Christ United Methodist Church
Lansdale, PA

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

The proceeding contents are an addendum to the Eastern Conference Safe Sanctuary policy. The Conference policy will be referenced throughout this addendum and will take precedence should there be conflicting policies between Christ UMC policy and the conference policy.

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Safe Sanctuary Mission Statement

To create an environment at Christ United Methodist Church that will continue to nurture the spiritual growth of our children while ensuring their safety. Christ UMC will make every reasonable effort to protect our children from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Through education, training, and supervision over those who work with our children, we will ensure that this congregation will cultivate mutual respect and trust between our children and their mentors while continuing to make this place welcoming to all who wish to come and share in Christ's work.

Key concepts relating to keeping children safe in church:

1. The recognition and acknowledgement of the safety of children being of paramount importance, and relevant State standards are met.
2. The recognition and acknowledgement that no community is exempt from child abuse –churches, therefore, have a responsibility to prepare themselves to have a well-thought out response.
3. The recognition and acknowledgement that children, as well as adults, have certain rights, namely:

- To be treated with respect
- To be protected from violence and harmful treatment from anyone
- To be protected from abuse
- To be valued
- To have their voices heard
- That the adults caring for them take responsibility for ensuring the above points are met

Defined Words

Words that appear in italic in the following pages are defined below.

CHILD: Any person(s) infant through 6th grade.

YOUTH: Any person(s) 7th grade through the age of 18.

CHILD/YOUTH ACTIVITIES: All activities for children and/or youth on site (at Christ Church) or off site that are sponsored by Christ Church.

CLEARED WORKER (CW): An individual who

1) will be working with children and/or youth
2) has successfully gone through the application process including all relevant background checks
3) has been approved by the Safe Sanctuary Committee and the Pastor.

YOUTH ASSISTANT (YA): Youth who assist in children's activities.

VOLUNTEER WORKER (VW): Any non-compensated individual who works with children at any church-sponsored activity.

PAID WORKER (PW): Employees of the church who work with children and/or youth at any church-sponsored activity.

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE: A manner of dress that helps our children and youth grow in the virtue of modesty which is at the foundation of their self-respect and their respect for others.

COMMUNICATIONS: Contact with another person via phone, email (including instant messaging), text messaging, written correspondence, sign language, online "chat room" and/or private web pages.

INFORMED REFERENCE: A church member who personally knows the CW/VW applicant, and who is not a relative of the CW/VW applicant.

MENTAL ABUSE: Defined in Eastern Conference Policy

PHYSICAL ABUSE: Defined in Eastern Conference Policy

SERIOUS PHYSICAL NEGLECT: Defined in Eastern Conference Policy

SEXUAL ABUSE: Defined in Eastern Conference Policy

VULNERABLE ADULT: An individual over the age of 18 who requires direct adult supervision as a result of mental or physical limitations.

Screening Procedures for Cleared Workers and Volunteer Workers

1. All *CW/VW* must be at least 18 years of age or older and when working with *youth* must be at least five years older than the oldest youth member in their group.
2. All *CW/VW* will have demonstrated an active relationship with this church for at least six months before working in a supervisory role with youth as outlined in the Eastern Conference policy.
3. *CW* are required for any role that involves scheduled and repeated contact with *children/youth/vulnerable adults*. *VW* are sufficient for roles that involve contact for a limited time.
4. Occasional contact by a parent of a *child/youth* involved in a program is allowed under the supervision of a *CW*.
5. *CW* must complete an application which will include a criminal background check and a child abuse clearance as outlined in the Eastern Conference Safe Sanctuary Policy. Background checks will need to be completed every three years.
6. *CW/VW* who provide transportation must complete a motor vehicle report.
7. *VW* must complete an application before working with *children/youth/vulnerable adults*.
8. At least two church members will serve as *informed references* before an application for *CW* or *VW* can be submitted. An exception to this rule for an individual who is seeking employment at Christ UMC can be made only by the Pastor.
9. Applicants for *CW/VW/PW* may be subject to an interview by the Pastor, Youth Director, and/or chairperson of the Safe Sanctuary Committee.

Behavior for *CW/VW/Children/Youth*:

1. All *CW* and *VW* are viewed as representatives of Christ Church and should behave in an appropriate Christian manner.
2. All facilities and equipment at Christ UMC should be used with care. Any unsafe conditions and any significant damage must be reported to the trustees.
3. *Children/Youth* must be supervised during *children/youth activities* by at least two *CW/VW*. A roaming *CW/VW* may fill the role of the second *CW* or *VW*.
4. *Children* under 4th grade must be supervised at all times both in the Sanctuary and other areas of the church.
5. When a *youth* group is the only group in the building <u>and</u> the activity involves overnight accommodations at the church, all outside doors should be locked.
6. For an overnight trip with youth, all female *youth* should sleep together with at least one female *CW* and all male *youth* should sleep together with at least one male *CW*. Whenever possible we encourage two same sex adults (second may be a *VW*) for overnight trips.
7. Whenever possible, no *CW/VW* should be left alone with a *child/youth*. If a *child/youth* is not picked up when all others have gone, two *CW/VW* should stay with *child/youth* if possible. Phone contact should be made to the parent/guardian if a *child/youth* is alone with a *CW/VW*. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up *children/youth* promptly
8. No Smoking is permitted by *CW/VW* in the presence of *children/youth*.
9. Mutual respect between *children/youth* and *CW/VW/YA* span across all lines including outward appearance. *Appropriate attire* by all at *child/youth* activities will help develop such mutual respect.

Training for *CW/VW*

1. All *CW/VW* will receive a copy the Eastern Conference Safe Sanctuary and Christ UMC addendum of that policy.
2. All *CW* will be required to take training courses inside or outside of Christ UMC to help with understanding the following:

    - Recognizing the different types of abuse and abusers
    - Response in reporting procedures for allegations of abuse
    - Taking all allegations of abuse seriously, while maintaining respect for both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
3. *CW* should receive CPR and First Aid certification and keep their cards current.

TRAINING COURSES MAY INCLUDE:

1. Presentations from "Safe Sanctuaries, Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church" by Joy Thornburg Melton.
2. Watching training DVD/Videos covering abuse awareness and other relevant topics.
3. Attending Annual meetings at church to cover any changes in the Safe Sanctuary policy.

LANSDALE, PA

APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEER CHILD/YOUTH WORKER

APPLICANTS NAME: _____ Date of Birth _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State_____
(required if worker is providing child/youth transportation)

Previous Work Experience:

Most recent Employer: Are you currently employed? Yes No
If Yes, may we contact Yes No

_____
(company name) Address

(_____)_____
Phone

_____
Job Title Supervisor

_____
Duties

Second Most recent Employer:
May we contact Yes No

_____
(company name) Address

(_____)_____
Phone

_____
Job Title Supervisor

_____
Duties

Previous Work Experience with Children/Youth **(either Paid or Volunteer)**

1. _____

(name of organization/church, etc.) City, State. Contact Person/ Phone#

_____

Duties

2. _____

(name of organization/church, etc.) City, State. Contact Person/ Phone#

_____

Duties

References: Individuals not related to you by blood or marriage:

1. Name: _____ Member of Christ UMC? Yes/No

Address:_____, Phone_____

Relationship:_____

Length of time you have known reference:_____

2. Name: _____ Member of Christ UMC? Yes/No

Address:_____, Phone_____

Relationship:_____

Length of time you have known reference:_____

3. Name: _____ Member of Christ UMC? Yes/No

Address:_____, Phone_____

Relationship:_____

Length of time you have known reference:_____

Have you ever been convicted of, or plead guilty to a Motor Vehicle violation(s)?
(Skip this question if not providing child/youth transportation)

Yes No
If yes, please give dates and explain:

_____

_____

Have you ever been convicted or plead guilty(no contest) to a misdemeanor?

Yes No
If yes, please give dates and explain:

_____

_____

Have you ever been convicted or please guilty (no contest) to a felony including but not limited to drug related charges, child abuse, or domestic violence, theft or larceny?

Yes No
If yes, please give details and explain:

_____

_____

If there is any information you feel is relevant to your application that has not be addressed, please state below: _____

_____

_____

_____

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
LANSDALE, PA

**Rules for reporting allegations of abuse are defined clearly in the Eastern PA Conference Safe Sanctuary Policy which is part of this addendum. Below is a form for gathering necessary information upon notification of alleged abuse and in no way a substitute for the reporting procedures outlined in Eastern PA Conference Policy.*

REPORT OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

NAME AND TITLE OF PERSON RECEIVEING THE REPORT:

Name:_____ Title:_____

Date report received: _____ Time: _____

Report received from: _____ Alleged Victim: ___Yes ___No.

If No: Relationship to alleged victim:_____

Alleged Victim's information:

Name: _____, Date of Birth (or age) _____

Address:_____, Phone: _____

Name of person(s) with whom alleged victim resides: _____

____Parents ____ Legal Guardians ___Other: _____

About the alleged perpetrator:

Name of Person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship to the alleged victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, pastor or asst pastor, etc.): _____.

Address:_____, Phone: _____

ACTIONS TAKEN BY MANDATED REPORT:

Name of Mandated Reporter: _____ Title: _____

1. Called PA Child line & Abuse Registry (1-800-932-0313) to make a report:

   Date Called:_____ Time:_____ Spoke with:_____

   Notes of conversation:
   _____
   _____

2. Called Montgomery County Office of Children & Youth {(610) 278-5800}

   Date Called: _____ Time:_____ Spoke with: _____

   Notes of conversation:
   _____
   _____

3. Call to alleged victim's parent/guardian (if applicable): _____

   Date Called:_____ Time:_____ Spoke with:_____

   Notes of conversation:
   _____
   _____

4. Report to District Superintendent (if alleged perpetrator is a paid staff person or volunteer of the church.

   Date:_____ Time:_____ Spoke with:_____

   Notes of conversation:
   _____
   _____

The report's statement: (A Statement explaining what incident/abuse has been alleged by the victim, whether stated directly by the alleged victim, or observed by the reporter with as many specifics as possible, such as dates, length of time, situations, description of abuse, visible injuries, prior reports to authorities or others, etc.)

_____

_____

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Standards for the Conference, Districts, and Local Churches of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference

PREAMBLE

God has called us to make our ministries safe, protecting our children, youth and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation. God has also called us to create communities of faith where children, youth and vulnerable adults can be safe and grow strong.

Jesus taught "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me," (Mark 9:37 NRSV) and "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 NRSV)

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state "…children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse."

At each child's baptism, we affirm our responsibility to their safety by our congregational response, pledging:

> "With God's help, we will so order our lives after the example of Christ that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." (The Book of Worship, Baptismal Covenant, Congregational Pledge II)

Building on these foundations, we recognize that our faith calls us to offer hospitality and protection to all children, youth and vulnerable adults, as well as those who are committed to ministering to them as volunteers and employees. Every 15 seconds, a child is abused or neglected. Often, abuse occurs in places where children and youth feel safe – homes, schools, camps, and even churches. In over three quarters of reported cases, the victim was related to or acquainted with the abuser. In light of this, the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church has seen fit to establish this policy that can help to 1) prevent such abuse from happening in our churches; 2) make our churches places where children can feel safer in disclosing abuse; and 3) protect the loyal volunteers and employees that minister to our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

It is the policy of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference that all conference and district ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults conform to the standards set forth in this policy.

It is also the policy of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference that, by its 2008 Charge Conference, every church in the conference adopts a Safe Sanctuaries policy that conforms to the standards set forth in this policy.

DEFINITIONS:

Child or **children** or **youth** – any person who has not reached his/her eighteenth birthday.

Imminent Risk – (As defined in the PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 Pa. C.S.S. Chapter 63) – An act or recent act or series of such which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual exploitation of a child.

Mental Abuse – (As defined in the PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 PA C.S.S. Chapter 63) – An act or failure to act that results in a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate

treatment that: Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic, or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or Seriously interferes with the child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

Persons who work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults – any person who works with young people under the age of 18 o vulnerable adults in any regular capacity such as Sunday School teacher, youth group leader, choir director, regular driver, regular food servers, and general helpers on a schedule that repeats such as weekly, monthly, quarterly; or who participates on-site or in transportation for an overnight or longer program.

Physical Abuse – (As defined in the PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 PA C.S.S. Chapter 63) – A recent act (within the past two years) or failure to act, which causes a non-accidental serious physical injury that causes the child severe pain or significantly impairs the child's functioning, either temporarily or permanently.

Serious Physical Neglect - (As defined in the PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 PA C.S.S. Chapter 63) – A prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning. Other essentials include food, shelter, clothing, dental care, personal care, protection from physical injury and supervision.

Sexual Abuse - (As defined in the PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 PA C.S.S. Chapter 63) – An act or failure to act that results in the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in a sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct to rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault or other form of sexual exploitation of children.

Supervision – to oversee or direct a ministry or activity.

Vulnerable Adult – A person eighteen (18) years of age or older who, because of a mental or physical dysfunction, is unable to manage his/her own resources, carry out the activity of daily living, or protect himself/herself from abuse or neglect without assistance from others.

SCREENING AND SELECTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS:

Careful screening is an effective way to help protect children, youth and vulnerable adults. It can be time consuming and expensive, but is an essential step in selecting the most reliable, committed and experienced staff and volunteers for every program that involves children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Screening Standards:

All persons who are working with children, youth and vulnerable adults at the time this policy goes into effect shall complete the following steps by December 31, 2008. All new applicants for employment or volunteer service with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall complete the following prior to start service.

1) Written Application – All prospective workers with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall complete a written application that shall include at least the following information:
    a. Name
    b. Address
    c. Phone Number
    d. Work/Volunteer History
    e. Experience and skills related to the position
    f. Two (2) personal, non-related references.
2) Background Checks – The following background checks shall be obtained for all prospective workers with children, youth or vulnerable adults:
    a. Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Report – A report of criminal history information obtained from the Pennsylvania State Police or a statement from the Pennsylvania State Police that the State Police central repository contains no information related to that person. The report or statement shall have been obtained within a on-year period proceeding initial application. A new State Police Criminal History Report shall be obtained every three (3) years. The original document shall be kept in file, or a copy shall be made of the original and be kept in the file with a notation that the original was shown by the applicant.
    b. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance – A certification obtained from the Department of Public Welfare as to whether the applicant is named in the central register as the perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse, indicated report of child abuse, founded report or indicated report for school employee. The certification shall have been obtained within a one-year period preceding initial application. A new Childline report shall be obtained every (3) years. The original document shall be kept in file, or a copy shall be made of the original and be kept in file with a notation that the original was shown by the applicant.
    c. FBI Report – Where the applicant is not a resident of Pennsylvania, or where the applicant has been the resident of another state at any time during the past five years, a report of federal criminal history record information shall be obtained within the preceding one-year period from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A new FBI report shall be obtained every three (3) years for persons who become or remain non-residents of Pennsylvania. The original document shall be kept in the file, or a copy shall be made of the original and be kept in file with a notation that the original was shown by the applicant.
    d. Based on the results of the background checks obtained from sections (a), (b), and (c), the following, as found in the PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 Pa. C.S.S. Chapter 63, shall be grounds for denying employment or volunteer service. Grounds for denying employment or volunteer service is not limited to this list only:

i. No applicant may be hired or used in volunteer service that is named in the central register as the perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse committed within the previous five (5) years.

ii. No applicant may be hired or used in volunteer service if the applicant's criminal history record information indicates the applicant has been convicted of one or more of the following offenses under Title 18 (related to crimes and offenses) or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state:

1. Chapter 25 Relating to criminal homicide
2. Section 2702 Relating to aggravated assault
3. Section 2709 Relating to harassment and stalking
4. Section 2901 Relating to kidnapping
5. Section 2902 Relating to unlawful restraint
6. Section 3121 Relating to rape
7. Section 3122.1 Relating to statutory sexual assault
8. Section 3123 Relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse
9. Section 3124.1 Relating to sexual assault
10. Section 3125 Relating to sexual aggravated indecent assault
11. Section 3126 Relating to indecent assault
12. Section 3127 Relating to indecent exposure
13. Section 4302 Relating to incest
14. Section 4303 Relating to concealing death of a child
15. Section 4304 Relating to endangering welfare of children
16. Section 4305 Relating to dealing in infant children
17. A felony offense under Section 5902(b) Relating to prostitution and related offenses
18. Section 5903(c) or (d) Relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances
19. Section 6301 Relating to corruption of minors
20. Section 6312 Relating to sexual abuse of children

21. The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses listed above

iii. No applicant may be hired or used in volunteer service if his/her criminal history record information indicates the individual has bee convicted of a felony offense under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act (P.L. 233, No. 64), committed within the previous five (5) years.

e. Applicants may be provisionally hired or used as volunteers for a single period not to exceed 30 days or, for out-of-state applicants, 90 days, if all of the following conditions are met:

i. The applicant has applied for the required background checks and the applicant provides a copy of the appropriate completed request forms.

ii. The administrator has no knowledge of information pertaining to the applicant, which would disqualify them from employment or volunteer service pursuant to the grounds for denying employment or volunteer service listed above.

iii. The applicant swears or affirms in writing that he is not disqualified from employment or volunteer service pursuant to the grounds for denying employment or volunteer service listed above.

iv. If the information obtained in the background checks reveals that the applicant is disqualified from employment or volunteer service, the applicant shall be immediately dismissed.

v. The applicant will not be permitted to work alone with children, and the applicant will work in the immediate vicinity of an employee or volunteer who has completed the screening process.

f. Applicants who can not obtain background checks due to administrative reasons may be used as volunteers if all of the following conditions are met:

i. The administrator has no knowledge of information pertaining to the applicant, which would disqualify them from employment or volunteer service pursuant to the grounds for denying employment or volunteer service listed above.

ii. The applicant swears or affirms in writing that he is not disqualified from employment or volunteers service pursuant to the grounds for denying employment or volunteers service listed above.

iii. The applicant will not be permitted to work alone with children, and the applicant will work in the immediate vicinity of an employee or volunteer who has completed the screening process.

3) References – at least two References Checks shall be made on all new applicants for employment or volunteer service
4) Relationship with Church – All prospective workers with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall demonstrate an active relationship with the local church for at least six months before being allowed to be in asupervisory role in activities for children, youth or vulnerable adults. In the case of new staff hires, references deemed adequate by the hiring supervisor will replace the six-month waiting period.
5) Records – All written records shall be confidential and shall be kept in a locked file cabinet. All files shall be maintained for three (3) years after service ends.

ADDITIONAL SCREENING MEASURES:

Additional screening measures that can be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) Written Position Descriptions – A written position description defines duties, performance expectations, and general qualifications necessary and to whom the position reports. This basic document establishes a common understanding of the role for each position.
2) Additional background checks – In addition to the State Police, Childline, and FBI background checks, churches can conduct additional checks that include the following:
    a. Commercially available background searches including:
        i. Multi-state criminal records
        ii. Multi-state sex offenders records
        iii. Drivers license records
    b. Internet search on applicants (e.g. Google)
    c. Checking the Megan's Law website (www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us/)
3) Formal Interview – An interview provides a time to clarify any questions the church may have about information on the application, and it offers an opportunity to discuss the responsibilities of the role.

TRAINING:

All persons who work with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall participate in orientation training and then an annual review.

The orientation shall include an explanation of the Safe Sanctuaries program including:

1) The need for Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures
2) Supervision requirements

3) Appropriate discipline practices
4) Recognizing signs of child abuse
5) Reporting procedures

The initial training shall occur prior to the adult having direct supervision of children, youth or vulnerable adults.

The annual review shall include a review of the Safe Sanctuaries policies, procedures for supervision, and current information on how to identify and report child or vulnerable adult abuse. The annual review may be a self-conducted reading of materials followed by a written self-test.

SUPERVISION:

Supervision procedures are designed to reduce the possibility of abuse or exploitation of children, youth or vulnerable adults, and to protect staff persons and volunteers form unfounded accusations.

Supervision Standards:

Programs and ministries that are licensed or accredited by a licensing or accreditation body shall follow the requirements established by that body for the supervision of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Programs and ministries that are not licensed or accredited shall use the following standards for the supervision of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

1) The two adult rule – Regardless of the size group, there will always be at least two adults present. This may include the presence of an adult 'roamer' who moves in and out of rooms/ministry activities.
2) No child, youth or vulnerable adult will be left unsupervised while participating in a ministry activity/event.
3) All ministry activities should occur in open view. Each room or space where ministry activities/events occur must be open to public view. For example: enclosed spaces such as classrooms shall have a viewing window, a glass panel in the door, a ½ door configuration or an open door.
4) No person shall supervise an age group unless he/she is at least 18 years of age or older and is at least 5 years older than the children/youth being supervised.
5) Ministry events involving transportation shall require a written consent form signed by the parent or guardian of the child/youth/vulnerable adult.

REPORTING:

Reporting of an allegation of child abuse is required whenever there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse has occurred (PA Child Protective Services Law), Title 23 Pa. C.S.S. Chapter 63). Reasonable cause to suspect abuse can occur (1) when any staff or a volunteer personally witnesses an incident of abuse, (2) when an allegation of an event of abuse is made to staff or volunteer by a third party, and/or (3) when a child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse to staff or a volunteer. It is crucial that reporting be immediate and the allegations dealt with as soon in time as possible to the incident or disclosure.

Reports of suspected child abuse are made to the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Hotline (24-Hour service) at 1-800-932-0313 or to the Childline & Youth agency of the county in which the alleged abuse occurred.
The Church Policy shall include:

1) The individual to whom an allegation of abuse must be reported.
2) The individual who must file the report to child welfare authorities.
3) The process by which a report is filed with child welfare authorities.
4) A requirement that a plan of safety is put in place for the child, youth or vulnerable adult.
5) A requirement for a written statement from the person who observed or was informed of the suspected abuse.
6) A requirement that the District Superintendent be notified if the alleged perpetrator is a staff person oo volunteer of the church.

In the event that a member of the clergy becomes aware of suspected child abuse as a result of confidential communication which is protected under 42 PA C.S. 5943 (relating to confidential communications to clergymen), the conference legal counsel should be consulted.

RESPONSES FOR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE:
Any allegation of abuse requires a process to address responding to the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and the press. The response must be quick, compassionate and unified. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse there shall be cooperation with all official investigating agencies.
Response to victims of abuse:
In the instance of any allegation of abuse, there shall be a reaching out to the victim and the victim's family. Pastoral resources shall be extended, and the conference I-Care Team can be contacted to assist in providing this service. The care and safety of the victim shall be considered the first priority. Response to the victim and the victim's family shall be done in a positive and supportive manner.
The parents of the victim shall be notified and steps shall be taken to address the safety and well being of the child or youth until the parent(s) arrive. **NOTE:** If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, the direction of the child welfare authorities shall be followed concerning notification of others.
Response to all alleged perpetrators of abuse:
The alleged perpetrator shall immediately, yet with dignity and respect for their sacred worth, be removed from further involvement with children or vulnerable adults and advised that there has been an allegation of abuse. Details of the allegations of the abuse shall not be discussed with the alleged perpetrator at the time of removal. In any removal of a staff member or volunteer from any activity/ministry, care shall be taken to handle the removal in a discreet manner, recognizing that there will be an investigation by either state or church authorities, or both.
When it has been alleged that a member of the church staff or a volunteer, has committed an act of abuse, the staff member or volunteer shall be required to refrain from all ministry activities/events with children, youth and vulnerable adults until the incident has

been fully resolved by the appropriate state authorities and/or in accordance with the Book of Discipline

Response to the Media:
The District Superintendent, the Conference Director of Communications and pastor shall decide on a single spokesperson for contact with the public/media. All media requests for statements shall be directed to that spokesperson.
Compliance:
Compliance with this policy shall be a matter of record at each annual Charge Conference.

Person responsible for presenting this resolution: James H. Wilkin