CHILD AND YOUTH

ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

FOR

ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON, Wisconsin

Adopted June 14, 2015

CHILD AND YOUTH ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

FOR ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON

# Introduction

To help protect children, ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON has adopted the following Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. It is important that all ST. JOHN’SUNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent sexual abuse against children. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children.

# Purpose

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of sexual abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of sexual abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

# Definitions

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff*: Any pastor, minister, preacher, cleric, or employee who is paid.
2. *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
4. *Volunteer*: Means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
5. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
6. *Child Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.

**Protection and Prevention**

# Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

1. *Employment Application and Volunteer Application*: Any paid staff and volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Employment Application and/or the Volunteer Application. The release statement attached to the Application must be signed by the individual completing the Application to apply for and qualify for service.

Our Employment Application includes questions regarding:

* Current and previous residence addresses.
* Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles, and reasons for leaving.
* Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned.
* References from previous employers and organizations that serve children.
* Pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law).
* Criminal history information.

Our Volunteer Application includes questions regarding:

* Current address.
* Volunteer experience.
* Criminal history information.
* Personal references.

 Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

1. Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
2. Conduct interviews with qualified applicants. *When at all possible there will be two persons involved in the interview with the applicant.*

 If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired or accepted as a volunteer, document the reasons for overriding the prior information.

1. Contact all listed references for volunteers. Contact each of the volunteer applicant's references and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
2. Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
3. *Criminal Background Check*: ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated periodically.
4. *Six-Month Rule*: Volunteers who have taken active part of the life of the congregation for at least **SIX MONTHS** may be invited to become involved with the Educational and Youth Programs at various levels of commitment All volunteers will be required to review and sign the Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program.

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# Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above‑referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible. These materials will be archived.

# Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.

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| **AGE GROUP** | **COUNSELOR/YOUTH RATIO** |
| Infants and toddlers | 1 adult staff per 4 youth |
| 6 - 8 years old | 1 adult staff per 6 youth |
| 9 - 14 years old | 1 adult staff per 8 youth |
| 15 - 18 years old | 1 adult staff per 10 youth |
| When an activity/trip involves overnights, there shall be at least two adult chaperones of the same sex in the youth sleeping quarters. |

1. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.
2. Will release minors only to a parent or guardian.
3. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.
4. Staff and adult leaders or teachers cannot transport children or youth between congregation facility and home. Transportation for field trips, to activities, or for events is by groups and to/from the congregation facility except with written parental permission.
5. Will require that young children be accompanied to the restroom and the paid staff or volunteer wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
6. Will encourage minors to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON property.
7. Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.
8. *Will designate a two (1 male and 1 female) "confidential counselors" to whom any minor can go at any time, without special permission, to discuss any problems he or she is having. These counselors will have background checks and training on how to respond to an allegation of sexual abuse or misconduct. Although these individuals are NOT mandatory reporters, they will undertake the Wisconsin Child Welfare and Professional Development Service on-line Mandatory Reporter training every three years.* [*http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/mandatedreporter/*](http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/mandatedreporter/)*. They will also view any on-line training as is made available through the church insurance carrier every three years.*

*They will also serve, along with the Pastor, as the response team if there is a reported incident.*

# Behavioral Guidelines for Religious Organization Paid Staff

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. To the extent possible, ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. Whenever possible, at least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.
4. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
5. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
6. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
7. If one‑on‑one pastoral care is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.
8. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON for handling.

# Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug‑related offenses, or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

# Sexual Offender at ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON

ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON may allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become a member of the congregation, but they must adhere to specific guidelines. However, first check with the offender's probation/parole officer for any restrictions regarding attending services or other functions where children are present. Ask the probation/parole officer to put any restrictions in writing. If restrictions do not prohibit offender participation, the following additional four requirements must be implemented and remain in force at all times involving any known sexual offender:

1. The convicted sexual offender cannot participate in any of the child or youth programs in any way.

1. The convicted sexual offender can only participate in a predetermined service each week.
2. *The convicted sexual offender must report in and be assigned to a probation officer approved escort who has received instructions on the full responsibilities of this task. Although these individuals are NOT mandatory reporters, they will undertake the Wisconsin Child Welfare and Professional Development Service on-line Mandatory Reporter training every three years.* [*http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/mandatedreporter/*](http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/mandatedreporter/)*. They will also view any on-line training as is made available through the church insurance carrier every three years. The escort will accompany the sexual offender at all times.*

4. The congregation needs to be made aware that a convicted sex offender is attending. However, the name does not need to be disclosed.

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## Response to Sexual Abuse

ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. *The Pastor or one or both of the confidential counselors,* will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Pastor is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then the *confidential counselors and* Council President will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws*. (See addendum for specific Child Protective Services guidelines.)*

1. Report the matter to **ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON's** insurance carrier*. (Church Mutual 800-552-2642)*
2. *Contact the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ Conference Minister in DeForest, WI. (608-846-7880)*
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
5. An official of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the governing body of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.
6. An official of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
7. An official of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.

 9. During the investigation, an official of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.

 10. An official of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.

 11. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON.

 12. Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.

 13. Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON's attorney.

**CHECK LIST FOR FIRST RESPONDENT:**

* Document your efforts.
* Report the incident immediately.
* Contact the proper civil authorities.
* Notify the parents.
* Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child is secured.
* Do not prejudge the situation.
* Treat the accused with dignity and support.
* Use the prepared public statement to answer the press.

**Create a Response Plan**

* Maintain Adequate Records.
* Select a spokesperson to speak with the media and your congregation.
* Know your state's reporting requirements.
* Use a reporting procedure.
* Prepare a position statement.
* Do not engage in denial, minimization or blame.
* Use an attorney.
* Don't accuse in public interviews.
* Work with your denomination and insurance company.

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|  **INCIDENT REPORT FORM** |

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| Name of Person Reporting Incident |
| Phone Number: | Relationship to Congregation: |
| Date of Incident: | Time of Incident |
| Date of Notification: | Time of Notification: |
| In what manner was the incident reported |
| Name of person(s) involved in incident: (Name, address, phone number) Minor  Adult |
|  Minor  Adult |
|  Minor  Adult |
|  Minor  Adult |
|  Minor  Adult |
|  A separate report is being made for each minor involved. |
| Location of the incident |
| Witnesses to incident: (Name, Address, Phone) |
| Witnesses to incident: (Name, Address, Phone) |
| Witnesses to incident: (Name, Address, Phone) |
| Description of Incident: |
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| After the report was made the following actions were taken: |
| * An informal interview with the alleged perpetrator and victim was held.
* Since the alleged victim was under 18 years of age, his/her parents were notified and were present at the interview of the alleged victim.
* It was determined that the allegation was unwarranted and all parties concurred.
* It was determined that there was sufficient evidence and concern to report the incident to the:
* appropriate authorities,
* Advisory Panel,
* Head of the Judicatory Office.
* The alleged perpetrator was notified of this action.

Date the incident was reported to the appropriate authorities: The following space records the participation of the appropriate parties of the church during the ensuing investigation and outcome: (make date notation for each entry |
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| **REQUEST FOR PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN** **A SPECIAL ACTIVITY/TRIP OF THE****St. John’s United Church Christ****Please refer your questions to.... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-** |
| We are sponsoring the following special activity/trip will be: |
| The cost to the child/youth for this trip will be $  |
| Your child/youth will need to bring: |
| **ACTIVITY OUT OF TOWN** |
| Our departure time i:s AM PM on: | Our return time is: AM PM on:  |
| The trip will be chaperoned by: |
| Adult driver(s) will be: |
| Method of Transportation |
| **AN OVER-NIGHT ACTIVITY** IN TOWN OR ONE OFF PREMISES |
| The event will be begin at AM PM on | The event will end at AM PM on |
| The location of the event will be at: |
| The event will be chaperoned by: |
| Adult driver(s) will be: |
| Method of Transportation: |

(Save information above and return attached permission slip.)

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| **PERMISSION SLIP FOR MINORS INVOLVED IN A CHURCH RELATED ACTIVITY** |
| I give my permission for: (name of student) |
| . . . to attend the following activity: |
| **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY** |
| I can be reached at the following number: Or |
| Name of Parent/Guardian (Please Print): |
| Signature of Parent or Guardian: Date of Signature: |
| In case I cannot be reached please contact: Phone: |
| Special Instructions: |

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| **TRANSPORTATION FORM** |
| For the safety of your youth, St. John’s United Church of Christ is required to obtain a signed Transportation Form. Please provide the following information and bring this form with you. |
| Name of Youth: |
| Event Name: |
| My child/youth will be transported to the event/departure site by: (Name and Phone) |
| My child/youth will be picked up following the event by: (Name and Phone) |
| If, for some reason, I or the person listed above is not able to pick-up my child/student at the end of the event, I will call (The name of activity leader or local contact) and identify the responsible party who will do so. This person will provide appropriate identification and use the following password: |
| Signature of Parent/Guardian Date Signed:  |

I understand that church policy does not allow for less than two adult supervisors to be left alone with the youth of the church. If an adult supervisor finds himself/herself alone with your child after an activity or at the pick-up site, he/she will be forced to wait outside the premises until you arrive. Your prompt arrival would be appreciated. Thank you.

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| **BACKGROUND CRIMINAL AUTHORIZATION FORM** |

**St. John’s United Church of Christ** reserves the right to run and have access to a criminal records check if the need should arise. Signing and agreeing to this does not mean such a check will be run automatically. It may be run if deemed necessary by the minister and/or his/her designee.

Signature (Parent or Guardian if applicant Print Name

is under 18 years of age.)

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Maiden Name if applicable Date of Birth

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Social Security Number Place of Birth

Print all Aliases:

 I agree to be bound by the Policies and Code of Behavior of St. John’s United Church of Christ**. I shall** refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church, I covenant with Christian Education Committee, which programs children and youth work in the church:

* ***To honor each child's integrity and worth as a child of God.***
* ***To provide a nurturing and safe environment for children and youth to grow socially,***

 ***and spiritually.***

* ***To continue to grow and nurture my own personal faith.***
* ***To work in partnership with the professional staff, volunteers, and Christ as a part of the larger Christian community.***

 I state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement I have read and understand.

 (Signature) (Today’s Date)

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| **SCREENING STATEMENT FOR EVENT VOLUNTEERS** |

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

Signature (Parent or Guardian if counselor Print Name of Counselor

is under 18 years of age.)

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Print Maiden Name if applicable Date of Birth

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Name Event Beginning and Ending Dates of Event

I agree to be bound by the Policies and Code of Behavior of the St. John’s United Church of Christ. **I shall** refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I covenant with the Christian Education Committee, which programs children and youth work in the church:

  To honor each child's integrity and worth as a child of God.

 To provide a nurturing and safe environment for children and youth to grow socially, and spiritually.

 To continue to grow and nurture my own personal faith.

 To work in partnership with the professional staff, volunteers, and Christ as a part of the larger Christian community.

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 (Signature) (Today’s Date)

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|  **CODE OF BEHAVIOR FOR THOSE PARTICIPATING IN A PROGRAM,TRIP OR EVENT SPONSORED BY ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST** |

A successful event in our church is dependent upon the cooperation of all those participating in it. Please read the list of expectations which have been designed to insure a good experience for all of us. The brush strokes are intentionally broad so as to eliminate any creative loopholes one might think is there. Your adult advisor is the person to interpret the boundaries of conduct. Trust them. They may surprise you! Live in doubt and seek permission.

Assuming that the following list gives one a license to stretch the boundaries without seeking permission will only bring one to an abbreviated halt to their participation in the activity. The adult advisors will trust participants to embrace the boundaries until otherwise demonstrated.

During this (year, trip, program or event) I will:

 Not possess and/or use alcohol or other controlled substances nor purchase same.

 Respect the property of all other participants and advisors. This includes not touching things that are not mine.

 Attend all scheduled programs unless specific permission is given for me to be elsewhere.

 Join in group work, play, study, activities without undue complaint.

 Take my turn in the support and feeding chores of our community.

* Respect myself, God, the other members of our group, and the people we meet on our way. Conduct included in such an acts of respect would exclude:
	1. Self or other person directed put downs.
	2. Abusive or vulgar language.
	3. Inappropriate touching.
	4. Activity which separates an individual (or couple) from the GROUP.
	5. Placing adult advisors in uncomfortable and potentially vulnerable situations.
	6. Any non-scheduled activity which has not received permission from an adult advisor.

Please go over these expectations with a parent or legal guardian and sign the attached Covenant Statement. Please note the ***One Strike and You’re Out Rule*** which is described on the Covenant Statement.

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|  **COVENANT STATEMENT BETWEEN YOUTH PARTICIPANT AND** **ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND ADVISOR** |

***“ONE STRIKE AND YOU’RE OUT RULE.”*** This covenant statement assumes that the sponsoring organization has clearly stated what the behavioral expectations are of the participants and adult supervisors participating in (year round or special event) of the church. The expectations have been:

 Stated in writing,

 Sent to the participating youth and their parents or legal guardian,

 Reviewed by a parent/guardian/youth at the beginning of the year or before the trip.

 And shall be received by the adult advisor of the Program, Trip or Event.

In this way, any violation of the expectations shall result in an **immediate conclusion** of the young person’s participation in the stated (Program, Trip or Event). Second chances would require exceptional circumstances. No inch...no mile makes for a good experience for all.

***Covenant Statement***

1. I have read the information provided as to what is expected of me when I participate in the forthcoming (Program, Trip or Event). I understand that failure on my part to live up to these expectations will end my participation in the (Program, Trip or Event). Blatant disregard of these expectations may result in suspension of future experiences.

Signature of Participant: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. We have read the information provided and reviewed it with our child. We understand what is expected and accept the “One Strike and You’re Out Rule”. We will assume all costs involved in our child’s return home.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. I give my permission for my child/youth to be photographed/video taped and have said image downloaded on our churches Web Site with the understanding that in no way such images will include identifying names, phone numbers, e-mail or physical addresses. Furthermore, print images and negatives will not be available for any type of distribution or promotion without additional consent on my part.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. I have verbally confirmed that the child/youth and his/her parents or guardian have reviewed the information provided and that they are willing to accept the expectations stated.

Signature of (Program, Trip or Event) Adult Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

## Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program

## Acknowledgment

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with the ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON's Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of the ST. JOHN’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MERTON.

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Print Name

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

Signature

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Date

**Addendum – Waukesha County Child Protective Service FAQ page**

**What is child abuse and neglect?**

Child abuse is the physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment of a child (ages 0 to 18) by a parent, family member, other caregiver, or non-caregiver. Physical abuse will involve cuts, broken or fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, or "severe and frequent bruising" inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Sexual abuse will involve sexual intercourse, other sexual contact, or exploitation. Emotional abuse will involve verbal mistreatment, withholding of love or companionship, and the like.

Child neglect is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide necessary care (including supervision), food, clothing, shelter, and medical care - for reasons other than poverty - so as to seriously endanger the physical health of a child.

**What should I do if I believe that a child is abused or neglected?**

If you believe that a child (a boy or girl ages 0 to18) has been:

* Abused (physically, sexually, or emotionally)
* Neglected (physically or emotionally)
* At risk of abuse or neglect
* You should report your concerns to the Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Service.

**How and when do I report concerns?**

Contact the Department of Health and Human Services:
(262) 548-7212 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. After hours dial **211** or dial (414) 455-1736 or toll free at 1-866-211-3380. Make the call as soon as possible!

**What if I'm not sure if I should report?**

Please report! The Department of Health and Human Services staff will make follow-up decisions. We cannot protect children unless they are brought to our attention.

**Will the family know that I reported?**

State law protects reporter confidentiality. We will not disclose your name to the individuals whom you report. You should not be afraid of reprisals if you report.

**What will happen when I report child protection concerns?**

A social worker will write up your report. They will wish to know the names, ages, and addresses of family members. They will wish to hear information about the suspected abuse or neglect. Please be prepared to provide as much information as possible. It is critical for the Social Worker to obtain as much information to make a judgment about present danger threats and likely emergency conditions to child safety. This information assists the agency in identifying not only what actions it should take but also whether the option for an emergency response apply.

A supervisor will review the report and decide if the situation is of sufficient seriousness to merit an investigation.

The supervisor will make a response time decision once a decision is made to open a case. Response time is determined by use of a response priority tool. Cases are designated:

* Level 1 (immediate to within the same day)
* Level 2 (response in 24-48 hours)
* Level 3 (response in 3-5 days)

**What will happen when the social worker sees the child and family?**

Social workers will interview children and family members regarding the maltreatment concerns. They will assess present or impending danger threats to child safety and family strengths and needs. They will make determinations as to whether maltreatment as defined in state statutes has occurred. The Social Worker will make decisions as to services might benefit the children and family.

**Will the child be removed from their family?**

The Department of Health and Human Services strives to maintain families together. We serve most children and families in their home. However, if the family is unable or unwilling to control present and/or impending danger threats to child safety through an in home safety plan, an out of home plan will be considered to assure child safety. Court action is necessary in all of those instances.

In removal situations, the Department of Health and Human Services actions are guided by Wisconsin State Statutes (specifically, Chapter 48, also known as the Children’s Code). These statutes set forth agency child protection responsibilities, situations in which agencies may petition the Courts for involvement in children’s lives, dispositions which Courts might enter on children’s behalf, criteria which must be met in order to take children into custody, places in which children taken into custody may be held, and more. These Statutes closely circumscribe social workers’ actions. Children and families are awarded many rights by these statutes.

**Will I learn what happened?**

The social worker will write you if you are a mandated reporter. Mandated reporters are teachers, doctors, and other professionals who are required by law to report suspected maltreatment. The letter will provide basic information about the intervention, only, as state law provides for family confidentiality. The social worker will not write you if you are a non-mandated reporter as state law prohibits this breach of family confidentiality.