



# Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures

## Concerning Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

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**SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY**  
**Concerning Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults**  
**St. Luke's United Methodist Church**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana**

At St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Inc. ("St. Luke's" or the "church"), it is our belief that children, youth and vulnerable adults all have a significant place in our church. It is important that we not only make every effort to be inclusive and allow for these groups to fully participate and contribute to our church, but also that we should protect and advocate for these groups. According to Micah 6:6-8 (NRSV), God *requires* us "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Further, our Methodist founding father, John Wesley, had three rules he lived by: Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God. St. Luke's is intentional about doing no harm and providing justice for all – particularly for our most vulnerable. In fact, our Baptismal Covenant which we renew at each baptism states that each member is commended to our love and care, that we will faithfully participate in the ministries of the church and that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. In Christian love we must welcome and create a safe place for each of God's children within our church.

In the cause of justice for these groups, and to exhibit integrity within our congregation, we have developed the following list of policies and guidelines which are designed to prevent harm through accident or abuse. The nurture and care of children, youth and vulnerable adults is a sacred trust bestowed upon us by God; therefore, we must make every reasonable effort to uphold that trust and protect those in our care.

Abuse is not only a violation of Christian hospitality and care for those Jesus says are nearest the kingdom of God—it is also illegal. The State of Indiana has definitions of and laws regarding child abuse, elder abuse and abuse of vulnerable persons that are applicable in every venue of our church activity. This policy is applicable in all ministry settings where St. Luke's is involved as well as for all outside groups' activities held at St. Luke's.

While this Safe Sanctuaries Policy is primarily established to prevent the abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults, this policy also serves to protect staff and volunteers from uncertainty and unfounded or malicious allegations of abuse. Our comprehensive policy includes procedures for applicant screening, training, supervision, reporting and response, in addition to also outlining protection and integration of known sex offenders.

Jesus taught us to lead those new to the faith, including children, in ways that are true to the Gospel. Therefore, we are blessed with the responsibility to guide our children, youth and vulnerable adults in ways of righteousness. St. Luke's recognizes that they are entrusted to us not just within our physical walls; our ministries extend out into the world, including the virtual world. By protecting our children and youth as best we can, the Safe Sanctuaries Policy helps us to fulfill our United Methodist commitment to nurture children, youth and vulnerable adults

in the Christian faith, to witness to them and ultimately, to equip them to witness to others the teachings of Jesus Christ.

## DEFINITIONS

The following are terms and their definitions for the purpose of this Safe Sanctuaries Policy:

***Accountability Partner:*** a Screened Adult designated by the church to be present and in visual contact with a person who has been identified as a Known Sex Offender.

***Active Participant:*** a congregant who has participated in church activities (which may include worship, serving, groups or classes) on average at least twice per month for the last 6 months.

***Activity:*** any scheduled event or program in which Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults are under the supervision of church Staff persons or Volunteers.

***Adult:*** a person 18 years old or older (who is not in high school).

***Applicant:*** an applicant to become Personnel.

***Caregiver:*** A Screened Adult, paid or unpaid, who directly supervises children on behalf of the Children's Ministry.

***Child or Children:*** any person from infancy to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

***Child Abuse:*** as defined under includes any of the following that occurs before a child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday:

- The child's physical or mental health condition is seriously impaired or seriously endangered as a result of the inability, refusal or neglect of the child's Parent/guardian/custodian to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision
- The child's physical or mental health is seriously endangered due to injury by the act or omission of the child's Parent/guardian/custodian. An omission is an occurrence in which the parent/guardian/custodian allowed that person's child to receive an injury the parent/guardian/custodian had a reasonable opportunity to prevent or mitigate
- The child is the victim of a sex offense under the criminal citations incorporated with the Indiana Department of Child Services.
- The child's parent/guardian/custodian allows the child to participate in an obscene performance
- The child's parent/guardian/custodian allows the child to commit a sex offense

***Endangered Adult:*** a person who is at least eighteen years of age and deemed to have mental illness, intellectual disability, dementia, excessive substance abuse, or other physical or mental incapacity of managing their own resources or self-care and who is therefore at risk for neglect, physical abuse, or exploitation of resources.

**Helper:** a person assisting with a church activity involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. Helpers do not count toward the 2 Adult Rule. Adult helpers must still have a current background check on file. Background checks will not be required to be performed for youth helpers, but youth helpers will be required to have boundaries training.

**Intern:** a screened adult who may lead a church ministry program or activity under the supervision of St. Luke's staff.

**Known Sex Offender:** a person who has identified as a Sex Offender as defined by Indiana Code sections 11-8-8-4.5 or 11-8-8-5 which includes persons convicted of one or more of an extensive list of offenses including possession of child pornography, sexual misconduct with a minor, solicitation of a minor, sexual battery, rape and incest.

**Parent:** a mother, father or foster parent (or other legal custodian) of the child.

**Personnel:** any Adult, paid or unpaid, who manages or supervises a scheduled activity or program for the church.

**Responsible Adult:** the adult given responsibility or permission (parental or legal) to make decisions regarding a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult's participation and communication with St. Luke's.

**Roamer:** a Screened Adult who will roam the area and make frequent, unannounced visits with a room/location in which there is only one Screened Adult present with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.

**Safe Sanctuaries Team:** a team that includes clergy, staff, lay leaders and other volunteers which oversees policy development and review, the development and implementation of annual training, and the procedures for the inclusion of Known Sex Offenders.

**Screened Adult/Volunteer:** an Adult who has completed a screening process including application, reference and background checks and who has subsequently been cleared to work directly with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.

**Small Group Leader:** a Screened Adult (when working with Children or Youth) who leads a church small group, creates connections and builds relationships with and between those in their group.

**Special Needs:** any number of factors that when exhibited by an individual may require special accommodations within a typical ministry setting. These factors could include physical, mental or emotional disabilities; developmental delays; chronic or terminal illnesses; mental health concerns; behavioral disorders; learning disabilities and educational delays; or behaviors or signs that indicate a suspected disability. Children, Youth or Adults with Special Needs may benefit from assistance or modified environment, activities, or expectations.

***Special Needs Buddy:*** a Screened Adult or Youth who has been trained to assist and accompany a Child or Youth with Special Needs and assigned by the Special Needs Coordinator.

***Staff:*** any person (or people) employed or paid by St. Luke's and is responsible for activities for Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.

***Student:*** a minor who is not an established personal friend or relative. Students may be Children or Youth within or outside the church congregation.

***Volunteer:*** a person who conducts or assists with activities within the church but is not paid by the church.

***Vulnerable Adult:*** includes any person 18 years of age or older with diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities who is at risk for neglect, abuse, or exploitation of resources.

***Youth:*** denotes any person or group of Children from 5th-12th grades.

## 1. SCREENING AND POLICIES FOR ASSIGNING PERSONNEL

Careful screening of those who have direct contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults can help prevent incidents of abuse and provides some assurance that only those with high integrity, competence and merit are permitted to work with or near those entrusted to us. St. Luke's reserves the right to turn down any applicant for any position, paid or unpaid, at any time and for any reason. It is our policy to never knowingly hire as Staff or appoint as Volunteers a Sex Offender in any capacity that would put that person near or in direct contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. Likewise, no person convicted of a felony, with a history of assaultive behavior of any sort or history of a crime involving minors or Vulnerable Adults will be approved to work with or near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. The following policies and procedures relate to Applicants and the process of approving Applicants to become Personnel:

### 1. *Prerequisites to Apply*

#### a. **6 Month Rule**

- i. All Volunteer Personnel who lead or supervise a program or activity involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults must have been an Active Participant of St. Luke's for at least six months prior to being appointed a leader or supervisor.
- ii. If Applicant does not meet 6 months rule, they may serve as a Helper.

#### b. **5 Years Older Rule:** It is best practice that all Staff and Volunteers be at least five years older than the age of the oldest Child or Youth for which they are responsible.

- i. At the discretion of the Director of Student Ministries, St. Luke's may choose to use a Staff, Adult or Youth volunteer who is not five years older than the oldest youth to lead a program or activity.
- ii. However, all other best practices within the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, including the 2 Adult Rule, Rule of 3 and Clear View Rule are non-negotiable and cannot be waived.

#### c. **Helpers**

- i. If a ministry involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults chooses to assign within their ministry an Adult who has not been an Active Participant during the preceding six months (6 months rule), the Adult must be considered a Helper; thus, they must assist in the presence of two other Screened Adults until they have become an Active Participant for six months. They must still undergo a background check before working with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
- ii. Children or Youth serving as Helpers must never be put in a position in which they could be left alone or unsupervised with Children or Youth. Children or Youth Helpers do not count toward the required Adult:Child ratios, must not be solely responsible for the safety of other Children or Youth, and must not escort a Child to or assist a Child in the restroom.

### 2. *Application Process*

- a. All Applicants who would work regularly with or near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults will provide an application with at least two references.

- b. This application is only needed the first time an Applicant applies to work with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.
  - c. References may not be relatives or anyone cohabitating with applicant.
  - d. The application will be turned in with their Safe Sanctuaries Covenant. The supervising staff member will call their references.
3. **Approval Process**
- a. **References.**
    - i. Must have at least two positive responses and zero negative responses before approving an Applicant for work with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.
    - ii. Approval or rejection will be noted in the applicant's profile on the Church Database Management Software, The Rock.
  - b. **Background check.** All Applicants for Staff or Volunteer positions must submit to a nationwide background check before working with or near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
    - i. Applicants must voluntarily disclose any arrests and convictions of criminal behavior before running the check, or instances in which they were under investigation or named a perpetrator in a confirmed or indicated child abuse report.
    - ii. The Authorization to Perform a Background Check and any results will be securely kept in the church office with restricted access.
    - iii. The background check results may also be stored digitally online with the background check vendor.
    - iv. Applicants may request access to their own information and shall be provided copies upon request.
    - v. St. Luke's must receive an acceptable background check results on Applicants before approving Applicants to a position working with or near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
      - 1. Only the Executive Pastor may approve any exceptions;
        - a. The director or clergy must be confident in the Applicant's decision making abilities if an exception is made
        - b. Exceptions must not be made if the report includes any crime involving a Minor or Vulnerable Adult or any crime involving violent or sexual acts.
  - c. **Interview.** Applicants will be interviewed by the director of the church ministry or program being served (or their designee) and must be deemed competent by the interviewer to serve effectively in the position to be assigned. Applicants will receive an up-to-date position description.
4. **Post-Approval**
- a. **Documentation**
    - i. Background check will stay on file with Human Resources. Personnel will receive "badge" on St. Luke's Church Data Management Software, The Rock, that indicates passing background check.

- ii. Application with References will go on file with completed Safe Sanctuaries Covenant. Personnel will receive “badge” on The Rock that indicates passing Safe Sanctuaries.
      - iii. Personnel will be added to a group on The Rock that indicates where they are serving.
    - b. **Orientation.** Personnel are subject to a 90-day orientation period in which performance, punctuality and attendance will be evaluated. During this time period, the Personnel or St. Luke’s may determine that the position is not a good fit for the Staff or Volunteer.
      - i. Because all Staff are employed at-will, the employment of any Staff may be terminated by either party at any time before or after the orientation period.
      - ii. Any Volunteer’s services may be terminated by either party at any time before or after the orientation period.
5. ***Training***
- a. Those working with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults will be provided training and expectations, including those related to boundaries and ethics, that are specific to their role before beginning in that role and as frequently as each ministry determines is necessary for that position.
  - b. Safe Sanctuaries training will be completed prior to working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.
  - c. First Aid/CPR training will be required of and provided for at least one Personnel per age level, activity or area who regularly directs or works directly with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.
  - d. It is recommended that someone in each age-level ministry within Children and Youth ministries be trained in de-escalation/restraint training.
6. ***Oversight of Personnel***
- a. **Background Checks**
    - i. St. Luke’s will reconduct Volunteer background checks every two years for those working with or near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
    - ii. Staff background checks will be conducted annually.
    - iii. Personnel must immediately notify St. Luke’s if they are the focus of an investigation, are arrested, named the perpetrator or otherwise have charges pending for any criminal offense.
  - b. **Annual Safe Sanctuaries Training**
    - i. An annual Safe Sanctuaries Policy training will be required of and provided for all Personnel in direct contact or working near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
    - ii. This training must be provided before anyone is placed in a supervisory position and will be offered at least annually.
    - iii. Training will include guidelines for proper supervision and our policies and procedures as well as how to identify and report suspected abuse.
    - iv. This training is also recommended for all of St Luke’s Staff, ministerial volunteers and the congregation at large.



## 2. RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACTIVITIES AND MINISTRY PROGRAMS

All Staff and Volunteers who have access to Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will be trained with the following procedures. These provide protection not only to those who are served by the church's ministries, but also for those serving within the church's ministries.

1. **2 Adult Rule:** No Personnel shall ever be alone with a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult. There will be at least two Screened Adults present whenever Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults are present except in the case of emergencies. The two Adults should not be related or cohabitating. The 2 Adult Rule must always be considered a best practice; as such, every reasonable effort must be made to comply with this rule.
  - a. **Roamers:** If all reasonable efforts have been made to adhere to the 2 Adult Rule, and yet only one Screened Adult is available to supervise Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults, the activity will be conducted with the door open (excepting safety issues) and will require an unrelated and non-cohabitating Adult Roamer who will roam the area and give frequent, unannounced visits.
  - b. Alternatively, this activity lacking two Screened Adults could be moved to a public setting where others are likely to walk by.
2. **Rule of 3:** There may be exceptional cases or emergencies when the 2 Adult Rule cannot be supported even with the assistance of a Roamer. In these rare circumstances, Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults must be in the presence of two other individuals, one being a Screened Adult. This ensures that no one finds themselves alone with another individual. Absolutely every effort must be exhausted to ensure that there are two other individuals in the presence of a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult to maximize safety and minimize liability for all.
  - a. It is acceptable for Staff or Small Group Leaders to meet individual students off-campus, but only in a public place with high visibility and with Parental permission.
  - b. Staff and Small Group Leaders must not host Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults from their ministry in their home in one-on-one situations.
3. **Clear View Rule:** Any one-on-one sessions or interactions between two people or an activity or program involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults in which there are not two Screened Adults present must take place in a public or open setting or in a room with an open door (with a Roamer present or accessible). Alternatively, it could be acceptable to meet behind a closed door with uncovered transparent glass or transparent mirror glass (interior side is reflective, but someone on the other side can see through window). If possible, these meetings will be scheduled, and known about by supervisors, Parents or another individuals responsible for the care of a Child, Student or Vulnerable Adult.
  - a. Any ministry activities held at a Staff or Small Group Leader's home must include proper ratios and supervision by other unrelated, non-cohabitating Screened Adults and the Clear View rule followed.
  - b. If Staff or a leader is invited to a Student's house, the Parent must be home and the Clear View rule followed.

**4. Restrooms:**

- a. Children in 1st grade or younger will be escorted to the restroom if one is not available in their room. Adults will stand outside the restroom or stall unless the child needs assistance.
- b. Children 2nd through 4th grades may go to the restroom independently if there is a Screened Adult monitoring the hallway, otherwise they should go in pairs. Ideally, restrooms should also be checked before and after programs for safety.
- c. When it is appropriate for an Adult to assist a Child in using the restroom, the door will remain open.
- d. Youth may go to the restroom at any time with Adult permission.

**5. Physical Affection & Gifts**

- a. Physical affection must be appropriate to the age of the Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult. For example, it is generally appropriate for a three-year-old to sit on a leader's lap, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and their Youth leader to behave this way.
- b. Touching and affection should be a response to the Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult's need for comfort, encouragement or affection. It should not be initiated or requested by a leader of any age. It is strongly recommended that side hugs, with only one arm be used. It is also recommended that Children sit on one side or another of a leader's lap rather than in the middle.
- c. Touching and affection will only be given in the presence of other Adults or Helpers. Personnel must promptly discuss any questionable behavior by other people with their supervisor, ministry leader or pastor. Known or suspected inappropriate touching must be reported to the authorities as outlined in the Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures and Response Plan followed by the reporter's chain of command.
- d. No Personnel are to give gifts to individual Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adult without the prior knowledge of the Parent(s) or responsible Staff. Because gift giving can be a form of buying loyalty or silence, gift giving will be done on a group basis, or for special occasions only. Gifts should not be elaborate but instead modest and appropriate to the occasion.

**6. Personnel and Helpers must be attentive to:**

- a. Appropriate and modest dress and personal cleanliness. Each ministry may determine a specific dress code for their area as necessary. Staff must also follow the Employee Handbook.
- b. Appropriate use of language and topics of conversation.
- c. Appropriate demonstration of affection and encouragement with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.
- d. When supervising Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, Personnel will not engage in activities that cause distraction from their primary role of supervising and engaging those in their care. Unless directly used to augment an activity or program, items that cause distractions, particularly technological devices such

as cell phones and tablets, should not be used while supervising Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. This also serves as modeling appropriate behavior in a group setting for the Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

- e. Leaders of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adult ministries and programs may sign an additional Volunteer or employee behavior covenant which outlines the standards and expectations of behavior.

#### **7. *Permission Slips & Medical Release Forms***

- a. For on-site events in which Children or Students are dropped off, at a minimum emergency contact information for the Parent or Responsible Adult and participant allergies will be collected.
- b. Parents or Responsible Adults will also provide specific written permission for each ministry event in which their Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adult participates. Paper sign-in, digital sign-in or online registration indicates parental permission.

#### **8. *Sign-in Procedures & Supervision***

- a. All on-site activities and programs will have a sign-in sheet.
  - i. Anyone considered a Child (by definition) must be signed in and out by their Parent or their Responsible Adult and may not be released to anyone who did not sign them in (unless written permission is provided and satisfactory identification is displayed).
  - ii. Within the Children's Ministry, security stickers may be used as a form of sign-in, provided the Adult walks the Child to the room; a matching Parent security sticker may be used upon pick-up as signing-out.
  - iii. The nursery may implement procedures that offer extra protections.
- b. Within the Children's Ministry, young Children should be counted frequently. Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults must be counted before and after movement from one place to another. If transporting Students, a count must be done before departure and upon arrival.
- c. Parents are to supervise their Children who are not actively participating in a program or activity while on church property and follow these guidelines:
  - i. Children must be picked up from all activities by an Adult and must be signed in and out as described above.
  - ii. Youth may sign themselves in and out and may meet their Parent or Responsible Adult in a place that their Parent or Responsible Adult has designated.
  - iii. Youth 5th through 8th grades may not cross the church parking lot without being accompanied by an older sibling, a Staff or Volunteer, or another trusted person as designated by their Parent or Responsible Adult.
  - iv. Youth and Children must be in a scheduled program or under the direct supervision of their Parent at all times. Youth and Children are not permitted to roam the church building or property.

- v. Parents or Responsible Adults should notify supervisory Personnel when entrusting a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult who has a physical, emotional or psychological condition to their care so that church Personnel can better serve and anticipate needs.
  - d. Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will have access to a telephone or cell phone during church sponsored events on or off the facility premises.
9. **Discipline:** Ministries serving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults will develop a discipline plan for their area.
- a. Discipline plans will include addressing behavior issues without shaming or making another person feel unworthy or unloved.
  - b. If a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult is removed, a Parent or Responsible Adult will be notified and invited to discuss behavior management.
  - c. Redirection is encouraged as the first behavior management technique. Positive reinforcement is also encouraged.
  - d. NO physical discipline is allowed except for restraint purposes as a last resort if a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult is in danger of harming self or others. It is recommended that key Personnel in these areas, including paid program Staff, receive restraint training.
10. **Facilities:** Church facilities will meet reasonable safety standards to reduce risk of harm or injury.
- a. Every classroom door will have a window providing a view of the interior.
  - b. Facilities will be regularly checked for safety hazards by Trustees and the Facilities & Grounds Director.
  - c. Playground and play areas will be checked regularly for dangers.
11. **Ratios**
- a. Minimum of 2 adults per room is always in effect
  - b. The church's minimum adult to Child/Youth ratio guidelines will be:

Ages Birth-11 months	1 adult to 3 Children
Ages 12-23 months	1 adult to 5 Children
Ages 24-35 months	1 adult to 6 Children
Ages 3-5 years	1 adult to 10 Children
Kindergarten - 6 <sup>th</sup> grades	1 adult to 12 Children
6 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> grades	1 adult to 15 Children
Any age overnight	1 adult to 8 Children

- i. If groups consist of Children of mixed ages, the Adult to Child ratio for the youngest Child in the group must be maintained; an Adult's own Children will be counted toward ratios.
- c. The following ratios should be considered as a guide for Children & Youth with Special Needs and Vulnerable Adults:

Participant needs constant individual assistance/supervision	1 Special Needs Buddy to 1 Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult
Participant needs close, but not constant, assistance or supervision	1 Special Needs Buddy to 2 Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults
Participant needs occasional assistance	1 Special Needs Buddy to 4 Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults
Participant needs minimal assistance	1 Special Needs Buddy to 5 Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults

- i. The specific needs of individual Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults may require a change to these guidelines and shall be determined by the Special Needs Coordinator.

### 3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN OR YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

St. Luke's is intentional about providing a safe and welcoming environment for individuals with Special Needs and their families. The following best practices and procedures allow for increased security and any necessary accommodations for Children and Youth with Special Needs and the Adult committed to their care and unique needs.

1. Children or Youth with Special Needs may require individual attention for such issues as sensory overload, bathroom breaks, diaper changes, or tube feedings. When removing a Child or Youth from a group environment or activity, special care is required to meet or exceed supervision policies.
  - a. A Child must never be isolated with only one other Adult or Youth Volunteer when out of clear view of others.
  - b. The Child or Youth needing attention or assistance will be moved to a space with clear visibility by others.
  - c. It is the best practice for two Screened Adults (unrelated, non-cohabitating) to accompany a Child or Youth when individual attention is required, especially if outside of clear view from others.
  - d. If the Child or Youth must be attended to in a location where it is unlikely that others will be in view (such as the playground, Lodge or Modge) two Adults

should be present. If this is not possible, it is acceptable for one Adult and one Youth Volunteer to be present.

2. Practicing Safe Restroom Assistance and Diaper Care for individuals with Special Needs.
  - a. Always assist the individual with diapering in an area with an open door and clear visibility by others. Restroom assistance must be done with an open door.
  - b. For Children over the age of three, the use of diaper changing stations designed for younger children is not permitted for safety concerns. As they are able, allow older Children to stand up for diaper changes.
  - c. For older Children and Youth requiring a horizontal position for diaper care, this may be done with the use of a mat or blanket provided by the church or individual's family.
  - d. It is permissible for a Volunteer to opt out of restroom and diaper care as long as the Special Needs Coordinator or ministry director is immediately notified of the need at hand so the Child or Youth is attended to quickly.

#### **4. OVERNIGHTS, OUTINGS and TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

Overnights and outings are important for bonding with others and experiencing God in different ways. Care must be taken when planning an event in order to be as prepared as possible for unforeseen circumstances and to ensure the safety of all participants. It is the event coordinator's responsibility to understand the situation, accommodations and available resources in planning a trip in order to adhere to the following procedures.

##### **1. *OUTINGS PROCEDURES***

- a. An annual signed Medical Emergency Information Form will be required for participants of all off-site events.
- b. Parents or Responsible Adults will also provide specific written permission for each ministry event in which their Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adult participates. Paper sign-in, digital sign-in or online registration indicates parental permission.
- c. Parents or Responsible Adults will receive at least 48 hours' notice and full information (including a predetermined start and finish time) about all events and activities in which their Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults will participate.
- d. Emergency contact information for Personnel leading an off-site activity (or their designee) must also be provided to Parents or Responsible Adults in the event that a Parent or Responsible Adult needs to get in touch with the leaders or their child. This is also true of onsite events in which Parents are off-site and may need to get in touch with leaders.
- e. When Youth are allowed to participate in activities out of sight of Adult supervision, whether on-site or off-site, Youth will be in groups of at least 3; Adults must give Youth a meet-up plan and instruct them to check-in with Screened Adults at given time increments.

##### **2. *OVERNIGHTS (ON-SITE) PROCEDURES***

- a. In the event of a coed sleepover on church campus, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms supervised with a ratio of 1 Adult per 8 Children/Youth with at least 2 leaders of the same gender as Youth. Any deviation from this procedure must include advance notice that includes the specific accommodations plan to Parents; Parents must also give their written consent (a text or email may suffice for permission at the discretion of the ministry director).
- b. For overnights without sleeping (lock-ins), normal activity ratios apply.
- c. Signed permission slips with emergency contacts must be obtained from a Parent of each Child or Youth and turned in to the Staff member. Handwritten notes are not acceptable.
- d. Leaders will use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies (parental permission may be obtained). No R-rated movies will be presented at any time.
- e. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn by Adults and Children or Youth, especially outside of the sleeping quarters (ex. men wear shirts).

### **3. *OVERNIGHTS (OFF-SITE) AND CAMPING (OFF-SITE) PROCEDURES***

- a. Hotels must be selected that have rooms opening to the interior of the building and rooms will be on the same hallway when possible.
- b. Males and females must be separated during sleeping time.
- c. If two Adults of the same gender as Students cannot be assigned to a room housing Youth, the Youth will be roomed separately from Adults. However, Children and Youth in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and below must have 2 Adults in their room. If adjoining rooms are available with doors that can be left open, a single Adult in each of the adjoining rooms is acceptable.
- d. An Adult must never share a bed with a Child or Youth.
- e. Where Adults need to be assigned to separate rooms, it is recommended that Adult rooms be dispersed between the rooms as much as possible.
- f. If room checks are needed, they will be executed by two Adults.
- g. When tent camping, Adults must sleep separately from Children and Youth, but in close proximity; doors to Children or Youth tents will face the doors of adult tents. Married Adults may share a tent when accommodations allow.
- h. For private showers, bathers will dress and undress behind closed curtains or doors. Under no circumstances will two persons share the same enclosed shower.
- i. If open showers are the only option, showers must be scheduled separately for unclothed Children, Youth and Adults. Bathing suits may be worn to help comply with Safe Sanctuaries practices.
- j. When Children or Youth are showering, Adults will monitor activities from outside of the bathroom or shower facility.
- k. Every place of accommodation is different, and it is the responsibility of that program's director to ensure that arrangements comply with church policy.
- l. Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will have access to a telephone or cell phone during church sponsored events on or off the church premises.

#### 4. **TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

- a. In addition to being screened in the same manner as other leadership for an event involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, all drivers must also submit to a review of their motor vehicle record prior to any trip.
- b. All drivers must provide proof of insurance and a driver's license for St. Luke's to keep on file with Human Resources. Drivers must provide copies to the office whenever these documents are updated. Insurance must include the minimum insurance coverage for property damage and public liability as required by law; however, it is recommended to have more than the minimum required.
- c. All drivers for any church event must be an Adult as defined by this policy. St. Luke's will never ask a Youth driver to transport other Students. The Director of Student Ministries will approve the list of drivers who transport Students.
- d. Whenever possible, Staff will contract vehicles and drivers for events.
- e. Vehicles must be in good working order and will contain a First Aid kit (or be provided one for a group trip).
- f. For transporting groups, copies of the entire group's emergency forms will be in each vehicle or will be available digitally; there will also be a copy of the group's emergency forms at church or in the hands of a designated Adult who will be available via phone for emergencies.
- g. Where possible, it is best practice that two non-related, non-cohabitating Screened Adults be placed in each vehicle or the vehicle's occupants be grouped using the Rule of 3. If neither the 2 Adult Rule or Rule of 3 is possible, it is advised that the Screened Adult driver maintain an open communication line with the Child's, Youth's or Vulnerable Adult's Parent or another Screened Adult. Note that Indiana Law prohibits a driver of any age to text while driving.
- h. Drivers must not divert their attention from driving by using cell phones, eating meals, setting map or GPS systems, selecting music, texting, etc. It is the driver's responsibility to understand and follow all traffic laws, including the use of cell phone while operating a vehicle.
- i. Each occupant of a vehicle must be in their own designated seat and must wear a seatbelt while inside the vehicle. This is in accordance with Indiana law which states: all passengers in vehicles that have seatbelts must use them while in forward motion. Additionally, if transporting Children, all safety belt and booster seat laws will be followed. Insisting that all passengers engage their seatbelt will ensure that other states' laws are met or exceeded should the trip venture out-of-state.
- j. Drivers will not drive for more than 10 hours per day. Breaks from driving must be taken at least every 3 hours.
- k. No Youth will drive to an out-of-town event under any circumstances.

#### 5. **CONSIDERATIONS FOR PERSONS IDENTIFYING AS LGBTQ+**

1. **Open Statement:** Approved by St. Luke's Governing Board on June 18, 2020

At St. Luke's United Methodist Church, we are an open community of Christians helping people find and give hope through Jesus Christ - regardless of their gender,



race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, disability or socioeconomic background. We work to ensure that our congregation and its leadership represent the community in which we are located. We are dedicated to including women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ as staff and in positions of leadership and decision making.

We renounce the way religion has been used throughout history to support racism, war, discrimination, genocide, violence and poverty, and we pledge to rid ourselves of the conscious and unconscious biases when sacred stories are used to uphold injustice. We are particularly sensitive to the issues facing our brothers and sisters of color and LGBTQ+ individuals, both within the United Methodist Church and in the general society. We pledge to be leaders in eradicating racism and discrimination. You are invited to join us.

As John Wesley said, “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences.”

## 2. Policies & Procedures

- a. The United Methodist Church voted to exclude LGBTQ+ persons from seeking ordination and same sex couples from being allowed to marry within a United Methodist Church. We believe in a future when the United Methodist Church will embrace full inclusivity. We believe God’s grace is unlimited, the Holy Spirit is at work within all people, and all persons are God’s beloved children. St. Luke’s United Methodist Church will continue to be a leader within our denomination by demonstrating what it looks like to be a fully inclusive body of Christ. You are invited to join us.
- b. The following are best practices and procedures to allow accommodations to assure that each person is included in our community:
  - i. Creating safe spaces:
    1. Make no assumptions about a person’s sexual orientation or identity. Identity can be fluid, especially with Children and Youth, so approach each conversation open and unassuming.
    2. Do not enforce or reinforce gender stereotypes.
    3. An individual’s preferred name and pronouns will always be acknowledged and celebrated.
    4. Respect an individual’s privacy. If an individual shares their sexual orientation or gender identity with you in confidence, honor that confidence by sharing this information only with those who need to know this information to care or minister to them. You may share this information with the appropriate Staff member if they are a Child or Youth to best provide care for them, but do not share with other leaders, students, or parents.
    5. If a Child or Youth shares their sexual orientation or gender identity privately with you, do not assume others know, including

their parents. Encourage them to share with their parents, but keep their confidence unless they are at risk, as described under “Signs of Abuse and Neglect.”

6. Be intentional about creating a safe environment and culture by awareness and include in leaders training around homophobic language and bullying. There will be no tolerance for exclusivity or language that is homophobic, bullying, judgmental or dismissive by a Child, Youth, or Personnel.
- ii. When assigning LGBTQ+ persons to Groups for Programming, Activities and Overnights:
    1. The 2 Adult, 3 Person, and Open Doors rules already provide the first barrier of protection for both Children and Youth and for Personnel for groups, activities, and overnights.
    2. Youth Ministry will strive to provide at least one co-ed group for each age group, and at the beginning of the year each Youth has the option of a female group, male group, or coed group.
    3. Persons who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual are to use the restroom of their biological gender. Any Youth or Vulnerable Adult who identifies as gender-fluid or transgender are able to use the restroom of their preferred gender.
    4. In the event that a Youth who identifies as gay, lesbian, or bisexual is included in an overnight activity, they will stay with their biological gender. In the event that a Youth who identifies as gender-fluid or transgender is included in an overnight activity, they will stay with their preferred gender.
  - iii. Please speak to staff should changes or decisions need to be made regarding overnight accommodations or restroom use or signage. Always err on the side of compassion when making decisions regarding LGBTQ+ persons.

## 6. VISITATION GUIDELINES

At St. Luke’s we strive to extend our church to those who may be ill or homebound by offering visitation under our Care Ministry. The following guidelines are provided to protect those requesting visitation as well as those conducting visitation.

1. The coordination of visitation will be conducted in a way that provides transparency. There will be systems in place for scheduling visits and reporting after the visit.
2. The Care Ministry may visit an individual once the individual or their family member requests visitation.

3. Those providing visitation will be Screened Adults who have received Safe Sanctuaries Policy training, as well as training in ethical boundaries specific to visitation.
4. Accepting monetary offerings to the church from individuals during visitation must be done with caution. It is appropriate to accept checks made out to St. Luke's; however, handling cash is discouraged.
5. While the 2 Adult Rule, 3 Person Rule and Clear View rules are ideal, St. Luke's recognizes that it is not always feasible or appropriate for visitation Staff or Volunteers to visit in pairs. Meeting in a public space, in a care facility with the door open, or at an individual's home while a caregiver, family or friend is present are all preferred over a one-on-one visit in a private home. However, as multiple protections are built into Care Ministry visitation procedures, if both the visitor and the individual are comfortable with the arrangement, scheduled one-on-one visits approved by our Care Ministry are acceptable.

## **7. ONLINE, SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES**

The virtual world is a vital part of people's lives -- this is particularly true of young people. As such, St. Luke's recognizes that social media and electronic communications can be powerful ministry tools that extend our ministries, not just to our own church members and participants, but also to those outside of our congregational sphere who may need to hear about God's love and our welcoming community of Christians. However, care and intention must be used to balance effective and vibrant ministry with safety and transparency. We will strive to honor and protect the privacy of those in our care. The following guidelines provide clear boundaries and accountability for those interactions that occur outside our physical walls.

1. Personnel must ensure that posts and comments reflect the spirit of the church's ministry on church sites or personal pages used for ministry. Any comments or photos will not be posted that could be deemed as bullying, inappropriate or harmful and anything that could be categorized as such will be immediately removed. Any such comments added to posts on ministry sites or pages will be removed as soon as they are discovered.
2. In order to provide proper supervision during church activities and programs, cell phones should not be a distraction for the leaders.
3. ***Posting Pictures of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable adults***
  - a. Staff leadership may post pictures or comments regarding activities involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults in the church's newsletter, website or social media pages only after obtaining photo release permission for those in the picture. Permission can be found on the Annual Medical Release Form or otherwise designated by Director of Ministry.
  - b. Comments and photos must not include full names or other identifying information.

- c. Students will not be tagged or otherwise identified in social media posts unless they expressly request to be tagged or identified.

#### **4. *Utilizing Social Media and Other Communications with Youth***

- a. All individual communication done via electronic means must be done on traceable platforms; messages, photos and data should be savable to the device's Cloud. Screenshot or screencap any individual communication that may have been sent via non-traceable means, particularly if the content is potentially questionable.
- b. All direct communication with Youth will be done to further ministry with Students and must be professional and within the spirit of the church's ministry. All communication will occur in appropriate timeframes for the applicable ministry. For example, late-night communications with Students would be inappropriate.

#### **c. Social Media Accounts**

- i. It is highly encouraged that Staff and leaders use social media accounts dedicated solely for ministry use.
- ii. If instead a Staff or Screened Volunteer uses personal social media pages for use within ministry, these must be as open and public as possible. This ensures that Parents, Staff or Volunteers can also view communications on personal pages. Personal social media accounts used within ministry will include easily identifiable information such as a real photo and real name.
- iii. For the church's youth group social networking pages, passwords to accounts will not be divulged. Adults or Youth allowed permission to manage such social media will be screened and trained by church Staff.

#### **d. Following Students on Social Media**

- i. Screened Volunteers may follow students in their small group on social media with permission from their Parents. Volunteers are discouraged from initiating requests to follow students on social media who are not in their small group, or without their Parents' permission.
- ii. Staff are discouraged from initiating friend requests or initiating following Students from their personal social media pages, and are encouraged to initiate following Students and communicating from the designated ministry pages. Staff are required to follow all other rules within the social media policy if they follow Students on social media.

#### **e. Texting Youth**

- i. It is best practice to follow the 2 Adult Rule even in communications (including electronic forms); group format communication is highly encouraged whenever feasible. This communication should include the Youth's small group, the Parent or Responsible Adult, or the Staff.

- ii. Small Group Leaders may text Youth one-on-one with written permission from parents. If the Parent is in agreement through text or email before the first contact with a Student occurs, the leader may communicate openly with the Student using Staff-approved, traceable means of communication.
- iii. Phone calls or other direct communication with Students may only be done with Parent permission. Where reasonable and appropriate, Parents will receive the same information as the Student.
- iv. If a Staff or leader is uneasy about the content of one-on-one communication with a Child, the Parent or another Staff must be informed. Honor privacy, but not secrecy.

**5. *Privacy of Information:***

- a. Personnel will not share contact information for a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult with anyone other than a Small Group Leader without specific consent from the Parent or Responsible Adult (for Vulnerable Adults).
- b. When addressing a group via email, the best practice in respecting and maintaining privacy is to use the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) feature so as not to disclose each person's email address to the others within the email without permission. Any group of emails over 20 must have an opt-out procedure.
- c. Bulk emails that go out to the church congregation will have an easy opt out procedure. The church approved email tool complies with all state and federal regulations pertaining to bulk email including Opt Out. In the instance where the removal is manually done, removal must be completed within 3 business days of receipt of removal request.

**6. *Video Conferencing with Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults:***

- a. Video conferencing with Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults should be from church accounts rather than personal accounts.
- b. All volunteers must be trained on how to use video conferencing as part of their volunteer training if they plan to use video conferencing with their small groups.
- c. The Parent shall be notified of the conference and give permission for their child or youth to participate.
- d. Passwords should always be used when meeting with children and youth.
- e. Meeting Participants should change their display name to reflect their real name, and no nicknames should be used.
- f. Parents are always welcome to attend conference videos.
- g. Peer-to-peer chat is turned off so that chatting occurs only with the host and/or all participants.
- h. Limit screen-sharing to hosts only.
- i. 2-Adult Rule
  - i. In accordance with the 2-Adult Rule, there shall always be two screened adults present on any video conference.

1. When breakout rooms are employed, the host of the meeting shall function as a floater when it is possible to “float” between rooms. This can count towards the 2-Adult Rule.
  2. When a parent or guardian is available in the house of a participating student, their presence in the room with the student can count toward the two-adult rule.
  3. If two adults are not possible, the meeting should be recorded and saved to the ministry’s Zoom account. The meeting should not be saved on a personal device.
- ii. When possible, a waiting room shall be employed for participants to ensure that two adults are present before students enter the video conference.
- j. One on One Video Calls.
- i. In accordance with the 3-Person rule, one-on-one video calls shall not take place between an adult and a child or youth.
  - ii. When a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult initiates a video call the authority figure is to deny the call and move the conversation to a group video platform, text, or audio call.
  - iii. A parent present with the child, youth, or vulnerable adult when the call is initiated may serve as the second adult in the case of a video call.

## 8. OUTSIDE GROUPS

St. Luke’s believes in partnering with outside organizations and allows approved outside groups to use its church facilities as a service to the community. As the safety of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults remains a priority at all times, these groups will be required to, at a minimum, adhere to our protection policies and procedures while on St. Luke’s property. Groups will sign a covenant committing to abide by our policies while on site.

1. ***Agreement to abide by policies.***
  - a. St Luke’s will provide to the outside organization copies of all applicable policies and procedures governing Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults when such persons will be present.
  - b. Entities must sign a covenant agree to abide by policies provided.
2. ***Failure to Comply with Policies***
  - a. Any allegation of non-compliance will be documented and reported for investigation to the staff member who coordinates outside events.
  - b. Findings will be reviewed by the Safe Sanctuaries Team, who shall decide on appropriate action.
  - c. If at any time an outside organization, individual or institution fails to follow the Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures, St. Luke’s reserves the right to terminate future use of its facilities to that group or individual.
3. ***Allegation of abuse:*** Anyone alleging abuse during an activity hosted by an outside group or individual on St. Luke’s property will follow the protocols outlined within the

Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures and Response Plan in Section 11 of this document.

## **9. SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults need everyone to stand up for their safety and best interests when they are in harm's way. Families in crisis or turmoil need support from those close to them.

1. The following are a few indicators that a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult may be experiencing abuse
  - a. Nervousness or aggression toward/around Adults or other Children
  - b. Frequent or unexplained bruises and injuries
  - c. Poor hygiene
  - d. Acting out sexually at an inappropriate age
  - e. Dramatic change in personality
  - f. Significant changes in behavior or grades
  - g. Inability to stay awake or concentrate
  - h. Low self-esteem
  
2. For a comprehensive resource on recognizing signs of abuse in Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults, refer to *What Is Child Abuse and Neglect? Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms* published by the Children's Bureau Child Welfare Information Gateway found in the Appendix of this document.

## **10. SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The following are some signs that an individual may be an Endangered Adult according to the National Center on Elder Abuse.

1. The following are some potential signs that an Endangered Adult is suffering from psychological abuse
  - a. Unusual changes in behavior or sleep
  - b. Fear or anxiety
  - c. Isolated or not responsive
  - d. Sadness
  - e. Is not allowed visitors or to speak with others
  - f. Caregiver is verbally aggressive or demeaning, controlling, overly concerned about spending money, or uncaring
  
2. The following are some potential signs that an Endangered Adult is either suffering from financial abuse, or that they are unable to handle their financial responsibilities:
  - a. Unusual changes in bank account or money management
  - b. Unusual or quick changes in a will or other financial documents
  - c. Fake signatures on financial documents
  - d. Unpaid bills

3. The following are some potential signs that an Endangered Adult is either suffering from physical abuse, or that they are unable to direct their own self-care:
  - a. Broken bones, bruises, and welts
  - b. Cuts, sores or burns
  - c. Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
  - d. Sexually transmitted diseases without clear explanation
  - e. Dirtiness, poor nutrition or dehydration
  - f. Poor living conditions
  - g. Missing daily living aids (glasses, walker and medications)

## 11. ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES AND RESPONSE PLAN

St. Luke's will take any suspected or alleged abuse or neglect seriously, and it will be immediately reported to the proper authorities. The safety and overall well-being of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will be the highest priority. St Luke's, where permissible by law, will remain involved with a reported case to see it through to resolution.

1. ***Take it Seriously.*** A Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult's report of abuse must always be taken seriously. Never promise an individual that a private conversation will remain private. Reassure the individual that while the conversation is confidential, to protect them and the individual, outside assistance may be sought.
  - a. If a Volunteer is unsure or uncomfortable reporting the incident themselves, they may talk to the Staff they report to for assistance in reporting an incident to the authorities.
2. ***Mandatory Reporter Law.*** In the state of Indiana, everyone is considered a mandatory reporter. This means if an individual knows of or suspects abuse of any sort, it is the individual's legal duty to report that to the police or Indiana Department of Child Services.
  - a. Indiana Law requires that reports of suspected abuse must be made within 24 hours of becoming aware of such a concern.
  - b. By law, all reports are kept anonymous (reporter's name will not be released).
3. ***Reporting Procedure***
  - a. **Incident information collection**
    - i. When making a report, specific information about the Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult will be asked. Collect as much of this information as possible before calling, but do not worry if the information is incomplete:
      1. Name, address, age and sex of the Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult
      2. Name and address of Parents or other person responsible for care
      3. Nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult
      4. Evidence of any previously known or suspected abuse
      5. The name, address and relationship, if known, of the person suspected of the abuse



- b. **Report to Legal Authorities**
    - i. Report suspected or known abuse to any one of the agencies listed below:
      - 1. **Emergency (the child may be in immediate danger)**
        - a. Local Police: 911
        - b. Non-Emergency (Child)
        - c. Indiana Child Protective Services Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556
        - d. Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department: 317-327-3811
      - 2. **Non-Emergency (Adult)**
        - a. Adult Protective Services Indiana Elder Abuse Hotline: 1-800-992-6978
        - b. Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department: 317-327-3811
  - c. ***Report to St Luke's leadership***
    - i. Any Staff or Volunteer who is reporting abuse to the authorities regarding a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult under the church's care must also immediately notify the supervising ministry leader (Director or clergy), excepting those individuals who are suspect in the abuse.
      - 1. By law, the ministry leader must also make a separate report.
    - ii. Once the ministry leader (Director or clergy) has been notified (excepting those individuals who are suspect in the abuse) and makes their report to the authorities, they will immediately notify the Executive Pastor or designee (excepting those individuals who are suspect in the abuse.)
    - iii. The Executive Pastor or designee will then immediately notify the Responsible Adults (if the Responsible Adults are not suspect) and will respond compassionately with questions and concerns.
    - iv. If a Staff member, including a pastor, is a suspect in the abuse, the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) must be notified, who will in turn notify the District Superintendent for an internal investigation. Please note that this is in addition to making an official report to the proper legal authorities.
    - v. After the proper authorities and Executive Pastor or designee (or SPRC Chair) have been contacted, St. Luke's will notify the church attorney, the church's insurance company and the District Superintendent.
4. ***Investigation by Qualified Legal Authorities.*** It is not a church Volunteer or Staff person's duty to determine if allegations or suspicions are accurate or true; only the authorities are qualified to investigate. The safety of a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult should always take precedence over the unease or doubt of the Personnel who knows of or suspects the abuse.
5. If abuse has occurred or is suspected to have occurred on St. Luke's property or during a St. Luke's sponsored program, in addition to adhering to the above external and internal reporting procedures, the following procedures will be followed:
  - a. The immediate safety of any Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults will be ensured.

- b. The person in charge of the event or activity will discreetly but immediately suspend and remove the accused or suspected individual from duties involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults pending external and internal investigation. The accused may not be banned from other church activities.
  - c. The person in charge of the event or activity will complete an Incident Report.
  - d. All persons, including Volunteers and Staff, must cooperate fully with any internal and external investigations.
  - e. All such matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Any person reporting alleged abuse will refrain from any discussion about the alleged incident with anyone other than the authorities, the leader of the ministry or the Executive Pastor or designee.
  - f. Only the Senior Pastor or designee or the District Superintendent will make public comment regarding alleged abuse. If any Personnel receives an inquiry from the media, the inquiry must be referred to St. Luke's Director of Marketing & Communication.
6. **Ministerial Care.** St. Luke's will endeavor to provide all appropriate and available ministerial care and counseling to all persons involved in any allegations of abuse. The care of the victim will be a top priority once a report has been made.

## 12. CHURCH PARTICIPATION BY KNOWN SEX OFFENDERS

St. Luke's recognizes that abuse in all of its forms is detrimental. The church will endeavor to provide a safe environment, and counseling and support for the abused. While we deplore the actions of the abuser, we affirm that all persons are in need of God's redeeming love.

- 1. The Safe Sanctuaries Team will provide oversight for participation of Known Sex Offenders, ensuring that a system is in place should a Known Sex Offender share their past behavior with St. Luke's.
- 2. Where a person is known to have previously committed a violent or sexual offense and he or she is listed on a sexual offender registry (or other such registry) maintained by any jurisdiction, he or she will not be permitted to work in direct contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
- 3. The following precautions, in addition to any others deemed necessary by the church and the person previously identified as a Known Sex Offender, will be confidentially maintained for as long as the individual is associated with this congregation:
  - a. A pastor will meet with the individual and will openly discuss the conditions that will be placed on the individual. These conditions will be included in the Known Sexual Offender Accountability & Conditional Participation Covenant. This document will be individualized and signed by the Known Sex Offender, Executive Pastor, Care Ministries Pastor, Director of Safety and Security, Director of Student Ministries, Director of Elementary Ministry and Director of Early Years and Childcare Ministries. A sample agreement included is included in Appendix C.

- b. If applicable, a Known Sex Offender's specific restrictions of probation or parole may be made part of the written conditions of participation.
- c. The Known Sex Offender will be accompanied by an Accountability Partner designated by the church while the Known Sex Offender is present on church property or is attending any church-sponsored event. The Accountability Partner must agree to remain in the direct visual presence of the Known Sex Offender at all times.
- d. St. Luke's has a zero tolerance policy for violation the Accountability and Conditional Participation Covenant. Any such violations will result in the revocation of privileges to attend St. Luke's or participate in any of its ministries.

### 13. ANNUAL SAFE SANCTUARIES TRAINING

St. Luke's will provide Safe Sanctuaries Policy training for Staff and Volunteers working with or near Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. This regular training is instrumental in providing Personnel with the knowledge and tools to help reduce the risk of incidents or false allegations.

1. ***Annual Training Requirement.*** All Personnel having direct contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults must have their annual training completed and documented.
  - a. Training will cover all aspects of St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries Policy, and will specifically include boundaries with and supervision of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults as well as training in the identification and reporting of abuse.
    - i. Training will include information about resources for those who have questions about the Safe Sanctuaries Policy.
    - ii. Training will include information about resources for those who may confront situations that make them uncomfortable.
  - b. A system will be in place to provide multiple opportunities for those needing training to receive it.
    - i. St. Luke's acknowledges the importance of face-to-face training and conversation when online training is use
2. ***Documentation of Training.*** A system will be developed to track those Staff and Volunteers who have completed or are in need of training. The system will be documented in this policy within one year of the first adoption of the Safe Sanctuary Policy.

### 14. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY BY COMMITTEE

The Safe Sanctuaries Team will have oversight of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and will determine the frequency with which it should convene.

1. ***Composition of Safe Sanctuaries Team.*** The Safe Sanctuaries Team will include one representative from the following areas of the church:
  - a. Appointed Clergy (assigned by Senior Pastor)
  - b. Staff-Parish Relations Committee
  - c. Trustees of Property
  - d. Safety Team

- e. Finance Committee
- f. Care Ministry (Clergy/Director, one lay leader)
- g. Children's Ministries (Director, one lay leader)
- h. Student Ministry (Director, one lay leader)
- i. Early Childhood Program (Director, one lay leader)
- j. Adult Discipleship Ministries (Clergy/Director)
- k. Special Needs Director
- l. Outreach

**2. *Responsibilities of Safe Sanctuary Team.***

- a. Annual review the Safe Sanctuaries Policy annually to ensure that the policy provides reasonable protections, followable guidelines and due diligence.
- b. St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries Policy must include the minimum guidelines directed by the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- c. When necessary, revisions will be approved and forwarded to the church's general counsel and the church's Governing Board for final approval.
- d. The Safe Sanctuaries Team will verify annually that St. Luke's has liability insurance coverage for sexual molestation or misconduct.
- e. The Safe Sanctuaries Team will ensure that an up-to-date Safe Sanctuaries Policy is made available to the congregation and will be filed with the Central District of the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- f. An executive committee comprising of the Appointed Clergy, Director of Students, Director of Childrens, and Director/Pastor of Care will meet quarterly to discuss continued efforts to uphold the policy.

**APPROVED**

- 1. This policy was approved by the Safe Sanctuaries Team on August 25, 2019.
- 2. This policy was approved by the Trustees on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- 3. This policy was approved by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee Safe Sanctuaries Team on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- 4. This policy was approved by the Governing Board on November 21, 2019

# APPENDIX



## First-Time Safe Sanctuaries Application with References

All volunteers who work regularly with Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults must provide an application with at least two references complete with contact information the first time they get certified in Safe Sanctuaries. References may not be relatives or anyone cohabitating with applicant. We recommend that at least one be a member or staff member of St. Luke's.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION APPLYING FOR: \_\_\_\_\_

### REFERENCE ONE:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

### REFERENCE TWO:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

### OPTIONAL -- REFERENCE THREE: In case we can't get in touch with another reference.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

*Turn in to the staff member who supervises the position you are applying for,  
along with the Safe Sanctuaries Covenant.*

#### OFFICE USE ONLY:

- I called the above references for the applicant and received at least two positive references with no negative reference. They are approved for the position.
- I called the above references for the applicant, and they received at least one negative reference and will not be approved for this position. Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_





## Safe Sanctuaries Participant Covenant

St. Luke's United Methodist Church is an open community of Christians helping people find and give hope through Jesus Christ. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and vulnerable adults (including volunteers and staff) who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others. Please initial next to each item and sign the bottom acknowledging that you understand and agree to follow these rules that help St. Luke's do no harm:

1. No adult who has been convicted of abuse to a minor or an adult will be allowed to serve in ministry areas involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. \_\_\_\_\_
2. All Volunteers and Staff who will work with or near Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will complete an application with references and background check. \_\_\_\_\_
3. All Volunteers and Staff who will work with or near Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will undergo Safe Sanctuaries training before serving in these areas and at least annually. Training will include safety, supervisory and boundaries training. \_\_\_\_\_
4. All Volunteers and Staff will abide by the St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries policy. \_\_\_\_\_
5. All Volunteers and Staff will abide by the 2 Adult-Rule, Rule of Three and Clear View Rules so that no one is ever alone or unobserved with a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Those working with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults should be Active Participants for at least six months before serving in these ministry areas. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Volunteers and Staff who suspect or know of abuse or neglect of a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult attending church activities will report it to the authorities and the church as outlined in the St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries Policy. The matter will remain strictly confidential and no public comment can be made unless by the church spokesperson. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Volunteers and Staff who will be responsible for driving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults must provide additional documents and will undergo a driver history check. \_\_\_\_\_
9. We value communication (including social media) that optimizes our programming; however, communication methods and practices involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults must have approval from the director or clergy of the ministry area involved. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Volunteers and Staff who are in a position to counsel, transport or visit Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults must take extra care to understand and follow our boundaries ethics and our protection policies for the benefit of all involved. \_\_\_\_\_

I have read this Safe Sanctuaries Participation Covenant and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

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

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Area(s) Served: \_\_\_\_\_





## Known Sexual Offender Accountability and Conditional Participation Covenant

St. Luke's United Methodist Church (St. Luke's) affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being an open community of Christians, helping people find and give hope through Jesus Christ. Each of us is in need of the mercy and grace God offers freely, and St. Luke's welcomes all who wish to worship and grow closer to God.

While as a church family we affirm every person's need to be part of a faith community, we hold in balance our responsibility to keep our community safe in body and spirit. The following guidelines are designed to reduce risk within our community, including the risk of false accusations. As a Known Sexual Offender, your presence and participation in the life of St. Luke's requires that a written and binding covenant be made. By making this covenant and remaining faithful to it without exception, we are hopeful that our church will help provide for your spiritual needs, and that St. Luke's will benefit from your gifts and presence.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to adhere to the following guidelines for the protection of myself and the children, youth and vulnerable adults connected to St. Luke's:

- I agree to participate in professional counseling throughout the duration of my involvement with St. Luke's.
- I agree to be a member of an Accountability Group that will include the Executive Pastor, an Accountability Partner, and at least one member of the congregation [chaperone]. The Accountability Group will be available to offer support, discuss issues you may have, and provide prayer. Frequency of these meetings and who is in attendance will be determined by your Accountability Group.
- I understand that my Accountability Group will provide quarterly reports to the Safe Sanctuaries Team, my probation/parole officer (where applicable) and my professional counselor.
- I agree to have a chaperone (designated by the Executive Pastor or Accountability Partner) with me and in view at all times (including public restrooms) while I am at any church function.
- I will meet a chaperone at a designated area upon arriving at the church. If no chaperone or member of my Accountability Group is available, I understand that I must leave the premises immediately.
- I will participate in ministries involving only adults.
- I will refrain from being alone with any child, youth or vulnerable adult on church premises.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that at no time shall I will enter the Children’s Education Wing, the Lodge, and any part of the church facility where children or youth activities are in session.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not attend children or youth functions.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will refrain from any physical, written or verbal contact, on and off church premises with children, youth or vulnerable adults (adults with diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities).

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not transport any children, youth or vulnerable adult to or from the church or its activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will consult with and gain permission from my Accountability Partner and appropriate ministry staff before committing to participate or serve in any church activity, group or ministry of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I will not serve in a role that would include contact with children.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree that the Executive Pastor has permission to share and discuss my being a Known Sexual Offender with the appropriate leadership of St. Luke’s, and with members of the church if it is deemed necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my name will not be allowed to appear on the church website, in the bulletin, or any item of print within the church, excluding prayer lists that will not have public access.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that this covenant will remain on file with the church and will be readily available to members of the church on a need to know basis. It will be shared directly with all appropriate persons involved directly with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that St. Luke’s has a Zero Tolerance Policy for violation of this agreement and that any violations of the Accountability and Conditional Participation Covenant will result in the revocation of my privilege to attend St. Luke’s or participate in any of its ministries.

*Before God and St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, I commit to adhering to this Accountability and Conditional Participation Covenant. If at any time this covenant is suspected of being broken, I will meet with the Safe Sanctuaries Team. I agree all findings of the Safe Sanctuaries Team are final. I agree that if the Safe Sanctuaries team finds that any item of this covenant at any time was broken, I will immediately discontinue attendance at all church functions. I understand and agree that all church members will be made aware of the violation. Any violation that occurs that is illegal in nature will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Signature of Executive Pastor

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Date

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Signature of Accountability Partner

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Date

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Signature of Pastor of Care

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Date

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Signature of Director of Safety and Security

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Date

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Signature of Director Student Ministries

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Date

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Signature of Director of Children Ministries

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Date

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Signature of Director of Early Childhood Program

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Date





## What Is Child Abuse and Neglect? Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms

The first step in helping children who have been abused or neglected is learning to recognize the signs of maltreatment. The presence of a single sign does not necessarily mean that child maltreatment is occurring in a family, but a closer look at the situation may be warranted when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination. This factsheet is intended to help you better understand the Federal definition of child abuse and neglect; learn about the different types of abuse and neglect, including human trafficking; and recognize their signs and symptoms. It also includes additional resources with information on how to effectively identify and report maltreatment and refer children who have been maltreated.

### WHAT'S INSIDE

How is child abuse and neglect defined in Federal law?

What are the major types of child abuse and neglect?

Recognizing signs of abuse and neglect and when to report

Resources

## How Is Child Abuse and Neglect Defined in Federal Law?

Federal legislation lays the groundwork for State laws on child maltreatment by identifying a minimum set of actions or behaviors that define child abuse and neglect. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended and reauthorized by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation (including sexual abuse as determined under section 111), or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (42 U.S.C. 5101 note, § 3).

Additionally, it stipulates that “a child shall be considered a victim of ‘child abuse and neglect’ and of ‘sexual abuse’ if the child is identified, by a State or local agency employee of the State or locality involved, as being a victim of sex trafficking<sup>1</sup> (as defined in paragraph (10) of section 7102 of title 22) or a victim of severe forms of trafficking in persons described in paragraph (9)(A) of that section” (42 U.S.C. § 5106g(b)(2)).

Most Federal and State child protection laws primarily refer to cases of harm to a child caused by parents or other caregivers; they generally do not include harm caused by other people, such as acquaintances or strangers. Some State laws also include a child’s witnessing of domestic violence as a form of abuse or neglect.

For State-specific laws pertaining to child abuse and neglect, see Child Welfare Information Gateway’s State Statutes Search page at [https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/](https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/).

<sup>1</sup> According to the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, sex trafficking is categorized as a “severe form of trafficking in persons” and is defined as a “situation in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.” As of May 2017, States are required to have provisions and procedures in place as part of their CAPTA State Plans that require “identification and assessment of all reports involving children known or suspected to be victims of sex trafficking and...training child protective services workers about identifying, assessing, and providing comprehensive services for children who are sex trafficking victims, including efforts to coordinate with State law enforcement, juvenile justice, and social service agencies such as runaway and homeless youth shelters...”

To view civil definitions that determine the grounds for intervention by State child protective agencies, visit Information Gateway’s *Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/define/>.

**Child Maltreatment reports.** These annual reports summarize annual child maltreatment and neglect statistics submitted by States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. They include information about victims, fatalities, perpetrators, services, and additional research. The reports are available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

**Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data.** This website provides information on the performance of States in seven outcome categories related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children involved in the child welfare system. Data, which are made available on the website prior to the release of the annual report, include the number of child victims of maltreatment. To view the website, visit <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

## What Are the Major Types of Child Abuse and Neglect?

Within the minimum standards set by CAPTA, each State is responsible for providing its own definitions of child abuse and neglect. Most States recognize four major types of maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Additionally, many States identify abandonment, parental substance use, and human trafficking as abuse or neglect. While some of these types of maltreatment may be found separately, they can occur in combination. This section provides brief definitions for each of these types.



**Physical abuse** is a nonaccidental physical injury to a child caused by a parent, caregiver, or other person responsible for a child and can include punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise causing physical harm.<sup>2</sup> Physical discipline, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child. Injuries from physical abuse could range from minor bruises to severe fractures or death.

**Neglect** is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect generally includes the following categories:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, lack of appropriate supervision)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment, withholding medically indicated treatment from children with life-threatening conditions)<sup>3</sup>
- Educational (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs)
- Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, permitting a child to use alcohol or other drugs)

Sometimes cultural values, the standards of care in the community, and poverty may contribute to what is perceived as maltreatment, indicating the family may need information or assistance. It is important to note that living in poverty is not considered child abuse or neglect. However, a family's failure to use available information and resources to care for their child may put the child's health or safety at risk, and child welfare intervention could be required. In addition, many States provide an exception

<sup>2</sup> Nonaccidental injury that is inflicted by someone other than a parent, guardian, relative, or other caregiver (i.e., a stranger) is considered a criminal act that is not addressed by child protective services.

<sup>3</sup> Although it can apply to children of any age, withholding of medically indicated treatment is a form of medical neglect that is defined by CAPTA as "the failure to respond to...life-threatening conditions by providing treatment (including appropriate nutrition, hydration, and medication) which, in the treating physician's or physicians' reasonable medical judgment, will be most likely to be effective in ameliorating or correcting all such conditions..." CAPTA does note a few exceptions, including infants who are "chronically and irreversibly comatose," situations when providing treatment would not save the infant's life but merely prolong dying, or when "the provision of such treatment would be virtually futile in terms of the survival of the infant and the treatment itself under such circumstances would be inhumane."

to the definition of neglect for parents who choose not to seek medical care for their children due to religious beliefs.<sup>4</sup>

**Sexual abuse** includes activities by a parent or other caregiver such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials. Sexual abuse is defined by CAPTA as "the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children"(42 U.S.C. § 5106g(a)(4)).

**Emotional abuse** (or psychological abuse) is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove, and, therefore, child protective services may not be able to intervene without evidence of harm or mental injury to the child (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2016).

**Abandonment** is considered in many States as a form of neglect. In general, a child is considered to be abandoned when the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left alone in circumstances where the child suffers serious harm, the child has been deserted with no regard for his or her health or safety, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide reasonable support for a specified period of time. Some States have enacted laws—often called safe haven laws—that provide safe places for parents to relinquish newborn infants. Information Gateway produced a publication as part of its State Statutes series that summarizes such laws. *Infant Safe Haven Laws* is available at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/safehaven/>.

<sup>4</sup> The CAPTA amendments of 1996 (42 U.S.C. § 5106i) added new provisions specifying that nothing in the act be construed as establishing a Federal requirement that a parent or legal guardian provide any medical service or treatment that is against the religious beliefs of the parent or legal guardian.

**Parental substance use** is included in the definition of child abuse or neglect in many States. Related circumstances that are considered abuse or neglect in some States include the following:

- Exposing a child to harm prenatally due to the mother's use of legal or illegal drugs or other substances
- Manufacturing methamphetamine in the presence of a child
- Selling, distributing, or giving illegal drugs or alcohol to a child
- Using a controlled substance that impairs the caregiver's ability to adequately care for the child

For more information about this issue, see Information Gateway's *Parental Drug Use as Child Abuse* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/drugexposed/>.

**Human trafficking** is considered a form of modern slavery and includes both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Sex trafficking is recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining someone for a commercial sex act, such as prostitution, pornography, or stripping. Labor trafficking is forced labor, including drug dealing, begging, or working long hours for little pay (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). Although human trafficking includes victims of any sex, age, race/ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, children involved in child welfare, including children who are in out-of-home care, are especially vulnerable (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018).

For more information, see Information Gateway's webpage on human trafficking at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/trafficking/> and the State statutes on the definitions of human trafficking at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/definitions-trafficking/>.

## Recognizing Signs of Abuse and Neglect and When to Report

It is important to recognize high-risk situations and the signs and symptoms of maltreatment. If you suspect a child is being harmed, reporting your suspicions may protect him or her and help the family receive assistance. Any concerned person can report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Reporting your concerns is not making an accusation; rather, it is a request for an investigation and assessment to determine if help is needed.

Some people (typically certain types of professionals, such as teachers or physicians) are required by State laws to report child maltreatment under specific circumstances. Some States require all adults to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Individuals required to report maltreatment are called mandatory reporters. Information Gateway's *Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect* discusses the laws that designate groups of professionals or individuals as mandatory reporters. It is available at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/manda/?hasBeenRedirected=1>.

For information about where and how to file a report, contact your local child protective services agency or police department. Childhelp's National Child Abuse Hotline (800.4.A.CHILD) and its website (<https://www.childhelp.org/hotline/>) offer crisis intervention, information, resources, and referrals to support services and provide assistance in more than 170 languages.

For information on what happens when suspected abuse or neglect is reported, read Information Gateway's *How the Child Welfare System Works* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/cpswork/>.

A child may directly disclose to you that he or she has experienced abuse or neglect. Childhelp's *Handling Child Abuse Disclosures* defines direct and indirect disclosure and provides tips for supporting the child. It is available at <https://www.childhelp.org/story-resource-center/handling-child-abuse-disclosures/>.

While it's important to know the signs of physical, mental, and emotional abuse and neglect, which are provided later in this factsheet, the following signs of general maltreatment also can help determine whether a child needs help:

- Child
  - Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
  - Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
  - Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
  - Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
  - Lacks adult supervision
  - Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
  - Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home
  - Is reluctant to be around a particular person
  - Discloses maltreatment
- Parent
  - Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home
  - Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
  - Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
  - Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
  - Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of the parent's emotional needs
  - Shows little concern for the child
- Parent and child
  - Touch or look at each other rarely
  - Consider their relationship entirely negative
  - State consistently they do not like each other

The preceding list is not a comprehensive list of the signs of maltreatment. It is important to pay attention to other behaviors that may seem unusual or concerning. Additionally, the presence of these signs does not necessarily mean that a child is being maltreated; there may be other causes. They are, however, indicators that others should be concerned about the child's welfare, particularly when multiple signs are present or they occur repeatedly.

For information about risk factors for maltreatment as well as the perpetrators, see the webpage *Risk Factors That Contribute to Child Abuse and Neglect*, which is available at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/factors/>, and the webpage *Perpetrators of Child Abuse & Neglect*, which is available at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/perpetrators/>.

## Signs of Physical Abuse

A child who exhibits the following signs may be a victim of physical abuse:

- Has unexplained injuries, such as burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other noticeable marks after an absence from school
- Seems scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, or aggressive
- Seems frightened of his or her parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Shows changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Abuses animals or pets

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when a parent or other adult caregiver exhibits the following (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2018):

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury or provides an explanation that is not consistent with the injury
- Shows little concern for the child
- Sees the child as entirely bad, burdensome, or worthless
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abusing animals or pets

### Signs of Neglect

A child who exhibits the following signs may be a victim of neglect (Tracy, 2018a):

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical care (including immunizations), dental care, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

Consider the possibility of neglect when a parent or other caregiver exhibits the following (Tracy, 2018b):

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs

### Signs of Sexual Abuse

A child who exhibits the following signs may be a victim of sexual abuse (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology, 2014; Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network [RAINN], 2018a):

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Experiences bleeding, bruising, or swelling in their private parts
- Suddenly refuses to go to school

- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when a parent or other caregiver exhibits the following (RAINN, 2018b):

- Tries to be the child's friend rather than assume an adult role
- Makes up excuses to be alone with the child
- Talks with the child about the adult's personal problems or relationships

### Signs of Emotional Maltreatment

A child who exhibits the following signs may be a victim of emotional maltreatment (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2016):

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as being overly compliant or demanding, extremely passive, or aggressive
- Is either inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., frequently rocking or head-banging)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Shows signs of depression or suicidal thoughts
- Reports an inability to develop emotional bonds with others

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the parent or other adult caregiver exhibits the following (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2016):

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- Describes the child negatively
- Overtly rejects the child

## The Impact of Childhood Trauma on Well-Being

Child abuse and neglect can have lifelong implications for victims, including on their well-being. While the physical wounds may heal, there are many long-term consequences of experiencing the trauma of abuse or neglect. A child or youth's ability to cope and thrive after trauma is called "resilience." With help, many of these children can work through and overcome their past experiences.

Children who are maltreated may be at risk of experiencing cognitive delays and emotional difficulties, among other issues, which can affect many aspects of their lives, including their academic outcomes and social skills development (Bick & Nelson, 2016). Experiencing childhood maltreatment also is a risk factor for depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric disorders (Fuller-Thomson, Baird, Dhrodia, & Brennenstuhl, 2016). For more information on the lasting effects of child abuse and neglect, read *Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect* at [https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long\\_term\\_consequences](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long_term_consequences).

## Resources

**The National Child Traumatic Stress Network's** factsheet *What Is Child Traumatic Stress?* (<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/what-child-traumatic-stress>) defines child traumatic stress and provides an overview of trauma, trauma signs and symptoms, and how trauma can impact children. Find more resources that strive to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families, and communities on the National Child Traumatic Stress Network at <http://www.nctsn.org/>.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** web section, *Child Abuse and Neglect: Consequences*, provides information on the prevalence, effects, and physical and mental consequences of child abuse

and neglect as well as additional resources and a comprehensive reference list. You can visit it at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/consequences.html>.

**Stop It Now!** is a website that provides parents and other adults with resources to help prevent child sexual abuse. The site offers direct help to those with questions or concerns about child abuse, prevention advocacy, prevention education, and technical assistance and training. The website is available at <http://www.stopitnow.org/>.

**The American Academy of Pediatrics'** The Resilience Project gives pediatricians and other health-care providers the resources they need to more effectively identify, treat, and refer children and youth who have been maltreated as well as promotes the importance of resilience in how a child deals with traumatic stress. The webpage is available at <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/resilience/Pages/Resilience-Project.aspx>.

**Information Gateway** has produced webpages and publications about child abuse and neglect:

- The Child Abuse and Neglect webpage (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/>) provides information on identifying abuse, statistics, risk and protective factors, and more.
- The Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect webpage (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/>) provides information about mandatory reporting and how to report suspected maltreatment.
- Information Gateway also has several publications that cover understanding and preventing maltreatment:
  - *Child Maltreatment: Past, Present, and Future:* <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/cm-prevention/>
  - *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect:* <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/preventingcan/>
  - *Understanding the Effects of Maltreatment on Brain Development* <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/brain-development/>

The **CDC** produced *Understanding Child Maltreatment* (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/understanding-cm-factsheet.pdf>), which defines the many types of maltreatment and the CDC's approach to prevention.

**Prevent Child Abuse America** is a national organization dedicated to providing information on child maltreatment and its prevention. You can visit its website at <http://preventchildabuse.org/>.

A list of organizations focused on child maltreatment prevention is available on Information Gateway's National Child Abuse Prevention Partner Organizations page at [https://www.childwelfare.gov/organizations/?CWIGFunctionsaction=rols:main.dspList&rolType=Custom&RS\\_ID=%2021](https://www.childwelfare.gov/organizations/?CWIGFunctionsaction=rols:main.dspList&rolType=Custom&RS_ID=%2021).

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