baptism "*With God's help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that each person, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal*" (Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal).

## *Reducing the Risk of Physical and Sexual Abuse in Church*

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### **The church at risk:**

Any organization involved with young people or vulnerable adults is a place where abuse can occur. Several factors make local congregations, districts, and annual conferences more susceptible to risk:

- Churches behave as relatively trusting organizations, relying upon their members and their leaders to conduct themselves appropriately. Sometimes this trusting attitude persists even in the face of questions or reports of misconduct.
- Churches are notoriously inactive when it comes to screening volunteers and/or employees who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Often, no investigation is done at all before total strangers are welcomed aboard.
- Churches routinely provide opportunities for close contact and for close personal relationships with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Indeed, these are nurtured and encouraged as we try to live out the gospel message.

### **Consequences of abuse:**

- When one person is abused within a church or Christian program, many victims are created, including the victim, the congregation, the victim's family, and often the family of the abuser.
- The congregation becomes a victim after abuse is revealed and relationships are fractured. It may also suffer for a long time when civil or criminal litigation ensues because of the abuse.
- Of foremost importance is the person who has been harmed and for whom care must be provided.
- In addition, paragraph 2702 of the *2012 Book of Discipline* names child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment as chargeable offenses for clergy and lay members.

### **Statement of Policy:**

No congregation or annual conference can afford, either financially, ethically, or morally to fail to implement strategies for the reduction and prevention of any and every kind of abuse. Therefore, it shall be the policy and covenant of the Alabama West Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to do everything in our power to prevent physical, emotional, or sexual abuse against children, youth, and vulnerable adults involved in any ministry-sponsored by the Annual Conference or in any of our local congregations.

Further, we are called to minister to those persons who are experiencing abuse and to those who have been victims of abuse in the past. To that end, we covenant to be aware of our legal responsibilities and comply with those responsibilities, and we will go beyond those responsibilities when necessary to act justly in the best interest of those who are most vulnerable to abuse.

Careful screening is the best way to reduce the risk of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. It can be time-consuming and expensive, but well worth the effort and peace of mind that comes with having the most reliable, committed, and experienced staff and volunteers in place for every program that involves children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Although it is our fervent hope and prayer that abuse does not occur in our programs, we must put into place sufficient mechanisms to protect children, youth, vulnerable adults, and those who work with them. For that purpose, our ministers shall implement the following procedures for First United Methodist Church Dothan. These policies meet or exceed the minimum standards set by the conference.

### *What is Abuse?*

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The depth and breadth of the problem of abuse is far greater than can be effectively addressed within this resource. For our purposes, we must limit our focus to the prevention of abuse in the church and its ministries.

#### **Types of Abuse**

Generally, abuse is categorized into five primary forms: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and ritual abuse. We will include abuse of vulnerable adults in this list.

1. **Physical Abuse.** Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, and so forth), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, hitting with fists, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries.
2. **Emotional Abuse.** Abuse in which a person exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved but undeserving of love and care. Those exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental or caregiver affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove but can be devastating to the victim.
3. **Neglect.** Abuse in which a person endangers a person's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.
4. **Sexual Abuse.** Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often, the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution. Vulnerable adults may also experience sexual abuse as a non-consenting adult.
5. **Ritual Abuse.** Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child, youth or non-consenting adult are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to a child, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Persons making such reports must not be ignored.

6. **Abuse of Vulnerable Adults.** Ritual, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect of any person 19 years of age or older with physical, mental, and/or developmental disabilities.

### *Indicators of Abuse*

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People suffering from abuse often will not tell anyone about it. Therefore, it is important to be able to recognize signs of abuse. The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. Individually, any one of the indicators may be a sign of other more or less serious problems. When these indicators are observed, they can be considered as warnings and lead you into the situation further.

**Possible Signs of Physical Abuse** may include, but are not limited to:

1. Hostile and aggressive behavior toward others
2. Fearfulness of parents, caregivers, or other adults
3. Destructive behavior toward self, others, or property
4. Inexplicable fractures or bruising inappropriate for a child's developmental stage or a vulnerable adult's activity level
5. Burns, facial injuries, or a pattern of repetitious bruises

**Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse** may include, but are not limited to:

1. Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
2. Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
3. Failure to thrive
4. Threatens or attempts suicide
5. Speech and/or eating disorders
6. Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
7. Extreme passive-aggressive behavior patterns

**Possible Signs of Neglect** may include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to thrive
2. Pattern of inappropriate dress for the climate
3. Beggars or steals food, chronic hunger
4. Depression
5. Untreated medical conditions
6. Poor hygiene

**Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse** may include, but are not limited to:

1. Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for the child's age and developmental stage
2. Depression – cries often for no apparent reason
3. Promiscuous behavior
4. Runs away from home and refuses to return
5. Difficulty walking or sitting
6. Bruising or bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
7. Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, and extreme fatigue
8. Sexually transmitted diseases

## *Abuse FAQs*

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**Who should report suspected abuse?** Alabama's mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting law states that all school teachers and officials, social workers, daycare workers or employees, mental health professionals, members of the clergy as defined in Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report or cause a report to be made of the same, orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority. This applies to volunteers and employees equally.

**Must I report suspected child abuse and/or neglect?** Some people are required, by law, to report suspected abuse or neglect, but anyone is encouraged to make a report if he or she suspects a child is being abused or neglected. Those required, by law, to report suspected abuse include a wide range of medical professionals, childcare workers and teachers, law enforcement, and clergy. Also required to report are persons called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of abuse or neglect.

**How can I be certain that a child has been abused or neglected?** Certainty is not required. In most instances, the only way you can be certain a child has been abused or neglected would be if the parent or another person admitted it. All that is required is a reasonable suspicion that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect. After investigating the report, the Department of Human Resources determines whether abuse and/or neglect occurred.

**How am I protected?** All persons reporting suspected abuse or neglect (whether required by law to report or not) are presumed to be acting in good faith. They are, by law, immune from legal action, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be taken. Thus, you have full protection in the event a parent or someone else should seek to initiate action against you.

**To whom should I report suspected abuse?** Volunteers and staff may report abuse directly to DHR or law enforcement. They are encouraged to also report to church employees or a member of the clergy staff so the church may be aware of the situation. Church employees should report suspected abuse to their supervisor or to one of the clergy staff. Clergy staff are obligated to report suspected abuse to Law Enforcement or DHR. If the person suspecting or witnessing abuse does not directly report to DHR or law enforcement, they should follow up to make sure the incident has been reported.

**What are my responsibilities after I report suspected abuse?** If a report is made within the church, you are obligated to make sure the person receiving the report adequately responds and contacts the necessary agencies and church leadership as necessary. If the situation is not handled satisfactorily, you are obliged to press for further action and you may call DHR yourself.

Source: Family and Children's Services Division Office of Protective Services State of Alabama DHR

## *Definitions*

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**Authority figure** - an **adult** who is the primary leader of any children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult activity, and such a person is required to be 21 years of age or older.

**Assistant** - a person who gives help to and is directed by an **authority figure** during any youth, children, or at-risk or vulnerable adult activity, including, but not limited to, volunteers, interns, camp counselors, and Vacation Bible School workers. Such an assistant must be at least twelve (12) years of age. However, to satisfy the requirements of the **two-adult rule**, such an assistant must be an **adult** as herein defined.

**Adults** - all persons who have attained the age of majority (19 years in Alabama).

**Floater** - an **adult** who acts as an **assistant** to an **authority figure** to monitor covered activities or events to comply with the **two-adult rule** when achieving such compliance by use of two nonrelated adults is unfeasible.

**Two Adult Rule** - a core principle regarding the supervision required for covered activities and overnight events. This rule means that a minimum of two **adults who are not related to each other** should be utilized in all programming with children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults. However, when unfeasible to staff at buildings and outdoor areas with two non-related adults, there should be at least one additional adult serving as a **floater** with visual and physical access to all areas where such programming occurs. Visual and physical access means either an open door or door with a window provides a line of sight enabling the **floater** to see into a room or other building space and to see fully outdoor sites where covered activities or events take place.

## *Accidents*

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- All accidents should be reported to parents, guardians, or caregivers.
- If a child has head trauma of any degree, a parent must be immediately notified.
- If additional medical attention is deemed necessary, the Church Administrator should also be notified whether the church staff or parents/caregivers seek the additional aid.
- Accidents occurring on church property or in conjunction with church activities that result in physical injury to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult must be documented.
- Accident Reports should be kept on file with the Supervising Staff Member. If additional medical attention was deemed necessary, a copy of the report should be given to the Church Administrator.

## ***Volunteer Standards/ Screening/Training***

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### **Authority Figure or Paid Staff**

#### **Safe Sanctuaries Standards:**

- Minimum age of 21 years old and at least five years older than children or youth being supervised
- Employees must be a minimum age of 19 years old but cannot be considered an authority figure until they reach the age of 21. It is required they are at least five years older than the children or youth being supervised.

#### **Safe Sanctuaries Screening:**

- Be recommended or approved by Children's Ministry Director and/or a member of the Executive Team
- Have experience or qualifications for the position sought
- Consent to a background check
- Demonstrate an active relationship with FUMC for six months before being permitted to serve as an **authority figure**

#### **Safe Sanctuaries Training:**

- Attend Safe Sanctuaries training to meet the requirements of FUMC
- Complete the Safe Sanctuaries Covenant Form

### **Assistant**

#### **Safe Sanctuaries Standards:**

- Whether working with youth or children, assistants must be:
  - At least twelve (12) years of age (7<sup>th</sup> grade)
  - At least five years older than the participants

Assistants less than 19 years old cannot be counted as an adult, satisfying the 2-adult rule, and must be under the supervision of an adult.

#### **Safe Sanctuaries Screening/Training:**

- Be recommended or approved by Children's Ministry Director and/or a member of the Executive Team
- Attend Safe Sanctuaries training to meet the requirements of FUMC

## ***Notification of Unfavorable Background Check***

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- Person shall be notified with a "Notification of Unfavorable Background Check" form.
- Volunteer applicants receiving an unfavorable report will be counseled by the Pastor and another Church leader (laity or staff) chosen by the Pastor.
- Employment applicants or staff receiving an unfavorable report may be counseled by the chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Documentation will be placed in the employee/applicant's file.



- The review process may consider the following:
  - The nature and seriousness of the crime or conduct
  - The relationship of the crime to the purpose of the congregation
  - The age of the person at the time of the commission of the crime or conduct
  - The time elapsed since the time of the commission of the crime or conduct
  - Anything the minister in charge deems relevant to consideration of employment
  - Any charge that deals with sexual or physical abuse shall prevent that person from being employed by First United Methodist Church Dothan

### *Staffing Ratios*

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**There must always be at least 2 employed staff and/or volunteer staff supervising children, youth, and vulnerable adults regardless of the number of participants in the group. At least one of these people must have a background check and current Safe Sanctuaries training.**

To provide adequate supervision for the safety and well-being of children participating in the programs and activities of FUMC, the following ratios (adults: children/youth) are recommended: All FUMC ratios will meet or exceed Alabama DHR and AWF Conference Safe Sanctuaries requirements.

**Two Adult Rule applies in all cases**

<b>AGE GROUP/PROGRAM</b>	<b>FUMC TARGET RATIO</b>	<b>DHR Guide</b>	<b>Safe Sanctuaries Guide</b>
<b>Nursery, Sunday School, Children's Church, Children's Choirs, Youth Events</b>	Always 2 adults per room/group.		
0-18 Months	<b>1:4</b>	1:5	1:5
18-24 Months	<b>1:6</b>	1:7	1:7
2-3 Years	<b>1:7</b>	1:8	1:8
3-4 Years	<b>1:10</b>	1:11	1:11
4-5 Years	<b>1:17</b>	1:18	1:18
Kindergarten – 8 Years	<b>1:20</b>	1:21	1:21
8+ Years	<b>1:21</b>	1:22	1:22
<b>Overnight Trips</b>	<b>Ratios may vary depending on guidelines outlined by providers.</b>		
Grades 1-3	<b>1:6</b>	N/A	1:8
Grades 4-8	<b>1:8</b>	N/A	1:10
Grades 9-12	<b>1:10</b>	N/A	1:12
<b>Participants who are physically or mentally impaired</b>			
Those needing constant and individual assistance or supervision	<b>1:1</b>	N/A	1:1
Those needing close, but not constant, assistance or supervision	<b>1:2</b>	N/A	1:2
Those needing occasional assistance	<b>1:4</b>	N/A	1:4
Those needing minimal assistance	<b>1:4</b>	N/A	1:5
<b>*Traveling Aide/Floater is acceptable to meet the two-adult rule – all doors must remain open unless two adults are present*</b>			
<b>Weekday Children's Ministry</b>	Follow DHR Regulation Guidelines		

If a volunteer finds himself/herself in a circumstance where ratios are not being met, the volunteer needs to notify the person in charge, document the situation, and make every attempt to resolve the situation. If at the end of a class one adult must leave before all the participants have been picked up, the remaining adult must leave the door open, move the class to a high-traffic area, or move into a room with another adult.

## ***Overnight Activities/Special Settings/Trips***

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### **Interpersonal Boundaries**

- Adult volunteers/workers with youth and children must be attentive to:
  - Appropriate dress code
  - Appropriate use of language
  - Appropriate demonstrations of affection and encouragement (an adult leader should never initiate a hug and should always be the one to end the hug.)

### **Overnight/Out of Town Day Trips**

- Participation and Consent Forms must be completed for any individual attending an overnight or out-of-town activity.
- Offsite events for children and youth or an overnight event held at the church require the appropriate adult-to-children ratios indicated on the “Staffing Ratios” page.
- Adults staying with young people during **overnight events** must be the same gender as the young people and such adults must not be alone in a lodging room with a young person at any time and must not share a bed with a young person unless he/she is an immediate family member or guardian of such young person and of the same gender.
- **Immediate family member or guardian room sharing exception** means that an immediate family member or guardian of a young person who is chaperoning an **overnight event** is permitted to share a room and bed with his/her child no matter the gender as long as no other young people are sharing the room.
- Where adults need to be assigned to separate rooms, it is recommended that one adult room be located between every two youth rooms on the hall if possible.
- Adults should develop a rotating schedule allowing for the hallways to be monitored throughout the night.
- If room checks are needed, they should involve two adults of the same gender as the room residents.

### **Mentoring**

- Provide basic screening and background checks for adults who will be working with young people.
- Establish clear written guidelines for settings, boundaries, and the environment where the mentoring will occur.
- Provide Safe Sanctuaries training for all mentors.
- Outings should always be in public places with routes and timeframes agreed upon in advance. If possible, outings with several mentors and young people are preferred.
- One-to-one mentoring should be conducted in a group setting such as one large room.

### **Counseling**

- During counseling sessions at least one door of the room must have a window or must be left open for the entire session.
- Ideally, sessions should be conducted when others are nearby.
- Counseling sessions should never be held in secret.

### **Home Visitations**

- When visiting a young person in their home, the two non-related adult rule still applies.
- If a young person drops by the home of an adult volunteer or staff person, the visit should be conducted in the front yard or moved to a public venue.
- Educating young people about these requirements before they visit is most beneficial.

### Tutoring and Other Specialized Services:

- Specialized Services will be considered as any activity that by its purpose is best provided on a one-on-one basis. These may include tutoring, therapy, music lessons, etc.
- Services and persons providing “Specialized Services” at FUMC must be approved by FUMC administration.
- Persons providing ‘Specialized Services” must be cleared through a multi-state criminal and sexual offender background check.
- All “Specialized Services” must take place in an occupied building or on an occupied floor in a room with a windowed door during regular program hours.
- A sign will be placed outside the door while the services are being rendered so that others know an authorized service is being rendered.
- A completed Release of Liability – “Specialized Services” form must be on file before a child may participate.

### Outside/Visiting Groups Using the Church Facilities Overnight

- Outside groups should be notified in advance that FUMC Dothan is a Safe Sanctuaries congregation and alerted to any requirements that could be placed upon their group.
- Each group is required to submit a completed “Release of Liability for Facilities Use” form.

## *Digital Safety*

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### General

- Firewalls on computer systems need to be in place and kept up to date.
- Volunteers and employees should maintain Christian principles when using social networking sites, especially when referencing church events.
- Those in authority and assistants are to be accountable for cyber communications.
- When posting pictures and videos, no names are to be posted for those under 18 years of age.
- Pictures will be carefully screened for appropriateness before posting.

### Church “Admin” on Ministry Accounts

- There shall always be two, unrelated authority figures with administrator rights on any account that is posting official ministry content.

### Church-sponsored programs/events/broadcasts

- Where there is no real-time interaction between viewers (a video posted but not broadcast live) the two-adult rule applies in that there shall always be two, unrelated authority figures with administrator rights on any account that is posting official ministry content.
- Where there is real-time interaction between viewers, there shall be two, unrelated authority figures in attendance wherever the real-time interaction is happening (chat room, etc.).
- Church programs/events/broadcasts shall be initiated from official church accounts rather than personal accounts. Two authority figures shall be included.

### Friending/Online Social Connections

- Digital/online media accounts shall be set up as ministry accounts and shall have at least two authority figures as administrators.
- Ministry leaders involved with children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults shall never initiate a “friend request” on personal accounts. Parents of children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults may request to be a friend on the personal account of a ministry leader.
- The connections and all shared information on these sites shall only be ministry-related and include but not limited to GIFs, videos, and photographs.

### Video Conferencing

- There shall always be two unrelated authority figures present in any video conference.
- When possible, a waiting room shall be employed for participants to ensure that two authority figures are present before students enter the video conference.
- When breakout rooms are employed, one authority figure shall function as a floater when it is possible to “float” between rooms.
- When an authority figure is available in the house of a participating student, their presence in the room with the student can count toward the two-adult rule.

### Private Text Messaging

- Private text messaging is allowed. When possible, it shall be shifted to a group text that shall include two authority figures.
- No messaging shall take place on a platform where messages automatically disappear.
- Authority figures shall not delete history or chat logs from a messaging platform for 30 days.

### One on One Video Calls

- One-on-one video calls shall not take place.
- When a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult initiates a video call, the authority figure is to deny the call and move the conversation to a group video platform, text, or audio call.
- If and when video calls are unavoidable, due to medical emergency, the authority figure shall involve another authority figure as quickly as possible.
- A parent present with the child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult when the call is initiated shall serve as the second authority figure.

### **Apps with disappearing message capability shall not be used.**

### Best Practices of Video Conferencing

- If using video conferences, one must be sure to understand how the conference works. Most have tutorials to help the leader understand the controls and abilities of the software being used.
- The parent shall be notified of the conference and give permission for their child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult to participate.
- At least two authority figures shall be on the video at all times.
- Passwords and waiting rooms shall be used.
- Parents are always welcome to attend conference videos.
- All chats shall be open to all participants. No private messages. Turn off peer-to-peer chat so all chat occurs between all participants.
  - Limit screen sharing to hosts only.

## *Transportation*

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- Transportation is a covered activity whenever such transportation is provided in a church-owned or leased vehicle (car, SUV, van, bus, etc.) or when a church staff member is the driver of or present in any vehicle used for such transportation. This provision shall not apply to multi-vehicle caravanning transportation and requires two adults to occupy each of the private vehicles in a caravan.
- Any such transportation provided for a church-sponsored or church-hosted program of daycare, preschool, or after-school care that is licensed under the laws of Alabama or Florida shall abide by and conform with the respective state laws and regulations, if any, applicable to such a transportation function.
- Whenever possible, church vehicles and charters should be utilized instead of private vehicles.
- The trustees or transportation committee should establish, monitor, and enforce safety policies for church-owned vehicles.
- If it is absolutely necessary to use private vehicles the following criteria must be met:
  - All drivers should be screened in the same manner as other leadership for an event.
  - When private vehicles are used to transport young people for programmed church-related events, leaders should ensure appropriate insurance is being maintained by both the church and the private driver.
  - All drivers must be 21 years of age or older.
    - Exceptions:
      - Licensed drivers under 21 years transporting their own family members.
      - A parent has authorized their child to ride in a car with a licensed driver under the age of 21.
  - When possible, it is recommended that two adults be placed in each vehicle or the vehicles be teamed in minimum groups of two that stay together at all times.
  - No young person other than the driver's own child should sit in the front seat. No lone adult should sit in other seat rows also occupied by a young person other than their own child.
  - If a car seat is required, parents must provide their own transportation or personally install the car seat for the driver.
  - No one should be transported, no matter how small the distance, in the bed of a pick-up truck.

## *General Supervision Guidelines*

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The following guidelines shall be used when planning supervision for all church gatherings where children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults will be in attendance. These guidelines apply to all activities and programs of FUMC and to any programs or events that are held on the grounds of FUMC.

**Two Adult Rule:** A minimum of two **adults who are not related to each other** should be utilized in all programming with children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults. In the State of Alabama, a married person cannot be compelled to testify against their spouse. Therefore, when a married couple volunteers with children or youth, there must always be another adult present. When it is impossible to appropriately staff rooms, there should be an additional adult serving as a floater with visual and physical access to all areas.

**Open-door Policy:** Classrooms, child-care, and program rooms used for children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults should be open to visitation at any time by staff, parents, caregivers, or other volunteers at any time without prior notice. Insurance carriers recommend the church to have a window in all doors where children and youth activities meet. If there are no windows, doors must be left open.

**Visitors:** Visitors must be authorized by a supervising staff person. A visitor is defined as someone who is not the parent of a child in the group.

**Six-Month Rule:** All volunteers wishing to give service in the areas of children, youth, or vulnerable adult ministry should demonstrate an active relationship with FUMC for a minimum of six months. Persons not meeting this requirement may serve only in an assistant capacity with two other non-related adults.

**Sign-in and Sign-out Procedures:** Sign-in and sign-out procedures should be in place for all ministries for and with children and youth.

**Nursery Care:** Paid staff will follow all Safe Sanctuaries Guidelines. Regular training will be offered to include CPR certification, First Aid, emergency procedures, cleaning procedures, and childcare training. Parent volunteers should be advised that only nursery staff members may change diapers.

**Supervision of Children:** Children (6<sup>th</sup> grade and younger) should be in a designated program area or be with a parent/guardian or in childcare unless the parent has given written permission for the child to leave an activity.

**Restroom Guidelines:** When possible, children should use a classroom bathroom. Adults should avoid being in a bathroom alone with a child but if it is unavoidable the door must be propped open.

**Sick Children:** For the health and well-being of all, children who have vomited or had a fever in the previous 24 hours should not attend church programs. Children who become ill after arriving, should be isolated but never left unattended. Parents or caregivers should be contacted immediately.

**Appropriate Discipline:** A One, Two, Three discipline policy will be adhered to.

**One:** Leaders will **TALK** to a child who is not following rules, being disrespectful, or being disruptive. The child will be given the chance to change the behavior.

**Two:** If the inappropriate behavior continues, the leaders will **SEPARATE** the child from the group for a short period of time. (Rule of thumb – one minute for each year of age.) Children should never be unattended.

**Three:** If the inappropriate behavior continues when the child returns to the group, **CONTACT** the ministry supervisor to assist. Supervisors will make decisions about the next steps to be taken.

**Corporal punishment and shaming are strictly prohibited.**

## *Procedures for Reporting Alleged Abuse*

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Contacting Reporting Agencies – in this order

1. Department of Human Resources: 334-677-0400
2. Law Enforcement: 334-677-4808

### Forms and Resources

Containers or cabinets clearly marked as “Emergency Response Resources” can be found on the main floor of each FUMC building. The resources available will include, but not be limited to: appropriate Safe Sanctuaries forms, emergency contact information, instructions for appropriate handling of a variety of situations, and a First Aid Kit.

### During Church-Related Activities

Should an adult in charge suspect abuse or a child, youth, or vulnerable adult report abuse by any member of the church staff, volunteer, or by any person present at a church-sponsored meeting or activity, the following procedures shall apply for reporting the alleged abuse:

1. The adult in charge (Employed Staff or Supervisory Volunteer) shall document the incident in writing. If possible, an “Incident Form” should be used. All documentation must be signed and dated.
2. The Senior Pastor and/or Church Administrator shall be notified as soon as possible. If a pastor is the accused party, notify the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) or the District Superintendent.
3. Once an accusation occurs, if not already done, the Senior Pastor or SPRC Chairperson shall notify the following:
  - DHR or law enforcement
  - District Superintendent
  - Chairperson of the FUMC Trustees, who shall notify the Church insurance carrier.
4. The Senior Pastor or SPRC Chairperson may also notify the following persons:
  - Attorney
  - Pastoral Care Consultant

### Non-Church Related Activities

If an adult in a supervisory position suspects a case of abuse or a child, youth or vulnerable adult reports abuse occurring away from church-sponsored functions, the following procedures shall apply:

1. The adult shall document the incident in writing. Documentation must be signed and dated.
2. The Senior Pastor and the Church Administrator shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. The Senior Pastor shall notify DHR or law enforcement.



**Additional Child Abuse Intervention Resources.** Below are child abuse intervention reporting resources and contacts for use by the local church.

1. Child Protective Services - Department of Human Resources/Children Services (334) 677-0400
2. Houston County Sheriff's Department (334) 677-4808
3. National Child Abuse Hotline 1(800) 4-A-CHILD
4. Alabama Sex Offender Registry <http://community.dps.state.al.us>

### ***Principles of Responding to Abuse***

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If allegations of abuse are made, our response will be guided by the following principles:

1. All allegations will be taken seriously.
2. Respect for privacy and confidentiality will be maintained.
3. Victims include the abused, the family of the abused, the peers of the abused, the family of the accused, and the congregation.
4. The needs of the victims will be given high priority.
5. Full cooperation will be given to civil authorities.
6. The Senior Pastor, or other individuals appointed by the Senior Pastor, are mandated by Alabama legislation to report the alleged abuse and shall be the church's spokesperson with the media.

### ***Dealing with Persons Accused of Abuse***

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#### **Employed Staff**

Should an FUMC employee be accused of physically or sexually abusing a child or vulnerable adult, whether in connection with a church activity, that employee shall immediately be reassigned to a position that does not have any supervisory authority over children, youth, or vulnerable adults and shall not return to a supervisory position until such time as the Senior Pastor and Chairperson of the SPRC deem appropriate. The decision to return an employee accused of physically or sexually abusing someone to a supervisory position should be made in conjunction with FUMC's legal counsel and/or insurance carrier.

Pending investigation, FUMC reserves the right to reassign or suspend the employee, with or without pay and benefits, depending on the circumstances.

#### **Volunteers**

Should an FUMC volunteer be accused of physical or sexual abuse, whether in connection with a church activity, that volunteer shall immediately be suspended from working on any FUMC activities that involve children, youth, or vulnerable adults. The volunteer shall not be allowed to work on any FUMC activities involving any of these at-risk groups until such time as the Senior Pastor deems appropriate. The decision to return a volunteer to activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults should be made in conjunction with FUMC's legal counsel and/or insurance carrier.

## *Training Criteria*

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1. There shall be a variety of Safe Sanctuaries training sessions offered at the church at various times during the year to meet the needs of the employed staff and adult volunteers who work with any “at-risk” groups at the church.
  - This training will be required of all employed staff persons and adult volunteers who work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.
  - All training will be done in-house via attendance at a Safe Sanctuaries training session OR an online presentation provided by FUMC.
  - It is the responsibility of each supervisor to provide training themselves or to arrange for training within 14 days of the start of employment.
2. It is recommended each newly hired staff person who will serve in an area for children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults attend a Safe Sanctuaries training session before he or she begins working at the church. If this is not possible, the newly hired staff person or volunteer must attend or complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session within 14 days of his or her starting date at the church. It is the responsibility of the Church Administrator, or other such staff member as shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor, to ensure this training requirement is satisfied in a timely manner.
3. Each new adult volunteer, upon his or her appointment to that position, shall attend or complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session within 90 days of the time of the appointment. If the new volunteer is not able to attend or complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session within 90 days of the time of his or her appointment, that person shall be suspended from the position and shall not be allowed to serve in any supervisory capacity with children, youth, or vulnerable adults until that person is able to attend or complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session. It is the responsibility of the employed staff person that has supervisory authority over the newly appointed volunteer, to ensure this training requirement is satisfied in a timely manner.
4. Staff members and adult volunteers serving in a supervisory capacity for children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are required to attend Safe Sanctuaries training every two years as long as that person continues to serve in a supervisory capacity for children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. Documentation will be on file.
5. In the event of an unforeseen circumstance requiring the use of a substitute worker who has not had such training, that substitute must be briefed on the Safe Sanctuaries policy by the director or other supervisor before beginning work.
6. A copy of this document will be provided to each employed staff member for review. The Safe Sanctuaries Policy is available on the FUMC website. A copy of this document is on file in the administrative office of FUMC.

## *Training Session Overview*

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Training sessions will be held to meet the needs of Employed Staff and Adult Volunteers who work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults at the church. Sessions will include at least the following:

1. FUMC policies and procedures
2. Definitions and signs of abuse
3. Behaviors that could indicate problems
4. Guidelines for prevention
5. The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics
6. Appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders including discipline, interpersonal boundaries, and age-level characteristics
7. Procedures for reporting alleged abuse
8. Confidentiality
9. Procedures for response
10. Forms

### Responsibility for Training Sessions

The Church Administrator, or such person designated by the Senior Pastor, shall have the responsibility for ensuring:

- Safe Sanctuaries training sessions contain up-to-date, appropriate materials to educate those who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults as to the risk of physical or sexual abuse in our church and how to reduce such risk.
- The Safe Sanctuaries training sessions are provided often enough and at a variety of times during the year so that all employees and volunteers have sufficient opportunity to attend.

### Documentation of Training

Each staff member and adult volunteer must sign a statement certifying he or she has attended a Safe Sanctuaries training session and has read, understood, and will abide by this policy. The Safe Sanctuaries training session is not deemed to be complete until a signed and dated Covenant Statement has been received by FUMC.

Each signed Covenant Statement shall be kept on file by FUMC indefinitely or until legal counsel advises the destruction of the certifying statements is permitted.

## *Educating the Congregation*

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It is recommended that the following educational opportunities be provided for the congregation of FUMC:

1. The general congregation should be made aware that FUMC has a Policy on Reducing the Risk of Physical and Sexual Abuse in the Church, a.k.a. Safe Sanctuaries, and that we ensure our staff and adult volunteers are fully trained to reduce the risk of abuse during any church-related activities.
2. We will be open to sharing the policy with any member of our Congregation.
3. We will make every reasonable effort to allow concerned members of our Congregation to attend a Safe Sanctuaries training session.
4. We will encourage classes and presentations that focus on sexuality education and safety to groups within our Congregation including age-appropriate classes for youth and children.

Additional guides and suggestions for the clergy are available from the Alabama West Florida Conference website and Safe Sanctuaries conference policy.

## *Safe Sanctuaries Committee*

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A Safe Sanctuaries Committee shall have the responsibility for developing a local church safe sanctuaries policy and minimum standards and procedures, communicating with and educating the congregation concerning those policies and procedures, recruiting, screening, and training all paid staff and volunteers, retaining safe sanctuaries documentation and records, and regularly reviewing conference policies and procedures relating to safe sanctuaries.

The Safe Sanctuaries Committee in addition to its chairperson shall include, but not be limited to, the Pastor in Charge, Church Administrator, Lay Delegate to AWF Annual Conference, Board of Trustees chairperson, and may include if such offices and positions exist, Youth Director, Children's Director, Daycare Director, Worship Leader, and Buildings and Grounds Director.

## *Sources*

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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Alabama West Florida Conference Safe Sanctuaries Policies</li><li>-Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church by Reverend Joy Melton AWF Conference.</li><li>-Safe Sanctuaries Policy Guide – FUMC Montgomery, AL</li><li>-Family and Children's Services Division Office of Protective Services</li><li>-State of Alabama DHR Website</li></ul> |
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## First United Methodist Church Dothan Safe Sanctuaries Covenant

*FUMC Dothan is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities. The following policy statements reflect our commitment to preserving this campus as a holy place of safety and protection for all who enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God.*

- Adult volunteers with children and youth shall observe the “Two-Adult” rule at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children or youth.
- To be considered an adult authority figure, volunteers with children and youth shall be at least 21 years old.
- Adult volunteers with children and youth shall participate in training regarding Safe Sanctuaries guidelines.
- Adult volunteers shall immediately report to church staff any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.
- Any adult who has been convicted of child abuse (sexual, physical, or emotional) cannot volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.

Please initial each of the following statements with which you agree:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand and agree to observe and abide by the Safe Sanctuaries Policy.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to the “Two Adult” Rule at all times.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in Safe Sanctuary training.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to promptly report to church staff any abusive or inappropriate behavior that I may observe.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Staff/Volunteer

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Full Name of Staff/Volunteer



## Background Check Form

### DISCLOSURE REGARDING CONSUMER REPORTS

First United Methodist Church  
1380 W. Main Street, Dothan, AL 36301  
334.793.3555

First United Methodist Church of Dothan, AL is committed to providing a safe, secure environment that includes putting the right volunteers into the right positions within our organization and conducting background checks on our volunteers.

#### **First United Methodist Church of Dothan, AL Will Obtain a Background Check**

You acknowledge and understand that in connection with your volunteer application with **First United Methodist Church of Dothan, AL** (including any independent contract for services) or when deciding whether to modify or continue your ongoing involvement, we may obtain a “consumer report” and/or an “investigative consumer report” on you from Trak-1, a consumer reporting agency, or from any third party, in strict compliance with both state and federal law.

#### **Consumer Report Defined**

A consumer report is any communication of information by a consumer reporting agency bearing on your credit worthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living which is used or expected to be used for purposes of serving as a factor in establishing your current and/or continuing eligibility for involvement. A common term for a consumer report is a “background check report.”

#### **Investigative Consumer Report Defined**

An investigative consumer report is obtained through personal interviews with individuals who may have knowledge of your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living. An investigative consumer report might include, for example, calls to the personal references you provide or conversations with former supervisors or colleagues where you worked.

#### **Reports May Contain**

The consumer reports or investigative consumer reports may contain public record information which may be requested or made on you including, but not limited to: consumer credit, criminal records, civil cases in which you have been involved, driving history records, current motor vehicle insurance coverage information, education records, previous employment history, workers compensation claims history, social security traces, military records, professional licensure records, eviction records, drug testing, government records, and others.

You further understand that these reports may include experience information along with reasons for termination of past employment. You also acknowledge and understand that information from various federal, state, local and other agencies which contain information about your past activities will be requested, and that a consumer report containing injury and illness, drug testing, or other medical records and medical information may be obtained only after a tentative offer of employment has been made.

#### **Your Rights as a Consumer**

You are hereby notified that you have the right to make a timely request for a copy of the scope and nature of the above investigative background report and/or a complete copy of your consumer report contained in Trak-1’s files on you at the time of your request by providing proper identification.

You are further notified that, prior to being denied a volunteer position based in whole or in part on information obtained in the consumer report, you will be provided a copy of the report, the name, address and telephone number of the consumer reporting agency and a description in writing of your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Correspondence to Trak-1 should be forwarded to: Trak-1 | Consumer Relations | 7131 Riverside Parkway | Tulsa, OK 74136 | 1-800-600-8999 | CustomerCare@Trak-1.com



### AUTHORIZATION TO OBTAIN CONSUMER REPORT

The following is accurate and complete information required for First United Methodist Church Dothan, AL to request Trak-1 to perform a background check on you and, in the process, obtain a complete consumer report about you:

Full Legal Name: <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[2]</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
(First Name, Full Middle Name, Last Name)

All Previously Used Former or Other Names: (AKA, Maiden Names, Married Names, Surnames, Etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Current Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Street Address 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Resided Here: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Street Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Resided Here: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Street Address 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Resided Here: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Email Address\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender\*\*: M / F Race\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Issuing State: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your signature below indicates the following:**

- 1) You authorize, without reservation, Trak-1 or any third party to obtain and/or furnish to FUMC Dothan any records or information referenced in the provided disclosure statement for volunteer-related purposes;
- 2) You authorize ongoing procurement of any records or information, reports, and records at any time during your relationship with FUMC Dothan to the extent allowed by law;
- 3) You authorize the use of a fax or photocopy of this authorization as having the same authority as the original;
- 4) You authorize and request, without reservation, any present or former employer, school, police department, financial institution, division of motor vehicles, consumer reporting agency, or other entity, person or agency having knowledge about you to furnish FUMC Dothan and/or Trak-1 with any and all background information in their possession regarding you for these stated employment purposes;
- 5) You understand and agree that in connection with your volunteer application consumer report information, whether investigative or otherwise, may be shared with and/or reviewed by all applicable parties involved in the hiring process;
- 6) You have read and fully understand the foregoing disclosure and this authorization.
- 7) You certify that all the information you have provided on this form is true, complete, correct and accurate; and
- 8) You certify you have received, reviewed and understand the "Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.)" which is published by the Federal Trade Commission to help you know your rights.

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

*\*Your email address will be provided to notify you when any adverse public record information is being reported.*

*\*\* This information will be used for background screening and record matching purposes only.*

## Accident Report Form

To be completed & submitted to the ministry area Director

Date of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant Injured: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Location of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) who witnessed the accident:

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

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

Describe the Accident: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Notified? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution Follow-up: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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



## Incident Form – Confidential

### For Suspected, Reported or Discovered Abuse or Violation of Safe Sanctuaries Policies & Procedures

To be completed by incident reporter & submitted to clergy

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Victim's full name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Victim's age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Date and place of incident:  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Victim's statement (give your detailed summary here, "tell me what happened"): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Name of person accused of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_

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

6. Reported to Clergy (Name): \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary by Clergy: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Call to Victim's Parent/Guardian:  
Call Initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Call to local service agency:

Call Initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Call to local law enforcement agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Call Initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Incident Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Incident Summary Documentation Form - Confidential**  
**For Suspected, Reported or Discovered Abuse or Violation of Safe Sanctuaries Policies & Procedures**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY CLERGY/BOARD OF STEWARDS CHAIR**

1. Date of report from Employee/Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date and time of report to the appropriate Protection Services: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Protection Service Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Telephone # to where the report was made: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of the recipient of the report: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Brief synopsis of incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Incident Reporter

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Clergy/Board of Stewards Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Safe Sanctuaries Notice of Unfavorable Background Check

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

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

As you authorized in your employment/volunteer application, First United Methodist Church Dothan has recently completed a background check as part of our application process. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that there is information in the report we received that, if accurate, would prevent us from offering you employment or allowing you to volunteer at this time. A copy of this report is enclosed.

If, after reviewing the report, (1) you believe that the information contained is inaccurate, and/or (2) you want to know what information in the report falls outside of the acceptable guidelines, we ask that you contact us within five business days. The contact information is included below. Otherwise, we will assume that you no longer wish to pursue employment/volunteerism with us.

This report was furnished to us by \_\_\_\_\_. Please understand that while \_\_\_\_\_ provided the report, they did not make the decision, and they are unable to provide you with the specific reasons why the congregation made this decision. Under the law, you have the right to dispute directly with \_\_\_\_\_ any information in this report.

First United Methodist Church  
1380 W. Main Street  
Dothan, AL 36301

Contact Person: Wendy Hicks, Church Administrator  
334-793-3555

## Children, Tween & Youth Participation Form

In consideration for being accepted by all ministries of First United Methodist Church Dothan from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024. The undersigned parent or guardian does hereby release, forever discharge and agree to hold harmless, the Alabama West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the directors thereof from any and all liability, claims or demands for personal injury, sickness or death, as well as property damage and expenses, of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by the undersigned while participating in any ministry.

Furthermore, the undersigned hereby assumes all risk of personal injury, sickness, death, damage, and expense as a result of participation in recreation and work activities involved therein.

The undersigned hereby authorizes FUMC Dothan representatives to transport below child in church buses and/or personal vehicles for church-related functions.

The undersigned further hereby agrees to hold harmless and indemnify said church, its directors, employees, and agents, for any liability sustained by said church as the result of the negligent, willful, or intentional acts of said participant, including expenses incurred.

The undersigned hereby gives permission to take said participant to a doctor or hospital and hereby authorizes medical treatment including but not in limitation to emergency surgery or medical treatment, and assures the responsibility of all medical bills, if any.

Further, should it be necessary for the participant to return home due to medical reasons, disciplinary action or otherwise, the undersigned hereby assumes all transportation costs.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Male or Female      Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address with City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade (as of Aug 2020): \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Physicians Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Physicians Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Insurance and Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is authorized to pick up child other than parent/guardian? \_\_\_\_\_

Known allergies:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Medications currently taking and pertinent health information  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge and agree to the following (please initial):

- My child will be dropped off no more than 10 minutes prior to service/ministry beginning. \_\_\_\_\_
- My child will be picked up within 10 minutes of service/ministry ending \_\_\_\_\_
- I will allow my child to have photos/videos taken and/or published \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Please do not sign until notary is present)

State of \_\_\_\_\_, county of \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
20\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_, who is personally known to me or  
who has produced \_\_\_\_\_ as identification.

Seal:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary public

## Participant Consent Form

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Below are the details for an offsite activity that requires your permission for your child to participate. Please be sure to complete this form, sign, and return it. We will be unable to allow any individual to participate who does not return a signed consent form from their parent or legal guardian. Thank you!

### Event Details

**WHO:**

**WHERE:**

**WHEN:**

**TIME:**

**BRING:**

### Participant Information

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

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (printed name of parent/guardian) being the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, (printed name of minor) have been informed of the FUMC of Dothan sponsored activity described above and give my consent for my child to participate in this activity.

I understand that all reasonable safety precautions will be taken by the leaders of this activity and that the possibility of an unforeseen hazard does exist. I further agree not to hold FUMC Dothan, its leaders, employees and volunteer staff liable for damages, losses, diseases, or injuries incurred by the minor listed on this form.

I acknowledge that my child is to be **excluded** from the following activities:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent or guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Phone number(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail:  
\_\_\_\_\_