



Safe Sanctuaries Policy for Youth, Children and Vulnerable Adults at Fairport United Methodist Church

The following documents comprise the Safe Sanctuaries Policy for Fairport United Methodist Church (FUMC):

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It is a reality that accidental injury, child abuse, sexual misconduct, and false accusations occur wherever humans exist. While it is impossible to completely insulate anyone from these occurrences, steps can be taken to greatly reduce the risk of harm to youth, children, vulnerable adults, and those who work with them.

Responsibilities

For this policy to be effective, *all* members of FUMC must be alert to possible violations and must report these violations or possible violations. If a member of the FUMC church family suspects that another community member is engaged in activities this policy addresses, it is the responsibility of that member to report that activity to the person in charge of that activity and/or the senior pastor. Church Council members, representing the leadership of each ministry team involving contact with youth, children and vulnerable adults, are responsible for the initial approval and subsequent annual updates of the policy. Individual ministry team leaders/staff and a pastor are responsible for assuring that the requirements outlined in this document are followed within their ministry areas, including the completion of all required paperwork as indicated in this document. That same team leader/staff working with a pastor will ultimately determine the acceptance/decline of a volunteer. A pastor or staff member is responsible for record keeping and related actions stemming from the procedures contained within this policy are being followed. All files associated with compliance to this policy will be maintained in confidence within locked files. Record retention will be duration of activity plus eight years. Attendance records of children and teachers will be maintained in perpetuity in electronic record keeping.

Definitions

1. A *child* is anyone under the age of 18 years old.
2. A *vulnerable adult* is a person (whose age is 18 or over) who:
 - a. Is either chronically or acutely in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness.
 - b. is or may be unable to take care of him or herself; and/or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
3. A *volunteer* is a person who works with youth, children or vulnerable adults in any unpaid capacity.
4. A *regular volunteer* is an adult, over 19, with responsibilities for organizing and/or supervising activities involving youth, children or vulnerable adult participants OR with responsibilities with coordinating and/or supervising other volunteers.
5. A *non-regular volunteer* is an adult or a youth who serves as an occasional helper or assistant to the regular adult volunteer.
6. *Youth, child or vulnerable adult abuse* refers to any non-accidental injury; any sexual activity or sexual exploitation; or any neglectful treatment or maltreatment that harms the health, welfare, or safety of a child, youth or vulnerable adult. This includes the following types of abuse.
 - a. *Physical abuse*: Causing deliberate and intentional bodily harm or pain to a youth, child or vulnerable adult.

b. *Emotional abuse*: Verbal and/or nonverbal emotional cruelty to a youth, child or vulnerable adult. Emotional abuse sends a message to the victim that he/she is worthless, bad, unloved, and undeserving of love and care.

c. *Neglect*: Endangering a youth's, child's or vulnerable adult's health, welfare, and safety through negligence. This includes but is not limited to withholding food, medical care, affection, affirmation, clothing, shelter, hygiene, or education.

d. *Sexual abuse*: Sexual contact between an adult and a youth/child, an older and/or more powerful youth/child and a youth/child, or an adult and a vulnerable adult. Sexual abuse may include but is not limited to: fondling, inappropriate touching, intercourse, incest, exploitation, or exposure to pornography and/or prostitution.

e. *Ritual abuse*: Intentional abuse of a physical, sexual, or psychological nature inflicted on a youth, child or vulnerable adult in a stylized way by a person (or multiple persons) with responsibility for the victim's welfare. Ritual abuse may include cruelty or threats of cruelty to animals, and repetitious threats of sexual or physical violence to the victim, or other persons related to the victim.

FUMC Guidelines for Employees and Adult Volunteers Who Work with Youth, Children and Vulnerable Adults

General Guidelines

1. Volunteers and employees will be ideally over 21 years of age, 25 for working with youth.
2. Volunteers and employees must complete and sign an **Application Form**. Volunteers under 18 years of age must have co-signature of a parent or guardian.
3. Regular volunteers and employment applicants must submit requested information to conduct a **background check** in accordance with guidelines of the Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church.
4. Volunteers and employees must agree to abide by the adopted Safe Sanctuaries Policy of the FUMC. This policy is available to all FUMC family electronically and via hard copy in the church office or upon request. We expect everyone in the church to abide by the policy.
5. All regular and non-regular volunteers and employees shall make every effort to avoid being alone with one child/youth/vulnerable adult. This will be stated henceforth as the two-adult supervision rule.
6. Any person who has been convicted of sexual abuse will not hold any position involving youth/children/vulnerable adults or volunteer work with youth/children/vulnerable adults in any church-sponsored activity.
7. A personal interview will be held for all *new* volunteers and employees by the appropriate staff or the Pastor before working with children and/or youth.
8. A **reference check form** will be completed by the appropriate Staff Team/Ministry leaders or the pastor before working with children and/or youth.

9. A **volunteer commitment form** will be signed by all volunteers before working with children and/or youth.
10. Approval of volunteers to be completed by appropriate team ministry leader or staff member in conjunction with a pastor.
11. Hiring for all new employees will be contingent on completion of the checks outlined by SPRC.

Physical Surroundings

1. Classrooms, offices and other rooms should have door windows which make the rooms clearly visible to outside observers. Rooms without clear visibility will have a door open whenever youth, children or vulnerable adults are present.
2. Spaces used for children, youth, and vulnerable adults should be clean and free from safety hazard, such as chipping paint, toxic chemicals, fire hazards, etc. Fire exits must also be readily available with exit routes clearly marked in each room.
3. Scheduled activities must conform to the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of FUMC. Two-adult supervision is always necessary.
4. An **accident report form** will be filled out for all accidents on the property of FUMC.

Other Considerations

1. Abuse may happen between youth, children, between vulnerable adults, or any combination of the three. To reduce the risk of harm, volunteers and employees should be aware of potentially abusive and/or misconduct situations whether physical, emotional, or sexual. There must be supervision at all times to minimize the possibility of this type of abuse.
2. If any abuse is suspected, refer to *Response and Reporting Plan* section of this document.
3. Safety issues and considerations are to be addressed by sponsoring ministry as part of planning.
4. All regular volunteers and staff that work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will attend a mandatory *Safe Sanctuaries Training* every two years. The *Training* will be offered at least once every calendar year.

Transportation

1. Adults transporting children, youth or vulnerable adults must have a valid drivers' license and must be at least 25 years of age.
2. Private vehicles used for transportation must have a current inspection and registration and be properly insured to, at least, the New York State minimums.
3. There must be a seat belt (and appropriate child restraint for those required by NYS law) for every youth/child/vulnerable adult that is transported in any vehicle other than a bus. Adults are responsible to see that they are used.

Permission Forms

1. A detailed *Medical Release Form* must be filled out by a parent or guardian for each child or youth prior to any on- or off-site activities and/or overnight activities. (Note: The *Medical Release Form* shall be good for one (1) year.)
2. In addition to event-specific permission forms, a general *Permission Form* must be completed for each child/youth participating in Sunday School and/or Youth Group activities. This form shall be good for one (1) year.
3. Children will be released from Sunday School as the *Class Release Information Form* indicates: PreK through Grade 2 will not be released to parent/guardian unless a *Class Release Information Form* or *Visitor Card* is completed. Children Grade 3 and up will be released at the end of class time to meet their parent/guardian, only with parental/guardian permission.
4. All children and youth who participate in Fairport UMC programming must have a *Media Release Opt-Out Form* on file.

Response and Reporting Plan

Reporting

Reporting shall be required by any staff or volunteer that personally witnesses an incident of abuse or exploitation, when an allegation of an event of abuse or exploitation is made to staff or a volunteer by a third party and/or when a child, youth, or vulnerable adult discloses abuse or exploitation to a staff member or volunteer. It is crucial that reporting be immediate and the allegations dealt with as soon in time as possible to the incident or disclosure.

1. The staff person or volunteer who observes alleged abuse or to whom such abuse is reported or disclosed, or who suspects abuse shall be required to report the incident/suspected abuse **immediately** to the person in charge of the ministry/activity. Upon receiving the information, the person in charge of the ministry/activity shall **immediately** call:
 - a. New York State *Child Protective Services Hotline*: (800) 342-3720
 - b. New York State Justice Center *Vulnerable Adults Hotline*: (855) 373-2122
 - c. New York State Office of Children and Family Services *Adult Abuse Hotline*: (844) 697-3505

Identification information for the alleged victim and the adult responsible for their care is required for the report. The pastor in charge and immediate staff supervisor are to be informed immediately before or subsequent to the making of a report. The person in charge of the ministry/activity in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information such as the name of the alleged victim and his/her address and family information.

2. If the accused is the appointed clergy, supply pastor (assigned by the district superintendent) or a member of his/her family, the allegations shall be immediately reported to the district superintendent. The district superintendent shall immediately report to the proper authorities as set forth in paragraph 1 above. The district superintendent shall take responsibility and act according to the established rules in *The Book of Discipline* with

respect to claims against the pastor. If the district superintendent is not available, the incident shall be reported to the bishop's office.

3. Every clergy in any active status or relationship with the Conference whose appointment is set or approved by the bishop, every person serving as a supply pastor and retired clergy performing ministerial functions are included in mandatory reporting as required by *The Book of Discipline*.
4. After the person in charge of the ministry/activity has reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the appointed clergy/supply pastors shall report the incident immediately to the district superintendent. If the district superintendent is not available, the incident shall be reported to the Bishop's office.
5. The person in charge of the ministry/event must keep a written report of the steps taken by the church/charge in response to the reported abuse. The report should be kept brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. This report should be kept in a secure place. It should be written or typed to prevent it from being changed.
6. NEVER discuss allegations with any other people except law enforcement or designated county investigators. To do so can cause irreparable harm to the victim, their family, the church/conference and community.

Response Plan

A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of abuse is expected. All allegations shall be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse, FUMC staff and pastors will be in cooperation with all official investigating agencies and shall adhere to the following:

1. All media requests for statements shall be directed to the Annual Conference director of communications at (315) 424-7878.
2. Take all allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Show care and support to help prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the **first** priority. Respond in a positive and supportive manner to the victim and the victim's family.
3. Immediately, and with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with children, youth, or vulnerable adults and advise the accused that there has been an allegation of abuse. Details of the allegations of the abuse should not be discussed with the accused at the time of the removal. In any removal of a staff member or volunteer from any activity/ministry, care shall be taken to handle the removal in a discreet manner, recognizing that there will be an investigation by either state or church authorities, or both.
4. When it has been alleged that a member of the church staff or volunteer, has committed an act of abuse or exploitation, the staff member or volunteer shall be required to refrain from all ministry/activities with children, youth, or vulnerable adults until the incident has been fully resolved by the appropriate state authorities and/or in accordance with *The Book of Discipline*.

5. Notify the parents/guardians of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety and well-being of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult until the parent(s)/guardian(s) arrive. NOTE: If one or both of the parents/guardian is the alleged abuser follow the advice of the authorities concerning notifications of others.
6. The church/charge shall provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing may take place.

Media Safe Sanctuaries Policy

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Some incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. However, following basic Safe Sanctuaries procedures can help to minimize those risks. There is no such thing as privacy on the Internet. Consider anything and everything on the internet as public information. Here are some recommendations:

Receive Parental/Guardian Permission

In addition to general permission to participate in an FUMC ministry, parental permission is required for children and youth, and vulnerable adults in writing for:

1. Posting photos of participants on any websites or sending them e-mail or cell phone messages or making videos for any use;
2. E-mailing, Instant Messaging, calling, texting, or sending data to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by computer, cell phone; and
3. The sharing of any full name or contact information.

Never Post Easily Identifiable Information Online

1. If you communicate by email, do not use "broadcast" emails. Use the "BCC" (blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.
2. Be cautious when transmitting easily identifiable information like event dates, times, locations, or participants.
3. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests. When placing anyone on an electronic prayer list, consider using only first names.

Limit individual communications with children, youth, and vulnerable adults

1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner. (Even though you may be a sounding board for a person having a bad day, the reverse is not true.)
2. Save all confidential cyber-communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (i.e., instant messages (IM's) chat room conversations, emails, etc.). An electronic paper trail can be important.
3. If you are uneasy about any topic addressed in an email or in an email in general, send a BCC to a parent/guardian (if appropriate) or another trusted adult. Honor privacy, but not secrecy.
4. If abuse is alleged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.

Safety Measures for Sharing Photos Electronically

1. ALWAYS obtain permission to use photos.
2. When posting photos, refrain from using names and never use last names or identifiable information.
3. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and make sure they uphold our mission.
4. Block "save photo as" options on websites
5. Limit access to photos by employing the use of a password.

Safety Measures for Using Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, Instagram and others are popular with many people:

1. Set privacy settings to limit who can see your profile, otherwise people may still be able to view your full profile.
2. Restrict who can be your friend. It is prudent to use judgment in accepting requests from youth.
3. Use higher level security features even if you have a restricted profile (such as requiring your approval of all comments posted to your site.)
4. Do not post anything to your social networking site that you would not want attached to your resume or printed in the church bulletin or newsletter (the same goes for blogs).
5. Remove or do not post inappropriate comments, photos, etc.
6. Do not "tag" children or youth in social media posts to avoid identifying them.

Encourage children, youth and adults to follow these same guidelines.

Social Media Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Introduction

As an ever-increasing number of people use and prefer digital communication over other forms, it is essential that the church be present in this mission field. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices and email can enhance communication, faith sharing and deepen relationships.

The following recommended practices and guidelines apply principles of healthy boundaries and safe church to the virtual world of digital networking and communication. They are intended to raise awareness of issues and open doors of conversations with ministry teams. We encourage all ministry teams to discern together the following guidelines, considering the nature of your ministry and being mindful that our calling is to meet children, youth, and vulnerable adults where they are; model healthy boundaries; and love and care for them safely. Adults engaged in ministry to children, youth, and vulnerable adults should consider their relationship with the child, youth, or vulnerable adult when interacting with them using digital media, and should conduct themselves in a manner that would be acceptable on church grounds.

Connecting on Social Networking Sites

1. In addition to participating on the ministry pages, youth may wish to establish social media connections with church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in youth ministry. Adults who are willing to participate in these relationships should use the following guidelines when establishing these connections:
 - a. Adults should not submit 'friend' requests to children or youth. Minors may feel like they are not able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between them and adults. Exceptions to this rule should only be made in situations when the adult's privacy settings make it difficult or impossible for the youth to find the adult's page on the site. In these circumstances, it is acceptable for an adult to request a youth as a friend, if the youth has requested that they do so.
 - b. Due to the greater potential for misinterpretation, inappropriate discussions, and inadvertent exposure of youth to inappropriate content; personal pages should be maintained appropriately. Church leaders and adult volunteers should avoid relationships with children/youth via Social Networking sites, unless an actual relationship (ministry, family friendship, etc.) already exists between them.
 - c. As additional social media sites gain popularity, the Safe Sanctuaries Committee reserves the right to apply this approach to the various methods of digital communication.

Boundaries

1. All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry with children and youth are strongly encouraged to set strict privacy settings on any personal social networking profile, making every effort to prevent youth and children from being introduced to objectionable content. Privacy settings on personal pages and information should be thoroughly scrutinized on a regular basis to prevent this information from being available to minors. In the event that a church leader or adult volunteer does not feel that they can set the proper privacy settings and/or regularly check their personal pages (2-3 times per day) for inappropriate material that might have been posted by others, they are asked to completely restrict child/youth access to their pages.
2. For the sake of their own privacy and the well-being of the child/youth participants, church leaders and adult volunteers should not add or invite children or youth to any groups, events, pages, chat rooms, etc. that are not solely dedicated to activities directly related to the children or youth ministries or ministry activities.
3. Given the continuing evolution of privacy settings and capabilities on many social networking sites, church leaders and adult volunteers must be willing to continue to educate themselves on what settings are needed to support the above recommendations. Additionally, the child and youth ministry programs should establish education for adult volunteers who wish to use social media as part of their ministry efforts.

Communication

Social media is an excellent way to quickly share both good and sad moments in a person's life with a large number of people. However, as with all forms of communication, users should be respectful of the privacy of others. This is particularly the case with youth and children's ministry leaders. Leaders should be especially mindful of how information is presented in such a permanent medium, and should never share news about another person without their express prior consent.

1. Use prudent judgment in the time you contact youth and children through social media, e-mail or other forms of digital communication. The "home phone rule" is a basic rule of thumb to use – normally do not text or chat with youth at a time you would not normally call their home phone line, i.e. before 9:00 AM or after 9:00 PM.

Exceptions to this rule are as follows:

- a. In emergency situations or when children or youth reach out to a church leader or adult volunteer with issues that they feel that they need to discuss immediately.
- b. During weekends, vacation times, and other times when children or youth may have parental permission to stay up later than normal, adult leaders may respond to youth initiated communications outside of these hours, at their discretion.

In all of the exception situations, adults should use good judgment in deciding when discussions should continue or be picked up at a more appropriate time, in order to support and demonstrate good boundaries with their personal time.

2. All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry with children and youth should consider the content and nature of any posts that will be seen or read by others. Your voice is often considered the voice of the church.
3. 'One on one' video or chat room interaction is generally not appropriate between adults and minors. Such communications should only be engaged in where no face-to-face communication is possible, such as where the youth is away for the summer in a foreign country but regularly communicates with the adult in person.
4. When the content of received communications raises concerns or questions, it should be shared with a member of the Pastoral team, and law enforcement, where appropriate.
 - a. Email is not an appropriate communication method for matters that are pastorally sensitive, emotionally charged, or that require extensive conversation.
 - b. Email may be more appropriate where matters are deemed legally sensitive.
 - c. Humor and sarcasm can be easily misinterpreted, and should be used only where appropriate.

All communication sent digitally (email, social networking sites, notes or posts, etc.) may be shared or reposted to others. Adults should be mindful that comments sent to a youth may be shared by that youth in a number of ways and that misinterpretation of those comments may occur.

5. Phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are the preferred mode of communication, when responding to emotionally driven communication or pastoral emergencies, and should be used when possible to provide the appropriate level of support.

Identity Protection

We will seek to protect the privacy and identity of all minors in our use of social media. All church leaders and adults leaders in youth and children's ministry should closely monitor the privacy settings of any posted youth images to ensure that they are not accessible to individuals who do not have permission to view them.

1. All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry with minors must not post photos or video that identify children or youth on any online site or printed publication without the written consent from a parent or legal guardian. This rule is in keeping with the Fairport UMC Safe Sanctuaries Policy, *page 8* (Photographs).
2. Even with the written consent from a parent or legal guardian, pictures should be posted to either the Fairport UMC Youth closed group or on personal pages, where the privacy settings restrict viewing to only those associated with the youth ministry.
3. We strongly encourage the respect and dignity of every person depicted in an image. Only pictures depicting youth in an appropriate light should be posted. "Appropriate" pictures may include goofy pictures that the youth's parents are comfortable being posted. If a picture would make the youth feel self-conscious, vulnerable, or would subject the youth to ridicule, the picture should not be posted.

4. When checking in with any location tagging social media, only check in yourself. Never check in minors. Be sensitive to tagging or revealing other participants' locations.

Administration of Official Fairport UMC Social Media Groups

1. Each church related social media site, group or page must have a minimum of two unrelated administrators, who are either church leaders or adult volunteers engaged in the ministry.
2. Sites must be monitored by administrators regularly to allow for quick responses in the event urgent or crisis concerns are posted.
3. Administrators should review the access to the FUMC Youth 'Closed' group account to remove:
 - a. Adult leaders who no longer actively participate in the youth program
 - b. Former youth members, and their parents, who no longer actively participate in the youth program.
 - c. Active participation in the youth group may include:
 - a. For former youth:
 1. Having a sibling who remains in the youth group
 2. Having a number of younger friends who participate in the youth group
 3. Regular attendance as a counselor or participant on summer mission trips, but not participating on a weekly or monthly basis
 - b. For adults:
 1. Regular attendance as a counselor or participant on summer mission trips, but not participating on a weekly or monthly basis
 2. An established mentor/mentee role with an older youth
 3. Family relationships that essentially establish the adult in an older sibling or parental role with an active youth
 4. Youth leaders who, but for their geographic distance from Second, would remain involved in the lives of the youth, provided that the youngest age the adult worked with have not matriculated out of the youth group

Any inappropriate material posted to a church related social media site, group or page must be deleted and addressed. Refer to the Fairport UMC Safe Sanctuaries Policy 'Reporting Allegations of Abuse' section for further information and reporting guidelines.



Fairport United Methodist Church Youth Overnight Policy

Guided by our Reconciling Ministries commitment, sleeping arrangements will be determined by the Youth Coordinator and Volunteers.

1. There shall be no more than eight (8) youth for each adult attending.
2. Two-adult supervision is required during sleepovers.
3. Adult advisors will be present in all sleeping areas during overnight hours or there will be shifts for awake adults to be roaming throughout the night.
4. Exterior doors will remain locked at all times.
5. Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other illegal or controlled substances are prohibited.
6. Weapons are prohibited, as are violent or harassing actions or words.
7. Engaging in sexual activity or exclusive behavior is prohibited. No shared bedding.
8. Adults should at all times be aware of their surroundings, and avoid situations during a youth event where they might be alone with a youth or out of sight of other adults.
9. All adults must be aware of, sign, and abide by the Volunteer Commitment.
10. Drivers must meet the criteria under Transportation Guidelines.



Fairport United Methodist Church

Sex Offender Policy

Safe Congregation Response Team

A SCRT will be established and in place at all times, with the names and phone numbers of team members available to all members and friends of Fairport UMC. This team will be composed of the Minister(s), and eight members of Fairport UMC (appointed annually by the Spiritual Gifts Team). It is preferable that lay members of the SCRT be familiar with issues likely to arise to include but not be limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, human resources, and legal issues. When the SCRT is responding to an allegation, a minimum of the Minister and three members of the SCRT will actively function on the team.

The Church Council of Fairport UMC will appoint one of its members to be the liaison to the SCRT. The responsibilities of this person include:

1. Bring nomination of SCRT members to the Spiritual Gifts Team of FUMC for annual approval.
2. Report to the Church Council of FUMC when annual training for Children and Youth Ministries staff and teachers has taken place.

In cases of a conflict of interest, a SCRT member must be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate. Guided by the Mission Statement, their function, individually and collectively, will be to offer confidential support, advice, and counsel with concern for the safety of all parties involved. The SCRT will generally have the following responsibilities:

1. Know about community resources for child abuse, treatment for sex offenders, and support groups for survivors.
2. Know about state laws regarding reporting.
3. Be a resource for people to share their concerns.
4. Evaluate applications for children and youth ministry teachers and youth group leaders that are flagged by the Minister Children/Youth Ministry staff as needing more information or follow-up. Facilitate annual training for Children/Youth ministry staff and teachers on issues, policies, and procedures relevant to sexual/physical abuse.
5. Receive allegations of possible abuse and recommend a process for expedient handling of such allegations.
6. Meet with convicted sex offenders/criminals and/or individuals who have been accused of inappropriate behavior to develop a Limited Access Agreement for participation in FUMC activities.
8. Coordinate the offering of First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training to church volunteers.

The SCRT will report its activities to the Church Council. It will be the discretion of the Church Council to decide whether activities remain confidential or disclosed to the congregation.

Guidelines Involving Sex Offenders

There are generally a few ways that the presence of a convicted sex offender becomes known in a congregation. In an ideal world, a person with this background would come to the minister before they started coming to the congregation to discuss how they could participate in the congregation.

In some cases, people reveal their backgrounds to the ministers. In other circumstances, another congregant may discover a congregant's history of sexual offenses. Congregants should know that in these cases they should make their concern known to the minister. In other cases, someone may see a familiar name on the sex offender registry. Or, perhaps it becomes known that a long-standing member of the congregation has been accused of a sexual offense. Whatever way the information becomes known the minister should be alerted as soon as possible.

Once the situation is revealed that there is a person with a history of sex offense in the congregation, the minister, as quickly as possible, should meet privately with the individual to discuss the concerns that have been raised. The minister may want to check the local sex offender registry before meeting with the person. (If the minister is the one being accused, this manual and these steps do not apply. Instead, the Chair of the Church Council should be contacted immediately and the President should contact the District Executive serving the congregation.) If the person is a member of the congregation and has a partner who also attends the church, then the minister should reach out to the partner as well.

The individual should be asked to sign a release form so that the minister can contact his/her sex offender treatment provider and/or current therapist. The therapist and, if applicable, the parole/probation officer should be asked for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the sex offender will re-offend and whether additional restrictions beyond the standard Limited Access Agreement ought to be placed on the person's conditional restrictions.

If the minister determines that there is genuine cause for the concern, the minister will then alert the ministry team, Church Council, and the SCRT about the individual in question. From this point forward Church Council is responsible for overseeing the process by the SCRT of establishing a Limited Access Agreement with the individual. Church Council and/or the SCRT may consult with District staff. They may also choose to call in an outside consultant if they think that this would be helpful. If the sex offender level of the individual in question and/or the assessment indicates that the person has completed or is participating successfully in treatment and is not at high risk for recidivism, Church Council, after consultation with the SCRT, may then ask the SCRT to develop a Limited Access Agreement. If the professional assessment indicates that the person is at high risk for reoffending, it is appropriate to deny that person involvement in the faith community until treatment is successful at reducing the risk.

If Church Council determines that the process should move forward, then the person should then be asked to meet with the SCRT. During the first meeting with the SCRT, the person in question will be asked to sign a temporary Limited Access Agreement, which is general in nature. At a later time the Agreement will be changed, if need be, to better suit the needs of all parties concerned. Best practice would be that a temporary Limited Access agreement be entered into with the individual and the SCRT within two weeks of when the minister first meets with the individual in question. Until such time as the temporary Limited Access agreement is in place, the individual will be asked to refrain from attending FUMC activities. Once a temporary agreement is in place then portions of the larger congregation will be told about the participation of this individual with our congregation.

These people will include, but may not be limited to, other FUMC staff, Sunday school volunteers, parents, and the Staff of the Day Care Center.

Once the SCRT decides that it is appropriate to go forward and draft a more permanent Limited Access Agreement, or simply make the temporary Limited Access Agreement permanent then portions of the larger congregation will be told about the participation of this individual with our congregation. These people will include, but may not be limited to, other FUMC staff, Sunday school volunteers, parents, and the Staff of the Day Care Center.

The SCRT will draft the permanent Limited Access Agreement and Church Council will have the final vote on it. It is the Church Council's responsibility to enter into a permanent Limited Access Agreement acting as representatives of the congregation. Church Council will thoughtfully consider the situation before then, and in consultation with the minister, will determine a congregational informational process so that members of FUMC are appropriately informed in a timely manner.

The Church Council will weigh both the clear need of parents to be able to make informed timely decisions about their children's participation in activities at FUMC and the individual in question's worth and dignity as an individual.

The SCRT, or a member thereof, should meet at least quarterly with any individual with whom it has a Limited Access Agreement to review the arrangement and address any concerns. If the minister or the staff changes, as well as the chair of the Church Council, it is important that the departing person inform the new person of this situation to ensure provision of pastoral support for the offender as well as continuity of awareness of the situation. In sharing information appropriately it is also important to remain aware of confidentiality and privacy for all involved.

Copies of files including Limited Access Agreement information should be treated with care, and kept in a secure file drawer.

REASONS FOR EXCLUDING A PERSON FROM ALL CONGREGATION ACTIVITIES

- A Refusal to allow the minister to contact the treatment provider and parole officer.
- A Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
- A Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high risk for recidivism.
- A Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
- A Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.

Once an individual decides that they can comply with these conditions, the process would begin again to reassess the individual and see if they could be welcomed into the life of the congregation anew.



**Fairport United Methodist Church
Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse**

Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

Name of recorder of incident:

Alleged victim's name:

Approximate Age:

Date & Time / place of initial conversation/obervation:

Name of person accused of the alleged abuse:

Relationship of the alleged accused to alleged victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, etc.):

Reported to:

Pastor (assuming Pastor is not involved)

or the Designated Lay Leader

Date/time:

Summary:

Call to parent/guardian (Name):

Date/time:

Signature of Worker

Date

Signature of Recorder

Date

Print Name:

Print Name:

The following provides space to document required contacts.

Call to local children and family service agency

(NYS Child Abuse hotline: 1-800-342-3720) Date/time:

Name of person making contact:

Spoke with:

Summary:



Fairport United Methodist Church Accident Report Form

Please print all information

Date/Time of accident:

Name of person injured

Age:

Address of injured:

Location of accident:

Name(s) of persons who witnessed the accident:

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Describe accident:

Signature of person filling out report form

Date



Volunteer Application

Choose one:

- Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Vulnerable Adult Volunteer

General Information

Name: _____ **Today's Date:** _____
Last First MI

Please include a **copy of your photo identification** (Driver's license, student ID, passport, etc.)

Please list every address you have lived at for the last seven (7) years, and the dates:

Contact information:

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Employer: _____

Work Status: part time full time student volunteer

Have you worked here for the last 5 years? If not, list all employment positions in the last five years (use additional pages if necessary):

Marital Status: single married divorced

Are you over the age of 18? Yes No

Qualifications

First Aid Training? No Yes - Date Completed _____

CPR Training? No Yes - Date Completed _____

Previous volunteer experience working with children and/or youth over the last five years:

How long have you been part of the Fairport UMC family? Were you a member of another congregation prior to this? If so, where?

Personal and Spiritual History

Write briefly about significant events in your life that have impacted you spiritually.

How would you describe your spiritual journey now?

Are there any special issues or concerns happening in your life right now that would have an impact in your commitment and involvement in the youth ministry? (e.g. relationships, other commitments, etc.)

References – other than family members or church staff/pastors

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Length of time you have known reference _____

Relationship to reference _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Length of time you have known reference _____

` Relationship to reference _____

Statement of Convictions

Have you ever been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or violation? Yes No

If "yes", please provide complete information listing date of conviction, court, sentence (if any), and final disposition.

Felony or Misdemeanor

Date of Conviction	Court	Sentence	Final Disposition
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Violation (including traffic) Last 5 yrs.

Date of Conviction	Court	Sentence	Final Disposition
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Under penalty of perjury, I certify that I have never been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor.

If this applies to you, please initial here: _____

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I, the undersigned, give my authorization to Fairport United Methodist Church or its representatives to release any and all records or information relating to working with minors. Fairport United Methodist Church may contact my references and appropriate government agencies as deemed necessary in order to verify my suitability as a youth or children's volunteer.

I understand that the personal information in this application will be held confidential by the professional Church staff.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If Under age 18 signature of parent or guardian _____



Fairport United Methodist Church Youth & Children's Ministry Reference Check

Applicant Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Reference Interview with _____

Phone Number _____

- In what capacity do you know the applicant? _____
- How long have you known the applicant? _____
- How well do you know the applicant? _____
- Is there a particular age group that you see this person being gifted to work with?

- This person has indicated an interest in volunteering with our _____ ministry.
Would you have any reservations? _____
- How would you describe their ability to interact with youth and children in the following areas?
As a role model _____
As an authority figure _____
As a mentor _____
- Do you view this person as:
 Loving Sensitive to the needs of others
 Open minded Relating well to others

How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child and/or youth?

- Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children and or youth? If so, please describe

Reference inquiry completed by _____



Youth & Children's Ministry Adult Volunteer Commitment

After observation of the ministry, time I have spent in prayer, and discussing with my family the commitment involved with being a volunteer at FUMC, I choose to commit to the following:

- I am committed toward growing and maturing in my relationship with God through quiet times and active attendance at church.
- I understand the three fold nature of the spiritual journey and will endeavor to make it real in my life.
 - *Worship:* We urge everyone to develop a pattern of regular worship of God, both with the congregation and individually. In worship we are nourished by God for a life of faith and discipleship.
 - *Service:* We serve the God we are coming to know by serving others, by sharing in many varieties of love, justice and peace activities, guided by and depending on the gifts God gave us.
 - *Learning:* Disciples need to be fed in different and deepening ways than are possible from worship alone. We need to be formed spiritually by engaging in study and prayer with others who are also on the journey. We cannot offer others what we do not have ourselves.
- I am committed to choices and a lifestyle that is Godly and make a concerted effort to follow Christ's example, knowing that my lifestyle is a model for the students.
- I am making a commitment to the youth/children's ministry for at least the full school year.
- I will attend volunteer meetings associated with my volunteer position.
- I understand that as a volunteer I commit to following and holding the youth/children accountable to the permission slip guidelines that have been established and published for an event or activity.

For those over 25 years of age:

- I possess a valid driver's license - State _____ # _____ Exp _____.
- My vehicle's inspection and insurance coverage are current.
- I am over 25 years of age which meets the minimum age requirement for drivers on the Fairport UMC insurance policy.
- I will make a committed attempt to help recruit at least one other adult volunteer for our growing needs in the youth & children's ministry.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Dear _____ :

The overall vision for our ministries with youth, children and vulnerable adults is to show each of them that they are loved and valued, not only by the members of our church but most importantly by God. We feel this is best accomplished through meaningful relationships. Because we encourage these relationships it is our responsibility to ensure the safety of all children, youth, and adults, including staff and volunteers.

For this reason we are asking each adult volunteer to provide Fairport United Methodist Church with requested information to complete a background check in accordance with the guidelines of the Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church. The form has been provided for you and is attached. If you have recently completed a background check and can provide a notarized copy, you will not need to complete another check. Please mail the copy to our church administrator at 31 W. Church St., Fairport, NY 14450.

In caring for students and adults, we believe it is our responsibility to seek adult volunteers and staff who are able to provide healthy, safe and nurturing relationships. Your help in this is most appreciated.

Signature

On behalf of the Church Council of Fairport United Methodist Church



**Fairport United Methodist Church
Children's Ministry
Class Release Information**

For the safety of our children we require that all children PreK through 2nd grade be picked up by a parent. Children 3rd grade through 5th grade may be released either to an older sibling or on their own to meet you in a pre-designated location only if you indicate that information below and sign.

Please note that many of our teachers need to pick up their own children from their classrooms. Your timely pick up of your child will allow them to pick theirs up.

Thanks so much for your cooperation.

My child _____ will be picked up by _____
Print First Name/ Last Name *Please Print*

or can be released on their own to meet me at _____.

Parent Signature

Date



**Fairport United Methodist Church
Youth & Children's Ministry
General Permission Slip**

Please complete the following, sign and return to the Youth Coordinator if you give your child permission to participate in on-site and off-site activities in the 20xx-20xx program year.

I give my permission for my child _____ to participate in on-site and off-site activities during the 20xx-20xx program year. I understand that some events will take place off Church property and my child will be under the supervision of FUMC Adult Volunteers. I consent to these conditions, including the method of transportation.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Contact information in the event of an emergency

Home phone _____
Cell Phone _____
Other Phone _____



Fairport United Methodist Church Youth & Children's Ministry Medical Release Form

I, _____ of _____
Parent/Guardian Name *Address, City, State, Zip*
am the _____ of _____
Relation *Youth/Child's Name*
Of _____
Address, City, State, Zip

I hereby give my consent, in the event all reasonable attempts to contact me have been unsuccessful, for immediate medical treatment as required in the judgment of the attending physician while

_____ is participating in any Fairport United Methodist Church activity.
Youth/Child's Name

Youth/Child's Date of Birth _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Phone Numbers

Name _____

Work _____

Home _____

Cell _____

Physician: _____ Dentist _____

Phone Number _____ Phone Number _____

Medical Insurance Company _____

Policy Number _____

Name of Insured _____

Additional information needed on back

The Following information is needed by those chaperoning your youth/child and will be needed by medical personnel in the event that emergency care is sought. Please be specific and complete.

Allergies _____

Medications being taken _____

Does youth/child carry medication with him/her? _____

Can youth/child self medicate? _____

Date of last tetanus shot: _____

Physical impairments: _____

Other pertinent facts to which physician should be alerted:

If parent/guardian cannot be reached in case of emergency, call:

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

In a medical emergency, I consent to the chaperone or appointed agent, his/her or their discretion in using, taking, arranging for or consenting to the procedures or treatment necessary. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Fairport United Methodist Church, the individual members, agents, employees and representatives thereof, for any and all claims, demands, actions, rights of action, and/or judgments by or on behalf of the above named member arising from or on account of said procedures and/or treatment rendered in good faith and according to accepted medical standards.

I assume the total financial responsibility for the above named member and will not hold the Fairport United Methodist Church responsible in the event of a medical emergency.

Signature of parent or guardian

Date



Fairport United Methodist Church Media Release Opt Out Form

In this digital age the church takes many pictures of baptisms, worship services, special events, activities, Sunday school, youth groups, etc. We use these pictures to record, promote, and celebrate our church ministry through many different venues including, but not limited to, our church website, slide shows, publications, etc.

We understand that some people may choose not to have their photos used and we want to respect their wishes. Therefore, we have provided below an “Opt Out Form” for those individuals or families who may prefer NOT to have photographs of themselves used by the church.

YOU NEED ONLY COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THE FORM BELOW IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR PHOTOGRAPH USED BY THE CHURCH.

OBJECTION TO USE OF PHOTOS BY Fairport United Methodist Church.

IF YOU HAVE NO OBJECTION TO CHURCH USE OF YOU OR YOUR CHILD’S PHOTOGRAPH DO NOT SIGN OR SUBMIT THIS FORM.

I object to the release or use of _____’s photograph in any still photograph, videotape, television, or motion picture production that will be produced, used, or distributed by Fairport United Methodist Church.

Signature

Date



**Fairport United Methodist Church
Youth & Children's Ministry
Transportation Permission Form**

Please complete the following, sign and return to the Youth Coordinator.

Youth Name: _____

If pertinent, please complete the following information and provide all required signatures:

____ I give my NY-state licensed youth driver permission to drive him/herself to Fairport UMC programs and events. (copy of license attached).

____ I give my child/youth permission to drive him/herself and other students/passengers.

____ I give him permission to ride in a vehicle driven by another youth. (That student must also have a permission form on file with the above option checked and signed off).

Name(s) of youth that your youth is permitted to ride with:

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Contact information in the event of an emergency

Home phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Other Phone _____

Limited Access Agreement (Example)

Limited Access Agreement (Example)

Fairport United Methodist Church is committed to affirming and defending the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a faith community open to all who wish to worship with us, guided by our principles and committed to our mission and values. At the same time, your status as a “level ____ sex offender” raises concerns about your contact with our congregation’s children, youth, and families with children. This Limited Access Agreement is designed to reduce the risk to our congregation of a sexual offense, and to you of an accusation.

We, the leadership of FUMC, welcome you into our congregation with limitations on your participation and areas of access (out of our concern for our children and youth). You are welcome and encouraged to participate in adult worship services, coffee hour, adult committee meetings, adult education, all adult-focused social events provided that you avoid all contact with children on FUMC property, and elsewhere at congregation-sponsored events.

Avoiding contact includes, but is not limited to:

1. Not talking with children.
2. Not volunteering or agreeing to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth, including such things as religious education classes, stories or children’s lessons for worship, youth group events, intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
4. Not being in the presence of children or in a restroom at FUMC unless you are accompanied by an adult member of FUMC who is aware of this Limited Access Agreement.
5. If you are attending a function at which others are wearing name tags, you will do likewise.
6. If a child of the congregation approaches you, you will politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.

In addition, we ask that you not knowingly accept rides from, or visit the homes of, congregation families where children are likely to be present.

By signing this Limited Access Agreement:

A. You accept that the congregation, specific people, and/or organizations that use the church, may be told of your history as a sex offender, in order for them to reduce perceived risk to the children and young people who attend, visit, or are members of FUMC.

B. You also give permission for the Minister, Children and Youth Ministries or someone acting at their request, to speak with your treatment provider(s) in order to better plan for your involvement at FUMC.

Representations made by EXAMPLE PERSON:

I have reviewed this agreement and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that if I violate this agreement, I will not be welcome at FUMC, and will be denied access to FUMC’s building and grounds, and to future FUMC functions.

I understand that FUMC and I may mutually agree to review this contract from time to time. Notwithstanding, this contract, or a signed revision of it, will remain in effect for an indefinite period.

Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Church Council Chair _____ Date _____

Minister _____ Date _____

I, EXAMPLE PERSON, hereby specifically release and authorize my treatment provider(s) to speak with FUMC's Minister, Children/Youth Ministries staff, or someone acting at their request, without separate or further release. Notwithstanding, if any such further release is required, I will provide it upon request.

Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

* Contact information for all correctional and treatment providers. These include, but are not limited

to:

Parole/Probation Officer:

Therapist(s):

Social Worker(s):