



MATTHEWS UNITED METHODIST

Risk Management and Safety Procedures (RMSP) Matthews United Methodist Church

The Administrative Council, members, and staff of Matthews United Methodist Church (MUMC) recognize that children, youth, and vulnerable adults are entrusted to the care of adults who lead church programs and activities both on and off the campus (and also in educational or recreational programs operated by others on MUMC property.)

The Administrative Council, members, and staff of MUMC are committed to maintaining an environment in which children, youth, and vulnerable adults are protected from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and one that also protects volunteers and paid staff from potential false allegations of abuse.

To achieve these goals, MUMC has developed appropriate procedures to be followed in the following areas:

- Interviewing and selection of volunteers involved in the supervision or care of children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults;
- Orientation and training of approved volunteers and/or paid workers;
- Supervision of these volunteers/paid workers by trained staff;
- Reporting of and responding to any incident and/or allegation of the abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

The general policy and procedures shall apply to all persons, whether compensated staff, teacher, or volunteer as well as all church members, visitors, and guests.

Approved by Administrative Council on February 19, 2006

Section 1: Definitions:

- 1.1 **Children and Youth:** Any person under the age of 18 years involved in programs or activities provided at or sponsored by MUMC.
- 1.2 **Adult:** Any person 18 years of age or older involved in programs or activities provided at or sponsored by MUMC.
- 1.3 **Vulnerable Adults:** Persons 18 years of age or older who live in or receive services from nursing homes, hospitals, treatment centers or who have mental retardation, mental illness, or physical disabilities.
- 1.4 **Abuse:** This term includes physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse.
- 1.5 **Level 1 Volunteer:** Any one who is an occasional driver for an activity, and/or someone assisting in a classroom, a one-time volunteer, or someone who is not directly working one-on-one with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. This person cannot serve in a supervisory position with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults and must have a Level 2 volunteer present.
- 1.6 **Level 2 Volunteer:** Someone who is a volunteer or paid worker with children, youth, or vulnerable adults and is teaching in a class, leading a small group, keeping nursery, or who is directly working one-on-one with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.
- 1.7 **Active Participant:** Any person who has attended worship 75% of the time (three out of four Sundays) in the six months prior to the activity or event in question.

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Section 2: Procedures for Hiring and Screening

- 2.1 Level 2 volunteers involved in the care of children, youth, and vulnerable adults at MUMC must have been active participants of the church for six months prior to the volunteer activity and complete the Screening Form for Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults as well as the Covenant Form as designated by each particular ministry. An exception to this policy is in the Child Learning Center (CLC) where applicants are not required to be a member of MUMC. They must, however be an active member in another church having a signed letter acknowledging active participation in that church for six months prior to applying and/or being hired.
- 2.2 Volunteers with children, youth or vulnerable adults must agree to criminal background checks. Secondary checks may be run as deemed necessary by the particular responsibilities. Background checks are mandatory for all Level 2 Volunteers and all paid workers. Random background checks will be conducted on Level 1 Volunteers. (See “Definitions” for explanation of Level 2 Volunteer.)
- 2.3 The staff member directly responsible for the ministry specific to the applicant will conduct the reference checks. Phone interviews documented in writing and/or mail may accomplish the reference checks. All materials related to reference checks must be reviewed and signed by church Administrator.
- 2.4 The personnel file of a paid worker for MUMC shall include, but is not limited to, the completed employment application, the Screening Form, the authorization form, and the results of the investigations or inquiries made in response to these forms.
- 2.5 General access of the applicant’s or paid worker’s personnel file will be limited to the position's supervisor, the related member of the Management Team and the Administrator. Personnel files will be maintained by the Administrator
- 2.6 Volunteers who have been victims of sexual or physical abuse are encouraged to discuss their desire to work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults the Senior Pastor or other clergy as designated by the Senior Pastor prior to engaging in any volunteer service with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- 2.7 Adults who have been convicted, in any jurisdiction, of any kind of sexual or physical abuse towards children, youth or vulnerable adults and/or any person considered to pose a threat to minors are not eligible for a position as a volunteer or paid worker under the RMSP guidelines and are prohibited from having any direct and unsupervised contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- 2.8 Any organization, individual and/or groups that use the facilities of MUMC or requests usage of the MUMC facilities must agree to abide by the RMSP. Failure to do so will result in denied access to MUMC facilities. A copy of the RMSP guidelines will be given to every organization requesting or requiring the use of MUMC facilities, and a statement must be signed by the user confirming: (1) acknowledgement of the RMSP guidelines and requirements; and (2) an agreement to abide by the RMSP guideline and requirements.

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Section 3: Procedures for Reporting Incidents

- 3.1** MUMC encourages all adult church members to be sensitive to the potential for abuse of children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. All incidents of alleged abuse must be reported orally and in writing by the person witnessing the alleged abuse and, (if not the person who witnessed the alleged abuse), by the person informed either verbally or in writing of the alleged abuse. Reports of alleged abuse must be made within 24 hours of knowledge of the alleged abuse. The report of alleged abuse must be made orally and in writing to: (1) the staff person directly responsible for the ministry area where the alleged abuse occurred; and (2) the management team member over the ministry area where the alleged abuse occurred. This report must be signed and dated.
- 3.2** Any staff person and/or management team member who receives any verbal or written report of alleged abuse must report the alleged abuse orally and in writing, within 24 hours of receiving the allegation, to the following:
1. The Senior Pastor.
 2. The Church Administrator.
- 3.3** In the event that a child, youth, or vulnerable adult inflicts abuse on another child, Youth, or vulnerable adult, the parents or legal guardians of both will be contacted.

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Section 4: Procedures for Responding to Abuse Allegations

- 4.1** All facts and circumstances of an incident must be documented in writing.
- 4.2** A full investigation of any alleged abuse will be carried out by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and/or criminal and State authorities; not by church personnel.
- 4.3** Any person accused of any alleged abuse towards children, youth or vulnerable adults will be immediately suspended from their position. Employed staff person will be placed on compensated administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Consideration for possible reinstatement of the volunteer position or return to continuing employment will take place only after the investigation by DSS or the State is completed and all criminal allegations or charges are cleared.
- 4.4** All actions taken in the course of investigating and handling the alleged abuse must be documented, in writing, by the staff person responsible for the ministry in which the alleged abuse took place. The written documentation and investigation shall be kept in a confidential file in the Administrator's office.
- 4.5** All persons involved in the alleged abuse, including the accuser, the accused, and the victim, shall be treated with dignity, support, and love. Confidentiality shall be safeguarded. If the accusation is found to be true, the parents of other children or youth and the guardians of vulnerable adults will be contacted.
- 4.6** Only one person is authorized to speak to the media, on behalf of MUMC, regarding the alleged, confirmed or convicted abuse. The spokesperson for MUMC will be designated and appointed annually by the Administrative Council.

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Section 5: Training and Supervision Procedures

- 5.1** The Staff-Parish Relations Committee of MUMC will ensure that a church-wide anti-abuse training program is provided for volunteers and staff. The training is to occur twice a year and as needed at other times to ensure appropriate practices are implemented in all areas of ministry, and to reduce the risk of potential abuse. All persons employed by MUMC, whether part-time or full-time, are required to attend anti-abuse training at least once a year.
- 5.2** Education regarding abuse issues must be included in the training events of each individual ministry area, including adult areas, and must be conducted at least annually. It is the responsibility of the MUMC staff member accountable for the particular MUMC program to provide or procure the anti-abuse education and training. The specific circumstances of each MUMC program or ministry shall be considered in the development of anti-abuse education and training for that area.
- 5.3** The applicable parent, legal guardian or custodian of children, youth or vulnerable adults will receive advance notice and information regarding any event in which their children, youth or vulnerable adults will participate.
- 5.4** First Aid and CPR training and certification, at the expense of the applicable MUMC ministry, is mandatory for all paid workers working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. First Aid and CPR training will be offered annually to all volunteer workers of children, youth and vulnerable adults.
- 5.5** In the event children, youth or vulnerable adult activities take place off of the MUMC campus, transportation to and from that event must be provided by a qualified Level 2 Volunteer adult worker or paid staff worker over the age of 25 years old. MUMC must also possess written parental, guardian, or custodial permission for the transportation of any youth or children 17 years of age and under. Permission by phone is acceptable for brief local outings for persons over the age of 17.
- 5.6** Volunteers or paid staff for any overnight church activity involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults must be approved in advance by the program staff accountable for that program.
- 5.7** The parent, guardian, or custodian is responsible for ensuring that any child, youth or vulnerable adult is dropped off in a supervised area. Only a parent, legal guardian or custodian may drop-off and/or pick-up a third grade or younger child from MUMC, unless MUMC is properly notified of a valid request to do otherwise.
- 5.8** The MUMC staff member responsible for campus programs shall make recommendations to the Trustees for facility modifications that could further reduce the risk of potential abuse occurring on MUMC campus.
- 5.9** The “two-adult rule” will be observed at all times. This rule requires any adult working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults be accompanied by an adult partner at all times. This adult partner must be someone other than a spouse.

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Section 6: Exceptions to the “two-adult rule” policy include:

- 6.1** Small group activities involving Middle and Senior High youth on the campus of MUMC. Any small group activity taking place in a home must have at least one adult counselor and a parent present.
- 6.2** The Child Learning Center, (CLC) as they provide Preschool Assistants called “floaters” who go into the classrooms at various times during the day to assist the teachers. The three directors are also involved in the classrooms on a daily basis. Refer to the CLC handbook for further safety measures in place. The Intercom system in all CLC rooms must remain operational. Doors to all CLC classrooms must be left open making the room accessible by other staff persons.
- 6.3** Adult visits with children, youth or vulnerable adults in the hospital, nursing home, or home bound situations.
- 6.4** The Scouting programs, as they have their own Risk Management and Safety procedures established by their national organizations. All Scouting programs meeting in MUMC are required to follow the policy and guidelines established by their national and local governing bodies as it pertains to children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Any changes to the Risk Management and Safety Procedure policy, including any applicable exceptions, must have prior approval from the Administrative Council.

**We, as the Matthews United Methodist Church family,
expect that all adults in relation to each other, children, youth, and vulnerable adults
will conduct themselves in a way that is consistent with Biblical teachings as
Disciples of Jesus Christ.**

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