

# EVANGELICAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Revised August 2013

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to help provide a caring and secure environment for children, youth, and their families in all phases of church life, and to protect Evangelical United Methodist Church from legal risk and liability exposure.
2. **Biblical Foundation.** Evangelical United Methodist Church seeks to express God's love of children and provide for their personal wholeness. This caring community seeks to provide a safe church environment, prevent any form of abuse or harm to the children and youth in our care, and to be a ministry to families where abuse may occur, providing nurture and support in all circumstances. The Bible is foundational 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

By example, Jesus teaches us that children are to be welcomed, cared for, and protected. He demonstrated this through blessing and acceptance. Our goal in response is to maintain a safe, secure, and loving place where children may grow, a place where caregivers, teachers, and leaders (both paid and unpaid staff) minister appropriately to their needs.

3. **Covenant Statement.** Any individual working with children or youth at EUM will read and sign this Child Protection Policy statement. Signing this statement indicates that the individual has read, understood, and agreed to abide by this policy.
4. **Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse.** In an effort to create the safest possible environment within EUM, several child protection measures will be utilized. These measures include (a) screening of paid and unpaid staff for past child abuse convictions, (b) training of paid and unpaid staff on child protection and child abuse issues, (c) use of the two-adult rule, (d) open classrooms, and (e) standards for appropriate behavior management.

### (a) Screening

The following screening requirements apply to paid and unpaid staff responsible for supervising children or youth programs.

1. **Background Information.** All persons applying for paid and unpaid staff positions at EUM will complete an application for their particular ministry—whether children or youth.
2. **Records Checks.** At the expense of EUM, the following records checks will be conducted on all paid and unpaid staff of children and youth programs:  
First Advantage: National Criminal File Plus Check

### (b) Training

All paid and unpaid staff are required to attend a volunteer education training session.

### (c) Two Adult Rule

EUM will make every effort to recruit a sufficient number of unpaid staff so that two unrelated adults (21 years of age or older) will be present during each scheduled child and youth activity. In the events that two adults are not present at an activity, an assigned monitor will make random, unannounced visits to the rooms in which those activities are taking place.

**(d) Open Classrooms**

Classrooms, child care rooms, and all other child and youth activity areas may be visited without prior notice by church staff, the parents of children and youth involved in those activities, and other unpaid staff working during child and youth activities. Windows on the classroom doors will not be blocked so as to prevent visual observation of the classrooms from the hallway. Paid and unpaid staff working during child and youth activities will conduct intermittent observations of all classrooms, child care rooms, and other meeting areas throughout the church facility to ensure the safety of all children and youth.

**(e) Behavior Management**

All paid and unpaid staff working with children will use the Forever Friends Children's Ministry behavior management guidelines (see Attachment 3). Behavior management measures pertaining to youth (6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades) are outlined in the Youth Ministries Behavior Modification Policy attached as an addendum to this policy (see Attachment 4).

5. **Reporting Accidents.** Whenever a child or youth is involved in an accident during a church-sponsored activity, the adult who witnessed the accident will complete a report using an EUM Accident Report (Attachment 5). After completion, the report will be given to the adult in charge of the activity, who will provide a copy to the children's or youth ministry director to be placed in the official church files. In the case of multiple witnesses, the person with primary responsibility for supervising the activity will complete the report and a copy will be given to the church office for filing.
6. **Reporting Child Abuse.** EUM will treat all allegations of abuse seriously. All action will be taken within 24 hours after receiving the allegation. Under no circumstances will the pastor or any other church staff member or church official investigate the allegation or confront the accused. In providing care or ministry to either the victim, the accused, or the families of either party, under no circumstances will the pastor or other church official be drawn into a discussion as to the truth or falseness of the allegation. The Senior Pastor, with the advice of legal counsel, will be the designated contact person for all media contact. Under no circumstances will any other member of the pastoral staff or other senior church official—except in the absence of the Senior Pastor—or any other member of EUM, discuss any allegation with any media representatives. If the accused has assigned duties within the life of the church, that person will be temporarily relieved of his/her duties until a complete investigation is concluded.

I have read, understood, and agree to abide by this policy.

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Signature of Forever Friends or Youth Staff

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Date