

**St. Luke's United Methodist Church
Orlando, Fl.**

Child and Student Protection Policy

Adopted: June 2004

Revised: July 2005

Revised: May 2006

Revised: May 2008

**St. Luke's
United Methodist Church
Child and Student Protection Policy
Table of Contents:**

Introduction	Page 3
I. Definitions	Page 3
II. Screening and Selection	Page 4
Of Church Staff and Adult Servant Ministers	
III. Ongoing Education of	Page 5
IV. Supervision of Children	Page 6
And Students	
V. Trip and Retreat Supervision.....	Page 10
VI. Medical Procedure	Page 11
VII. Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse.....	Page 12
VIII. Participation Covenant.....	Page 14

**Child and Student Protection Policy
St. Luke's United Methodist Church
Orlando, Florida**

Introduction:

A central tenet of the Christian faith is the inherent value and worth of all Children, Students, and Adults. Children and Students are least able to protect themselves in our society and are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. St. Luke's United Methodist Church desires to do what it can to protect the Children and Students who participate in the life of this congregation. As the church continues to grow in numbers and in size of the campus, it is increasingly important to take proactive and preventive steps that will make St. Luke's a safe place for everyone who comes. We have therefore, written the following policy in order to accomplish our goal.

I. Definitions

A. Child/Student/Adult

Following the Orange County Public School system, a **Child** is anyone age 11 and under. A **Student** is over the age of 11 and under the age of 18. An **Adult** is anyone 18 years of age or older.

For the purposes of this policy, the following are various adult classifications.

1. Ministry Director:

A **Ministry Director** is a paid staff person who supports, in conjunction with Lay Leadership, a specific ministry area, is overseen by Staff Parish Relations Committee, and is a Screened Adult (as described in Sec. II below).

2. Paid Staff Person:

An adult paid by the church, overseen by Staff Parish and screened every 5 years.

3. Screened Adult:

A Servant Minister (volunteer) who has gone through the screening process and will be rechecked every 5 years.

4. Adult Servant Minister:

Is an adult volunteer who has not gone through the screening process. Adult Servant Ministers can work in the presence of Children or Students with a Screened Adult, Paid Staff Person, or Ministry Director. They may not be alone in any setting with Children/Students. These persons may or may not be members of St. Luke's, but they must be regular attendees at St. Luke's or

another church for at least six months. The other church may be contacted for verification of attendance or membership. A regular attendee is someone who either attends worship, small group or other church-sponsored ministry on a consistent basis.

B. Child Abuse

For purposes of this Policy, **Child Abuse** is defined as any of the following:

1. Physical Abuse:

Is any violent non-accidental contact which may result in injury. This includes, but is not limited to striking, biting, or shaking. Injuries may include but are not limited to bruises, fractures, cuts, and burns.

2. Sexual Abuse:

Any form of sexual activity with a Child/Student, whether at the church, at home, or any other setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another minor.

3. Emotional Abuse:

A pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a Child/Student's spirit or attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.

II. Screening and Selection of Church Staff and Adult Servant Ministers

Adult Servant Ministers who regularly work in ministry with the church's Children/Students and each Church Paid Staff Person will be screened. Those who work regularly with Children/Students will be trained on child protection issues prior to beginning their involvement with Children/Students. The procedures for screening are as follows:

- A.** Each person being considered to work regularly with Children/Students, whether as a Servant Minister or Paid Staff Person, shall fill out an application form.
- B.** Before placing the applicant in a position of responsibility with Children/Students, a Ministry Director, designated Paid Staff Person or other person charged with specific responsibility will interview the applicant reviewing with them the written application.
- C.** The person conducting this interview will contact the references provided on the application form and any additional persons as the circumstances dictate. A written record of such contacts will be retained with the application form.
- D.** Each person applying to work with Children/Students shall "authorize" the church to conduct a **Criminal Background Check**. For persons who have not

lived in Florida for the past five years, a national background check needs to be conducted. Each person will also read and sign an **Affidavit of Good Moral Character**.

- E. Before beginning work with either Children/Students, each Paid Staff Person and Servant Minister will participate in a training session and sign a statement that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Child and Student Protection Policy.
- F. After the interview and background check have been accomplished, the decision will be made whether to accept or not the applicant as a Paid Staff Person or Adult Servant Minister who will work with Children/Students.
- G. Where it has been determined that an applicant should **not** work with Children/Students, those persons involved with the decision will handle it in a sensitive manner. The respective Ministry Director or her/his designee will inform the applicant in person. The specific reasons for the decision will be given, whenever possible. A **Review Process** is in place which will allow such an applicant to be considered for work in these ministries after a background check has been returned showing a criminal record. The Ministry Director will discuss this process should the applicant be interested. The applicant will be required to provide clear and convincing proof of rehabilitation as part of this review process.
- H. Servant Minister's records will be kept in a locked cabinet in the respective ministry area. There will be a system in place that gives those who need these records easy access and a safe place to be stored when they are not needed.

III. Ongoing Education of Persons Who Work With Children and Students

St. Luke's United Methodist Church shall ensure that regularly scheduled (at least annually) training focused on current issues of Child/Student Protection is available to and received by those working with Children/Students. Attendance at these training will be **required** of all Paid Staff Persons, Screened Adults and Adult Servant Ministers who work consistently with Children/Students. The training for all Paid Staff Persons will include:

- A. Review of St. Luke's Child and Student Protection Policy.
- B. St. Luke's Policy and Procedures on Child Abuse and the reasons for having them.
- C. The definition and recognition of child abuse.
- D. The need to maintain a positive classroom/small group environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics.
- E. The appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of Children/Students events.
- F. Child Abuse reporting responsibilities and procedures.
- G. Definition of appropriate interpersonal boundaries.
- H. Disaster response procedures.
- I. Medical response procedures.

- J.** Basic First Aid/CPR (including AED training) is recommended for all Paid Staff Persons and all Servant Ministers and can be scheduled through specific ministry areas.

IV. Supervision of Children and Students

A. General Rules

- 1.** All activities involving Children/Students will be supervised by at least one Screened Adult.
- 2.** When feasible, each room set aside for Children/Students will have a door with a window.
- 3.** The “Two Person Rule” is defined as having at least two people in any classroom or setting, one of which must be a screened Adult Servant Minister or Paid Staff Person. No Child/Student will be alone with a Paid Staff Person or Servant Minister. When two adults are not available to supervise, classroom doors are to remain open, or classroom doors must have a window for visibility.
- 4.** In cases where physical contact may be necessary for purposes of instruction or safety: including, but not limited to, dance classes, gymnastics instruction or other physical activity where the Child/Student must move about with prescribed form and/or technique, any physical contact will be limited to what is commonly considered appropriate and necessary in the course of instruction and/or safety. Examples of such contact include, but are not limited to assisted placement or guidance of the body or a body part (arm, leg or head position) to the prescribed position.
- 5.** Physical contact is not allowed with any part of the body that if left uncovered would be considered inappropriate for public viewing. Physical contact is not to be made against the wishes of the Child/Student, unless their physical safety or the safety of others is obviously in jeopardy. Congratulatory touching such as a pat on the back, “high-fives”, hand shakes, brief hugs or brief touches on the shoulder or upper back are considered appropriate in the presence of other adults. A Child’s hand may be held when the group is walking from one activity to another, if the Child wishes to have his/her hand held.
- 6.** The “Five Years Older Rule” requires that all persons working with Children, including all Servant Ministers should be at least five years older than the Children they are working with. Anyone under the age of 18, if utilized, will be required to work with an unrelated Screened Adult.

7. Paid Workers and all Servant Ministers may not have Children/Students sit on their laps while the room is darkened for a video or when other Paid Staff Persons or Servant Ministers are not present.
8. Paid Workers and all Servant Ministers may not use physical force with a Child/Student. Examples of physical force include pulling a Child/Student by the arm or restraining the Child/Student in some other way. If you have a serious problem with a Child/Student, please see the person in charge of the event. If it is absolutely necessary to restrain a Child/Student to keep him/her from being harmed or from harming others, be as gentle as possible and have someone report to the person in charge, or the Ministry Director immediately.
9. Paid Workers and all Servant Ministers will be positive role models for the Children/Students and will refrain from any form of verbal abuse toward the Children/Students or each other. Paid Workers/Servant ministers will always speak to Children/Students and each other with respect, even when reprimanding.

B. Rules Specific to Age Groups

1. Infant to 5th Grade

At least one Screened Adult will be present for all program activities. When feasible, there will be two Screened Adults present, and where the two adults are family members, a third adult must be present. In addition, a designated person will periodically check programs. Two persons in the program area is the expectation, at least one of them must be a Screened Adult. Children will be escorted to and from bathroom facilities or when otherwise leaving the room by either one of the supervising adults or by a designated floating person who checks on program areas. Where two adults are not available to supervise, program area doors are to remain open, or doors must have window for visibility.

2. Grades 6-12

At least one Screened Adult will be present for all Student activities. When feasible, there will be two Screened Adults present, and where the two adults are family members, a third adult must be present. In addition, a designated person will periodically check each program area. Two persons in the room is the expectation, at least one of them must be a Screened Adult. Where two adults are not available to supervise, doors are to remain open, or doors must have a window for visibility. Screened Adults are allowed to have one on one prayer and listening time with students who need or desire this individual attention. If you feel that

your conversation requires a closed door for sensitivity reasons, contact the specific Ministry Director for that area.

3. Open Door Policy

Parents, Servant Ministers or Paid Staff Persons will be permitted, as reasonableness dictates, to visit and observe all programs and classrooms at any time.

4. Sign-in/Sign-out Procedure

Adults responsible for Children who are infants through 5th grade will sign their Child in and out of all programs. Please note this applies only to programs with Children birth to 5th grade. Students who are in 6th through 12th grade will check/sign themselves in/out at all programs. Students in 6th -8th grades who wish to leave before the scheduled end of a church-sponsored activity however, must be signed out by a parent or other authorized adult. Picking-up Children/Students by non-authorized individuals is prohibited.

5. Counseling of Children and Students

Only Certified Counseling Staff and Ordained Clergy are allowed to counsel Children/Students under the age of 18 years of age. All other Ministry Directors, Paid Staff, and Adult Servant Ministers are allowed to listen to what a Child/Student is saying, repeat what they are hearing, and pray with them.

6. Time Following Group Events

Following Child/Student group events both on campus and offsite, it is inevitable that occasionally a Child/Student's transportation will arrive after all other Children/Students have departed. In those circumstances, a Child/Student may unavoidably be supervised by one Screened Adult. Under these circumstances, the general rule requiring the presence of two Screened Adults is temporarily suspended and the available Screened Adult is responsible for exercising his/her best judgment for the students well being. The Screened Adult who is present shall call the Ministry Director immediately and apprise the Director of this situation. Further, it is suggested that the Screened Adult seek the company of the church security personnel or another Paid Staff Person while waiting, and to wait in a highly visible area (i.e. outdoors when practical or in any public indoor area). Only a Screened Adult and/or a Paid Staff Person may be present in this situation.

NOTE: A Child/Student shall NEVER be left alone on campus to wait for transportation or for any other reason.

C. Supervision of Offsite Activities

1. Requirements

At least two Screened Adults will be present for all off site activities involving Children/Students. Additionally, any meetings held in an

individual's home will be supervised by at least two Screened Adults who are not members of the same family. Two family members may be present but a third Screened Adult must also be present if this is the case. The host homeowner should **not** be the scheduled group leader or facilitator. However, the host homeowner may substitute in this capacity in the event of an unexpected absence of one of the scheduled group leaders. For this reason, the host homeowner must be a member of St. Luke's and any host homeowner present at the meeting shall also be a Screened Adult.

Parents/Guardians of Children/Students planning to attend meetings held in an individual's home must complete a **Consent Form** in advance of participation. This consent can be for the duration of the scheduled classes as long as the Consent Form indicates the duration of the class/study group (i.e. 8 weeks of sessions, meeting once a week).

2. Transportation

Transporting Children/Students is an important concern. Their safety can be at risk in a variety of ways. Therefore, certain discretion must be used depending upon the event attended, the location of the event, and the age group participating. It is expected that the Requirements outlined in this Policy will always be followed. Drivers will read and sign the **Participation Covenant** indicating that training has been completed and that they will thus agree to and abide by this Policy.

- a.** Drivers must be known to the designated adult leader and Ministry Director of the event.
- b.** When a Child/Student is transported in any vehicle, the driver must be either the Child/Student's parent/guardian, or a Screened Adult or a Paid Staff Person who is at least 21 years old.
- c.** When a Child/Student is transported in a church owned vehicle, the driver must be at least 21 years of age.
- d.** Drivers must have a valid driver's license for the vehicle being operated. A copy of the driver's license will be on file at the church.
- e.** Drivers must require that seat belts be used at all times and the number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts.
- f.** Drivers will be advised of a designated route and will not deviate from it except in cases of emergency or road detours.
- g.** Persons who drive church owned vehicles to transport Children/Students will receive procedural training and orientation for the church owned vehicle being operated and will be added to an "Approved Driver List" maintained in the office of the Manager of Facilities and Grounds prior to driving the vehicle.
- h.** In order to be listed on the approved driver list, a Motor Vehicle Record search will also be conducted. The form for this search must be submitted to the Florida U.M. Conference Office of Risk Management for approval.

3. Students Driving to Offsite Events

It is understood that Students will at times, and with permission of the Ministry Director, drive their own vehicles to offsite events/activities. Students who drive their own vehicles will be reminded regularly of the importance of vehicle safety. They will agree to follow all state driving laws with regard to passenger safety and driving behaviors. When there is reason to believe it would not be safe for a Student to drive a vehicle, the supervising adults shall intervene and take reasonable steps to insure the safety of the driver and passengers, and make alternate arrangements for all concerned.

V. Trip and Retreat Supervision

Trip and Retreat settings can call for different Child/Student protection requirements depending on the circumstances. What follows are the Requirements of this Policy with regard to these varied settings. Those persons acting in a supervisory capacity for the trip or retreat will read and sign the Participation Covenant indicating that training has been completed and they will thus agree to and abide by the Policy and these Requirements. In addition, they will be expected to apply their own wisdom and discernment to the needs of a given situation with the protection and safety of the Children/Students in attendance being the highest priority.

NOTE ABOUT VISITING GROUPS: Groups visiting St. Luke's United Methodist Church for overnight stays are asked to agree to and abide by this policy. St. Luke's will not be responsible to document that Screened Adults are present. However, it is expected that United Methodist groups in particular will bear in mind the Florida Conference mandate for the protection and safety of Children/Students and will have Screened Adults accompanying overnight trips to the campus. Further, it is understood that any visiting group will execute due diligence, using this policy as a minimum standard, in providing for the safety and protection of Children/Students while they are on St. Luke's campus.

1. A Screened Adult will be required on any trip, retreat, or any other church sponsored event. There will be at least two Screened Adults present for all trips, retreats and other events where the Children/Students gather overnight, or away from, the church campus.

2. There will be at least one Screened Adult for each gender present at co-ed overnight events. At single gender overnight events, at least one of the two Screened Adults present shall be of the same gender as the Children/Students.
3. The person in charge of Children/Students for each overnight trip and/or retreat will carry parental permission slips including permission for emergency medical care.
4. In any overnight setting, space should be assigned as follows:
 - a. Space with Students will be monitored at all times by Screened Adults.
 - b. Only same gender and adjoining same gender rooms are permitted.
 - c. If all are sleeping in large open area separate space will be designated. In this setting, Screened Adults will be placed in such a way as to separate Students by gender.

VI. Medical Procedures

First Aid kits are available throughout the campus including Gym, Reception Desk, Attic, Fellowship Hall, School of the Arts office, Workrooms in Building A and C, A-201, Kitchen in Building C, Child Development Center in Building B, and in all Church Vehicles.

A **First Aid** kit will also be brought by the adult leader to all off site activities, trips, retreats or missions. In the event of a medical need, send someone to get the Ministry Director or person in charge, begin treating the Child/Student in accordance with Standard First Aid procedures and afterward, complete the Incident Report Form. The Ministry Director will talk with the parents on their arrival, letting them know what happened and how the injury was treated.

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AED units) are located:
Building C- Reception Office
Sanctuary- Narthex closet outside Men's restroom
Building B- CDC office underneath Reception desk

Medications: We are not authorized to dispense any medications.

Serious Injury: Serious injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious bodily injury should be treated following accepted Standard First Aid procedures and as follows:

1. Keep calm and keep the injured person and other Children/Students as calm as possible. Speak calmly to reassure the injured Child/Student.

2. Contact 911 and any medical personnel available on campus. The Ministry Director will have health and emergency contact information and will contact the parents/guardians immediately.
3. Do not move the injured Child/Student and do not leave them alone.
4. In the event that an injured person is not breathing, or does not have a pulse, send someone **immediately** to get one of the **Automated External Defibrillator** units on campus. (Locations listed above). Send another person to get the Ministry Director, the person in charge, or another Paid Staff Person.
5. If the Child/Student is to be transported to a hospital and the parents cannot be located in time, the Ministry Director will accompany the Child/Student to the hospital.
6. The Ministry Director will follow up with the parents as needed.
7. Paid Staff Persons or Servant Ministers involved in the emergency will complete an Accident/Incident Report describing what happened immediately following the emergency.

VII. Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

- A. Everyone in the church has a moral responsibility and a legal duty to report suspected Child Abuse (as described on page 3 of this document) whenever it comes to their attention, regardless of where that abuse takes place. Reporting abuse is a form of ministering to the needs of those crying out for help. Therefore, **immediately** notify the proper authorities (i.e., the local law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the Child/Student resides or in which the suspected abuse occurred and/or the appropriate department of children's services). **This is a requirement of the Florida "MANDATED REPORTER" law. Contact for the purpose of reporting any suspected or actual abuse can be made by calling the Child Abuse Registry at 1-800-962-2873.**
 1. Immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with Children/Students. Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the Child/Student is secured, the other designated persons will inform the accused that abuse has been reported. If abuse is observed by, disclosed to, or suspected by a Servant Minister and/or Paid Staff Person of the church, the observer will report the incident immediately to the Ministry Director.
 2. If the accused is the appointed clergy or other Pastor or a member of her/his family, the allegations will be immediately reported to the District Superintendent **and** immediately reported to the proper authorities as required by state or local law. The District Superintendent will take responsibility and act according to established rules of *The Book of Discipline* with respect to claims against a Pastor. If the District

Superintendent is not available, the incident should be reported to the Bishop's office.

3. Do not interview the Child/Student regarding the suspected abuse. A trained professional will conduct any such interview. Do not discuss the suspected abuse with anyone, including other Paid Staff Persons, Servant Ministers, or parents. All information regarding the Child/Student will be kept strictly confidential.
4. Notify the parents of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety and well being of the Child/Student until the parent(s) arrive. Note: If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, follow the advice of the authorities concerning notification of others.
5. 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.
6. The church will 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 can take place.
7. After having reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the Ministry Director and Staff Leadership Team are to report the incident immediately to the District Superintendent. If the District Superintendent is unavailable, the incident should be reported to the Bishop's office.
8. Keep a written report of the steps taken by the church in response to the reported abuse on an Accident/Incident Report Form. The report will be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. It will be kept in a secure place. It will be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed.
9. Any contact with the media will be handled by a member of the Staff Leadership Team. **NOTE:** The Florida UM Conference Communications Department is a good source of help when media questions arise. The church spokesperson should generally convey a spirit of concern for the spiritual, physical, and emotional well being of all who are affected, and that the matter is being diligently and appropriately handled.

**Child and Student Protection Policy
St. Luke's United Methodist Church
Orlando, Florida**

Participation Covenant

The congregation of St. Luke's United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all Children, Students, and Servant Ministers (volunteers) who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statement reflects the commitment of this congregation to preserve this church as a Holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter, and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

Therefore, no person who has been convicted of Child Abuse will be involved with or directly connected to any church sponsored or hosted activity with Children/Students.

All adults involved with or connected to the activity of Children/Students at this church must have been members or at least verifiably active participants of St. Luke's or another church congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.

All adults involved with or connected to the activity of Children/Students at this church shall observe the Child and Student Protection Policy at all times.

All adults involved with or connected to the activity of Children/Students at this church will attend training and educational events provided by the church to be informed of the church policies and other laws regarding child abuse.

All adults involved with or connected to the activity of Children/Students at this church shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate in any way.

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth herein.

Print Name

Signature of Applicant

Date