

# FIRST UMC CHILDREN and YOUTH SAFETY POLICY

## The “Six Month Involvement” Rule

All volunteers who work with children are to be active participants of FUMC Winfield for at least six months prior to serving in any position involving contact with children. During this six-month period volunteers are encouraged to serve as an assistant in a program. This policy is not applicable to paid staff.

## Interview, Screened and Trained

All children’s ministry team volunteers, along with paid KDI and nursery staff will be required to fill out an application, undergo an interview, complete a background check, and participate in Boundary Awareness Training.

## The “Two Adult Rule”

No fewer than two adults are to be present at all times during a church **sponsored program**, event, or ministry involving children. The two adults should be unrelated. In unusual circumstances, a volunteer under the age of eighteen (yet in line with the “Five-Years” rule) may serve as a required adult. In the nursery, one required adult may be a volunteer working with a paid staff person.

**\*Abusers thrive on secrecy, isolation, and their ability to manipulate victims. When abusers know they will not be allowed to work in isolation, they lose interest in working with children.**

## Age-Related Guidelines

Leaders must be a minimum of five years older than the children they are working with. This policy does not apply to the High School ministry program. Volunteers under the age of eighteen may *only* assist with an older, qualified adult. This policy does not include nursery personnel who may serve as hired staff at a minimum of 16 years old.

**\*Persons under the age of eighteen cannot be expected to have the maturity and judgment necessary to respond to young children. Pairing these volunteers with an older adult is advisable.**

## Windows or Dutch Doors in all Classrooms

It is the goal of FUMC to provide visual access to all classrooms. Any classroom door without a window or Dutch style door should remain open at all times.

**\*A window or Dutch style door in all classrooms would allow the door to be shut but would remove the opportunity for secrecy and isolation, by providing full visual access.**

## Open-Door Counseling

During counseling sessions with children, the door to the room should remain open for the entire session. Confidentiality is to be practiced within a safe and open environment.

**\*Counseling sessions conducted behind closed doors are a breeding ground for abuse or false accusations of abuse.**

## First Aid/CPR Training

It is the goal of FUMC to provide First Aid and CPR training for all those who work with children. In an effort to achieve this goal, at least one training event will be offered on an annual basis.

**\*Having volunteers and staff who are prepared to deal with bumps, bruises, and scrapes contributes to the creation of a safe environment for children and fosters the confidence of parents and children in children’s ministry.**

## Advance Notice to Parents

Parents shall receive advance notice and reliable information regarding the event(s) in which their children are invited to participate. Parents must provide written permission before their child may participate in an event.

**\*Advance notice is a courtesy to parents but it also gives adequate time for parents to complete the written permission slip or decide if the event is suitable for their child.**

## Participation Covenant for all Participants and Leaders

A written covenant of participation shall be provided to all leaders and participants in children’s ministry which they agree to: (1) take part in the ministry, (2) give their best efforts to the ministry, (3) respect the other participants, (4) treat others as well as they would wish to be treated, (5) practice cyber safety as defined by FUMC.

**\*A Participation Covenant establishes the behavioral standards for volunteers and staff: abusive behavior will not be tolerated.**