

# Mount Zion United Methodist Church

## Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures

The Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church is committed to ensuring that all children and youth, vulnerable adults, staff, and volunteers involved in local church or annual conference ministries are provided with a safe and secure environment. In 2008, Mount Zion formed a task force to develop a safe sanctuaries plan using the United Methodist-recommended book *Safe Sanctuaries* by Joy Melton.

The following plan reflects Mount Zion's commitment to do everything possible to protect our children, youth, and adults from harm.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is responsible for establishing and periodically reviewing the Safe Sanctuaries Policy. The SPRC will also designate one member to conduct background checks on Mt. Zion staff members and to serve as liaison to the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries.

The Lead Pastor is responsible for monitoring the administration of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

The SPRC Chair will be responsible, in conjunction with the Lead Pastor, for determining the disposition of background reports that reveal criminal activity not related to sexual behavior.

The Director of Youth and Children's Ministries will be responsible for the overall management and administration of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy. The Director will provide a summary report detailing compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures to the SPRC annually prior to Church Conference.

### General Policies

**Permission Forms** – Parents or guardians will be asked to give permission for youth to participate in church activities by signing the annual Youth Ministry Permission and Liability Form. A permission form authorizing the use of photos and videos of individual children and youth on the church's website and social media accounts and in printed communications and other media will be incorporated into event registration forms (e.g., VBS, mission trips). Additional permission forms may be required for specific activities, such as overnight trips.

**Youth and Children's Ministry Leadership Covenant** – All adult volunteers and staff with direct oversight of children and youth will be required to sign a covenant to establish and maintain appropriate and healthy relationships within Mt. Zion's youth and children's ministry. (See Appendix A) The covenant will be renewed annually.

**Two Adult Rule** -- Mount Zion will endeavor to have at least two unrelated adults who have been satisfactorily screened working with our children and youth at all times. If an occasion arises when only one screened adult is available to supervise children, the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry will take steps to address the situation, such as combining two classes or pulling in an adult from a Sunday school class. Furthermore, if it is not possible to assign two unrelated adults, one adult and one unrelated high school youth may be used (e.g., the nursery). The Director of Youth and Children's Ministry may allow exceptions to this policy, based on his/her best judgment, and is responsible for monitoring such situations.

The two-adult rule also applies to activities conducted entirely online, such as Zoom Sunday school. For such activities, this requirement can be satisfied if there is a) a parent or other household adult closely monitoring the online ministry activity while the child or youth participates or b) an unrelated adult in a separate location monitoring the online ministry activity. If there is an occasion when two unrelated adults cannot be present for an online youth or children's ministry activity, the host of the meeting will record the meeting and notify the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry. The Director will develop appropriate procedures to notify and obtain parental agreement for this policy, to ensure the security of the recordings, and to review them for inappropriate behavior.

**Age Restrictions** – No one under 18 years old will be solely responsible for supervising children. All those working with children/youth will be at least five years older than those in the group they are overseeing.

**First Aid/ CPR Training** – Mount Zion will ensure that appropriate staff members working with children or youth are trained and certified in First Aid/CPR. A certified staff member or volunteer should be on hand during all church and children/youth functions. A list of certified staff members and volunteers will be posted in the church office in case of emergency.

**Training and Orientation** – The Director of Youth and Children's Ministries will develop training materials on the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures. All volunteers with direct oversight of children/youth will receive an orientation and training annually. Attendance records will be kept to document compliance with this policy. Staff should also receive an annual review of Mt. Zion's Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures.

**Space Requirements** – All meetings, classes, or other activities involving children, youth, or adults will be located in rooms with a window in the door.

**Parent and Family Education** – Mount Zion will provide information about the Safe Sanctuaries Policy to parents of children and youth participating in church activities.

**Bathroom Use** – Children in preschool and kindergarten must be accompanied to the restroom by one of their teachers who has had a background check. The teacher will wait outside with the door open. Children in first grade through fifth grade may go to the restroom by themselves if the restrooms are in close proximity to the classrooms and class leaders can monitor the hallway during bathroom visits by the older children.

**Arrival and Dismissal** – All children in the nursery must be signed in and out by a parent or adult caretaker. All children in preschool through fifth grade should be dropped off for Sunday school by a parent or adult caretaker. Parents are required to pick up their children from Sunday school. A parent or an adult caretaker must remain on Mt Zion's campus while their child/ren are in nursery and/or Sunday School.

**New Volunteers** – Adult volunteers working with children or youth must be members or regular attendees of Mount Zion for at least six months before starting a volunteer assignment or be paired with an experienced volunteer or staff member for six months.

**Traveling with Youth** – In general, adults participating in day trips and overnight trips must go through the background check process and complete orientation and training on Mt. Zion's Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures as outlined elsewhere in this policy. Specific exceptions to this policy are noted throughout.

- **Day Trips** – At least two of the drivers for day trips must meet the criteria for Designated Drivers listed below. Parents or other responsible adults may also serve as drivers for youth and children’s day trips without undergoing background or driver record checks.
- **Overnight Trips** – All participants (children, youth, and adults) attending any overnight field trips, activities, or retreats off church premises should follow the best practices and guidelines established by the Director of Youth and Children’s Ministries. (See Appendix B) At least two of the drivers for overnight trips must meet the criteria for Designated Drivers listed below.

**Social Media Policy** – Adults working with children and youth will follow best practices established by the Director of Youth and Children’s Ministries on the appropriate use of social media and mobile devices (e.g., texting) in interactions with children and youth. (See Appendix C)

**Insurance** – The Mount Zion Trustees will ensure that the church has adequate insurance in the event of a legal action involving the Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

**Other Groups** – The Mount Zion Trustees will ensure that all other groups that use the church facilities will agree to and abide by these policies and/or policies required by Maryland licensing guidelines. This includes the Mt. Zion Christian Preschool, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.

## **Safe Sanctuary Procedures**

### **Recruiting, Screening, and Hiring**

**No one who has been convicted of any type of abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, or emotional abuse) will be allowed to volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activities. All volunteers and staff are required to adhere to the policies covered in Safe Sanctuaries training and in this Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures.**

Regular volunteers and staff and occasional workers with direct oversight of children and youth, such as VBS volunteers, will be required to complete or provide the following items:

- Youth and Children’s Ministry Leadership Covenant (at start of volunteer service)
- Online Background Check (every other year for adults 18 and older with direct oversight of youth or children)
- Sexual Misconduct Form provided by the Baltimore-Washington Conference, including personal references (updated annually)
- Safe Sanctuaries Training (reviewed annually)

Occasional workers without direct oversight of children and youth, such as preschool parents and field trip chaperones will be required to complete the following forms:

- Sexual Misconduct Form provided by the Baltimore-Washington Conference, including personal references (updated annually)
- These adults are not permitted to be alone with the children; a person who has been background-checked will always be present.

Designated Drivers – Any paid staff member or volunteer who drives children or youth for a Mount Zion program or activity as defined above must meet the following requirements:

- 24 -74 years of age
- Valid U.S. driver’s license
- Proof of current auto insurance coverage
- Vehicle with a working seatbelt for each participant being transported.
- Online Background check including driving record (every other year)
- Sexual Misconduct Form (updated annually)
- Safe Sanctuaries Training (reviewed annually)

**Driving Record Check** – If a driving record check reveals evidence of reckless driving (i.e., three or more moving violations in the past year) or driving under the influence (DUI) during the past ten years, the person will not be approved as a designated driver. In case of lesser violations, the SPRC chair and Lead Pastor will determine and agree to the appropriate course of action.

### **Background Checks**

First Advantage (hereinafter “FA”) is the company used by Mount Zion to obtain background information. FA researches the databases of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Criminal Justice Investigation Service (CJIS) to determine whether there is information about an individual having engaged in criminal activity.

Background checks (including driving record checks) will be performed every two years on all adult volunteers regularly working in a direct oversight capacity (e.g., lead Sunday School Teacher in a classroom) in ministry with children or youth. An adult in this context is an individual who is 18 years of age or older. The Director of Youth and Children’s Ministries will be responsible for initiating background investigations for volunteers, keeping all information confidential, and reporting to the Pastor and SPRC any issues of concern.

Background checks will also be performed every two years on all paid staff. The designated SPRC liaison will be responsible for initiating background investigations for all staff.

The person initiating the background checks will provide the names of the individuals to First Advantage. The company will then send an email from Shepherd's Watch (operated by First Advantage) to each person requesting them to enter their data into the online Background Check Form using a secure website. Applicants may request a copy of their background report when they complete the online form.

All reports will be maintained and secured digitally by First Advantage and will be accessible to the SPRC chair, Lead Pastor, and Director of Youth and Children’s Ministries. If a report indicates there has been criminal activity related to sexual behavior, the individual is automatically disqualified from working in ministry with children or youth. If the report indicates that there has been criminal activity not related to sexual behavior, a decision will be made by the Lead Pastor and the SPRC Chair as to whether the individual will be approved to work in ministry with children or youth.

The Lead Pastor or the SPRC Chair will inform the church committee chair or team leader of the group requesting the background check in the event that the individual is not approved to supervise children or youth.

First Advantage will maintain an up-to-date spreadsheet of all volunteers and staff who have had background checks. Approvals will be valid for a period of two years. The spreadsheet is accessible to the designated SPRC liaison who is tasked with filing it in the SPRC Dropbox.

All information related to background checks will be kept strictly confidential, and all those with access to the information will sign a Covenant of Confidentiality.

### **Document Retention and Storage**

The paper Background Check Permission Forms completed prior to October 2022 and all paper Sexual Misconduct Forms will be kept by the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the Director, the Lead Pastor, the SPRC Chair, and designated SPRC liaison. These records must be preserved permanently according to law.

### **Response to Allegations of Abuse**

Maryland child abuse law requires that anyone who suspects a child or youth is being abused or mistreated must report the matter to the Howard County Department of Social Services or Police. Consequently, if an incident is reported to the Lead Pastor or Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, it must be reported. This information will be immediately told to the person reporting abuse.

If abuse is suspected by, observed by, or disclosed to a volunteer and/or paid staff member of the church, that person shall report the incident immediately to the Lead Pastor or designee (If the accused is the Lead Pastor, see below).

The following steps must be taken:

- Ensure the protection of and tend to the immediate needs of the child or youth, as the situation requires.
- **IMMEDIATELY** contact the Lead Pastor or pastor on call.
- **IMMEDIATELY** notify the immediate supervisor or adult in charge of the event. This person will:
  - Provide written documentation concerning the incident on the child abuse report form within 48 hours. (See Appendix E.)
  - Notify the Howard County Department of Social Services. **This is a requirement of the law.** (Note: Do not attempt an investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.)
  - Notify the pastor in charge. If the pastor is the accused party, the designee will notify the chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent.
  - Give the written documentation to the Lead Pastor and/or SPRC chair.
- The Lead Pastor or designee will notify the parents of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety of the child or youth until the parent(s) arrive. It is important to emphasize that the proper authorities must be notified even if the parent does not wish the incident to be reported. (Note: If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, contact the proper authorities listed above. Follow their advice about notification of the parents.)
- After having reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the incident is to be reported immediately to Mount Zion's legal representative and insurance company and to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendent will report the allegation to the bishop's office. Do not try to handle this situation without professional assistance. If the accused is a clergy member (deacon, elder)

of an annual conference, local pastor, or diaconal minister, provisions of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church must be followed.

- A list of emergency numbers will be provided to staff and volunteer leaders, posted in the church office, on bulletin boards, and in the Youth Center.
- If the accused is working in a volunteer or paid position with children or youth in the church immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the person, remove the accused from further involvement with children and/or youth.
- Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the child or youth is secured, the Lead Pastor or other designated person may tell the accused that a report has been made. If the accused is a volunteer or paid staff person of the church, that person shall be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the accused is a paid staff person of the church, follow the SPRC policies for an immediate leave of absence.
- Any contact with the media should be handled by the SPRC chair or designee. Care will be taken to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved. The spokesperson should generally convey that the matter is under investigation and any comments made prior to the conclusion of the investigation would be premature.
- The written child abuse report of the basic information shall be kept to ensure ongoing ministry to, and advocacy for, victims and others involved. The report shall be brief and document only the factual information relevant to the situation. It will be filed in a secure place to ensure confidentiality. It shall be preserved in a format that does not allow it to be changed (e.g., Read Only). The church must also file a copy of the report with the Baltimore-Washington Conference where it shall remain confidential.

**Revised and Approved by the Staff Parish Relations Committee: March 28, 2023**

**Approved by Church Council: May 28, 2023**

**Next Update: 2026**

## **Appendix A:**

### **Youth and Children's Ministry Leadership Covenant**

As a leader in youth ministry, you are called to exhibit the highest of Christian values and serve in ways that honor Christ. Students in your care and charge are seeking and searching. They are hungry to discover even more fully what it means to be a Christ-follower. Your examples of servant leadership, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, self-control, patience, and love will serve as signposts throughout their journey.

This covenant is created to encourage your God-giftedness, your unique talents, and your leadership, while also helping you to establish and maintain appropriate and healthy relationships with the youth and children of our community.

Teamwork always takes precedence over individualism. The goal is community for everyone involved.

You can nurture disciples only as much as you offer yourself as a disciple. Gifted leaders have a passion for God and a desire to share God's love.

Young people will seek you out for advice, personal sharing, and direction. It is important that you respect the confidentiality with which something is shared, unless you are required by law to share information you have been given.

It is the expectation that as a leader, your life will reflect a high level of personal and moral integrity.

While it is not prohibited for youth and children's leaders to date one another, it does create an interesting dynamic, especially when a breakup occurs. If you date another youth or children's leader, you are asked to use discretion and Christlike judgment. It is absolutely prohibited for a youth leader to date or engage in any sexualized behavior with a minor. Sexual misconduct of any type will not be tolerated.

All of us face situations of fear, frustration, and loss in our lives. You are asked to refrain from sharing with youth and children information pertaining to your personal life issues. You are also asked to use careful and judicious judgment in sharing any past experiences of poor judgment or behavior as a teaching tool.

While it is most appropriate to be friendly to youth at group activities, in the community, and in the church, it is not appropriate to begin a friendship with youth or children that will spill over into fraternization outside of sponsored activities. Again, it is expressly prohibited for youth leaders to date youth. Maintaining appropriate boundaries with youth is an acknowledgment of the power differential that is implicit in your role as a leader. These boundaries will help you gain their respect and will enhance your ability and effectiveness in disciplining or counseling them.

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As a child of God, a member of the church universal, and as a volunteer or paid employee of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, I covenant and agree to:

(Initial in the space provided after you have read and agreed to each bulleted item)

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- not abuse alcohol or drugs in any inappropriate or illegal manner, engage in sexualized behavior, or participate in the sharing of music or other material that contains offensive language. \_\_\_\_\_
- work as a team and submit myself and my will to the assigned leader of a particular mission, event, or activity. \_\_\_\_\_
- attend to my own spiritual growth through prayer, Bible study, worship, and participation in the community of faith. \_\_\_\_\_
- display exemplary moral character and integrity when participating in online social media, using my cell phone and other mobile devices, and engaging with others utilizing these devices. I will abstain from and encourage young people to abstain from sexting, cyberbullying, online harassment, and any type of Internet intimidation. \_\_\_\_\_
- I acknowledge receipt of Mt. Zion's Guidelines for Use of Social Media. \_\_\_\_\_
- engage with youth and children and fellow leaders in ways that allow us to build one another up, rather than demoralize, criticize, or demean. This includes the games we play and the jokes we share. \_\_\_\_\_
- be mindful and respectful of the safe spaces I create for youth.
  - I will avoid being alone with any youth or child behind closed doors, in a vehicle, or in any place where other adults are not present. \_\_\_\_\_
  - I will seek to encourage relationships and conversations in places of community that foster confidentiality, safety, and respect. \_\_\_\_\_
- respect and hold sacred the confidential information youth and children might share with me. However, I also covenant to operate within the boundaries of the law and will break confidences if legally required to do so. \_\_\_\_\_
  - I will establish healthy boundaries in my interactions with youth, children, and other youth leaders. This includes dating and sharing personal experiences and friendships beyond the youth or children's group or counseling relationship. \_\_\_\_\_
  - I understand that dating or engaging in sexualized behavior with youth and children is absolutely prohibited. \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*(Each item above is to be initialed by the person completing this form. The signed and dated document will be retained in that person's record.)*



## **Appendix B: Best Practices for Traveling with Children or Youth**

1. Mt. Zion's current Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures for designated drivers and trip chaperones are in effect.
2. Drivers must obey the laws of the road.
3. Everyone must have their own seatbelt and be buckled in while the vehicle is moving.
4. No hand-held cell phone use by drivers while driving is permitted.
5. Keep in visual contact with other vehicles in the group. When this is not possible, be in regular communication with them.
6. Youth/Children need to stay in their assigned vehicles for travel.
7. In case of any emergency while "on the road," contact the designated ministry leader immediately.
8. The "two-deep" policy is in effect: No adult should be alone with just one student. It is preferable always to have at least two non-related adults present; when this is not possible, there should always be two or more students present with an adult.
9. Have an established line of communication with families and Mt. Zion ministry leadership to provide updates (arrival or estimated time of return) or to communicate emergency information. Youth and adult leaders are not to independently communicate trip-related information unless specifically asked to do so by the trip leader or approved to do so.
10. Create a cell phone usage policy for each trip for both youth/children and adults.
11. Youth/Children and adults should maintain separate shower time/space.
12. Youth/Children and adults should maintain separate sleeping rooms. Under no circumstances should any ministry leader/chaperone share a bed with a youth or child.
13. Privacy and safety should be prioritized for all trip participants with regard to restroom/shower/changing facilities and sleeping arrangements.
14. Adults are expected to participate with youth/children in all trip/retreat activities unless otherwise established prior to the trip.
15. Church trips are not appropriate venues for romantic activity or physical intimacy.
16. Church trips are not appropriate venues for alcohol or drug use.
17. Youth/Children should always have at least two buddies to "travel with."
18. Youth/Children should always let an adult know where they are headed/will be (i.e., during free time, leaving an activity to use the restroom, etc.)
19. Youth/Children should have access to the trip/retreat schedule.
20. Policies for "open dorms," "quiet time," and "lights out" need to be established and communicated prior to all overnight trips/retreats.
21. Adults should not post pictures of ministry-related events that include minors unless they have received permission to do so from an assigned ministry leader.
22. All youth/children's medication, including over-the-counter medications, should be secured and administered by a designated adult leader. Parents/guardians should present medication to the designated adult in its original container labeled with the name and dosage of the medication, the name of the youth/child on the package, and a signed note with specific instructions for administering the medication. If there is a medical need for a youth/child to have access to medication due to emergency

or time-sensitive administration needs (e.g., asthma inhaler, epi-pen, continuous monitored/flow glucometer), the parent/guardian must give signed permission for a youth/child to maintain possession of their emergency medication, and it must be made known to the adults supervising that young person. Adults on the trip may maintain possession of their own medication and are responsible for keeping it secure.

23. Youth/Children should not have access to personal information about other students. Permission/Information/Medical forms are to be confidentially maintained by trip leaders and chaperones and available in case of an emergency. All Permission/Information/Medical forms are to be returned to the ministry leader immediately upon return to Mt. Zion.
24. A well-equipped First Aid Kit should be accessible to all persons attending the trip/retreat. If the group will be separated into smaller groups in different locations (e.g., mission trip with work crews) each smaller group must have their own First Aid Kit.

## **Appendix C: Best Practices Best Practices for Social Media, Virtual and Digital Communication for Youth and Children’s Ministry Volunteers**

### **Regarding social media use, I will:**

1. Recognize and respect that my online posts and behaviors impact how other Christians and people associated with the Church (including Mt. Zion UMC) are portrayed.
2. Recognize that all of my posted words, images, and links are reflections on me individually, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and as a volunteer of Mt. Zion.
3. Refrain from posting anything related to inappropriate or illegal conduct, such as drug or alcohol use, or any items that contain profanity, degrading humor, ethnic/racial/gender slurs, personal insults, obscenity, vulgarity, nudity, or pornography.
4. Communicate respectfully and ethically in online posts and interactions relating to all persons; refrain from negative or disrespectful posts; respect that others may have different points of view; and appreciate diversity of opinions.
5. Obey laws and platform policies governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright as well as the fair use of proprietary or confidential information.
6. Establish and maintain appropriate boundaries in all communications in accordance with Mt Zion’s current Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures.
7. Not post material that is disrespectful or harmful to pastors, staff, congregation members, or the reputation of Mt. Zion UMC.
8. Not post pictures of ministry-related events that include minors unless I have received written permission to do so from an assigned ministry leader.
9. Respect confidentiality and personal privacy. I will not disseminate confidential or private information, whether directly relayed or indirectly learned, without receiving direct, written consent and permission to do so.
10. Remember that everything posted online is discoverable and can be seen and shared for a very long time.

### **Regarding phone calls, texting, and other digital communication (e.g., email) I will:**

1. Recognize that texting is a primary means of communication with and for young people and should be viewed as a ministry tool. Texts (as well as phone calls and other digital communications) with students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades should always be conducted according to the boundaries that apply to the use of social media (as listed above) with regard to appropriate topics, language, and confidentiality; legal, ethical, and respectful behavior/conversation; and pictures.
2. Communicate with parents/guardians that text messages are a regular and normal part of communicating with young people in 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades within the guidelines and best practices established by Mt. Zion. Staff and volunteer leaders of Mt. Zion UMC will assume permission to communicate via text, call, email, or church-sanctioned communication channels unless parents/guardians expressly forbid such contact by notifying the church office.

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3. Remember that it is advisable to create a “group chat” that includes other youth, parents/guardians, or staff/volunteer leaders for communication with young people in 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades.
4. Preserve and DO NOT delete digital conversation streams with youth in the event that questions arise.
5. Respect that Mt. Zion staff and volunteer leaders should NOT be connected with youth on any private platform or app or one that has images or text that is fleeting or disappears. This protects both the youth and the adult.
6. Respect that 8:00 am – 10:00 pm are considered reasonable hours for normal ministry communication. Staff and volunteers should not be communicating with youth during overnight hours unless there is an emergency.
7. Always communicate through parents/guardians for children and youth birth through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
8. Remember that phone conversations with children in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger, except in an emergency, should be conducted with a parent, guardian or unrelated adult included in the conversation.
9. Remember that it is the policy of Mt. Zion UMC that any adult who in any way interacts with a child under 18 years of age in that adult’s capacity as a staff member or as a volunteer for Mt. Zion and who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, shall immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to the pastor of Mt. Zion UMC (or the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) if the pastor is unavailable). Further reporting required by law shall be made without delay by the pastor or the chairperson of the SPRC.
10. If a child or youth initiates inappropriate conversation, cease any further contact and report the incident immediately to the pastor or the chairperson of the SPRC if the pastor is unavailable.
11. Refrain from sharing information pertaining to personal life issues with youth and children and be judicious about sharing personal past experiences of poor judgment or behavior.
12. Acknowledge the power differential that is implicit in my role as a leader and remember that it is inappropriate for adults to fraternize with young people through any means, including digital communication, in any way that violates or might be perceived to violate the boundaries of the ministry relationship.

**Appendix D:**

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Sexual Misconduct Form**

(Please check the appropriate box. If more space is needed, please use an additional sheet of paper.)

1. Have you ever filled out this questionnaire for this church or agency?  Yes  No

If no, please answer questions 2 through 9 below. If yes, give the date: \_\_\_\_\_

Have any answers changed since you filled out that copy?  Yes  No

If no, please sign and return this form. If yes or you are unsure, please answer questions 2 through 9 below.

2. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with a child or a youth?  
 Yes  No

3. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with an adult?  Yes   
No

4. Have you ever been dismissed from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of accusations of sexual  
misconduct on your part?  Yes  No

5. Have you ever resigned from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of an accusation of sexual  
misconduct on your part or to avoid being dismissed because of an accusation of sexual misconduct on your  
part?  Yes  No

6. If your response to any of the foregoing questions (2 through 5) is "yes," please provide on a separate sheet of  
paper all details regarding each accusation of sexual misconduct that has been made with respect to you,  
including a description of the alleged conduct, the name of the person who made the accusation, the date of the  
alleged misconduct, and the name of your employer at the time of the alleged misconduct.

7. Have accusations of sexual misconduct on your part ever resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings at  
any level (e.g., indictment, arrest, trial etc.)?  Yes  No

If yes, please provide the complete details of those proceedings (including dates, circumstances, the jurisdiction  
where the proceeding occurred, the nature of the accusations, and the result of the proceedings) on a separate  
sheet of paper.

8. Have accusations of sexual misconduct against you resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings on more  
than one occasion?  Yes  No

9. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into  
question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people?  Yes  No

10. Please provide three adult references (names, addresses, phone numbers) of persons who are not related to you by blood, marriage, or other family relationship and are not employed or supervised by you, who can, to the best of their ability, provide statements in support of your good character and clean record in regard to sexual misconduct with children, youth, and adults.

Name	Address	Phone
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____



### QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE FORM

*(To be signed by all laypersons and unappointed clergy who work with children or youth within the local church or a Conference agency. If under 18, a parent or guardian must also sign.)*

I verify that the answers I have provided on this Questionnaire are true and accurate to the best of my ability. I understand that false answers, as well as the failure to sign this Response Form, will result in my being denied the position for which I am being considered.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E: Child Abuse Report Form**

**See State of Maryland – Child Protective Services  
REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

<https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/Child%20Protective%20Services/180%20Form%20with%20instructions-fillable.pdf>