



Simpson United Methodist Church

**2095 Route 516
Old Bridge, New Jersey 08857**

Rev. Dr. Heasun Kim, Pastor

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Dear Simpson Employee or Volunteer,

Simpson United Methodist Church has adopted a Safe Sanctuary Policy. The policy is designed to provide a caring and secure environment for children in all phases of church life here at Simpson.

All employees of Simpson and all who volunteer to work with the youth of Simpson are required to read the Safe Sanctuary Policy Manual. You are then required to acknowledge with your signature that you have read and understood the Safe Sanctuary Policy adopted by our church.

Next you are required to submit an application for a background check at a cost of \$15.00 that will be refunded to you by Simpson United Methodist Church upon the submission of the receipt. Please follow the steps on the enclosed instruction sheet to complete the background check.

Within 10 days please return to PPRC Chairman the following:

1. The Safe Sanctuary Policy Acknowledgement signed
2. Background check report
3. Receipt if reimbursement is required

Place all items in a sealed envelope and place in the PPRC Chairman's mailbox.

Please retain the copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy Manual for your records.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Child Protection Policy and Procedure for Simpson United Methodist Church, Old Bridge, NJ

I. Purpose

1. To help Simpson United Methodist Church provide a caring and secure environment for children in all phases of church life.
2. To help Simpson United Methodist Church reduce its legal risk and liability exposure.

II. Biblical Foundation

Simpson United Methodist Church seeks to express God's love of children and provide for their personal wholeness. This caring community seeks to prevent child abuse of any form to our children and youth and to be in ministry to families where abuse may occur. The Bible is foundation to our understanding upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand.

And they were bringing children to Him, that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it He was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them. Mark 10: 13-16

Jesus teaches us explicitly that children have the right and the keys to the Kingdom of God. He demonstrated this through blessing and touch. Our goal in response to this Biblical mandate is to maintain a safe, secure and loving place where children may grow: a place where caregivers, teachers and leaders (both paid and volunteer) minister appropriately to their needs.

III. Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse

In an effort to create the safest possible environment within the church, several abuse prevention methods will be utilized. These measures include screening of paid and volunteer workers for past child abuse convictions or unresolved charges, provision for regular training on child abuse issues to paid and volunteer staff members, use of the six month rule, two adult rule, standards for appropriate classroom discipline and open classrooms.

Policies and Procedures

A Fourfold Strategy

1. Worker Selection
2. Worker Supervision
3. Reporting Obligations
4. Response to Allegations.

1. Worker Selection:

- A. All Paid Staff, including Nursery Staff (if paid), will have a police check. Also required will be a personnel interview with a Staff person, and be asked to give references. The cost of the police check will be reimbursed by the church.
- B. All Current Volunteers will be asked to complete the required Volunteer Application Form, or have a police check, which will be reimbursed by the church.
- C. After careful consideration of all information by the appropriate paid staff persons, the applicant will be notified of his/her acceptance.
- D. All information is confidential. All forms and confidential information will be kept in a locked security box and only reviewed by the paid Staff.

2. Worker Supervision:

Churches can reduce the risk of negligent supervision in many ways. First United Methodist Churches will use the following procedures.

A. The Two Adult Rule

Two adult workers will be present during any church function .. An adult is anyone over 18 years old and out of high school. This church has made an exception to this rule regarding the Nursery. *(That being at least one teacher and one youth assistant, who has received sexual conduct training, if two adults are not possible.)*

This two adult rule reduces the risk of abuse of the student by an adult and also reduces the risk of false accusations against the adults by the students.

B. Obtain Parental Permission

All church workers must use Permission forms to take students off church property. This includes youth who are over 18 but still in high school. These forms must be signed by a parent or guardian prior to leaving church property. Forms can be obtained in the church administration office.

If a church worker will be alone with a child or will be with a child in an unsupervised situation, he or she must have the consent of the parent prior to the activity. The church worker should also notify a church leader in advance of this activity.

C. Discuss Suspicious Behavior Immediately

Any inappropriate behavior by the adult or child/youth should be discussed immediately. If there is a drastic change of behavior by an adult or child/youth, it should be investigated promptly.

D. Discuss Criminal Sanctions with Youth Workers

Sexual relationships with minors can lead to a felony conviction and imprisonment. Church insurance may not cover such an offense.

E. Windows in Classroom and Youth Room Doors

Glass should be shatterproof (either tempered or wire glass)

Open and visible areas act as deterrents for molesters. Sunday school and youth leaders should make frequent visits to all areas of the building while activities are in session.

F. Provide Adequate Supervision

Supervision will be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or guardians

G. Observation of Overnight Rules.

All adult chaperones and supervisors must be cleared in advance with the pastor.

The definition of adult is someone over 18 and out of high school.

H. Hugs with permission

We are a church. We are here to show the love of God and Jesus Christ.

Therefore:

There are times when children are hurt in the playground area, by harsh words from other children, or are grieving from the loss of a pet or a relative. One of the most caring methods of consolation or showing Christ's love is with a hug.

Ask for permission first. "Do you need a hug? Or "Would you like a hug?"
Proper hugs are given around the shoulders.

Never give a kiss

I. Bathroom Procedures for 2,3,4 yr. olds or any sick student

The adult, who has escorted the student to the bathroom, will remain in the hallway while the student uses the toilet. If the student asks for assistance with clothing or because the student is extremely ill, then the adult may enter the bathroom and assist.

3. Reporting Obligations and Procedures:

A. If a church worker suspects or has witnessed an abusive situation (see types of abuse listed in the next section). He or she must report it immediately to the leader on duty. The person could be:

1. The Pastor
2. Lay Leaders
3. The Sunday School Superintendent

4. Chair of Pastor/Parish Relations

This report will be confidential.

Reporting reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty.

- B. The pastoral staff, after questioning the student, must immediately report the suspected or actual incident to:
 - 1. The Greater New Jersey United Methodist Raritan Valley District Superintendent
 - 2. The Greater New Jersey United Methodist Conference Director of Administrative Services.
 - 3. The Director of Administrative Services will then report the suspected or actual incident to the Conference attorney and to the Conference insurance company.
 - 4. Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)
 - 5. If there is proof that an actual crime has been committed, then the police should be called immediately.

- C. If an occasion occurs where a child/youth admits that he or she is being physically and/or sexually abused at home, he or she is looking for help.
 - 1. Report immediately to a pastoral staff person on duty.
 - 2. Bring the student directly to the pastoral staff person.
 - 3. Do not let the child/youth return home, until the staff person has investigated and reported the allegation and the authorities have decided if the student can return home.
 - 4. Failure to report may be punishable by a fine or jail sentence.

4. Response to Allegations

A. Factors to be included in a Response Plan

Paid and Volunteer Staff Records will be accessible, if required legally. These up-to-date records should include application forms, references screening forms and when appropriate police checks.

- B. Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support help to prevent hurt.

Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed.

Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. In some situations, churches have responded in a negative or non supportive manner to the alleged victim. This can increase the anger and pain of the victim and the victim's family. Future reconciliation will be more difficult and the possibility of damaging litigation increases.

C. Treat the accused with dignity and support.

If the accused is a church worker, that person should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished.

If the person is a paid employee, arrangements should be made whether or not to suspend the employee and whether to suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated. Judgment made by PPRC if it involves a paid employee. Appointed position TBD by conference.

D. Use the prepared public statement with the press and the congregation.

Be careful to safeguard privacy and confidentiality.

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual situations for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. It can include behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

- Types of abuse that involve touching include:
 - ~ Fondling
 - ~ Oral, genital, and anal penetration
 - ~ Intercourse
 - ~ Forcible rape
- Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:
 - ~ Verbal comments
 - ~ Pornographic video
 - ~ Obscene phone calls
 - ~ Exhibitionism
 - ~ Allowing children to witness sexual activity
- Who are included in this Sexual Abuse Policy?
 - ~ Infants
 - ~ Toddlers
 - ~ Elementary students
 - ~ Junior High students
 - ~ Senior High students
 - ~ Vulnerable adults.
- Which areas of church life are included in this policy?
 - ~ Acolytes
 - ~ Confirmation class
 - ~ Music Programming
 - ~ Nursery-worship hours & all other functions
 - ~ Sunday school classes & programming
 - ~ Youth programming

Physical signs of abuse and molestation

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are summarized below.

- Physical signs of abuse may include:

- ~ Lacerations and bruises
- ~ Nightmares
- ~ Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- ~ Difficulty with urination
- ~ Discomfort when sitting
- ~ Torn or bloody underclothing
- ~ Venereal disease

- Behavioral signs may include:

- ~ Anxiety when approaching church nursery area
- ~ Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- ~ Sexual self-consciousness
- ~ "Acting out" of sexual behavior
- ~ Withdrawal from church activities and friends

- Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- ~ I don't like (a particular church worker)
- ~ (A church worker) does things to me when we're alone
- ~ (A church worker) fooled around with me.

Simpson United Methodist Church

Child Protection Policy

1. **Six Month Rule:** The Church will not use anyone as a volunteer for children unless they have been an active participant or member of a local church for at least six months. New workers may be assigned an experienced volunteer as a mentor to assist the new volunteer in their understanding of procedures and policy
2. **Staff Screening:** Before the start of the service year, all new volunteer children's teachers will be asked to attend an orientation session and sign a statement indicating that he/she agrees to abide by the Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedure. Anyone refusing to sign the statement will not be permitted to work with the Church's children.
3. **Staff Training:** Before the beginning of their first year of service, all volunteer child workers will participate in training that explains church policy, individual liability, indicators of child abuse, reporting and responding procedures.
4. **Two Adult Rule:** When at all possible, teachers will be assigned in teams of two or more to every class of children. When circumstances do not allow two teachers to be present at all times, a supervisory person will periodically check on classrooms. Classroom doors must have a non-obstructed window or the door should remain open during class time when two adults are not present.

When a child needs or requests assistance in the bathroom, the bathroom door must remain open and a second adult must be present and aware of the assistance being given. Bathroom assistance should be reported to the parent at the end of class.
5. **Classroom Discipline:** Teachers will not use physical punishment or verbal abuse at any time. If isolating the child within the classroom or removal of the child from the room is necessary, the Sunday School Superintendent and the child's parents or guardians must be notified immediately.
6. **Open Classrooms:** Classrooms may be visited without prior notice by church members, staff, parents, or the Sunday School Superintendent. Observation of new teachers shall take place during their first two months of service by the Superintendent or the supervisory person.
7. **Reporting of Child Abuse (Sexual or other):** All allegations of child abuse should be taken seriously. Report the allegations to the Pastor, the Sunday School Superintendent, the Chair of Staff-Parish Relations Committee and to the Department of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). Confidentiality is assured. Immediate and appropriate action will be taken by the church leadership, including but not limited to the notifying of the District Superintendent. **Do not confront the accused** with the allegation. Observe confidentiality for all involved parties

Simpson United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuary Policy Acknowledgement

I have read the Simpson United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy Manual in its entirety and agree to abide by it. It is my responsibility to uphold the policy and report any incidents to the leader on duty.

I do Attest to the fact that I have never committed or been convicted of any of the following: murder, kidnapping, rape, sexual assault, pandering, crimes against nature involving minors, taking indecent liberties with children, abuse and/or neglect, obscenity, pornography, or any other crimes involving minors. Also, by signing below I am acknowledging my commitment to enforce and uphold the Safe Sanctuary Policy adopted by Simpson United Methodist Church.

Signature _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Thank you for your cooperation in helping Simpson United Methodist Church fulfill their obligation to the children of our church.

Please return this page signed to the PPRC Chair.