

# Safe Sanctuary Policy Review

Severna Park  
United Methodist Church

# Contact Information

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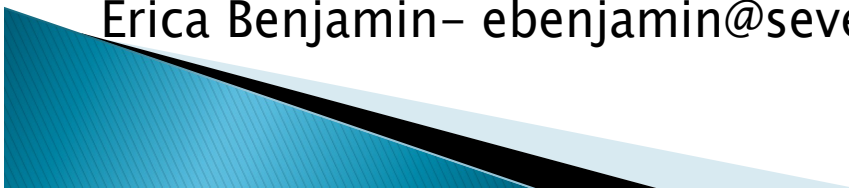
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# Purpose of Our Policy

To ensure the safety, well being and spiritual growth of the children and youth entrusted to the Severna Park United Methodist Church (SPUMC) by providing an environment that is free from sexual and other forms of child and youth abuse and to protect those adults who work with children and youth from unfounded accusations of abuse.



## Matthew 18:1–6

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If any of you put a stumbling–block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.’

# Baptismal Covenant

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons now before you in your care?

**With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.**

# Types of Abuse

- ▶ Ritual– abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites
- ▶ Neglect– through negligence endangering a child’s health, safety, or welfare
- ▶ Physical– deliberate and intentionally causing bodily harm
- ▶ Sexual– sexual contact between an older person, youth, or adult
- ▶ Emotional– spoken violence or emotional cruelty

# Facts about Abuse

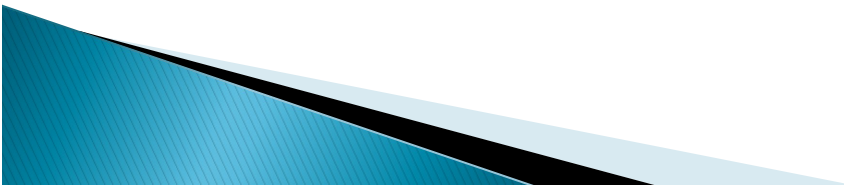
In 2008, U.S. state and local child protective services (CPS) received 3.3 million reports of children being abused or neglected.

- CPS estimated that 772,000 (10.3 per 1,000) of children were victims of maltreatment. Approximately three quarters of them had no history of prior victimization.
- Seventy-one percent of the children were classified as victims of child neglect; 16 percent as victims of physical abuse; 9 percent as victims of sexual abuse; and 7 percent as victims of emotional abuse.
- A non-CPS study estimated that 1 in 5 U.S. children experience some form of child maltreatment: approximately 1 percent were victims of sexual assault; 4 percent were victims of child neglect; 9 percent were victims of physical abuse; and 12 percent were victims of emotional abuse.

▶ <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/CM-DataSheet-a.pdf>

# Reporting Abuse

If you suspect abuse, you must report it to the Lead Pastor, Rev. Jim Farmer, and complete a Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form (available from Erica, Lee, or Pastor Jim.)





# Clearance

All persons interested in working with children or youth must be cleared. To begin this process these forms must be completed:

- ▶ Volunteer Application form with 3 references
- ▶ Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire and Response form– annually
- ▶ Authorization to Access Specific Consumer Report– every five years, not required for minors

# Clearance

A volunteer must be an active member of a church for at least 6 months prior to working with children and youth.

Once the forms are completed, the background check demonstrates no prior illegal acts that would affect the volunteer position, and the reference checks are returned and demonstrate good character, the volunteer is cleared to work with children and youth.

All of this must be completed within 45 days.

# Safe Practices

To reduce the opportunity for sexual or other forms of abuse during activities of SPUMC, we implement the following safe practices:

- ▶ Two by Two: At all church activities there will be two adults present
- ▶ Five Years Older: any volunteer working with children or youth should be five years older than that age group (exception for leaders in training)

# Safe Practices

- ▶ Minors– Leaders in training must be under the direction of an adult
- ▶ Windows– all classrooms where children and youth are participating in a church activity must have either a window in the entrance door or the door must remain open
- ▶ Open Door– counseling of children and youth must occur with the door open or with two or more adults