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# HOLMAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Theological Foundation

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes [a] child...welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse” (paragraph 162C)

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children and vulnerable adults. Sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse [“ritual abuse” refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be] have occurred in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problems cut across all economic and cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation within churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the person (child or adult), the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong.

The Church, above all institutions, is called to welcome and nurture the child. Our goal is to maintain a safe, secure, loving place where children may grow and where those who care for them may minister to their needs in responsible ways.

The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church suggests that churches should, “adopt screening procedures (use of application forms, reference checks, background checks, etc.) for workers (paid and volunteer) directly and indirectly involved in the care of children and youth.” Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church.

## II. Statement of Purpose

The purpose and intent of the Safe Sanctuary Policy of Holman United Methodist Church is to provide a safe and secure environment to teach and care for the children and youth of our congregation. We are equally committed to the physical safety and the spiritual growth of the young people in our care.

Our goal is to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and from neglect by staff or volunteers of Holman United Methodist Church. We also aim to protect the staff and volunteers from false accusations of abuse.

## III. Programs that call for the application of the Safe Sanctuary Policy

- Nursery Care of Infants and Toddlers
- Sunday School / Church School
- HYP (Holman Young People)
- Choirs (Voices of Harmony, Cherub Choir, etc.)
- Confirmation
  - *Classes*
  - *Meetings with mentors*
  - *Field Trips*
- Off Campus Events for Children and Youth
  - *Local outings as part of curriculum*
  - *Overnight trips such as Summer Camp, Youth Retreats, Lock-Ins, etc.*
- Church functions at which childcare is (or should be) provided
- Vacation Bible School
- Other events for children and youth led and hosted at Holman (Freedom School, special programs, etc.)
- Any event where children, youth or vulnerable adults are present

# SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

## I. Recruitment and Screening

- A. Recruitment – Volunteer leaders and teachers who will work independently and/or unsupervised with children or youth should be considered eligible only

after the volunteer has been an active part of our church community for at least six months (i.e. weekly worship, weekly bible study attendee or other consistent non-child related activities.)

- B. Screening – We use *AccuFax* to screen both paid staff and volunteers who work with children and youth. This is a Social Security Number-based screening that covers at least the previous seven years using a national database. Records are kept with secured personnel files. We may also require new volunteers to provide two to three references in addition to screening before working with youth or children. All church staff must undergo criminal background checks every 12 months. Volunteers working directly with children and youth must undergo criminal background checks upon appointment to position and every 24 months thereafter.
- C. DMV Screenings – We reserve the right to do a DMV screening of any staff or volunteer who will transport children or youth. Our church policy is to comply with the driver eligibility criteria recommended by our insurance company.

## **II. Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth**

- A. Two Adult Rule – provides for better teaching by sharing responsibility, adds a second watchful person to provide safe care and helps in the positive management of disruptive children.
  - 1. *Church School* – Our goal is a team of at least two teachers for each class; however, this is not always possible. In this case we will cover these classes by having an adult “roamer,” or other designated adult. An alternative is to recruit adult members of the congregation to volunteer on an occasional basis to act as the second adult in the classroom providing support for the regular Sunday School teacher.
  - 2. *Field/Off Campus Trips, Youth Retreats* – for these events we will always have at least two adult chaperones or teachers. There should be at least two adult chaperones per 10 children or youth. While driving, an adult chaperone should have a minimum of two children or youth in the car. In general children and youth should be dropped off and picked up at church, avoiding the issue of dropping off the last child.
  - 3. *Confirmation* – Confirmation mentors should meet with their confirmands in a place where other adults will be around, e.g. in L.L. White Hall or patio area instead of in a classroom, or in the child’s home with family members present. Mentors often like to take their confirmand out for dinner or ice cream. An experienced confirmation mentor recommends that such an outing be arranged between two (or more) mentors and their confirmands. The four (or more) members could enjoy the social part of the outing together, and the break into confirmand/mentor pairs in the same general area, but separated enough to allow private conversations.

B. Sign In/Out Procedures - All children/youth participating in the event must be signed in and out by a parent or guardian. Parents must be attentive to sign-in procedures.

1. Children/Youth may not leave prior to the ending of an event without prior notice from a parent.
2. Children will only be released to persons other than parents if prior contact has occurred between the parents and the staff person in charge.

C. Managing Children/Youth with Difficult Behavior Problems - Teachers will bring to the attention of the Director(s) of Children/Youth Ministries children who pose behavior management challenges. This will allow for obtaining consultation and development of a plan to provide positive and safe supervision of the child.

Training for volunteers will include:

1. Methods for positive discipline
2. Healthy physical and verbal communication with children and youth

D. First Aid/CPR

1. The lead teacher working with children through pre-kindergarten age and Director(s) of Children/Youth Ministries should have an updated First Aid/CPR certification. Taking this class is particularly important for nursery caregivers, and paid staff should take the class annually. Certification classes will be coordinated with the Red Cross and other agencies throughout the year.
2. The CPR/First Aid class should also be offered to all teachers, volunteers and parents.
3. The Coordinator(s) of Children/Youth Ministries will make available a list of other organizations in our area offering CPR/First Aid Training.

E. Bi-Annual Orientation/Training

1. A bi-annual training in our child protection policies will be offered for all volunteers and staff. The first orientation might be longer, but after the initial orientation we should try to keep this short and to the point. Training sessions will be offered in the fall and spring of each year. Volunteers should attend the training once a year.
2. All staff and volunteers must be trained prior to leading independently with children and youth. All new staff will be trained within 30 days of beginning work.
3. A Child Abuse and Child Safety Training package outlining our child safety procedures will be created and new staff and volunteers for training. A training brochure/ pamphlet will be developed and

disseminated to staff and volunteers. The brochure/pamphlet is not intended to replace the training. Parents will also be provided the training brochure/pamphlet and may be trained at their request. A training participation record will be maintained and receipt of the safety policy brochure/pamphlet. All volunteers will sign that they have received training and acknowledge that they are required reporters. SPPRC is responsible for keeping and maintaining staff personnel files and church volunteer records in the church office (including a training participation record).

F. Orientation/Training should include the following:

1. HUMC's policies and procedures for Child Safety including definition and types of child abuse and neglect. (Will be prepared by pastoral staff appointee and youth and children's directors)
2. Legal obligations and appropriate steps to report an incident of child abuse
3. Details of the state laws regarding child abuse, including how to make a report, who to call and hotline staff numbers to call if one is unclear about a reportable issue.
4. Child Protective Services reporting form – HUMC Secretary holds copies in the personnel file cabinet in the office. We will also facilitate online reporting to the Department of Family and Children Services via [link on the church website](#).

G. Supervision Requirements.

1. Workers with youth should be at least five years older than the youth participants.
2. Workers with youth should be at least 21 years of age.
3. Workers with youth serve at the discretion of the Pastor or Director of Youth Ministries.
4. All lead teachers for children in elementary school or younger should be at least 18 years of age.
5. Windows in all Classrooms - All of our rooms comply with this requirement.
6. An adult escorting a child to the restroom should wait outside.
7. When an adult helps a very young child with toileting, the door should
8. There should always be an open door/non-isolation policy when counseling youth. This applies primarily to confirmation mentors meeting with their confirmand or youth leaders meeting with a youth. L.L. White

Hall or patio offer enough space to achieve privacy while other adults are nearby.

9. When volunteers who work with youth arrange to meet with any youth outside of regular programs, the director of the youth programs shall be informed.

#### H. Website/Social Networking Guidelines

1. The church will offer its web content by way of the [www.holmanumc.com](http://www.holmanumc.com) url or other singular url as approved by Church Council. No other separate websites for specific groups within the church (i.e., music, youth, children's, etc.) are allowed. As a starting point, our website will adhere to the rules established by the Federal Trade Commission's 1998 Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (or COPPA). Given that such rules presently only govern children to age 13, the church will expand their application to all persons under age 18 years of age.
2. Only staff or adult volunteers approved by the Senior Pastor and/or SPPRC may have church website responsibilities including updating web content and email correspondence. As such, they will adhere to communications policies established to protect our children and youth. Youth/children are not permitted to have any church website responsibilities.
3. The church website will not disclose contact information for any youth/child including phone number, home address, email information, etc. The only publicly available contact information at the website will be the church address, phone, fax and "alias" email addresses. At no time should the last names of children/youth be disclosed.
4. Staff or volunteers may accept youth and children as "friends" within online social networking websites; however, the staff or volunteers shall not initiate those connections.
5. When this "befriending" occurs, the adult bears responsibility to maintain boundaries and provide positive modeling for online communication. This should reflect the same boundaries and behavior that the adult would exhibit in face to face encounters.

#### I. Policies for Off-Campus Field Trips

1. If using personal, private vehicles to transport youth, there should be current proof of license, registration, and insurance of the driver. The driver, if transporting to a "church sponsored or sanctioned event" should also go through a background screening like any other volunteer. Only drivers authorized by the Trustees can drive the church van.
2. Guidelines for Procedure for Permission slips, Drivers and Leaders:

- a) Permission slip needed for all off-campus events.
- b) The permission slip should acknowledge if non-Holman employees would be providing transportation and include a hold harmless clause to release Holman from any liability.
- c) Each driver will have copies of permission slips/medical release forms for all participants (even those in another vehicle since kids may change cars at a gas or food stop).
- d) A copy of all permission slips, and a detailed itinerary should be left with the church office prior to departure.
- e) It is recommended that every driver have a stocked first aid kit.
- f) Participation covenant for responsible behavior must be signed by all participants and leaders (for youth events)
- g) An individual adult should not sleep in an isolated room with fewer than two unrelated youth other than their own child/ren.
- h) Written information about all off-campus trips will be left in the church office before departure. This should include schedule, location, participants, and contact phone numbers.
- i) It is recommended that one adult in every vehicle transporting children shall be certified in First Aid/CPR.

3. The leader must:

- a) Carefully consider all safety, behavioral and medical issues that might arise in off-campus and overnight activities (New Year's Eve, Sleepovers, camping type trips where possibility of injury is increased.)
- b) Have a signed annual permission slip/medical release for all off-campus events.
- c) Have signed participant covenant for responsible behavior for all participants and leaders (for youth events).
- d) Prepare a checklist for preparation and instruct leaders and other volunteers.
- e) Assure that adults do not sleep in isolated room with unrelated youth. (For example, adult rooms would be interspersed among kids rooms at hotels.)

4. Parents are required to receive written information about all off-campus trips before departure, including schedule, location, leaders, and contact information.



5. Church office is required to receive:
  - a) Written information about all off-campus trips which will be left in the church office before departure. This should include schedule, location, participants, and contact information.
  - b) A copy of all permission slips, and a detailed itinerary prior to departure.
6. Each vehicle requires copies of permission slips and medical release forms for all participants and leaders (even those in another vehicle since kids may change vehicles at a gas or food stop.)
- J. Childcare – We should have two adults childcare for church activities/events where childcare is offered. In case of injury one adult may be needed to attend to the injury or call for help and the other to care for the remaining children. We feel the possibility of abuse is remote, but cannot be dismissed. Promotional material about meetings/dinners should specify whether childcare will be provided and require RSVP to confirm.

### **III. What to do if Abuse or an Allegation of Abuse Occurs**

#### **A. Responding to Allegations of Abuse**

1. All staff members and volunteers are required reporters of child abuse. Training materials for staff and volunteers include information about whom to contact with information about suspected incidents of child abuse.
  - a) For purposes of suspected child abuse/neglect reporting, "reasonable suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. "Reasonable suspicion" does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect; any "reasonable suspicion" is sufficient.
  - b) Examples of reasonable suspicion: (See section on Definitions of Abuse)
    - (1) Does the child have sexualized behavior or knowledge that is not age-appropriate? (see hand out)
    - (2) Do you suspect that there is sexually inappropriate behavior between a child and an adult?

- (3) Is there a pattern of behaviors that does not have a plausible explanation?
  - (4) Is there evidence of physical abuse?
  - c) Reports may be from any source and may be spoken or written using the Incident Report Form located in the Appendix of this document.
2. When we are faced with a case of suspected abuse of a child or youth in our care, we will:
- a) Assure the safety of the child
  - b) Report suspected abuse to pastoral staff member or children/youth director(s) who serve as designated reporters. Designated reporters are responsible for completing incident report with required reporter.
  - c) The Senior Pastor along with SPPRC shall coordinate a team of Holman members who are versed in child abuse who can serve as on-call consultants for suspected abuse. Pastors and/or Children/Youth Directors shall contact members on this team for advice and next steps.
  - d) If determined that abuse has occurred, the Senior Pastor or designee from Senior Pastor shall contact the Los Angeles Police Department or Los Angeles Sheriff's Office and Child Protective Services. Designated reporters must report the abuse to LAPD and CPS and follow up with the written report. Incident Report Form (Appendix D) must be submitted within 24 hours to the Parent/Guardians, Youth/Children Directors, SPPRC and Pastoral Staff -- unless directed not to do so by the LAPD or CPS. It is not the responsibility of HUMC staff to investigate the suspected abuse.
  - e) Cooperate with regulatory agencies investigating the incident.
  - f) It is important to keep an allegation of abuse as confidential as possible in order to protect the personal rights of all involved without appearing to be attempting to cover up the alleged abuse
  - g) The authorities (CPS or police) are responsible for the investigation and interacting with the alleged perpetrator and victim. The church is not responsible for any investigation, however, the office of the Senior Pastor in coordination with the District Superintendent will work with law enforcement authorities to help facilitate communication and contact with families.

**B. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse - Reporting child abuse is required whether suspected abuse took place on Holman's Campus or off site.** When a

member, volunteer or staff member has a suspicion of abuse of a child it is **required** to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate staff program supervisor. Reporters must immediately:

1. Notify the Senior Pastor, who in turn notifies our District Superintendent. All investigation is handled by the Bishop's office according to the requirements of the Book of Discipline.
2. If the accused is the Senior Pastor, notify the Associate Pastor or the Director of Youth/Children's Ministries. Either Associate Pastor or Children/Youth Director would notify our District Superintendent. All investigation is handled by the Bishop's office according to the requirements of the Book of Discipline.
3. Notify local police department:
  - a) Los Angeles Police Department, 213-486-0530
  - b) Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, 323-267-4800
4. Notify Child Protective Services where the abuse occurred:
  - a) Los Angeles County CPS: 1-800-540-4000
  - b) Riverside County CPS: 1-800-442-4918
  - c) San Bernardino County CPS: 1-800-827-8724
  - d) Kern County CPS: 1-661-631-6011
  - e) Inyo County CPS: 1-619-872-1727
5. The pastor will decide whether to suspend the accused during the investigation period. SPPRC and the Senior Pastor reserve the right to put accused on paid administrative leave until investigation and findings conclude.
6. The Senior Pastor will notify the Staff Pastor-Parish Relations Committee [SPPRC] which handles executive and confidential matters. If the accused is the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor or the Director of Youth & Children's Ministries. would notify SPPRC.
7. SPPRC will deal with the situation in closed session and document the case in confidential minutes. Open minutes would simply state, "an allegation of abuse was discussed."
  - a) SPPRC will determine how the church might best reach out to the victim and the victim's family.
  - b) If necessary, SPPRC appoints a spokesperson on the maintenance of child abuse prevention policies.
  - c) SPPRC will advise any staff members on a need-to-know basis.

#### C. Reporting to Families

1. Every allegation will be taken seriously. Adequate care and respect must be offered to the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators until the allegation can be substantiated or cleared.
2. The safety and security of the alleged victim must be safeguarded before the authorities are notified who in turn may confront the person accused of the abuse.
3. The parents/guardians of the suspected victim will be notified immediately by the Senior Pastor if they are not the one(s) accused of the abuse. if the parent(s) is the alleged abuser, the authorities will follow-up with the parent(s), not HUMC.
4. All procedures listed in the previous section on reporting will be strictly followed.
5. All records relating to the matter will be maintained in confidential files by SPPRC.
6. All efforts in handling the situation will be carefully documented.
7. The Senior Pastor or his/her designee will notify the liability insurer and the legal counsel for the Church about the alleged incident.
8. The Senior Pastor will be the sole spokesperson for Holman United Methodist Church and the District Superintendent will be the sole spokesperson for the district insofar as media inquiries are concerned.
9. Any person accused must be treated with dignity and support. That person will be immediately relieved of further responsibilities, as circumstances dictate, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

#### **IV. Maintaining our Safe Sanctuary Policy**

##### **A. Periodic Assessment of Existing Policy**

1. The continuing role of Staff-Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC) is to manage and approve the process of dealing with allegations of abuse. However, the Faith Formation Team & Children and Youth Ministry Directors will be responsible to periodically reassess the policy.
2. The Faith Formation Team will annually review the child abuse prevention policy in July.
3. In the case of a violation of the child abuse prevention policy the SPPRC will direct the Faith Formation Team to reassess the policy to assure that the policy itself was not flawed, leading to the alleged abuse.

- B. Church Council Approval - SPPRC will provide a recommendation of the Safe Sanctuaries Child Protection Policy when needed. The Church Council will be responsible for approving such a plan at its regular meetings.**

- C. Adequate Insurance - We will inform the Trustees of our child abuse prevention plan and any future revisions. We will ask the Trustees to advise the church's insurance agent of our policy and with the agent review and maintain adequate insurance coverage for our staff, volunteers, and church.

## V. Definitions

- A. **Physical abuse** - This is abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a youth or young child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (such as a knife or belt), burning, choking, fracturing bones, and other nonaccidental injuries.
- B. **Emotional abuse** - This is abuse in which a person exposes a youth or younger child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the youth or child that they are worthless, bad, unloved, and undeserving of love and care. Youth and children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being deprived of all parental affection, being locked in closets or other confining spaces, being incessantly told they are bad, or being forced to abuse alcohol or illegal drugs. This type of abuse is difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.
- C. **Neglect** - This is abuse in which a person endangers a youth's or child's health, welfare, and safety through negligence. It may include withholding food, medical care, affection, and even education to destroy the youth's or child's sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Neglect may well be the most common form of abuse. Although it is often difficult to prove, reports of neglect from teenagers or children should not be ignored.
- D. **Sexual abuse** - This type of abuse occurs when sexual contact between a youth, child and an adult (or older, more powerful youth or child) happens. The youth or child victim is not capable of consenting to such contact or resisting such sexual acts. Often, the youth or child victim is physically dependent on the perpetrator (for example, a parent). Additionally, the youth victim is often psychologically dependent on the perpetrator (for example, a teacher or a youth minister). Examples of sexual abuse include fondling, intercourse, incest (sexual assault), and the exploitation of and exposure to pornography and/or prostitution (sexual exploitation). *In the state of California, a person who is at least 18 years of age may be charged with statutory rape if that person has sexual contact with a person who has not reached age 18, which is the age of consent in California {CA CODES (PEN:261-269)}.*
- E. **Ritual abuse** - This is abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violence is inflicted on a youth, intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone (or multiple people) with responsibility of the victim's welfare. Typically, the perpetrator appeals to some higher authority or power or justify his or her abuses. Examples of ritual abuse may include cruel treatment or animals or repetitious threats of sexual or physical violence to the youth or child victim or to people related to the youth or child victim. When reports of ritual abuse are made, they are often

extremely horrifying. Such reports may even seem too gruesome to be true. However, any youth or child making such a report must not be ignored.

- F. **Child** - Any person(s) infant through 6th grade.
- G. **Youth** - Any person(s) 7th grade through the age of 18.
- H. **Vulnerable Adult** - An individual over the age of 18 who requires direct adult supervision as a result of mental or physical limitations.

# Appendix

**Holman United Methodist Church  
Emergency Release and Permission Form**

**APPENDIX A**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email: (parents) \_\_\_\_\_ (student) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

*In case we cannot reach you whom should we call next:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Company and Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

Special Medical Information \_\_\_\_\_

*I give \_\_\_\_\_ my permission to go and participate with \_\_\_\_\_ on their trip to \_\_\_\_\_. I fully understand the dangers and risks involved in the activities that my child will be participating in and will assume all Responsibility of injury in connection with them, releasing and discharging \_\_\_\_\_ and the Counselors / Sponsors involved with this trip, of responsibility. In case of emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the leaders to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and to order injection, anesthesia, or surgery for my child, as named above, if I cannot be immediately reached guaranteeing payment of such treatment.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Holman United Methodist Church

## Youth Ministries Covenant Code of Conduct

## APPENDIX B

The Youth Ministry of Holman United Methodist Church (HUMC) desires to foster an environment that helps students connect to God, their community, and their true selves. We also are determined to ensure the physical well-being of students, volunteers, and adult leaders. Our hope is that the atmosphere which we create will help our youth to become the people whom God and we hope they will be.

This Covenant Code of Conduct (“Code”) will be used by Youth Ministry leaders as a basis of accountability for all participating youth and adults. In general, it is expected that all Youth who participate in the church Youth programs will respect the rights and property of others and conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner. It is important that parents and youth discuss and understand this Code. Youth are reminded that all negative behavior has a detrimental effect on others in the Youth program and also affects the reputation of the church and its programs.

“Youth” are defined as those in grades 6 through 12. Graduated seniors or those over 18 years of age at the beginning of the following school year will move on to college and young adult ministries.

Both youth and their parents/guardians will need to sign below. This Code shall be signed prior to participation in any youth events. Youth Ministry events throughout the year will include regular church activities, meetings, retreats; and special trips and events. Parent volunteers, designated ministry assistants and staff, and youth leaders may attend all youth events.

Parents are informed of youth activities, trip itineraries, special activities, and projects through email notification, youth news information and other forms of communication. Information will be as specific as possible regarding time of departure and arrival, routes, method of travel, phone numbers, and number of drivers.

### **Respect Toward Leaders:**

Youth agree to follow the instructions of adult volunteers and Youth Ministry Staff and will be respectful to them. Any student who is insubordinate or disrespectful to any adult leader or who violates generally accepted rules of good citizenship and behavior will be referred to the Youth Leader for formal discipline.

### **Trip Policies:**

Off-site trips are a big responsibility for the Youth Ministry and the church. As a result, obeying and respecting trip leaders and adult volunteers is essential if the Youth Group is to function safely and effectively in an environment which fosters their growth as young men and women.

As detailed further in this Code, any incidents reflecting a breakdown in this area may result in the Youth being sent home at the parents’ expense. Parents or guardians agree to support the leaders’ decisions about sending a student home, knowing that only those present on the trip can know all the circumstances involved. In the event this situation arises, the parents or legal guardian will come pick the student up or pay for commercial transportation home as soon as possible.

**Property Damage:**

Any participant who damages or destroys property willfully will be responsible for the cost of repair/replacement and any clean up required.

**Inappropriate Language:**

No participant is to utilize language which is crude, offensive, insulting, profane or irreverent. This shall also include abusive language directed at another individual such as name calling or bullying.

**Smoking/Drinking/Illegal Drugs:**

No alcohol or tobacco in any form is ever permitted on youth trips, by youth or adults. Parents will be notified immediately if a youth is found to be in possession of alcohol or of any illegal or controlled substance. This is a zero tolerance policy and Youth will be sent home immediately at the expense of their parents/guardians.

**Violent Behavior:**

Violent behavior and/or possession of any type of weapon will not be tolerated. Any act of striking, hitting, kicking, or attacking another individual will be cause for immediate removal from the group and a parent/guardian will be required to pick up the offending youth.

Repeated offenses will result in the Youth not being permitted to participate in youth activities until the parents and Youth have received counseling from the Minister and/or a professional Youth Counselor. Reinstatement must be approved by the Youth Council. Any adult who displays any act of violent behavior will no longer be permitted to participate in youth activities.

**Dress Code:**

Our dress code is modesty in mind. Parents should make sure that their student is dressed appropriately and brings appropriate clothing on trips. Parents should recognize that dress which may be appropriate for other activities may not be appropriate for church-related programs. Adult leaders and chaperones have permission to suggest a change of dress at any time they feel the need to do so.

**Displays of Affection:**

Youth should refrain from excessive displays of affection such as kissing, prolonged embracing, and other contact inappropriate to a church environment. Genuine respect for each other in word, thought, and deed is always encouraged.

**Transportation:**

Generally, driving to off-site events will be provided by designated youth leaders or adult volunteers. Only church approved drivers are permitted to drive the van, the bus, or their own personal vehicles to transport youth. The number of youth, leaders, and chaperones per vehicle will not exceed the number of safety belts available. All persons driving or being driven to/from a youth event must use seat belts at all times.

If youth need to drive their own vehicle to an event off-site, the parents must notify the Youth Director in advance. In this case, parents are responsible for the youth's transportation to and from youth functions. Parents are responsible for their child if transported in a vehicle other than those provided by the church. The church, its leaders, staff, or members cannot be responsible or held liable for the safety and quality of either the vehicle or the driver, nor can

they be assured that there is insurance on the vehicle. Youth members are not allowed to drive not related to them or youth who did not arrive in the youth driven vehicle.

### **Emergency Medical Release Forms:**

Emergency release forms and medical information (including information with regard to required prescription medication) will be supplied by the parents to MFUMC Youth Ministry at the beginning of the school year. Any changes should be provided to the Youth director prior to participation in any event. A separate permission slip will be required for each off-site activity.

Emergency information will be kept for adult volunteers, leaders and chaperones as well.

### **Site Rules:**

“Safe Sanctuary” policies shall apply and extend to activities beyond the walls of the church for any youth events. It is understood that any rule or guideline that is not mentioned here but is required by a camp or retreat where our youth are present will also apply to our students.

### **Buddy System:**

The buddy system should be implemented in all situations. For their personal safety, youth should not be anywhere by themselves.

### **Housing:**

Male youth are not permitted in female youth rooms, hallways, wings or cabins nor are female youth permitted in male rooms, hallways, wings or cabins. Discipline, curfew, clean-up and other housing guidelines will be established for each event and are to be respected by all participants and will be enforced by the adult leaders and Youth Ministry.

## **Formal Discipline Policy**

### **Actions that warrant immediate removal:**

The use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or pornographic material, violence and/or sexual misconduct will result in immediate removal from the group or activity. The MFUMC Youth Director or trip leader will notify parents/guardians to arrange for the student’s return home.

### **Procedure for Inappropriate Behavior:**

Students are expected to follow the Covenant Code of Conduct as set forth above. In the event of an incident or situation in which the Youth has exhibited inappropriate behavior, the consequence of such action will be as follows:

*1. First Occurrence: Formal Warning*

*Adult Leader/Chaperone will notify the trip/youth director of the situation. The trip director/youth director will offer a serious verbal warning to the Youth, discussing the inappropriateness of the behavior.*

*2. Second Occurrence: Formal Notification*

*Trip/youth director will notify the parents and/or guardian of the seriousness of the situation with a reminder of the potential consequences of said action.*

*3. Third Occurrence: Dismissal from event or program*

*The trip/youth director will send the youth home according to the policies stated above.*

**I have read, discussed, and understand the Holman United Methodist Church Youth Ministry Covenant Code of Conduct. By signing this form, along with my parent/guardian, I agree to follow each of these rules. I understand that such policies help to ensure the physical and spiritual safety of all who participate in the Youth Ministry programs of the church.**

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Youth Name	Signature	Date
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Parent/Caregiver	Signature	Date
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# Holman United Methodist Church

## Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy

## APPENDIX C

It is the purpose of Holman United Methodist Church to promote positive relations among its community and especially to oppose bullying, harassment, and intimidation (BHI) in all of its forms by all members of the church community.

### ***Scriptural Basis***

Jesus taught the Greatest Commandment: first, love God with all of your heart, mind, and strength, and secondly, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. (Matthew 22:37, 39) Further, Jesus has given the Golden Rule as direction: "Treat others just as you want to be treated." (Luke 6:31)

### ***Definition of Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation***

A conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror. It is not about anger, nor about conflict; it is about contempt --- a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless/inferior/undeserving of respect.

BHI always includes these three elements:

- Imbalance of power --- the bully can be older, bigger, stronger, more verbal, higher on the social scale, a different race, the opposite sex, or a large number of kids banded together.
- Intent to do harm --- the bully means to inflict emotional harm and/or physical pain, expects the action to hurt, and takes pleasure in witnessing the hurt.
- Threat of further aggression --- both bully and bullied know that the bullying can and probably will occur again.

When bullying escalates unabated, a fourth element is added:

- Terror --- systematic violence used to maintain dominance.

### ***Our Position on Rights and Responsibilities***

Based on our belief that all persons are of sacred worth, we declare that it is the right of all individuals of all ages to be free of victimization. It is the responsibility of those who witness victimization to stop it and/or to speak to a trusted adult/pastor. The leadership of the church will intentionally seek to prevent and deal with BHI through:

- Setting rules concerning BHI behavior
- Responding to incidents in a prompt manner
- Seeing that both the bullied and bully are dealt with in a responsible and caring manner
- Overseeing training and education of staff and congregation concerning BHI

### ***Guidelines for Responding to Bullied and Bully***

Guidelines will be followed in accordance with Youth Covenant Code of Conduct.

**Holman United Methodist Church  
Safe Sanctuary Incident Report**

**APPENDIX D**

Injured person's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of injury/incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of the injury/incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the injured child/youth/adult doing when injury/incident occurred?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where did the injury/incident occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Who were the adults supervising? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency procedures followed at time of injury/incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was parent/guardian contacted? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

By what method? \_\_\_\_\_ Time of contact: \_\_\_\_\_

What steps did parent/guardian wish taken? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were these steps followed? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Youth/Children Director notified? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor/s notified? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

Further action taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person making report: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Copies to Parent/Guardian, Children/Youth Director, Pastors*

**Holman United Methodist Church  
Photo Permission/Release**

**APPENDIX E**

I give Holman United Methodist Church permission to post pictures of my child/youth taken at Church events on bulletin boards within the Church facility.

(please initial yes or no)      \_\_\_\_\_Yes    \_\_\_\_\_No

I give Holman United Methodist Church permission to post pictures of my child/youth taken at Church events on the Church Webpage/social media sites.

(please initial yes or no)      \_\_\_\_\_Yes    \_\_\_\_\_No

I give Holman United Methodist Church permission to send pictures to the newspaper for the purpose of publicity. I understand that if names are used, my child's/youth's first name only will appear.

(please initial yes or no)      \_\_\_\_\_Yes    \_\_\_\_\_No

**Name of Parent/Caregiver**      \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Child/Children**      \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **A Guide to Social Media, Technology and the Internet    APPENDIX F**

Under the auspices of the 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 United Methodist Books of Discipline, all United Methodist local churches are charged to create and employ church policies and procedures for the protection of children (birth -11 years), youth (twelve -18 years) and vulnerable adults (18+ years old with any mental, physical, situational or age-related condition that renders them vulnerable to the decisions and care of others). These Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures are meant to reduce the risk of abuse to such persons within the community and the Church. Given the increased use of technology and social media in the life of the church and its individual members, churches and conferences have a responsibility to define social media policies that uphold the covenant to create Safe Sanctuaries for children, youth and vulnerable adults. We affirm the following:

### **We will utilize technology, the Internet and all social media tools to promote Christian community and the building up of authentic relationships.**

- Facebook is a wonderful tool to use in Preschool, Children's and Youth Ministry. It is highly recommended that ministry groups establish their own "page" in order to communicate with group members, as well as their parents/legal guardians.
- Blogs allow adults and youth alike a place to express ideas, thoughts and opinions, and to allow others the opportunity to engage them through response.
- Youtube and other video websites have proved useful for sharing video clips from any number of church-related events, sharing original video produced to promote an upcoming event or idea, or sharing video produced by another individual or group that might be used by your ministry for conversation, worship, or reflection.
- Texting and Tweeting have proven effective means of communication for getting a message out quickly to one individual or to an entire group.

### **We will protect the privacy and identity of all persons under 18 years of age and all vulnerable adults in online writings, postings and discussions.**

- Adult employees and staff must not post photos or video that identify children, youth or vulnerable adults on any online site or printed publication without written consent from a parent or legal guardian.
- All Facebook groups and pages associated with Preschools, Children's or Youth Ministry areas will be designated as "closed" groups, requiring all those who wish to gain access to be approved by the page administrators.
- All church-related Facebook groups and pages must have at least two administrators. If an administrator is no longer associated with the ministry, that individual's administrative status must be revoked.
- Photos of minors may only be published or posted after a photo release has been signed by their parent/guardian. Photos used in other mediums, such as church newsletters, websites, blogs, twitpics, etc., must not include any identifying information of minors.

- Photos may only be posted to the Facebook page by page administrators. Adults (staff, volunteers, parents, etc.) should not identify minors in photographs posted online or in print. Individuals (including minors) are welcome to identify (i.e. “tag”) themselves.
- When checking in on Foursquare, Facebook, or any location tagging social media, only “check in” yourself. Never check in minors. Be sensitive to tagging or revealing other participants’ location without their expressed permission. Rather, create a hashtag to facilitate conversation.
- In the case of clergy and parishioner online connections, Friend Requests, Follow Requests, Circle Requests, etc. should be initiated by the parishioner, especially if the parishioner is a minor or vulnerable adult.

**We will maintain appropriate relational boundaries with minors.**

No adult shall initiate Facebook contact with or “friend” a minor or vulnerable adult. An adult accepting the “friend” requests of minors is up to the discretion of the adult in charge of the ministry area, in consultation with the pastor. Regardless of the decision that is reached, this United Methodist Church practice should be uniformly practiced by all adult staff and volunteers. Any conversations with minors or vulnerable adults shall occur in open channels.

When emailing, texting, tweeting, or Facebook messaging a minor, adults should copy another adult (ideally a parent or guardian) on the message, or post it in a public venue (i.e. a Facebook wall as opposed to a private message). This will allow adults to maintain the “two adults present” Safe Sanctuaries standard when using social media.

Social media, even though it offers convenient and private channels, is not an appropriate medium for counseling - especially with minors. Begin or transition a pastoral conversation into an approved Safe Sanctuary model (i.e. office with windows, two adult rule abiding settings, etc.).

**We shall not engage in the creation, viewing or distribution of pornography.**

Engaging in the above stated behavior is a violation of civil laws and clergy ethics and can lead to incarceration and the revocation of clergy credentials.

**We shall not engage in, encourage or condone cyberbullying.**

Every children’s ministry and youth ministry group, and adult volunteer training sessions should include in its teaching and ministry Code of Conduct a session on the types and consequences of cyber-bullying, including how to identify it and how to report it.

To learn more about cyberbullying, visit: <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org> or various other websites.

**We shall educate young people in the effective ways of using social media and technology to live out their Christian witness in what they write, post, share, and view.**

We all must understand, and teach to minors and vulnerable adults, that once something is posted on web, sent via email or sent via text, it is impossible to fully recover or erase it. There

should be no expectation of privacy or reasonable expectation that the information stops with the person for whom it was intended.

A good rule of thumb: If you don't want it posted on the church sign, website, or bulletin, do not text it or post it via social media.