

Safe Sanctuaries



Policies and Procedures for Maple Springs United Methodist Church

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Maple Springs United Methodist Church
Safe Ministry with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Introduction

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church in April 1996 adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of abuse at Maple Springs United Methodist Church.

Purpose

Maple Springs United Methodist Church's purpose for establishing this Safe Ministry with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults policy and duly-adopted procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Statement of Covenant and Policy

As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, Maple Springs United Methodist Church pledges to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults, as well as all the workers with those groups. Maple Springs United Methodist Church will follow reasonable procedures in all programs and events; will educate all who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding the use of appropriate policies, procedures and methods; will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law and will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident should occur. It is the policy of Maple Springs United Methodist Church to provide all children, youth, and vulnerable adults a safe and secure atmosphere to encourage the spiritual growth of children, youth, and vulnerable adults and those adults who are called to work with them.

In all of our ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ, so that each child, youth, and vulnerable adult will be "surrounded by steadfast love,... established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Baptismal Covenant 2, United Methodist Hymnal, 44).

Revisions approved by Church Council on 1/24/2017

Working Definitions to be Applied to this Document

- Child Abuse: A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Child abuse includes non-accidental-
 - Physical Abuse: Examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that result or could result in serious physical injury.
 - Sexual Abuse: Any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile.
 - Emotional Abuse: Expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child that create serious emotional or psychological damage.
- Child Neglect: Any serious disregard for a juvenile's supervision, care, or discipline.
- Child: Any person in the fifth grade and below. Generally, this includes those persons from birth through eleven years of age.
- Youth: Any persons in the sixth through twelfth grades. Generally, this includes those persons ages eleven through eighteen.
- Adult: Any persons nineteen years old and older.
 - To be considered a "lead adult" in ministry with children, a person must be nineteen years of age or older.
 - To be considered a "lead adult" in ministry with youth, a person must be twenty-one years of age or older.
 - See page 8, #7 for more information on the age requirements to be a Lead adult, or to lead without the direct supervision of another person.
- Vulnerable adult: Any person over 18 years of age with diagnosed diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities.
- Cyberbullying: Abuse or bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.
- Social Media: Computer-based tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. Examples of social networking sites include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Social media sites are constantly evolving, and this policy is intended to apply to all social media, regardless of whether it is specifically identified in this policy.

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Procedures for the Hiring, Recruiting, and Screening of Paid Staff at Maple Springs United Methodist Church

- Paid Staff refers to all salaried staff employed part-time or full-time by Maple Springs United Methodist Church.
- The following is required in the hiring and screening process for all paid staff:
 - a standardized application, including a question on the application that states: Have you ever had a problem with substance abuse?
 - a personal interview
 - a criminal background check
 - a reference check
 - a signed consent to a drug test
 - an updated ministry description
 - All information concerning paid staff, including the criminal background check, will be accessible to the Senior Pastor and the chair of the Staff-Parish Committee. The coordinator of the Weekday School shall have access to information regarding employees of the Weekday School. The Coordinator of Christian Education shall have access to information regarding paid nursery workers. The persons having access to this information shall maintain its confidentiality.
- The Staff-Parish Committee will oversee this process for all paid staff.
- Staff shall have annual training that will include instruction in policies on sexual harassment, Safe Sanctuaries, CPR/First Aid, AED, signs of abuse and the procedures for reporting suspected abuse, and sensitivity towards people with special needs. Staff shall provide documentation of such training to the Staff-Parish Committee.

Acceptable Use Policy

Computers, telephones, computer files, copy and fax machines, email, voicemail, Internet access and software ("Equipment") furnished to employees and volunteers are the property of Maple Springs United Methodist Church ("Church") and are intended to be used to carry out the ministries of the Church. Each user should be aware of the following policies regarding the acceptable use of this Equipment and is responsible for his/her own compliance with this Acceptable Use Policy ("AUP").

1. Users should have no expectation of individual privacy with respect to their use of Church Equipment or any communications or content created, stored, transmitted or received on the Church's Equipment. Authorized representatives of the Church have the right to inspect and monitor use of the Church's Equipment at any time and without notification to any user.
2. Users are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding the reasonableness of personal use of the Church's Equipment. Personal use of the Church's Equipment must not negatively affect the systems' resources or result in significant costs to the Church.
3. Use of Church Equipment must not interfere with the user's job or volunteer activities or disrupt the Church's operations or ministries. The content associated with user's online activity should be consistent with the user's work at the Church and the professional image the user is expected to convey. Users should behave in a manner that reflects the values of the Church and use the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration as they would use in face-to-face interactions.
4. The Church has the right to deny or restrict any user's access to electronic information provided by the Church, including but not limited to, websites, web-based messaging, streaming media and email.
5. Users are responsible for the security of their credentials to access Church Equipment, including but not limited to, log-ins and passwords. Users should take necessary steps to prevent unauthorized use of their credentials and to protect all confidential information entrusted to them.
6. The following activities are strictly prohibited:
 - (a) Engaging in any activity that is illegal under local, state, federal or international law while using Church Equipment.
 - (b) Violating the intellectual property rights of any person or company, including but not limited to, the installation or distribution of "pirated" or other software products that are not appropriately licensed for use by the Church.
 - (c) Copying of copyright material, including but not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and the installation of any copyrighted software for which the Church or the end user does not have an active license.

(d) Intentionally accessing (including browsing) of any websites containing material that is offensive, sexually explicit, profane, pornographic, harassing, or intimidating; uploading, downloading, or distributing such material; or using Church Equipment to obtain such material.

(e) Using Church Equipment for any purpose that is inconsistent with the Church's ministry.

7. Users are subject to monitoring to ensure their compliance with this AUP. Anyone who becomes aware of a violation of the AUP should report such violations to the Senior Pastor. If the violation involves the Senior Pastor, then the report should be made to the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Church employees who violate this AUP may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

8. Certain communications and information may be subject to the clergy-communicant privilege or otherwise considered confidential or proprietary by law or the Book of Discipline. This Policy is not intended to compromise the protections afforded to such material. Any person or entity responsible for monitoring the use of the Church Equipment shall be considered an agent of the respective authors or custodians, such that the privileged, confidential, or proprietary nature of the material is maintained.

Adopted by Church Council on 9/27/2011

Procedures for the Screening and Placement of Volunteers at Maple Springs United Methodist Church

- All volunteers desiring to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will complete the Volunteer Covenant Statement.
- Volunteers will also complete a form authorizing a criminal records check.
- All volunteer information will be kept in a file accessible only to the Senior Pastor, Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries, Coordinator of Youth Ministries, and the Chair of the Staff-Parish Committee.
 - All volunteers will be checked through the state and/or national sex offender registry websites. It will be shown in the volunteer file when the volunteer has been checked.
 - Criminal records checks will be conducted on a sampling of volunteers at regular intervals. It will be shown in the volunteer file when the volunteer has been checked.
- All volunteer orientations will include information that covers the church's policies on safe ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
 - This orientation will also make volunteers aware of the Mandatory Reporting Statute of North Carolina concerning Child Abuse. North Carolina law requires everyone to report suspected child abuse or neglect. "Any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected or dependent, or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the Departments of Social Services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found." (N.C.G.S. § 7A-543)
- Volunteer Covenant Forms will be filled out every two years. The Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries will be responsible for notifying volunteers when their form needs to be renewed.
- Within six months of completing a Volunteer Covenant Statement, each volunteer shall attend a Safe Sanctuaries training session.
- Volunteers must regularly attend Maple Springs for a minimum of six months before they can serve as the lead adult when working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Approved by Church Council on 1/22/2013

Volunteer Covenant Statement

The congregation of Maple Springs United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statement reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving 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. This form is valid for two years. Volunteers who wish to continue to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be required to fill out a new form and to attend a Safe Sanctuaries training session.

- A. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) shall be permitted to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults in any church-sponsored activity. Other criminal violations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- B. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's pastors before accepting an assignment.
- C. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall, wherever possible, observe the "two-adult rule" so that no adult is alone with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- D. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall receive written information and instruction concerning church policy and state laws regarding child abuse.
- E. Adult volunteers shall immediately report to a Church Pastor or the Coordinator of Christian Education any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer the following questions and X your response:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults?
I do I do not Need to discuss
2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to stay informed of church policy and state laws regarding abuse by attending scheduled training sessions and carefully reading all policies and letters on the subject sent to you by the church?
I do I do not Need to discuss
3. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report any suspected abusive or inappropriate behavior to a Church Pastor or the Coordinator of Christian Education?
I do I do not Need to discuss
4. Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to: drug-related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence, and theft, but NOT including speeding tickets and other traffic violations)?
Yes No
If yes, will you discuss this matter with an appointed Church Pastor or Coordinator of Christian Education before accepting a volunteer assignment?
Yes No
If any of this information changes, I will report it promptly to a Church Pastor or the Coordinator of Christian Education.
I do I do not Need to discuss

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print Full Name

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Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults at Maple Springs United Methodist Church

1. All prospective volunteers will complete a Volunteer Covenant Statement, which is valid for two years.
2. Volunteers will complete a form authorizing a criminal records check.
3. All prospective volunteers will be checked through the state and/or national sex offender and public protection registry. Criminal records checks will also be conducted on a sampling of volunteers at regular intervals.
4. Any adult who has been convicted of any crime involving a child, youth, or vulnerable adult will not be permitted to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Other criminal violations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries, Coordinator of Youth Ministries, or the Senior Pastor each have the discretion to prohibit any prospective volunteer from working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults if they have reason to believe that the volunteer may pose a risk to the participants.
5. Whenever practical, a minimum of two adults should be present during any activity involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. We will strive not to have a volunteer working alone with these groups.
 - a) When this is not possible it is imperative that the one adult and children, youth or vulnerable adults remain in a public area where they can be observed by others.
 - b) If a volunteer is alone in a classroom with children, youth or vulnerable adults, the door to the room should remain open.
 - c) Windows in doors and walls will remain uncovered for the protection of the children, youth, vulnerable adults, and volunteers.
 - d) Another adult (e.g., Sunday School Coordinator, Nursery Coordinator, Coordinator of Christian Education, or Youth Coordinator) will be in the hallways whenever teachers are teaching children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This person will act as a visible presence in support of teachers, as well as a deterrent of any potentially harmful situations for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
6. The Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries, Coordinator of Youth Ministries, or the Senior Pastor may remove any volunteer from working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults if they have reason to believe that the volunteer may pose a risk to the participants.
7. No volunteers under the age of nineteen (19) will be allowed to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults without the direct supervision of a "lead adult." We recognize that putting children in charge of children invites disaster.
 - a) To be considered the "lead adult," a person must be age nineteen (19) or older when working with children.
 - b) To be considered the "lead adult," a person must be age twenty-one (21) or older when working with youth.

8. Children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the written or electronic permission of their parents or guardians.
9. When tables and/or chairs are set up in Craven Hall for worship times or special events, sports equipment should not be in use.

For Sunday Mornings

1. On Sundays, fifth graders and younger must be with a parent or teacher at all times.
2. On Sundays and other times, all pre-kindergarten children must be signed in and out of rooms following the nursery guidelines.

For Wednesday Night Dinner

1. All children fifth grade and younger should be in Craven Hall under the supervision of their parents or guardians. Please do not allow our children to roam the halls.
2. Parents or guardians are asked to monitor the whereabouts of their children or vulnerable adults in their care at all times.
3. Sports equipment should not be in use while tables and/or chairs are set-up in Craven Hall.

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Incident Report

Name(s) of Persons Involved: _____

Date/Time: _____ Place: _____

What Happened: _____

Describe Injuries, if any: _____

Response to Incident: _____

Other Information: _____

Reported by: _____ on _____.

Reviewed by: _____ on _____.

****RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.**

Policy Regarding Registered Sex Offenders

1. We, as the church, invite all people to be a part of the worshipping community of faith. However, we must weigh the duty to protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of the church with the right of all people to experience God's redeeming love through worship. In furtherance of our Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures and in compliance with North Carolina law, a registered sex offender who wishes to be part of a church community should expect to have conditions placed on his/her participation.
2. A registered sex offender should identify himself/herself as a registered sex offender to one of the pastors. A registered sex offender who wishes to be part of our church community shall read and sign a Church Participation Covenant Statement. This document will also be signed by the pastor(s) and the Chairperson of the Church Council and be kept on file at the Church.
3. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) shall be permitted to work/volunteer with minors or vulnerable adults in any church-sponsored activity. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.17(a)(2008).
4. A registered sex offender shall not be in attendance at any church event where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are the primary audience. These events include, but are not limited to, United Methodist Youth Fellowship activities, Vacation Bible School, children's choir activities, preschool activities, and scouting activities.
 - If a registered sex offender does attend such an event, he/she will be told to leave and a report will be made to law enforcement.
5. A registered sex offender shall not be within 300 feet of any location on the church property intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors. N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-208.18(a) (2)(2008). This includes, but is not limited to, the nursery, preschool classrooms, children's Sunday School classrooms, Children's Assembly Room, and playground. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208(a)(1) 2008.
6. While on church property, a registered sex offender must be accompanied at all times by an unrelated, same-gender adult covenant partner provided by the church.
7. The pastors shall have discretion to impose additional restrictions on a registered sex offender's activities, as the circumstances dictate.

Approved by Church Council on 1/22/2013
Revisions approved by Church Council on 1/24/2017

**Registered Sex Offender
Church Participation Covenant Statement**

The congregation of Maple Springs United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and vulnerable adults. In furtherance of our Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures and in compliance with N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-208.17, 14-208.18, all registered sex offenders who wish to be part of our worshipping community must abide by the following procedures:

1. As a registered sex offender, I will have and abide by the conditions placed on my participation in the church community.
2. While on church property, I will be accompanied at all times by an unrelated, same-gender adult covenant partner. Providing a covenant partner will be the responsibility of the church.
3. I will not be permitted to work/volunteer with children, youth, or vulnerable adults in any church-sponsored activity.
4. I will not be in attendance at any event where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are the primary audience. This includes, but is not limited to, United Methodist Youth Fellowship activities, Vacation Bible School, children’s choir activities, preschool activities, and scouting activities. N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-208.18 (a)(3)(2008). If I attend such an event, I understand that I will be told to leave and a report will be made to law enforcement.
5. I will not be within 300 feet of any location intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.18(a)(2008). I understand that these areas include, but are not limited to, the nursery, preschool classrooms, children’s Sunday School classrooms, Children’s Assembly Room, and playground.

6. Other Conditions: _____

Pastor Signature

Date

Church Council Chairperson Signature

Date

Covenant Partner Signature

Date

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Procedures for Transportation of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

1. Children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the written or electronic permission of their parents or guardians.
2. No youth or child below under the age of thirteen will travel in the front seat.
3. It is recommended that when a youth aged 13 or older travels in the front seat, that youth should be the same gender as the adult driver.
4. It is preferred that there be at least two adults in a vehicle transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults. However, no unrelated adult driver is to transport any youth, child, or vulnerable adult alone without the written or electronic permission of the parents or guardians involved. If possible, there will always be more than one youth, child, or vulnerable adult in the vehicle.
5. Fifteen-passenger vans may be used for transportation if the rear seat is removed.
6. All riders and drivers must wear seatbelts.
7. Vehicles should be driven with headlights on for safety.
8. Every driver should have a working cell phone with him/her at all times during the activity. However, unless the vehicle is equipped with hands-free technology, drivers should refrain from using cell phones while driving. If it is necessary to communicate with others regarding the church-sponsored trip while en route, the driver should pull over to make a call.
9. Drivers must be at least twenty-one years of age. As a general rule, the driver most comfortable with the vehicle should drive.
10. All drivers must fill out a transportation form. This form is valid for one academic year and will be used to run a Motor Vehicle Record check using our background check company.
11. The transportation form shall be used by the Director of Christian Education to check each driver's driving record. The Director of Christian Education shall have the discretion to prohibit any person from driving others on church-sponsored events based on a review of the driving record. Further, a person shall be disqualified from driving on church-sponsored activities under the following circumstances:
 - a. the person has been convicted of more than three (3) moving violations in the last five (5) years;
 - b. the person has been convicted of more than one (1) moving violation in any 12-month period in the last five (5) years; or
 - c. the person has been convicted of driving while impaired.

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Transportation Form

1. Name of Driver _____
2. Driver's License Number _____
3. Insurance Company Name & Policy Number _____
4. Have you had any motor vehicle violations in the last five years (including speeding tickets)?
Yes No
If yes, please explain... _____

5. Have you read and do you agree to follow the guidelines for transportation (see below)?
Yes No
6. If any of this information changes I will report it to a Church Pastor, the Coordinator of Christian Education, or the Youth Coordinator.
Yes No

Guidelines for Transportation

1. Children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the written or electronic permission of their parents or guardians.
2. No youth or child below under the age of thirteen will travel in the front seat.
3. It is recommended that when a youth aged 13 or older travels in the front seat, that youth should be the same gender as the adult driver.
4. It is preferred that there be at least two adults in a vehicle transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults. However, no unrelated adult driver is to transport any youth, child, or vulnerable adults alone without the written or electronic permission of the parents or guardians involved. If possible, there will always be more than one youth, child, or vulnerable adult in the vehicle.
5. All riders and drivers must wear seatbelts.
6. Vehicles should be driven with headlights on for safety.
7. Drivers must be at least twenty-one years of age. As a general rule, the driver most comfortable with the vehicle should drive.
8. Every driver should have a working cell phone with him/her at all times during the activity.
9. All drivers must fill out a transportation form. This form is valid for one academic year.

Signed

Date

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Procedures for Overnight Trips

1. The lodging situation on overnight trips will be assessed on each trip to determine the best sleeping arrangements for those in attendance.
2. No unrelated adult will share a bed with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
3. The group leader will strive to have all of the rooms together in a block when possible.
4. Whenever practical, one unrelated adult should not spend the night alone with one child, youth, or vulnerable adult. An exception would include sickness, emergency, etc.
5. As a part of the participant covenant, parents or guardians will agree to pick up their children, youth, or vulnerable adult in the case of inappropriate behavior.

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Standardized Field Trip Permission Form

Event registering for _____

Participant's Name _____

Street Address, City, State, Zip

Home phone number (with area code) _____

Participant's email address _____

Participant's Date of Birth _____

Participant's Gender _____

Participant's Grade in School _____

Participant's T-Shirt Size _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Day Phone # (with area code) _____

Parent/Guardian Home Phone # (with area code) _____

Parent/Guardian Mobile or Alternate Phone # (with area code) _____

Parent/Guardian email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone # (with area code)

Emergency Contact relationship _____

Medical Insurance Provider _____

Policy/Group/Account # : _____

Medical Insurance Provider Phone # _____

Doctor's Name and phone # (with area code) _____

Known allergies and/or Current Medications: _____

Dietary or Physical restrictions: _____

Participation Covenant

Youth: 1) I agree not to bring, use, or purchase tobacco products, alcohol, or illegal drugs of any kind on this trip. I agree not to bring, use, or purchase knives, guns, fireworks, or any other weapon on this trip.

_____ I agree _____ I DO NOT Agree

2) I agree never to leave activity sites without a leader present. I agree to respect leaders, staff, and other youth. I understand that if I break any of these rules I will be sent home at my parents' or guardians' expense.

_____ I agree _____ I DO NOT Agree

Parents/Guardians: 1) I/We give our consent for the above-named participant to attend the above-named event or trip with Maple Springs United Methodist Church.

_____ I/We Consent _____ I/WE DO NOT Consent

2) In the event that the above named participant should require the attention of a doctor, I/We consent to any reasonable medical treatment by a licensed physician. I/We authorize an adult leader to give consent for this treatment in our place.

_____ I/We Consent _____ I/WE DO NOT Consent

3) I/We acknowledge that we will be ultimately responsible for the costs of any medical care should the cost of that care not be reimbursed by the health insurance provider. We affirm that the insurance information above is accurate.

_____ I/We Accept _____ I/WE DO NOT Accept

4) By turning in this form, you are committing your participants to attend this event or trip. That means you are responsible for all trip fees.

_____ I/We Understand _____ I/WE DO NOT Understand

Participant's Signature and Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date: _____

Maple Springs Dress Code

We have a dress code of modesty.

This is for those under 18 participating in children and youth activities at church (i.e. UMYF, Strings & Grapple, mission trips, music groups, etc.)
(Worship dress is up to the parent's discretion.)

For Girls:

- One-piece swimsuits for girls are preferred. Tankinis are permitted if they completely cover the midriff area. You may wear a t-shirt over your swimsuit while swimming, if you wish.
- No bikinis are allowed.
- No sports bras alone, tops too short to tuck in, or short-shorts.
- No halter or bare midriff tops
- No spaghetti straps or tank tops that don't meet the 2 finger rule
- No strapless shirts
- Shorts and skirts must meet the fist test (shorts and skirts must be as long as your fist when held down by your side)
- No soffies or pants with writing on the bottom area
- No provocative, revealing attire that exposes cleavage

For Guys:

- No pants, slacks or jeans that sag below waist — we don't need to see your underwear
- Swim trunks instead of briefs

For either Gender:

- Nothing with slogans promoting alcohol, sex, tobacco, drugs, profanity, or death themes.
- No garments that cover the student's face or conceal the student's identity
- No symbols, styles or attire frequently associated with gangs, intimidation, violence or violent groups.
- Any other clothing that isn't appropriate for church environment or activities away from church facilities.

Those deciding whether you meet dress code:

- Adults supervising the events, which could be either volunteer adult, staff, or another parent

Consequences to not follow dress code:

- You will be asked to cover up
- Parents will be called to bring a different outfit
- Go home and not be able to participate in event if fail to do the above 2 bulleted points

Guidelines for Personal Interaction with Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults

Maple Springs is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our ministries that protects our children, youth, and vulnerable adults from abuse and our church staff and volunteers from misunderstandings. The following guidelines should be followed by everyone working around or with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Showing Affection:

Love and affection are part of the church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive boundaries. Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are:

- Brief hugs. Preferred hugs are side-to-side hugs and one-arm hugs.
- When working with youth, you should generally allow the youth to initiate the hug and you should be the person to end the hug.
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives, hand-slapping and fist bumps
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands and arms
- Placing arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children or vulnerable adults
- Sitting beside small children or vulnerable adults
- Kneeling or bending down for huddles with small children
- Holding hands during prayer

The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in ministry settings:

- Hugs involving full body contact
- Lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Any kissing with youth
- Holding children over 5 years of age on your lap
- Any sexual touching. Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas, other than for diapering infants or assisting toddlers in going to the bathroom, is prohibited.
- Showing affection in an isolated area, such as a closet or other private room
- Occupying a bed with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult
- Tickling
- Any form of affection or physical contact to which the child, youth, or vulnerable adult objects
- Comments (spoken, written or electronic) about the child's or youth's body, e.g., "You really look hot in those jeans" or "You sure are developing."
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth, unless there is a special occasion that warrants it, e.g., birthday, graduation.
- Private scheduled meetings, outings or events with a single child, youth, or vulnerable adult without permission from a parent or guardian.

Physical relationships between a child/youth/vulnerable adult and a staff member or volunteer are strictly prohibited.

Approved by Church Council on 1/24/17

Weekday School Childcare Guidelines

1. All childcare staff will fill out an application form, a general health form, and turn in a criminal background check.
2. All childcare staff will be at least 18 years of age.
3. All childcare staff will participate in an annual orientation that covers policies and procedures in provided Policy notebook as well as monthly staff meetings.
4. CPR training is provided for the staff every two years.
 - There must be at least one person who is trained in CPR in the facility during program hours.
5. The Coordinator of the Weekday School will keep a list of approved substitutes. Any staff member needing a substitute will secure a substitute from the approved substitute list in cooperation with the Coordinator of the Weekday School.
6. Childcare staff are paid on a sliding scale that takes into consideration education and years of experience. Staff working as substitutes are paid \$30 for three hours. Non-staff substitutes are paid \$25 for three hours. The Coordinator of the Weekday School will be responsible for paying staff and substitutes.
7. Ratios for childcare (children/provider):
 - Infants and toddlers: 4/1
 - Twos: 7/1
 - Threes: 10/1
 - Fours: 12/1
8. During lunch bunch, two staff member must be in the classroom area.
9. Windows in the doors and walls will remain uncovered for the protection of the children and staff.
10. The staff should arrive 10 minutes before the scheduled start of the day and remain until all children are picked up and the room is put back in order.
11. Children are to be escorted to their classroom by a parent or guardian after the doors open at 9:00 a.m.
 - Parents or guardians are to leave an emergency contact number if it is different from the number that is on file.
 - Pick-up procedure will vary according to the teacher.
 - If a person other than a known parent or guardian will be picking up a child, the staff must be notified in advance and will ask the person picking up the child for photo identification.
12. If an unfamiliar person is seen in the hallways, the staff will ask to help the person find where he or she should be.
13. Childcare staff will not use the toilet facilities in the preschool classrooms. These facilities are for the use of children only.
14. Children in diapers must be changed on a changing table and using the diaper changing procedure.
15. Responding to allegations of abuse:
 - If a staff member witnesses or suspects abuse, he or she will immediately notify the Coordinator of the Weekday School.
 - The Coordinator will then immediately contact the Department of Social Services and the Senior Pastor.
 - If the suspected abuse involves a staff person, that person will be suspended until an investigation can be completed.
 - The Coordinator of the Weekday School will contact the parents of the child or children involved and inform them of the steps that have been taken.
 - Written records will be kept of all steps taken.

Maple Springs United Methodist Church Preschool Policy on Discipline

Maple Springs Preschool policy on discipline centers on giving positive reinforcement and isolating children for a short period of time. If this proves ineffective with a particular child, the teacher may send the child for a talk with the Coordinator. A child is usually given a second chance to improve his or her behavior before the parent is called. This information will be directly shared with the child. Maple Springs Preschool does not allow physical discipline of children, under any circumstances. This is grounds for immediate termination of a staff member. When positive reinforcement, isolation time-outs, and visiting the Coordinator prove ineffective for behavior modification, parents will be consulted, *and as a last resort, the parent may be asked to withdraw the child.*

Important note: According to North Carolina Laws, a teacher accused of striking a child may be charged with **felonious assault on a minor under age 12.**

Handwashing for Caregivers

When should caregivers wash their hands?

1. Before changing diapers, hands should be washed with surgical scrub and then with soap.
 - The surgical scrub contains hexachlorophene, a chemical that kills only a certain percentage of bacteria.
2. After changing a diaper and cleaning the changing area, hands should be washed with hot water and soap.
3. Before and after bottle-feeding procedures.
4. Before handling or preparing food.
5. Before eating as an example to children.
6. Before and after assisting children with toileting.
7. After cleaning up accidents.

Procedure for Handwashing...

It is very important that caregivers wash their hands as much as possible. Use common sense. It is better to be safe than sorry, and you can never wash your hands too much.

Handwashing should involve mechanical scrubbing and the frictional force of hands rubbing together. This action will rid your hands of bacteria. Studies have shown that vigorous handwashing can reduce infection in childcare centers. (Am J Epidemiol 1981; 113:445-451). It is not as important what you use on your hands to clean, but the actual vigorous scrubbing motion.

The “Stop Disease” Method of Changing Diapers

1. Check to be sure that your supplies are ready:
 - Latex gloves
 - Changing paper rolls
 - Disinfectant cleaner
 - Wipes
 - Clean diaper
 - Plastic bag
2. Put on latex gloves.
3. Spread changing paper on table.
4. Lay the child on the diapering surface, taking care to hold him or her only with your hands if his or her diaper is soiled.
5. Remove soiled diaper and clothes.
 - Put disposable diapers in a plastic bag or plastic lined receptacle.
 - Put soiled clothes in a plastic bag to be taken home.
6. Clean the child’s bottom with the wipes and then dispose of the wipes in the plastic bag or plastic lined receptacle.
7. Diaper or dress the child, wash his or her hands with a clean wipe, and put him or her in a safe place.
8. Remove the used changing paper.
9. Spray the area with disinfectant and wipe it with paper towels.
10. Remove gloves and dispose of all used wipes, paper, gloves, etc.
11. Wash hands with disinfectant.

This process must be repeated for every diaper change

Weekday and Special Event Childcare

1. All childcare providers will fill out a Volunteer Covenant Statement and will be subject to a background check.
2. All childcare providers will participate in an orientation that covers the nursery policies and procedures, as well as the general guidelines for safety with children.
3. The primary childcare provider will be at least 19 years of age. Younger individuals may assist with childcare under the guidance of the older primary childcare provider.
4. The coordinator of Christian Education will keep a list of approved childcare providers. Any group needing childcare will coordinate its own childcare using the approved list and in conjunction with the Coordinator of Christian Education.
5. Weekday and special event childcare workers are paid \$9/hr. The Coordinator of Christian Education will be responsible for vouchering any childcare.
6. Suggested ratios for childcare (children/provider):
 - Infants and creepers: 3/1
 - Toddlers: 6/1
 - Preschoolers: 8/1
 - Kindergarteners: 10/1
 - 6-8 year olds: 12/1
 - 9 years and older: 14/1
7. Whenever practical, a minimum of two adults should be present during childcare. We will strive not to have a childcare provider working alone with any children.
 - When this is not possible, it is imperative that the one adult and children or youth remain in a public area where they can be observed by others.
 - If alone in a classroom with children or youth, the door to the room should remain open.
 - Windows in doors and walls will remain uncovered for the protection of the children, youth, and volunteers.
8. The childcare provider should arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the event and remain until all children are picked up and room is put back in order.
9. When children are dropped off and picked up, parents are asked to follow the check-in/check-out procedure using the provided numbered tags. To pick up a child, the parent must present the tag.
 - Parents sign child in
 - Parents take a tag
 - Parents make a name tag for their child writing on the name tag the number on the tag they will take
 - When picking up a child, the parent must present the numbered tag
10. Adults will remain outside the gate when dropping off and picking up children.
11. Adult childcare providers will not use the toilet facilities found in the preschool classrooms. These facilities are for the use of children only.
12. Children in diapers should be changed on a changing table and using the diaper changing procedure.

Maple Springs UMC
Sunday School/Nursery Check-In Check-Out Procedures
Infant-Four Year Old

1. Check-in/Check-out Procedures: All parents of children in the infant and toddler-two nurseries and Sunday schools will be given a pager. Children in the three-and-four year old Sunday Schools and nursery will be given pagers as requested or needed. This should be automatic for any visitor. For those not receiving a pager, the number tags should be used.
 - A. Please sign your child in each Sunday and fill in the check-in sheet completely with your name and where you will be (e.g. your Sunday School class or sanctuary.) **Remember to sign your child in for both Sunday School and church service.**
 - B. Obtain a security tag or pager, write your child's name and the number from your security tag/pager on his/her name-tag. Take the security tag/pager with you and use this to pick-up your child.
 - C. If someone other than you will be picking up your child, please let the nursery volunteer know this before you leave. Remember to give the security tag/pager to the person picking up your child.
 - D. If you are using a pager, remember to turn this in at the time you pick-up your child. An all- page will be transmitted at 12 noon and 12:10 to remind you to return to the nursery.
 - E. For all nurseries (including threes and fours), please wait at the gate to both drop-off and pick-up your child. Do not go into the room. Hand your pager to the volunteer.
2. Please have your child's diaper bag labeled on the outside with his/her name. Also label any bottles or sippy cups. If your child is being toilet-trained, please alert the nursery volunteers. Remember that children who are being toilet trained are not as likely to ask or go to the bathroom with adults they do not know. If this is the case, we ask that you take your child to the bathroom before dropping your child off in the nursery.
3. All children from infancy until they are 3-4 years of age will have bouts of separation anxiety. This is a normal part of their development. If, after 15 minutes, the nursery volunteers have been unsuccessful in calming your child, we will page you to return to the nursery to comfort your child. In addition to being in the best interest of your child, it also ensures that the volunteers can meet the needs of the other children in the nursery.
4. If your child has any special needs or concerns, please alert the nursery staff. They are here to make the nursery experience a pleasant one. The more knowledge they have about your child the better they can meet his/her needs.
5. If you are a parent and are not currently volunteering in the nursery, please contact one of the nursery coordinators to be placed on the schedule.

Parent Seeker Pager System General Information

The transmitter will be located in Toddler-Two changing area on Sunday mornings. The volunteers who are responsible for 8:30 am nursery should make sure that the transmitter is plugged in and that the antennae is in the upright position and beepers are turned on before handing out to parents. Each nursery/Sunday School class is responsible for making sure their pagers are turned on in the morning. Directions for the pager system are posted on the wall in the changing area between the toddler-two classrooms.

Pagers should be available in each nursery. The pagers will be distributed as follows: four pagers will be in the 4-year-old Sunday School/nursery, 10 pagers in the infant nursery, and 12 in the toddler-two classroom. If a nursery needs more pagers, volunteers can check to see if another nursery has extras. If any pagers are borrowed from another nursery, they should be returned after service. Parents will continue to fill-out the sign-in sheet and enter their pager number in place of tag number. This number should also be placed on the child's name tag by the parent.

To page a parent, refer to the instruction sheet posted above the transmitter.

Remind parents to wait at the gate when picking up their child. Ask for the pager and check its number, then place in storage container.

Specific Instructions for each Sunday School and Nursery will be posted in the appropriate room, inside the door of the Sunday School cabinet.

8:30 am Nursery Responsibilities

1. Make sure transmitter is taken out of cabinet and plugged into wall outlet. Turn on all pagers.
2. Ask parents to sign-in the child per guidelines, make sure pager is turned on and show them their pager number. Tell parents to wear the pager clipped to their waistband or belt to ensure that they will feel the pager vibrate. Pagers should not be placed in purses. Remind parents to write down their pager number on the sign-in sheet. If parents are staying for Sunday School, remind them to sign-in for Sunday School as well.
3. As parents pick up their child, ask all parents to wait at the gate and collect the pager before handing the child to the parent. Make sure that you have a pager for each child that has been picked-up. If not, page the pager with the "return to nursery" message as noted on posted instruction sheet. Inform Shannon Bright if a pager has not been returned.

Sunday School/ Infant Class

1. Turn on the pagers located in the cabinet in the changing area.
2. Ask parents to sign in the child per guidelines, make sure pager is turned on and show them their pager number. Ask parents to wear the pager clipped to their waistband or belt to ensure that they will feel the pager vibrate. Pagers should not be placed in purses. Remind parents to write down pager the number on the sign-in sheet. If parents are staying for the church service remind them to sign-in for the church service as well as Sunday School.
3. If you need to page a parent, use the phone in the classroom, dial 423 and ask a volunteer in the two-year-old room to page the parent. Remember to give them the proper pager number.
4. As parents pick up their child, ask all parents to wait at the gate and collect the pager before handing the child to the parent.
5. As nursery hour begins to start, make sure all children staying for church nursery are listed on the sign-in sheet with the proper pager number. Pass on any specific instructions to incoming volunteers. Make sure that you have a pager for each child that has been picked-up. If not, page the pager with the “return to nursery” message as noted on posted instruction sheet. Inform Shannon Bright if a pager has not been returned.

Toddler/Two Class

1. Ask parents to sign in the child per guidelines, make sure pager is turned on and show them their pager number. Ask parents to wear the pager clipped to their waistband or belt to ensure that they will feel the pager vibrate. Pagers should not be placed in purses. Remind parents to write down pager the number on the sign-in sheet. If parents are staying for the church service remind them to sign-in for the church service as well as Sunday School.
2. If you need to page follow instructions on sheet above transmitter.
3. As parents pick up their child, ask all parents to wait at the gate and collect the pager before handing the child to the parent.
4. As nursery hour begins to start, make sure all children staying for church nursery are listed on the sign-in sheet with the proper pager number. Pass on any specific instructions to incoming volunteers. Make sure that you have a pager for each child that has been picked-up. If not, page the pager with the “return to nursery” message as

noted on posted instruction sheet. Inform Shannon Bright if a pager has not been returned.

3/4 Class

1. Check pagers and make sure they are turned on for parents. They are located in the nursery box in the 4-year-old Sunday School cabinet.
2. Ask parents to sign in the child per guidelines, make sure pager is turned on and show them their pager number. Ask parents to wear the pager clipped to their waistband or belt to ensure that they will feel the pager vibrate. Pagers should not be placed in purses. Remind parents to write down pager the number on the sign-in sheet. If parents are staying for the church service remind them to sign-in for the church service as well as Sunday School.
3. If you need to page a parent, use the phone in the classroom, dial 423 and ask a volunteer in the two-year-old room to page the parent. Remember to give them the proper pager number.
4. As parents pick up their child, ask all parents to wait at the gate and collect the pager before handing the child to the parent.
5. As nursery hour begins to start, make sure all children staying for church nursery are listed on the sign-in sheet with the proper pager number. Pass on any specific instructions to incoming volunteers. Make sure that you have a pager for each child that has been picked-up. If not, page the pager with the "return to nursery" message as noted on posted instruction sheet. Inform Shannon Bright if a pager has not been returned.

11 am Nurseries

Toddler/Two Nursery

1. Ask parents to sign in the child per guidelines, make sure pager is turned on and show them their pager number . Ask parents to wear the pager clipped to their waistband or belt to ensure that they will feel the pager vibrate. Pagers should not be placed in purses. Remind parents to write down pager the number on the sign-in sheet.
2. If you need to page a parent, follow the instructions on the sheet above the transmitter.
3. As parents pick up their child, ask all parents to wait at the gate and collect the pager before handing the child to the parent.
4. At noon send out an all-page as per instruction sheet. If all pagers are not returned by 12:10, do so again. Once all pagers are returned, turn pagers off per instruction sheet. If any pagers are not returned, leave Mary Taylor Setliff a message at ext. 405 that

includes the missing pager number and the name of the parent who signed out that pager. Unplug the transmitter, place all pagers in the case and return them to the cabinet.

Infant Nursery

1. Turn on the pagers located in the cabinet in the changing area.
2. Ask parents to sign in the child per guidelines, make sure pager is turned on and show them their pager number. Ask parents to wear the pager clipped to their waistband or belt to ensure that they will feel the pager vibrate. P agers should not be placed in purses. Remind parents to write down pager the number on the sign-in sheet.
3. As parents pick up their child, ask all parents to wait at the gate and collect the pager before handing the child to the parent.
4. If you need to page a parent, use the phone in the classroom, dial 423 and ask a volunteer in the two-year-old room to page the parent. Remember to give them the proper pager number.
5. Return all pagers to the box and place in the cabinet. Check to make sure all the pagers are returned, there should be 10 pagers. If any pagers are not returned, leave Mary Taylor Setliff a message at ext. 405 that includes the missing pager number and the name of the parent who signed out that pager.

3/4 Nursery

1. Check pagers and make sure they are turned on for parents. They are located in the nursery box in the 4-year-old Sunday School cabinet.
2. Ask parents to sign in the child per guidelines, make sure pager is turned on and show them their pager number. Ask parents to wear the pager clipped to their waistband or belt to ensure that they will feel the pager vibrate. Pagers should not be placed in purses. Remind parents to write down pager the number on the sign-in sheet.
3. As parents pick up their child, ask all parents to wait at the gate and collect the pager before handing the child to the parent.
4. If you need to page a parent, use the phone in the classroom, dial 423 and ask a volunteer in the two-year-old room to page the parent. Remember to give them the proper pager number.
5. Return all pagers to box. Count and make sure there are 4 pagers in the box. If any pagers are not returned, leave Mary Taylor Setliff a message at ext. 405 that includes the missing pager number and the name of the parent who signed out that pager.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

If the alleged perpetrator is a volunteer...

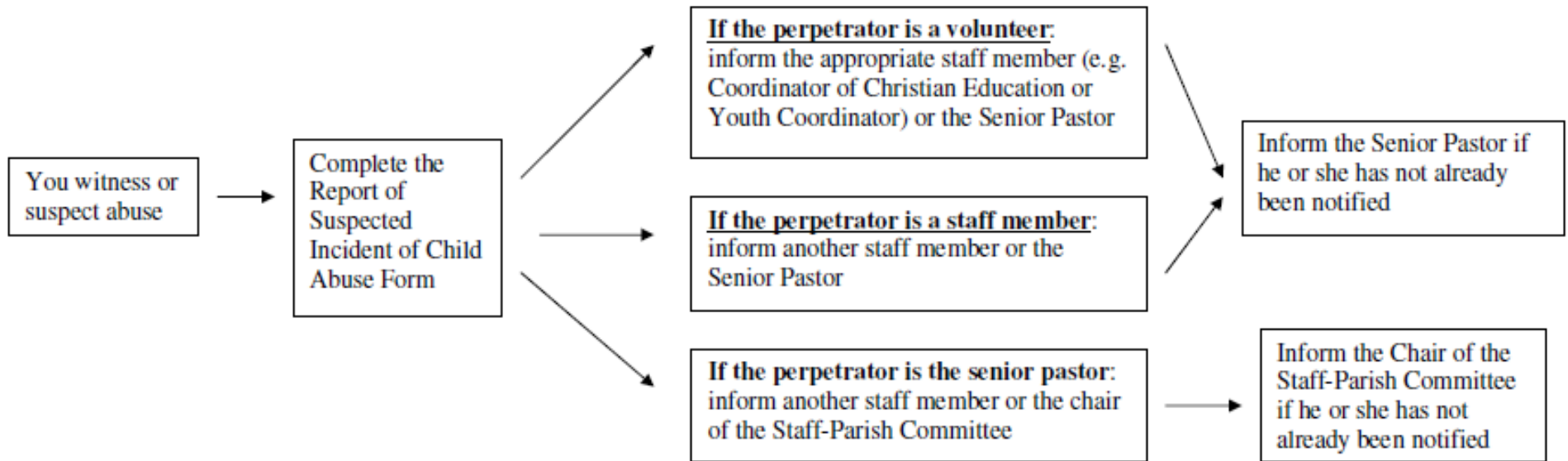
1. The reporter should immediately complete the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form and inform the appropriate staff person responsible for the area of ministry in which the situation took place (Youth Coordinator, Coordinator of Christian Education) or the Senior Pastor. The person receiving this form is responsible for initiating the process set forth below.
2. Notify the Senior Pastor of the situation, if he or she has not already been informed.
3. The Senior Pastor will then investigate the allegations contained in the report and respond accordingly.
 - a) Follow-up must be done promptly and discreetly.
 - b) The Senior Pastor must report his or her decision on the situation to the person making the initial report.
 - c) When dealing with allegations that, upon investigation, appear to be true, it is strongly recommended that the Senior Pastor notify the Department of Social Services (DSS).
 - d) If the Senior Pastor decides not to report the incident to the DSS, the Senior Pastor should make the initial reporter aware that the initial reporter may report the alleged incident to the DSS if the initial reporter feels it is necessary to do so.
4. If the Senior Pastor decides that the DSS should be contacted, the Senior Pastor should call the DSS and give a full statement based on the information he or she has collected. (Forsyth County Department of Social Services: 703-2287)
 - a) When making this report, the initial reporter should be present with the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor should identify himself/herself to the DSS so that the Senior Pastor may gain information about the progress of any DSS investigation. If a person makes an anonymous report, he or she loses all rights to further information.
5. Regardless of whether the DSS is notified, the Senior Pastor should contact the chair of the Staff-Parish committee, the Chair of Church Council and a lawyer for counsel.
6. Regardless of whether the DSS is notified, the Senior Pastor and/or the Chair of the Staff-Parish Committee should contact the District Superintendent (Winston Salem District Office: 727-1222).
7. If the incident occurred on church property, during a church-sponsored activity, or involved a staff member, the church's insurance carrier should be notified.
8. A media spokesperson should be appointed. This spokesperson shall be the only person to give statements to the media.
 - a) The church staff should be informed of who the media spokesperson is.
 - b) If staff receive inquiries from the media they should direct all questions to the media spokesperson. Staff should not respond by saying ""No comment"" or making any other statement about the situation other than, ""You will need to talk to (name of media spokesperson).""

9. Any person named as an alleged offender in a Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form shall immediately be required to cease any contact with children or youth through Maple Springs United Methodist Church activities. The alleged offender may resume activities with children or youth at such time as the District Superintendent, Senior Pastor and Staff-Parish Committee deem it appropriate.
10. Our ministry, after abuse, must be aimed at assuring justice for all and healing for those who are suffering.
11. The Senior Pastor and/or age-appropriate ministry coordinator should keep a written record of the steps taken by the church in response to the allegations that have been made, including accurate dates and times these steps were taken.

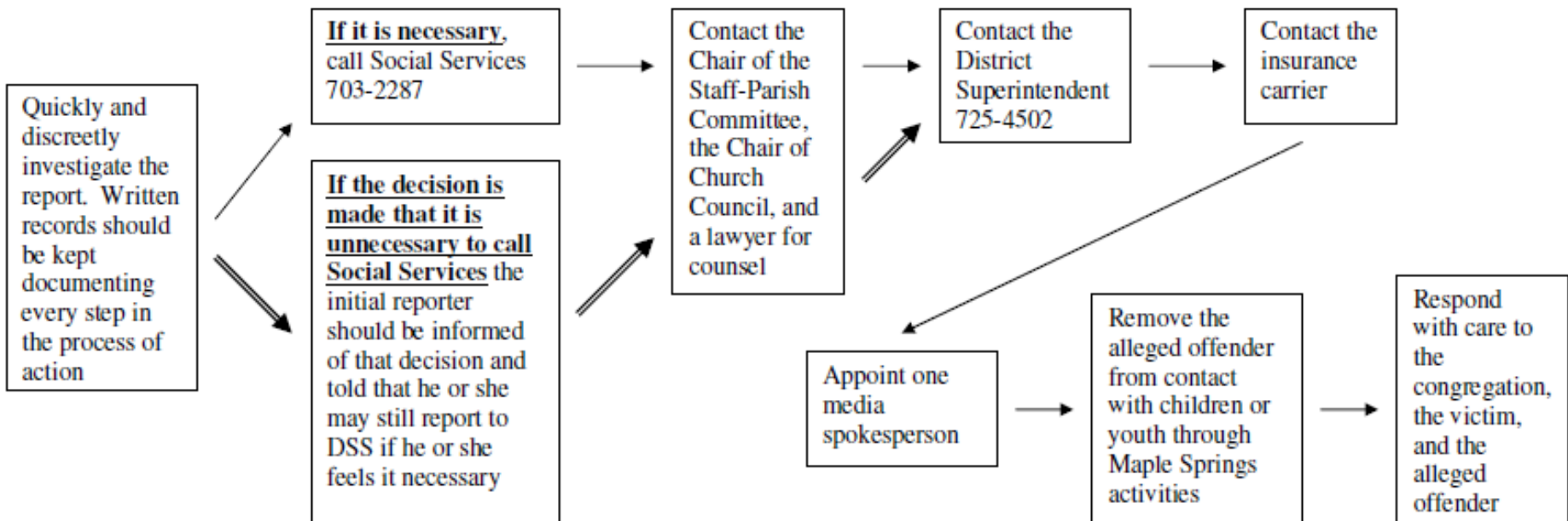
If the alleged perpetrator is a staff person...

1. The reporter should follow all of the above steps, but should not report the incident to the staff person who is the alleged perpetrator. Instead, the Senior Pastor or another staff person should be informed.
2. If the Senior Pastor is the alleged perpetrator, the Chair of the Staff-Parish Committee should assume the duties of the Senior Pastor in the above steps.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse



After the Senior Pastor and/or the Chair of the Staff-Parish Committee has been informed, he or she will...



Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

Individual Making Report:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (home): _____ (work): _____

Alleged Victim:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (home): _____

Age/Grade: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____

Alleged Perpetrator:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (home): _____ (work): _____

Age/Grade: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____

Relationship to Victim: _____

Describe your concerns and grounds for concern in as much detail as possible, including names, times, and dates where applicable and known:

- Reported to Staff person: (Name) _____

Date/Time: _____

- Reported to Senior Pastor:

Date/Time: _____

Summary of Investigation of Allegation: _____



- Follow-up with Initial Reporter, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Department of Social Services, Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Report Given: _____

- Call to Chair of Staff-Parish, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Chair of Church Council, Date/Time: _____
- Call to lawyer, Name: _____

Date/Time: _____

- Call to District Superintendent, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Insurance Carrier, Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Submitted by: _____

Title: _____

Signature

Date

Guidelines for Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communication

Introduction: Maple Springs recognizes that an increasing number of people in our congregation use and prefer electronic communication. Social networking sites, email, texting, Skype®, and other instant communication can be an effective form of connecting people, and when used properly, these mediums can enhance the church's ability to share our message. However, when used in an inappropriate fashion, social media can be detrimental to the church's purpose and have the effect of alienating persons from each other and from the church. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that they are representatives of Maple Springs when they post material online or communicate electronically with others. They should strive to observe Wesley's General Rules and The Great Commandment:

1. Do no harm.
2. Do good.
3. Attend to the ordinances of God.
4. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, strength, and soul.
5. Love your neighbor as yourself.

In particular, there is a need to establish healthy boundaries and a safe environment when adults communicate with children, youth and vulnerable adults in a virtual world. We recognize that we cannot completely control what persons may post online or put in electronic communications. However, adults engaged in ministry to children, youth, and vulnerable adults should be mindful of the powerful impact they can have when using electronic communications with children, youth or vulnerable adults. Staff and volunteers should conduct themselves in a manner that would be acceptable if the same interaction were to occur face-to-face on the church premises or at a church-sponsored event.

Connecting on Social Networking Sites:

1. Staff and volunteers should not submit "friend" requests on social media sites to children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Minors may feel that they are not able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between them and adults. Or, minors may accept "friend" requests because having a lot of "friends" is a status symbol.
2. It is preferred that staff and volunteers not have "friend" relationships with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, even if the request comes from the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Staff and volunteers should review this policy and their electronic settings carefully and ensure that they can comply with the safeguards listed herein before accepting a "friend" request.
3. Staff and volunteers may accept "friend" requests from children, youth, or vulnerable adults only when an actual personal relationship (teacher, minister, family friendships,

etc.) already exists between them. Do not accept “friend” requests from any child, youth, or vulnerable adult whom you do not personally know.

4. If an adult establishes a social media relationship with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, the adult must ensure that his/her social media pages and posts are appropriate for the child/youth/vulnerable adult to read. The adult should review his/her prior posts and adjust the privacy settings if there is objectionable content for a child/youth/vulnerable adult. Privacy settings on personal pages and information should be thoroughly scrutinized on an ongoing basis to prevent inappropriate information from being available to minors and vulnerable adults, whether that information is posted by the adult or by others in the adult’s network of “friends.” Given that privacy settings and other capabilities on social networking sites are continually evolving, staff and adult volunteers must be willing to continually educate themselves on what settings are needed to comply with these policies and update their settings accordingly.
5. Adults should not add or invite children, youth, or vulnerable adults to any groups, events, pages, chat rooms, websites, etc. that are not solely dedicated to activities directly related to a ministry for that group.
6. One-on-one video, photo or chat room-based interaction is generally not appropriate between adults and minors or vulnerable adults.
7. Cyberbullying is strictly prohibited. Emails of this nature can also be damaging to the Body of the Church, and all members are discouraged from sending group emails that do not build the Body of the Church. If you become aware of cyberbullying toward a child/youth/vulnerable adult, notify a church staff member.

Posting Photographs:

1. Be thoughtful about the pictures you post. Once an image is online, it is available to anyone who wants to download it and use it for any purpose. Photos can also be difficult to delete from social media sites after they are posted. Whatever you post may be there forever. Make sure you are comfortable with that before you post.
2. If you are posting pictures on a church-sponsored website or group page, it is preferred that you post group pictures instead of individual ones. Don’t use identifying information, such as names. Instead, label the photo with the activity, such as “Youth Retreat 2015.”
3. Make sure that you have written permission from the minor’s or vulnerable adult’s parents or guardians to post pictures on a website or use photos for publicity.

4. Posted photographs should send a positive message about the church's ministry and not be derogatory in any way. For example, photos showing the youth being "goofy" are permitted if you believe the youth's parents would be comfortable with that post. If a picture would make a youth feel self-conscious, vulnerable, or would subject the youth to ridicule, it should not be posted.
5. When "checking in" with any location-tagging social media, only check in yourself. Never check in minors or vulnerable adults. Be sensitive to tagging or revealing other participants' locations.

Electronic Communication with Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults:

1. Adults should communicate with children, youth or vulnerable adults in an electronic medium (email, text, etc.) only when they have permission in advance to do so from a parent or guardian.
2. Adults communicating with children/youth/vulnerable adults should keep their communications brief and factual. For example, if a youth texts an adult volunteer asking whether the group is meeting tonight, it is permissible for the volunteer to respond, "Yes. We're meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Craven Hall." The volunteer may wish to copy a parent or guardian on that communication.
3. If the staff member or volunteer cannot respond to a text in a brief, factual manner, the adult should copy another adult (such as a parent or guardian) on the message or post it to a public venue (i.e., a Facebook page instead of a private message). This will allow staff and volunteers to maintain the "two-adult rule" established in our Safe Sanctuaries policies.
4. Electronic communications from children/youth/vulnerable adults that seek personal advice or raise counseling issues should be dealt with through established counseling procedures. Adults should not engage in counseling-type communications with children/youth/adults via email, text, or social media.
5. Adults should not give out contact information for the child/youth/vulnerable adult to anyone not associated with the church's ministry unless the adult has written permission to do so from the parent or guardian of the child/youth/vulnerable adult.
6. Conduct all electronic communications in a professional manner. If you would not be comfortable having your email or text to a child, youth or vulnerable adult displayed on the large screen in Craven Hall during a worship service for everyone in the congregation to read, then you should not send it.

7. Save all electronic communications you have with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. A paper trail can be important if accusations are made against you about inappropriate communications.
8. Use good judgment in the time that you contact children, youth and vulnerable adults through social media, email or other forms of electronic communication. Do not text, Skype® or chat with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult at a time that you would not normally call their home phone. Avoid communicating at times when it is likely that a parent/guardian may not be supervising the recipient's online activities.
9. If you are uneasy about any topic addressed in an electronic communication from a child/youth/vulnerable adult, notify a parent/guardian (if appropriate) or other trusted adult. Honor privacy, but not secrecy.
10. If abuse is divulged in an electronic communication, follow the reporting procedures set forth in the Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures.

Management of Church-sponsored Social Media:

1. All church-related Facebook groups and other social media pages must have at least two administrators who are not related to each other by blood or marriage. An administrator's status should be revoked when the administrator is no longer associated with the ministry.
2. Sites must be monitored frequently to check for appropriate content. Any inappropriate material posted to a church-related social media site, group or page must be deleted. The administrator or pastor shall contact the person(s) responsible for the inappropriate posting and counsel him/her regarding appropriate posts. In the administrator's or pastor's discretion, the responsible person(s)' posting privileges may be revoked.
3. Administrators should review, on at least an annual basis, the members of the digital media group. Persons who no longer actively participate in the ministry should be removed from the group, such that they can no longer post or receive the postings of others in the group.

Approved by Church Council on 1/24/2017

Suggestions for Implementation

- Ask chairpersons to present the policy in their committees
- Hold at least two presentations to answer questions: One during Sunday School, another following a Wednesday Night Dinner, and possibly a third on Sunday evening during UMYF
- Write up highlights of the policy in the church newsletter
- Address the policy from the pulpit, possibly in conjunction with Children's Sabbath
- Design bulletin board in the children's wing featuring the policy and containing the necessary forms
- Inform all members that Maple Springs has a Safe Sanctuaries policy and give them the opportunity to review and/or receive a copy of it