



first CHURCH
CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY
First United Methodist Church
1001 Pleasant Street / Des Moines, IA 50309

The following policy has been established to insure a safe, loving environment which allows children and youth to grow in their Christian faith, protects children and youth from undue risk of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse and misconduct; and protects staff and volunteers who work with children and youth from false accusations.

1. All employed adults, youth and volunteers, who work with minors or request to work with minors, **must be** evaluated and approved. They will be required to complete a confidential form listing any criminal activity and requesting references and a form granting permission for a background check of criminal records. The Minister of Discipleship is responsible for evaluating volunteer workers. Any potential concerns may be further reviewed with the Pastor. The Minister of Discipleship is responsible for evaluating paid employees as part of the interview and job offer process. The extent of background checks is the prerogative of the Minister of Discipleship. Sex offender registration lists will be checked for all employees and volunteers.
2. Adults or youth who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth, or who have a history of inappropriate conduct and behaviors with children/youth involving actual or attempted abuse or sexual molestation of a minor,

- will not be allowed to interact with minors in any church-sponsored activity or program.
3. Volunteers must be members or regular attendees of First United Methodist Church for a minimum of six months before being eligible to work as a teacher or worker with children and youth. However, this time requirement may be waived after the suitability of the applicant's references and other background information are verified. This policy covers all who have contact in either a volunteer or paid position with children and youth activities including childcare.
 4. Those working with children and youth in organized activities shall observe the "two-person rule" and/or the "open view rule" at all times. The "two-person rule" requires that employees, volunteers, and supervisors must avoid situations where one worker is alone with children or youth without a co-worker. If the two-person rule is not feasible or practical, then the "open view rule" must be observed. The "open view rule" requires the interior of the occupied room to be visible to outside observers. An open door, a split door with one half open or an observation window or opening meets the requirements of the "open view rule".
 5. Christ-like discretion is necessary in regard to physical contact with young people. Non-threatening hugs, handshakes, high fives, and pats on the arm or shoulder are acceptable.
 6. Staff and volunteers must never remove a young person from church property without the verbal or written approval of the Pastor or Minister of Discipleship and the

- parent/guardian. If a minor attendee is harming other attendees during an event or is otherwise disrupting that event in a harmful manner, two adults will remove the child/youth from the immediate location and parents/guardians will be called immediately.
7. Our church will not permit or sanction corporal punishment of any kind by its staff and volunteers. No one must ever use one-on-one physical force on a child by spanking, swatting, or shaking as a means of discipline.
 8. Staff and volunteers are primarily responsible for children and youth from a designated drop-off point within the church to dismissal. Children through second grade will be released from activities only to parent/guardian, older sibling or designated adult. If the person designated to pick up a child is late, teachers will either take children to the nursery or hand over responsibility to the Minister of Discipleship or Pastor.
 9. Reporting procedures are to be in accordance with State law. Anyone observing suspected harm to a minor is required to report it immediately to the Pastor or Minister of Discipleship.
 10. When child is not in organized activity, responsibility for child's welfare and safety lies with parent/guardian. Any concerns should be reported to Pastor and/or Minister of Discipleship.

11. This policy will be reviewed and signed by all who work with children/youth, paid or volunteer.

Reviewed with:

Signature of volunteer or staff

Date

Signature of reviewer

Date