

Albright united Methodist Church Ponca City, Oklahoma

Safety Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a child(ren)...welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5) He also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6) Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to those who cannot protect themselves.

In response to this call and action of the 2003 Oklahoma Annual Conference, we hereby commit ourselves as a community of faith to this policy and safety for children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Safety Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to create within our ministries a "Safe Sanctuary" that will foster healthy growth and development in spiritual and other dimensions as we have opportunity to provide ministry.

Statement of Policy

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and an Oklahoma United Methodist congregation, we pledge 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 those who work with them. It is our policy to:

- Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers;
- Implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events;
- Conform our facilities to meet reasonable safety standards to reduce risk of harm or injury;
- Provide for workers adequate training regarding the implementation of our policies, procedures, and preferred methodologies;
- Provide adequate supervision and support for workers as they are in ministry on our behalf;
- Educate parents and others in our congregation as to our policies and procedures;
- Have in place a clearly defined procedure for reporting instances of injury, harm, or abuse that conforms to requirements of state law;
- Respond with compassion and integrity to needs as they present themselves following incidents of harm, injury, or abuse;
- Regularly review our policies and procedures to assure that they conform to current legal, health, and safety standards.

Conclusion

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

Adopted by the Administrative Council on July 20, 2008.

Procedures for the implementation of Albright UMC Safety Policies as of January 2009: (Policies are in bold type. Procedures describe how policies will be carried out.)

A) Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers;

1. All workers with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will have been active with their peers in the life of this congregation for at least six months prior to their taking responsibilities in our ministries. Persons new to the congregation are welcome to serve under the direct supervision of a volunteer leader upon completion of item 2 below.
2. Every person working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will complete a Volunteer Application and submit to an OSBI background check (or an acceptable alternative). This information will be reviewed and updated at the beginning of every two years. Smart-Trak is our most current program used for background checks and it will also alert us of concerns as they arise. Those persons teaching adult Sunday school classes prior to September 1, 2008 will be exempt from the complete application process to continue teaching in those classes.
3. Persons transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults for any church-sponsored ministry or function must complete a Volunteer Application, submit to an annual driving record check, and show proof of a current driver's license and insurance.
4. The Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator will administer the application process and will review each Volunteer Application and background check with the minister.
5. The minister, lay leader, staff-parish committee chair, trustee chair, children and youth committee chairs, and safe sanctuaries coordinator will review, as a committee, any issues arising from the Volunteer Application and background check and determine if a worker is qualified to serve in the church's ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
6. All applications and documents will be maintained in the church office in a secure manner.

B) Implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events:

1. At least two adults, one of whom is 21 years or older, should be present for all activities, programs, and events for children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Leaders should never be alone, one-on-one, with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult in an isolated or closed situation. Leaders are to maintain safe practices in regards to contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults via social media such as Facebook, email, texting, etc.
2. The following ratios are to be observed in all activities, programs, and events:
 - A) Nursery and Toddlers 1 adult to 4 children
 - B) Preschool and Kindergarten 1 adult to 6 children
 - C) Elementary 1 adult to 8 children
 - D) Youth 1 adult to 10 children
 - E) Vulnerable Adults 1 leader to 12

3. Young people 6th grade and above are welcome to serve as assistant leaders under direct adult supervision with a coordinator's permission providing that the young person is at least 4 years older than the group with whom he or she will work. (This does not apply to Sunday School.)
4. If there are not two adults per classroom, a hall monitor will check with leaders and offer assistance as needed during activities, programs, and events.
5. Parents and guardians will be informed of details and will be asked to give written permission for children or youth to participate in ministry activities that take place away from the church. Leaders will make every effort to inform parents or guardians of any changes made in plans, even at the last minute.
6. A medical release form should be signed for each child or youth per year.
7. Volunteers providing transportation for programs, activities, or events for children, youth, or vulnerable adults will:
 - A) Hold a valid driver's license (on file in the office) and be at least 21 years old,
 - B) Have no major driving violations,
 - C) Use a vehicle in good mechanical condition,
 - D) Carry no more people that can be secured in seat belts or appropriate restraints, and use them when transporting the children, youth, or vulnerable adults,
 - E) Must carry current insurance.
8. Any church-sponsored ministry or function that offers a nursery must follow the church's Nursery Ministry Policy.
9. Only adults can move or set up TV's, projectors, or other heavy equipment. Any such movable equipment must be securely attached to its conveyance (e.g. TV's belted or bolted to the cart).
10. Children should be under supervision anytime they are on the church campus for church sponsored activities or events. When official supervision is not provided, parents are expected to provide supervision at all times.
11. Emergency exit plans, first aid kit locations, and tornado safety instructions are posted on each floor of the building. These plans are to be reviewed regularly with parents, leaders, teachers, and caretakers.

C) Conform our facilities to meet reasonable safety standards to reduce risk of harm or injury;

1. Every classroom and office door will have a window providing a view of the interior.
2. Trustees will regularly check facilities for safety hazards.
3. Toxic materials, including cleaning and other supplies, will be stored in locked facilities well out of the reach of children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
4. Electrical outlets in children's classrooms will be covered when not in use.
5. Weapons are prohibited in the church building.

D) Provide for workers adequate training regarding the implementation of our policies and procedures;

1. All approved volunteer workers will receive a copy of the Albright UMC Safety policies.
2. Volunteer workers for children, youth, or vulnerable adults, will attend an orientation where policies, procedures, and preferred methodologies will be reviewed.

3. There will be opportunities to update and improve knowledge and skills useful in our ministries annually. Workers for children, youth, and vulnerable adults are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.

E) Provide adequate supervision and support for workers as they are in ministry in our behalf;

1. Leaders and teachers shall be provided sufficient personnel and logistical assistance as necessary to maximize their effectiveness, and to also maintain an understanding of their important role in ministry.
2. Leaders and teachers will know to whom they can go for assistance whenever it is needed.
3. Leaders and teachers will be affirmed annually by the congregation.

F) Educate parents and others in our congregation as to our policies and procedures;

1. Policies and procedures pertinent to a specific area will be posted in an easily accessible location to that area.
2. All policies and procedures will be accessible to any church member. Copies will be kept in a notebook in the church office and on our church website.
3. From time to time throughout the year, portions of our policies and procedures may be published in our newsletter.

G) Have in place a clearly defined procedure for reporting instances of injury, harm, or abuse that conforms to requirements of state law;

1. Suspected abuse of any kind is to be reported immediately to the Department of Human Services hotline, 1-800-522-3511, as required by state law. Any instance of suspected child abuse shall be recorded on the Report Form for Instances of Suspected Abuse of a Minor, Oklahoma Conference, United Methodist Church.
2. Any instance of injury, harm, or abuse that occurs in the context of any of our ministries with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be reported immediately to the senior pastor and the lay leader. Any such instances involving clergy will also be reported to the District Superintendent.
3. Any injury or accident requiring more than minor first aid will be recorded on the Accident/Incident Report and kept on file in the church office.

H) Respond with compassion and integrity to needs as they present themselves following incidents of harm, injury, or abuse;

1. When instances of injury, harm or abuse occur, the senior pastor, lay leader or other congregational leaders as seen appropriate for the situation, will take the lead in determining the need for ministry and will coordinate its implementation.
2. The District Superintendent will act as official spokespersons for our congregation with the community and the media.

I) Regularly review our policies and procedures to assure that they conform to current legal, health, and safety standards.

1. Annually we will conduct a "Safety Audit" to assess adherence to our safety policies and procedures.

2. When the need arises, we will convene a Safe Sanctuaries Task Force to bring our policies and procedures up to date.
3. Annually the Board of Trustees will assess our insurance coverage.

Albright United Methodist Church, Ponca City, OK
Nursery Ministry Policy (Sunday am)

Introduction

The nursery ministry of Albright UMC is a vital part of our congregation's overall ministry. We want each child to know that he or she is a child of God. Our covenant is to serve these little ones as children of God, and part of our congregation's present ministry – not just our future ministry.

General Policies

1. Two (2) workers should staff the nursery at a minimum.
2. Any nursery worker under the age of eighteen will work under the direct supervision of an adult worker.
3. At any church sponsored event there should be a ratio of one adult worker to every 4 children.
4. A church custodian is responsible for keeping the floors, halls, and rest rooms clean and sanitary. Nursery workers are responsible for keeping rooms neat and clean. Toys, furniture, and other nursery items should be sanitized-annually or more as needed.
5. Nursery care will be provided for children ages infant through 4 years old.
6. Information cards will need to be filled out by a parent. These will need to be updated every year.
7. The parents or designated responsible adult will sign their child IN and OUT for each activity. No child may leave the nursery without being signed out by a parent or designated adult.
8. Children with contagious infection or virus, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea will not be allowed in the nursery.

The Nursery Coordinator

1. The nursery coordinator is a volunteer position.
2. The nursery coordinator shall recommend the equipment and supplies needed to maintain the nursery and toddler rooms to the trustees.
3. The nursery coordinator should recruit volunteer workers, and schedule all workers as needed. All workers shall follow the Safe Sanctuary Policies.
4. The nursery coordinator will be responsible for the cleanliness of the nursery. (sanitation, bedding, etc)
5. The nursery coordinator will review the appropriateness of items (toys, furniture, etc) for the nursery.

Nursery Worker Responsibilities

1. All workers in the nursery and toddler rooms shall work under the direction of the nursery coordinator.
2. Nursery workers will be responsible for cleaning the room after the activity.
3. Nursery workers should be in place before the beginning of an activity and will remain until all children have been picked up. No children will be left unattended at any time.
4. Nursery workers are responsible for changing any soiled or unclean sheets on beds and should use disinfectant spray on all others.

5. Accidents or spills should be cleaned up immediately.
6. Any injury or accident/incident requiring more than minor first aid will be recorded on an accident report form and kept on file.
7. Hands should be washed or sanitizer used after every diaper change.
8. Toddlers will be given snacks when appropriate. Nursery workers should check allergy information before serving any snack to a child.
9. Babies should be held while feeding. No propping of bottles is allowed.
10. Nursery workers should notify the nursery coordinator as soon as possible if they must be absent for any reason.
11. Only authorized workers are allowed in the nursery area.
12. Youth under the age of 18 are welcome to volunteer with the following provisions:
 - A) The youth must be at least 16 years of age.
 - B) The youth may volunteer during worship service and not the Sunday School hour.
 - C) The youth may only serve one Sunday a month.
 - D) Youth may only work in the toddler room.
13. Nursery workers have the authority to consider refusal of admittance of a child who appears ill. A child who becomes ill during an activity will be returned to their parent/designated adult.
14. Nursery workers will not administer medication to any child in their care.

Parent Responsibilities

1. Parents shall sign their child(ren) in and out of the nursery for any activity.
2. Any items brought to the nursery should be clearly marked with the child's name.
3. Sick children should not be brought to the nursery. Workers have the authority to refuse the admittance if a child appears ill. Children who become ill will be returned to their parent.
4. Parents will administer any medication that needs to be given.
5. Parents are free to check on their child at any time, but access to the nursery will be limited to the workers and children.
6. Children will be released only to parents or designated persons
7. Children should be picked up quickly after the conclusion of the activity.

Albright United Methodist Church, Ponca City, OK Bus/Van Ministry Policy

1. The Board of Trustees, through the church administrative assistant or pastor, shall coordinate the activities of the church bus/van. The trustees shall have control over the use of the vehicle; maintaining, storing, and securing the bus when not in use. Any unusual requests should be made through the Board of Trustees.
2. Only church groups or church-sponsored groups shall be granted use of the bus/van.
3. Scheduled usage will normally take precedence over new requests unless special circumstances need to be considered.
4. Persons authorized to drive the bus/van shall have the following qualifications:
 - A) Must be at least 21 years of age and possess a valid driver's license.
 - B) All drivers must read and agree to this policy.
 - C) Must have an Albright UMC Ponca City, OK volunteer application on file with a background check and documentation of on-line driver training module completed prior to bus/van usage. A copy of the driver's license and personal vehicle insurance verification must be on file in the church office. A doctors report is also required for drivers aged 70 and older.
5. All groups using the bus/van must comply with the following:
 - A. Utilize the log book stored in the vehicle to record date of use, purpose of trip, driver, mileage at start and end of activity, and gallons of fuel used and refilled.
 - B. Perform routine examinations of the vehicle before departure and upon return for any physical damage, serviceable tires, fluid levels, evidence of leakage of fluids, and interior cleanliness.
 - C. Insure the bus/van's fuel tank is at least $\frac{3}{4}$ full before returning it, park in the designated garage, and return the keys to the church office. (church Conoco credit card is available for gas)
 - D. Should have 2 adults (at least 1 over 21) in bus/van if driving with youth or children.
 - E. Make sure all occupants are wearing seatbelts.
 - F. Immediately report any mechanical, other problems, or accidents to the designated van coordinator, church office, or trustees.
 - G. Insure the bus/van is clean for the next group.
6. All fines levied for traffic violations shall be paid by the driver. Obey all traffic laws and drive courteously at all times.
7. The bus/van shall not be used for personal use, unless authorized by the Board of Trustees.
8. The use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs will not be allowed on the bus/van. Food and drinks on the bus/van are a privilege and should be used with discretion. Any spills should be cleaned up ASAP.
9. Routine maintenance, inspections, and repairs shall be performed as needed by the Board of Trustees or their designee.
10. The Board of Trustees or the board's designee shall keep a log of maintenance, mileage, fuel, repairs, and inspections.

11. The bus/van is not to be used for hire, to pull trailers, i.e. boats, and so on, or for any purpose requiring the use of a trailer hitch or the removal of seats, without the approval of the Board of Trustees or the designed coordinator.

12. Safety guidelines to be followed when using the bus/van are as follows:

A) The ball hitch weight of any trailer to be pulled by the bus/van shall not exceed 400 lbs.

B) When pulling a trailer behind the bus/van, the driver shall not exceed the speed of 60 mph.

C) Posted speed limits shall be observed while driving the bus/van.

D) During a trip, set the emergency brake, turn on flashers and put shift lever in the park position at all times when loading and unloading passengers.

E) Luggage should be stacked on the floor – no higher than the top of the seat level to assure safe weight distribution. Additional luggage should be carried in the trailer.

13. The bus/van is to be driven only on hard surface, normal access roads.

14. Accessories, including appearance items or additional equipment, will not be added to or removed from the bus/van without prior approval of the Board of Trustees.

15. The misuse of the bus/van may result in the Board of Trustees disallowing future use of the bus/van by that group or individual.

Revised/Approved by: Board of Trustees-AUMC

Date: July 18, 2013

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