

**Broad Street United Methodist Church
Statesville, North Carolina
SAFE MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY**

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(Approved 12 – 14 - 2005 by Church Council)

INTRODUCTION:

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in our church. Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of child abuse in Broad Street United Methodist Church of Statesville, North Carolina.

PURPOSE:

The Broad Street United Methodist Church's purpose for establishing this Safe Ministry with Children and Youth Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth.

STATEMENT OF COVENANT AND POLICY:

As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, Broad Street United Methodist Church pledges to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth. Broad Street United Methodist Church will follow reasonable procedures in all programs and events, will educate all of those who work with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policy, procedures and methods. Broad Street United Methodist will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law and will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident should occur. It is the policy of Broad Street United Methodist Church to provide all children and youth a safe and secure atmosphere to encourage the spiritual growth of children, youth and those adults who are called to work with children and youth.

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SAFE MINISTRY WITH YOUTH AND CHILDREN PROCEDURES

In furtherance of the "Safe Ministry with Children and Youth Policy", Broad Street United Methodist Church adopts the procedures detailed below. These procedures are intended to provide a safe environment for children and youth and to protect adults from unfounded allegations of misconduct. "Children" or "Youth" shall be deemed synonymous and shall be defined as any person less than eighteen (18) years of age for purposes of these procedures.

PROCEDURES TO PROTECT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS DURING CHURCH ACTIVITIES AND WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL:

Church membership (minimum of six months) or regular attendance at Broad St UMC is normally a prerequisite for working with children or youth . Exceptions to this may be granted by the Senior Pastor of his/her designee in case of combined programs with other churches, intern programs and other similar circumstances.

- In most cases no less than two adults shall be present at all times during any church sponsored program, event or ministry involving children or youth. It is preferred, though not required, that at least two of these be unrelated by blood. The two adults may not be related by marriage. This includes Nursery, Children's Church, and youth fellowship meetings. However, supervision during Sunday School and Children's Church can be provided by one adult in the classroom and an adult roaming the hallways and observing through the half door of each classroom. The adult cannot be the spouse of someone who is supervising children that day.
- The adult, will be posted in the educational building to roam the hallways, viewing into each room where Children and Youth ministry is being held, monitoring the comings and goings of all adults in the building and keeping a close check on the activities around the restrooms.
- All adults who supervise activities for children and youth shall be at least five years older than the oldest child or youth in any given activity. Adults who are less than five years older than the oldest child or youth can participate in the activity as an "assistant" or "helper"--- they must not count as supervision. Older youth may "assist" or "help" with a ministry activity for children --- they will **not** count as supervision. A youth "helper" or "assistant" in the Nursery must be at least 15 years old. A youth "helper" or "assistant" in the Children's Dept. must be a minimum of 15 years old. Helpers or assistants under the age of 23 must also have been through the training process.. A youth "helper" or "assistant" in the

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- youth dept. must be a minimum of 20 years old. All youth and children's activities shall be supervised by adults who are present for all aspects of the activity. A child or youth shall never be placed as a supervisor of any activity.
- All outside doors of the Educational Building will be locked during weekday preschool hours. Parents visiting the preschool or bringing children after the doors are locked must enter through the church office and sign visitor registration.
 - All persons except church personnel must enter the preschool through the church office during preschool hours and should be escorted to the proper area of the preschool by church staff or office staff person.
 - Half doors are in all rooms regularly used for nursery and children's ministry. These are adequate for viewing of rooms from the hallway. The top doors should always be left open. If a child or youth activity takes place in a room with a solid door then the door must be left open for the duration of the activity.
 - Pastoral/staff conversations or meetings will be held only in rooms with doors that have windows or half doors.
 - Open doors shall be utilized for non-pastoral counseling of children and youth. It is preferred that this type of conversation be held with adults nearby but not necessarily listening in or overhearing the spoken content. It is preferred that a pastor, staff or volunteer adults insure that Pastoral conversation take place with other adults nearby even though not within hearing distance.
 - Parents will always be given written advanced notice and information regarding any away- from- church facility activity in which their child will be participating. The written information will include times of activity, type of transportation (if needed), the adults who will supervise and the nature of the activity. Parents will give written permission for their child to participate along with needed information on the health condition of their child, insurance information, emergency contact numbers and permission to seek medical attention. One copy of each of these will accompany the group and one copy will stay on file in the church office. Utmost care and safety will be considered where sleeping arrangements are required for overnight trips. It is recommended that adults not stay in the same room with children or youth.
 - Permission forms are required for any children or youth activities away from the church facility. Parents may give blanket permissions for standard activities programs such as Sunday School breakfasts so long as the "blanket" permission lists the anticipated activities of the program.

PROCEDURES FOR TRAINING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS:

- All paid staff of Broad Street United Methodist Church shall obtain and maintain First Aid/CPR certification . Volunteers who routinely work with children and youth are strongly encouraged to obtain and maintain First Aid/CPR certification. The Director of Nurture Ministries or her/his designee will make available a program of training in First Aid/CPR to all staff, volunteers and members of the congregation.

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- All staff and all volunteers who work with children and/or youth must receive training on the Safe Ministry with Children and Youth Policy and Procedures. Orientation to this policy will be made available to all participants in the church. The Pastor, Director of Nurture Ministries, or her/his designee shall insure that annual training requirements are met.

- All staff and volunteers will sign a pledge to uphold this policy and follow the procedures prior to being permitted to participate in activities with children or youth. (Implementation of this policy will be January 1, 2006).
- The Pastor, Director of Nurture Ministries, or her/his designee will ensure that an annual educational program about this policy and procedures will be offered to all participants in the church and/or families of children and youth who desire to review this policy and procedures. This will include a time of gathering additional ideas for the ongoing development of Broad Street United Methodist's Safe Ministry with Children and Youth Policy.

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE:

- Any person who receives a complaint alleging that a child or youth has been subjected to physical, sexual or other abuse by a Broad Street United Methodist Church Staff member or volunteer shall immediately communicate the complaint to the Pastor unless the Pastor is named as the offender in the complaint. If the Pastor is named as the offender in the complaint, then the complaint shall be immediately communicated to the Chairperson of the Staff/Parish Committee. In the case of unavailability of the Chair of Staff/Parish the Chair of Church Council will be the back-up person to call. The Pastor or the Staff/Parish Chair (or Chair of Church Council) will communicate this complaint to the District Superintendent as soon as is practical after the complaint is received.
- The Pastor or Staff/Parish Chair (or Chair of Church Council) shall communicate the complaint to the Iredell County Department of Social Services as required by NC State Statutes.
- If any complaint comes to the attention of the media, then only the Pastor or the District Superintendent or their designee will make releases of information to the media.
- The Pastor or Chair of Staff/Parish will notify the insurance carrier which provides liability insurance of the complaint as soon as is practical to do so.
- Any person named in the complaint, as an alleged offender shall immediately be required to cease any contact with children or youth through Broad Street United Methodist Church activities. The alleged offender may resume activities with children or youth at such a time as the District Superintendent, Pastor or Chair of Staff/Parish shall deem it appropriate.

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PROCEDURES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS:

- All staff and volunteers shall submit to a criminal record check as permitted by North Carolina General Statutes. The Pastor and Director of Nurture Ministries will ensure that all staff and volunteers clear a check within 120 days of the full implementation of the policy . The Pastor and Director of Nurture Ministries will make sure that from that point forward that a completed check be finished on all persons or hired staff **BEFORE** they are allowed to work with children or youth.
- All persons driving vehicles for church sponsored trips or events involving children or youth shall submit to a DMV check.
- All **prospective** staff and volunteers shall complete an appropriate application form approved by the Staff/Parish Committee , the Pastor, and the Director of Nurture Ministries.
- All **prospective** staff and any **prospective** volunteer who will be involved with children or youth activities shall provide references to the Pastor and the Director of Nurture Ministries. These will be checked and documentation written on these checks before the staff or volunteer is allowed to work in activities with children or youth. The Staff/Parish Committee will have the responsibility of checking references and reviewing this information with the Pastor for **prospective paid** staff positions.
- All staff and any volunteer who works with children or youth shall complete an annual review and training on this policy and procedures. Staff and volunteers shall also complete any other training deemed to be appropriate to the Pastor , the Staff/Parish Committee, or Director of Nurture Ministries.
- All record checks and reference checks will be kept in a locked secure file cabinet in the church office. The Pastor, the Director of Nurture Ministries and Chair of Staff/Parish Committee will have keys and access to this information.
- The Director of Nurture Ministries, in consultation with the Pastor or her/his designee, shall be responsible for approving or disapproving a person for a volunteer position if that position will be involved with children or youth.
- The Director of Broad Street Preschool., Director of Nurture Ministries, and the Board of Directors for the preschool will be responsible for interviewing, checking references, and approving or disapproving a person for a position in the Broad Street Preschool.
- The Broad Street Preschool director shall be responsible for criminal background checks on all preschool personnel and the preschool shall be responsible for the

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cost. Those records will be kept in the preschool office in a locked file cabinet. The Preschool director and the Director of Nurture Ministries will have access to these files.

All members of Broad Street United Methodist Church will be provided with opportunities to receive educational materials or to attend presentations regarding this policy. Our goal is to ensure that every member of BSUMC understands the need for this policy and the fundamentals of the procedures.