

**CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY  
MITCHELL FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ~ MITCHELL SD  
FORMULATED - 2005**

First United Methodist Church of Mitchell, South Dakota is committed to providing a safe place for all people. Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Child Abuse Prevention Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth. Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate procedures; and we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of South Dakota State law for reporting suspected abuse. Please see attached for abuse definitions.

**SAFE PLACE PROCEDURES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MITCHELL SD**

1. All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Information Form. A copy of some form of official identification (State ID card/drivers license) will be attached to the information form of each volunteer. Changes in volunteer information will be requested once a year.
2. We reserve the right to randomly verify information on volunteer information forms.
3. During the first six months of volunteer service at First United Methodist Church, we will strive to pair all workers with another leader who has had at least six months experience at working with children or youth at FUMC.
4. We will strive to have at least two leaders working with any group of children or youth at all times. If this is not possible at any given time, the door to the area where the activity is taking place is to remain open.
5. If a leader plans to do a one on one activity with a child or youth, parental permission should be obtained before doing so. Forms are available in the Education Office for this purpose.
6. In the event that any group of children or youth are to participate in an overnight activity planned by the church, at least one male and one female adult (preferably not married to each other) will be present to supervise. The one exception to this would be if the group of children or youth who will be participating in the overnight activity will be all of the same sex. In that case, adults of the same sex as the children or youth are permitted to supervise the group.
7. In the event that a leader will be transporting children or youth in any vehicle (their personal vehicle or one owned by the church), the driver will obtain a copy of and agree to adhere to the church's policies for drivers.
8. Volunteers will receive regular training on use of "Safe Place" procedures, which will include abuse prevention and awareness training as well as procedures for reporting suspected abuse.

9. Issues with media will be handled by the pastor and/or designee.

Generally, child abuse is categorized in five primary forms: physical, emotional, neglect, sexual and ritual:

### **1. Physical Abuse**

Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally caused bodily harm to a child, examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, and so forth), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.

Possible signs of Physical Abuse: hostile and aggressive behavior toward others, fearfulness of parents and or other adults, destructive behavior toward self, others and/or property, inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage, burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises.

### **2. Emotional Abuse**

Abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved but undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

Possible signs of Emotional Abuse: exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal, exhibits severe lack of self-esteem, failure to thrive, threatens or attempts suicide, speech and/or eating disorders, goes to extremes to seek adult approval, extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns.

### **3. Neglect**

Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.

Possible signs of Neglect: failure to thrive, pattern of inappropriate dress for climate, begs or steals food, chronic hunger, depression, untreated medical conditions, poor hygiene

### **4. Sexual Abuse**

Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and adult (or other older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often, the child is physically and psychological dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.

Possible signs of Sexual Abuse: unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage, depression--cries for no apparent reason, promiscuous behavior, runs away from home and refuses to return, difficulty walking or sitting, bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas, exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, extreme fatigue, sexually transmitted diseases. In addition to these indicators, children who have been sexually abused at church may exhibit some of the following: unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in the nursery or Sunday school class, reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously enthusiastically approached, comments such as "I don't want to be alone with \_\_\_\_\_" in reference to a child care worker or Sunday school teacher, nightmares including a child care worker or teacher as a frightening character, unexplained hostility toward a child care worker or teacher.

## **5. Ritual Abuse**

Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true.

Possible signs of Ritual Abuse: disruptions of memory or consciousness, unexplained mistrust and mood swings, flashbacks, eating disorders, fear of the dark, especially at sundown or a full moon, agitation or despair that seems to occur in cycles, fear of ministers, priests, or others wearing robes or uniforms, nightmares or sleep disorders, any of the symptoms of sexual abuse.

## **6. Harassment**

Harassment consists of physical or verbal conduct related to a person's race, color, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, or gender.

Possible signs of harassment include those similar to those listed in emotional abuse.

Revised 00.00.00

26-8A-2. SD codified law defines an abused or neglected child means a child:

10. Whose parent, guardian, or custodian has abandoned the child or has subjected the child to mistreatment or abuse;
11. Who lacks proper parental care through the actions or omissions of the parent, guardian, or custodian;
12. Whose environment is injurious to his welfare;
13. Whose parent, guardian, or custodian fails or refuses to provide proper or necessary subsistence, supervision, education, medical care or any other care necessary for his health, guidance or well-being;
14. Who is homeless, without proper care, or not domiciled with his parent, guardian, or custodian through no fault of his parent, guardian or custodian;
15. Who is threatened with substantial harm;
16. Who has sustained emotional harm or mental injury as indicated by an injury to his intellectual or psychological capacity evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in his ability to function within his normal range of performance and behavior, with due regard to his culture;
17. Who is subject to sexual abuse, sexual molestation or sexual exploitation by his parent, guardian, custodian or any other person responsible for his care;
18. Who was subject to prenatal exposure to abusive use of alcohol or any controlled drug or substance not lawfully prescribed by a practitioner as authorized by chapters 22-42 and 34-20B;
19. Whose parent, guardian or custodian knowingly exposes the child to an environment that is being used for the manufacturing of methamphetamines.

### One On One Activity – Consent Form

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency contact person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number where can be reached \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to child/youth \_\_\_\_\_  
Alternate contact person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone  
number \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to child/youth \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ give my  
permission for said minor to participate in a one on one activity with \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that, while participating in this activity, said minor will be alone with the above  
mentioned individual. I give my permission for above mentioned individual to act in my behalf  
if  
said minor should require any medical attention while engaged in this activity.

I release First United Methodist Church of Mitchell, South Dakota from any liability in  
connection  
with this activity.

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

**\*\*CHURCH LEADER, PLEASE CARRY THIS CONSENT FORM WITH YOU ON ANY  
ONE ON ONE ACTIVITY YOU TAKE A CHILD/YOUTH FROM MITCHELL FIRST  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON. AT THE COMPLETION OF THE ACTIVITY,  
PLEASE BRING THE FORM TO THE EDUCATION OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
WHERE IT WILL BE KEPT ON FILE.**

Revised 00.00.00

**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROCEDURES  
MITCHELL FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Mitchell First United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe program for all people who participate in our ministries. In regards to the transporting of passengers on any church-sponsored activity, the following procedures must be followed:

**PERSONAL VEHICLE USE**

10. Prior to transporting passengers in any non church owned vehicle, driver will provide:
  - A. Proof of valid drivers license
  - B. Proof of insurance on vehicle to be used, (primary if accident occurs)(Forms for this proof are located in the glove compartment for each of the church owned vehicle.)
  - C. If you have not completed the “Safe Place Policy And Procedure” training, you must read over this entire Transportation Safety Form, sign at the bottom of the form and return to the Christian Education Director’s office.

**CHURCH OWNED VEHICLE USE**

1. Prior to transporting passengers in a church owned vehicle, driver will:
  - A. Complete “Safe Place Policy and Procedure” Training of Mitchell FUMC
  - B. Submit a copy of their drivers license to the church office

**ALL DRIVERS FOR CHURCH SPONSORED EVENTS**

1. Agree to abide by the official rules of the road. (Seat belts?)
2. Must refrain from transporting passengers on church-sponsored events if they:
  - A. Are aware of any reason they would not be able to drive in a safe manner
  - B. Have an unsafe driving record
3. Drivers are asked to refrain from transporting passengers in privately owned vehicles if they are not certain that the said vehicle is in safe operating condition.
4. Driver is responsible for traffic tickets issued to them while driving on a church-sponsored event.
5. A report of your driving record may be requested from the State Department of Transportation by the church’s insurance company.
6. Scheduled drivers (of both church and privately owned vehicle) will be at least 21 years of age.

I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the Transportation Safety Procedures of Mitchell First United Methodist Church as stated above and agree all information provided is true and correct.

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

**RECORD OF DRIVERS WHO USE PERSONALLY OWNED VEHICLE TO  
TRANSPORT PASSENGERS ON CHURCH SPONSORED EVENT**

Date of event

Driver of personal vehicle

Driver's License number

Insurance Company for vehicle used

Policy number for vehicle used

Date policy expires

Please complete this form for each driver who will be transporting passengers in a personally owned vehicle for any church sponsored event and turn this form into the Education Office.

**PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OF CHILDREN OR YOUTH  
FOR VOLUNTEERS OF MITCHELL FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
MITCHELL, SOUTH DAKOTA**

If you have any reason to suspect that a child or youth, who is associated with First United Methodist Church is being subjected to any form of abuse, as described in the abuse prevention policy of the church, we ask that you follow these steps of response.

**DO:**

- Take all allegations or suspicions of abuse seriously
- Report suspicions of abuse to the Christian Education Director or Pastor, as soon as possible after suspicion is raised. Don't wait until the event is over and the child/youth have left the building.
- Complete a Suspected Abuse form, available in the Christian Education Office
- Document as clearly as possible, any statement or situations which cause you to suspect abuse
- Keep all information confidential

**DON'T:**

- Question the alleged victim in any way once suspicion is raised. Let the trained authorities do this.

**REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE TO:**

Christian Education Director - Carolyn Knight  
Pastors – Kathy Hartgraves & Katie Rowen

Revised 8.28.06

**PROCEDURE FOR FOLLOW-UP ON REPORT OF SUSPECTED ABUSE**

1. Fill out Report of Suspected Abuse form
  
7. Give report to CE Director or Pastor who will then call Department of Social Services Intake Child Protection
  
8. If it is felt that child/youth are in immediate danger, call 911

Department of Social Services Intake Child Protection Phone # 995.8000

**REPORT OF SUSPECTED ABUSE**

To be filled out by leader making report. Please provide as much information as is available.

Date of report: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of report:

Person filling out report:

Name of alleged victim:

Grade/Activity:

Witnesses:

Name of accused:

Relationship of alleged victim to accused:

Summary of information on alleged abuse: (use back if more room is needed)

Report to Christian Education Director or Pastor  
Specify which person report was given to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title:

\*\*\*\*\*

To be completed by CE Director, Pastor, or designee report was made to.

Reported to CE Director or Pastor - Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time:

Reported to South Dakota Department of Social Services - Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time:

Signature of staff taking report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

Revised 00.00.00

**Follow up action taken:**

**MITCHELL FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
310 NORTH ROWLEY STREET  
MITCHELL SD 57301  
PHONE: 605.996.7721  
FAX: 605.996.0877**

**AUTHORIZATION FORM**

During the application process and at any time during the tenure of my Volunteer Status with Mitchell First United Methodist Church, I hereby authorize the Mitchell First United Methodist Church to conduct a criminal background search in keeping with the church's safe environment/safe place policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Last Name, First Name, **Middle Initial**)  
Applicant/Volunteer Name Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

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

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 8.20.07

## **REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE AT MITCHELL FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Mitchell First United Methodist Church welcomes all children and desires to create a caring, safe environment for their growth. Realizing that our church is an open environment that welcomes all persons, regardless of their background, it is possible, even probable that an abusive person will be present in the church context. In order to reduce the possibility of child abuse occurring at church events, the following measures will be implemented.

Children's workers will typically serve in teams. When only one staff is available, the doors to the room where the event is taking place will remain open

Children's workers are encouraged to take children to the restroom in groups. The children's worker should not enter the restroom with the children unless adult assistance is needed (as with younger children). In these cases, the restroom door can be propped open.

When children's events are finished, the children will be encouraged to remain in the building until a parent picks them up.

If someone volunteers to help with the children's event who was not originally scheduled to serve, they should be briefed on this policy before serving.

In the event a children's worker finds him/herself in one of the above situations due to extenuating circumstances, he/she should inform the Children's Education Director as soon as possible.

If this policy is not being abided by, the following measures will be taken:

The Children's Education Director will review the policy with the children's worker and clarify the expectations.

If there are repeated, intentional, or serious failures to comply with this policy, the children's worker will be dismissed from service with children.

These measures offer protection not only to our children, but also protects our children's workers from wrongful accusations.

I agree to abide by these measures when I am serving at a children's event.

Name

Date