

**Salem United Methodist Church
Manheim, Pennsylvania**

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policy

The purpose of this Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policy (“Policy”) is to announce the existing policies and procedures of Salem United Methodist Church (“Church”) with respect to child abuse prevention and reporting.

I. What is Child Abuse?

Consistent with the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, as of December 2014, child abuse is defined as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly doing any of the following:

1. Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
2. Fabricating, feigning, or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
3. Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
4. Causing sexual abuse or exploitation a child through any act or failure to act.
5. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
6. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
7. Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
8. Engaging in any of the following recent acts:
 - a. kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing, or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child
 - b. unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration the method, location, or the duration of the restraint or confinement
 - c. forcefully shaking a child under one year of age
 - d. forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age
 - e. interfering with the breathing of a child
 - f. causing a child to be present at a location while a violation of 18 Pa.C.S. 7508.2 (relating to operation of methamphetamine laboratory) is occurring, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement
 - g. leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the

child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known:

- (1) is required to registered as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch.97 Such. H (relating to registration of sexual offenders), where the victim of the sexual offense was under 18 years of age when the crime was committed.
 - (2) has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under 42 Pa.C.S. 9799.24 (relating to assessments) or any of its predecessors
 - (3) has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child as defined in 42 Pa.C.S. 9799.12 (relating to definitions)
9. Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act (23 Pa.C.S. 6303(b)(1))
 10. Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Please note - Non-serious injury or neglect that results solely from environmental factors, such as inadequate housing, clothing, and medical care, that are beyond the control of the parent or person responsible for the child's welfare with whom the child resides is not subject to mandatory reporting. (PA Statute 6304)

II. Who Must Report Child Abuse?

Any Church employee or volunteer having contact with children through participation in a Church-sponsored activity, camp, conference, retreat, or program is considered a mandated reporter and *must report witnessed or reasonably suspected* child abuse. A mandated reporter who has *reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being or has been subjected* to abuse must report such abuse in accordance with Church Policy as described herein. A mandated reporter is to report, not investigate the child abuse. Any person who makes a good faith report of Child Abuse pursuant to this Policy will not be subjected to retaliation.

REGARDLESS OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, EVERY MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH SHOULD CONSIDER HIM- OR HERSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPORTING VIGOROUS EXECUTION OF THIS POLICY AND FOR ENSURING THE SAFETY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH ENGAGED IN THE CHURCH'S PROGRAMS, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

III. Employee/Volunteer Eligibility Policies

- A. In no case shall a person be eligible to be a Church employee or a Church volunteer expected to have contact with children if that person's criminal history information indicates either adjudication as a "perpetrator" or conviction for Child Abuse (as herein defined) or related offense, at any time and in any jurisdiction, or if that person is currently facing charges of Child Abuse or related offense in any jurisdiction.
- B. In no case shall a person be eligible to be a Church employee or volunteer expected to be in contact with children if that person is named in the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's central register as the perpetrator of a founded report of Child Abuse.
- C. In no case shall a person be eligible to be a Church employee or volunteer expected to have contact with children if that person refuses to sign the Participation Covenant Statement in the form designated by the SPRC, or to provide criminal history information as may be required.
- D. A person deemed ineligible to be a Church employee or volunteer expected to have contact with children shall not be permitted to function as such in any way.

IV. Mandatory Employee/Volunteer Background Verification

All Church employees and all Church volunteers expected to have contact with children must provide the following background information and covenants to the Church, prior to assuming their prospective roles with the Church, and in any event as soon as possible after adoption and implementation of this Policy:

A. Employees

1. A current FBI National Crime Information Center Record (NCIC);
2. A current Pennsylvania State Police Report of Criminal History information, or statement from the Pennsylvania State Police that the central repository contains no such information;
3. A certification from the Department of Public Welfare as to whether the applicant is named in the central register as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse, indicated report of child abuse, founded report for school employee or indicated report for school employee; and
4. An executed Participation Covenant Statement in the form designated by the Church.

B. Volunteers

1. A current Pennsylvania State Police Report of Criminal History information, or statement from the Pennsylvania State Police that the central repository contains no such information;

2. A certification from the Department of Public Welfare as to whether the applicant is named in the central register as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse, indicated report of child abuse, founded report for school employee or indicated report for school employee;

3. If not a consistent resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years, a current FBI National Crime Information Center Record (NCIC); and

4. An executed Participation Covenant Statement in the form designated by the Church.

Please note that all background checks will need to be updated every 5 years to remain current.

V. Procedure for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

If there is **reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being or has been subjected to abuse** or there is **observed or suspected conduct amounting to Child Abuse** on Church grounds or while under the care, supervision, guidance, or training of any person in connection with a Church-sponsored activity, camp, conference, retreat, or program **shall be reported immediately, adhering to the following procedure:**

1. ***Immediately* make an oral report of the suspected Child Abuse to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare via the ChildLine hotline at (800) 932-0313 or the website <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>.**
2. **Refer report of suspected Child Abuse to Church Pastor or SPRC Chair.**
3. Upon receiving the report of suspected Child Abuse, the Church Pastor or SPRC Chair will **immediately notify the United Methodist Church District Superintendent.**
4. **Within 48 hours of making the initial oral report to ChildLine**, the reporter must make a **written report on Form CY-47** (see attached) provided by the Department of Human Services on the website www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov under the resource tab to the county's children and youth agency where the suspected child abuse occurred.
5. The reporter and the Church Pastor shall maintain possession of confidential records of all such reports, including written and photographs, made under this Policy, excepting disclosures made in accordance with this Policy, or as may otherwise be deemed necessary to secure the safety of the child victim.