

FISHERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
ABUSE PROTECTION POLICY – FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
FISHERS, INDIANA

Fishers United Methodist Church is committed to the well-being of every person entrusted to its care. Jesus 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 provide both hospitality and safe sanctuary for all of God’s people especially children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that *“...children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse.”* 2008, *The Book of Discipline* (para. 162C)

As Disciples, we are called to create a community of faith where both children and adults feel safe to grow in their relationship with Christ. Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist Congregations, Fishers United Methodist Church vows to faithfully and obediently adopt the following policy for reducing the risk of abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults in our church.

Purpose

Our purpose for establishing the following abuse protection policy and procedures is to demonstrate our total and unwavering commitment to the physical, emotional and spiritual safety of all children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our care.

Covenant Statement

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to engage in the ministry of the Gospel in ways that will ensure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults, as well as all the workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding the use of appropriate policies; we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of Indiana state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child, youth, and vulnerable adult will be *“...surrounded by steadfast love...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to eternal life.”* (Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44).

FISHERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ABUSE PROTECTION PROCEDURES – FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

FISHERS, INDIANA

I. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Neglect** – A child or vulnerable person’s physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or endangered as a result of the inability, refusal, or care of a parent, guardian or custodian to supply the person with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision.
- b. **Abuse** – A child or vulnerable person’s physical or mental health is seriously endangered due to injury by the act or omission of a parent, guardian, or custodian
- c. **Sex Abuse** – A child or vulnerable person is the victim of a sex offense (rape, criminal deviant conduct, and child molestation, exploitation, and seduction, sexual misconduct with a minor, public indecency, prostitution, or incest).
- d. **Staff** – Includes any clergy person and any paid employee of the church.
- e. **Volunteer** – Any non-clergy, lay worker who is responsible for the care or supervision of children, youth, or vulnerable adult participants in a church ministry, at a church event on campus or off-site.
- f. **Participants** – Children, youth and vulnerable adults who are registered, enrolled, attending or otherwise participating in a church ministry, a church-sponsored event or activity.
- g. **Applicant** – all persons applying to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- h. **Paid Childcare Provider** – An adult or youth worker who is paid by the church to supervise children during church sponsored activities and events. These persons are not considered church staff.
- i. **Church Ministry or Event** – Includes all ministries within the church that host or plan events with children and youth participants that is supervised by appointed staff and/or volunteers. May be on-site or off-site.
- j. **Protected Persons** – Include children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- k. **Vulnerable Adults** – Are persons over 18 years of age with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities.
- l. **Children** – Persons 0-11 years of age or birth through 6th grade.
- m. **Youth** – Person 12 to 18 years of age or 7th through 12th grade.
- n. **Parent/Guardian** – a biological or legally-assigned adult responsible for the care, well-being, and upbringing of children and youth.