

SHADY GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Child Protection Policy And Procedures
2009

I. PURPOSE

- A. To help Shady Grove United Methodist Church provide a caring and secure environment for children and youth in all phases of church life.
- B. To help Shady Grove United Methodist Church reduce its legal risk and liability exposure.

II. BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Shady Grove United Methodist Church seeks to express God's love of children and provide for their personal wholeness. This caring community seeks to prevent child abuse of any form to our children and youth and to be in ministry to families where abuse may occur. The Bible is foundational to our understanding upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand.

And they were bringing children to him, that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it He was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And He took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them. (Mark 10:13-16)

Jesus teaches us explicitly that children have the right and the keys to the Kingdom of God. He demonstrated this through blessing and touch. Our goal in response to the Biblical mandate is to maintain a safe, secure, and loving place where children may grow; a place where care givers, teachers, and leaders (both paid and volunteer) minister appropriately to their needs.

III. VIRGINIA'S CHILD ABUSE LAW

Under Sections 63.2-100 and 16.1-228 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, an abused child is defined as one who is less than eighteen years of age, whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care create or inflict, or threaten to create or inflict, or allow to be created or inflicted upon such a child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means, or create a substantial risk of death or disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions. This includes the following: failure to provide care necessary for health, abandonment; committing or allowing sexual exploitation; endangerment or neglect. Child abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, or mental, and may be the result of actions or failure to act (e.g., lack of care for a child). Section 63.2 1509 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, states: "Any person licensed to practice medicine or any of the healing arts, any hospital resident or intern, any person employed in the nursing profession, any persons employed as a social worker, any probation officer, any teacher or other person employed in a public or

private school, kindergarten, or nursery school, any person providing full-time or part-time child care for pay on a regular basis....and any person associated with or employed by any private organization responsible for the care, custody, or control of children who has reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected, shall report the matter immediately...to the local department of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the 'Department of Social Services' toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline."

IV. TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

A. Definition

Child abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, care giver, or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare. The following definitions and explanations in this section are from the Virginia Department of Social Services.

B. Types of Abuse

1. Physical Abuse

A physical injury, threats of injury, or creation of a real and significant danger of substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily functions. Such injury or threat of injury, regardless of intent, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by non-accidental means. *Examples:* asphyxiation, bone fracture, brain damage, skull fracture, subdural hematoma, burns, scalding, cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions, internal injuries, poisoning, sprains, dislocations, gunshot, stabbing wounds.

2. Physical Neglect

The failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, or supervision for a child if the child's health or safety is endangered. Physical neglect may include multiple occurrences or a one-time critical or severe event that results in a threat to health or safety, such as a toddler left alone. Other types of neglect, include abandonment, inadequate supervision, inadequate clothing, inadequate shelter, inadequate personal hygiene, inadequate food, and malnutrition.

3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes any act defined in the Code of Virginia that is committed, or allowed to be committed, upon a child by his/her parent, other person responsible for the child's care or another child provided the child is 4-years

older than victim. *Examples:* sexual exploitation, sexual molestation, intercourse/sodomy, and other sexual abuse.

4. Medical Neglect

Refusal or failure by a caretaker to obtain and/or follow through with a complete regimen of medical, mental, or dental care for a condition, which if untreated, could result in illness or developmental delays.

5. Failure to Thrive

A syndrome of infancy or early childhood that is characterized by growth failure, signs of severe malnutrition, and variable degrees of developmental retardation. Children are considered to be in this category only when the syndrome is diagnosed by a physician and is caused by non-organic factors.

6. Mental Abuse/Neglect

A pattern of acts or omissions by the caretaker that result in harm to a child's psychological or emotional health or development.

7. Educational Neglect

The child's caretaker is directly responsible for the failure of the child to attend school or an approved alternative program of study.

8. Bizarre Discipline

Any actions in which the caretaker uses eccentric, irrational, or grossly inappropriate procedures or devices to modify the child's behavior.

V. REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE

In an effort to create the safest possible environment within Shady Grove United Methodist Church, several protection measures will be utilized. These measures include screening of paid staff and volunteer members, use of the two adult rules, standards for appropriate classroom discipline, and open classrooms.

Staff and Volunteer Screening

Before beginning the first year of service following the adoption of this policy, every person employed at Shady Grove United Methodist Church as paid staff or unpaid volunteer worker in a program involving children or youth under the age of 18 (e.g., children's Sunday School teachers and nursery workers, and scout and youth leaders, etc.) will be asked to sign a statement that he/she has never been convicted of child abuse or had such a conviction expunged. This

statement shall be part of a screening form (copy attached), which will also ask for the following: general information, criminal convictions, authorization to do criminal and child protective service record checks, prior church memberships, and prior church volunteer work. Where appropriate, Shady Grove United Methodist Church also shall require a valid state driver's license or other photographic identification to confirm identity. No one who has had a child abuse conviction or expungement — or who refuses to complete this screening form — will be permitted to work with Shady Grove United Methodist Church's children or youth. Youth helpers will be under the supervision of a trained adult. No volunteer shall lead children or youth ministries until they have been a regular participant at Shady Grove for at least six months. No one shall be allowed to help with the youth or children if she/he is known to have been previously convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to, any crime arising out of any act or conduct involving sexual abuse, or any act or conduct which is of a sexual, molesting, seductive, or criminally deviant nature, whether or not such conduct involved a child. This includes but is not limited to, crimes involving pedophilic behavior (molestation of a pre-adolescent child), incest, rape, assaults involving adults with special needs, children or youth, murder, kidnapping, pornography, and the physical abuse of an adult with special needs, child or youth. This qualifying rule shall be applicable no matter how long ago the crime occurred.

In addition to the screening process described above, every person hired for a paid staff position shall first have undergone a criminal record check, the cost of which shall be borne by Shady Grove United Methodist Church. Scout Leaders are subject to criminal background check at the discretion of the Program Council. All completed screening forms and criminal record checks shall be reviewed by the Senior Pastor, Minister of Discipleship, and Chair of Program Council. Forms will be maintained in a locked and secured file drawer in the office of the Senior Pastor and under the joint direction and control of the Senior Pastor, Minister of Discipleship and the Chairperson of the Program Council.

Kitty's Kids at Shady Grove, Inc. is a separate entity, which uses the church facilities. Kitty's Kids has its own Child Protective Policy and is not subject to this Child Protective Policy. Shady Grove United Methodist Church shall instruct Kitty's Kids at Shady Grove Inc., to have all of its teachers, aides and volunteers to undergo a criminal record check. However, Kitty's Kid shall maintain their own records and use their own policy with regards to their staff and volunteers. Any references made to teachers in this policy apply to Sunday School teachers, Vacation Bible School teachers and teachers of classes offered directly by Shady Grove Church and not to the teachers at Kitty's Kids of Shady Grove, Inc.

1. Staff Training

Once a person expresses an interest in volunteering in an area, the appropriate program staff person shall provide him/her with the necessary forms to be completed and returned to the program staff person. Before beginning the first year of service following the adoption of this policy, all paid staff and volunteer

child care workers, preschool teachers and aides, children's Sunday School teachers and youth workers, and teachers will be required to read Shady Grove's United Methodist Church Child Protection Policy and sign a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy and agree to abide by it. This statement shall be part of the screening form (copy attached). Anyone failing to sign this statement will be contacted. If the teacher or worker does not sign the statement after being contacted, that person will not be permitted to serve until the policy has been read and the form signed. Such persons also will be required to attend one training session related to the church's protection policy during the course of their first year of service following the adoption of this policy. These training sessions will be offered by the church, conducted by program staff, members of the Church Council or individuals certified to conduct such training, and held at various times throughout the school year.

Paid staff shall be CPR certified. CPR training for paid staff will be offered each year. Volunteers will have the option to participate in CPR training.

Vacation Bible School teachers and workers at Shady Grove will be required to read the policy and sign the acknowledgment form before the start of Vacation Bible School. Any teacher failing to do so will be contacted. Anyone refusing to read the policy and sign the form after being contacted will not be permitted to serve. Girl Scout and Boy Scout leaders and leaders of other groups of children or youth who regularly use the church facilities also will be required to read the policy and sign the acknowledgment form.

Children and youth groups not sponsored and led by Shady Grove requesting to use only church facilities must have its leadership read, sign and agree to comply with Shady Grove United Methodist Church Child Protection Policy. Failure to do so results in denial of facility use.

2. Two Adult Rule

Every Sunday School class or Vacation Bible School Class of children or youth shall be assigned at least one adult leader and one adult volunteer. If these adults are spouses, then there must be an unrelated adult present. Random visits will be made by the Sunday School Superintendent and assigned staff.

Other church-sponsored or community groups of children or youth who meet at the church will be instructed that they must have two or more adults in each room where children are present.

If the group of youth or children stays overnight at the church, or if a church sponsored group leaves the premises, two or more leaders must be present and shall include at least one male and one female if the group is mixed gender.

Two or more children of the same gender may sleep in the same room without an adult being present. If an adult is present in said room there must be another adult present. However, an adult may share a room with his/her child(ren) alone.

3. Adult/Child Ratios:

Provided that there are at least two adults to every classroom, Shady Grove will adhere to the following guidelines:

children newborn to 16 months:	1 adult/4 children;
children ages 16 months up to 2 years (24 months):	1 adult/5 children;
children age 2 years:	1 adult/8 children;
children ages 3 and 4 years:	1 adult/10 children;
children ages 5 through 17	1adult/18 children

4. Bathroom Policy:

School-age children through grade 5 shall go to the bathroom in pairs and be directed to remain together. A teacher will watch from the door and request assistance from another adult if the child needs help while in the bathroom. During worship the Ushers will direct children and youth to use the bathroom off of the Narthex. The door to the hall shall remain open.

5. Classroom Discipline

All teachers and workers will use the following discipline measures. If a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child specifically, what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is, e.g., “We do not throw the blocks. We use blocks for building.” If this measure is not effective, the child will be guided to another activity. If inappropriate behavior continues, a form of time out may be used such as placing the child at a table to work alone away from the other students. If the child’s disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the child may be taken to the appropriate director of the program, and left under such person’s supervision with a second adult present. No physical punishment or verbal abuse, e.g., ridicule, are to be used at any time. If isolating the child within the classroom or removal of the child from the room becomes necessary, the situation will be discussed with the child’s parents or guardian as soon as possible.

6. Open Classrooms

Classrooms or child care rooms may be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents, or other volunteer church workers, e.g., Sunday School Superintendent. All classrooms and meeting rooms shall be observable from the hallway. Brief observations of child care rooms and classrooms of children or youth will be conducted by the Minister of Discipleship and/or the Sunday School Superintendent during Sunday School hours.

7. Photographing Children

Children and youth may not be photographed for publication, personal storage or use outside the Church program without parental consent.

VI. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Should there be an allegation of child abuse at Shady Grove United Methodist Church, the matter should be reported immediately to the Hanover Sherriff's Office, the Hanover County Department Social Services, to the Senior Pastor, and the Chair of Staff Parish. Together, these individuals shall ensure that the appropriate actions will be taken. If the allegation involves the Senior Pastor, the matter should be reported to the Sherriff's Office, Social Services, the Associate Pastor, and the District Superintendent.

1. Every allegation of child abuse will be treated seriously.
2. Pray for the church and all persons affected by the allegation.
3. Immediately begin documenting all procedures observed in the handling of the allegation.
4. Immediately notify the Virginia Department of Social Services of the allegation.
5. Immediately notify the parents if it is not known that they have previous knowledge. (In the case the suspected abuser is the parent, they would not be notified.)
6. Immediately notify the church's insurance company.
7. If the accused have assigned duties within the life of the church that person must be temporarily relieved of his/her duties until the investigation is concluded.
8. It is appropriate to show care and comfort for the alleged victim. This should be the pastoral objective from the moment the allegation is received or otherwise made known.
9. Observe confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused.

VII. POLICY REVIEW

The Child Protection Policy and Procedures of Shady Grove United Methodist Church shall be reviewed annually by the, Policy Committee and changes or additions presented to Church Council and Trustees. A verification follow-up report will be made each year at Charge Conference to insure the integrity of the policy and procedures.

VIII. ENFORCEMENT

The policy is to be enforced by the Education Committee, Youth Ministries, Children's Ministries and the related staff to those Committees.

**PRIMARY SCREENING FORM
FOR
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORKERS
*Shady Grove United Methodist Church
8209 Shady Grove Road, P. O. Box 817
Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111***

Please complete the following, sign, date, detach and return this form to verify that you have read, understand and accept the Child Protection Policy and Procedures of Shady Grove United Methodist Church. THIS FORM IS CONFIDENTIAL.

FULL NAME (including maiden name):

Present Address:

City: _____ State _____ Zip

Daytime Phone:

Name(s) of church(es) you have attended regularly during the past five years:

Have you worked with children or youth before? YES, NO.

If yes, list below all previous church and non-church experience (provide names, dates and addresses, positions held).

Current drivers' license number:

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime? YES, NO.

If yes, please explain:

Personal References (not former employers or relatives):

Name _____ Telephone _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

I have read and understand the foregoing Child Abuse Prevention Policy and agree to abide by it. I have no convictions for child abuse or expungement of such convictions. I authorize any person or church listed above to give you any information (including options) that they may have regarding my character and fitness to work with children or youth and I hereby release any such person or church from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind that may result as a result of any compliance or attempt to comply with this authorization.

Signature: _____

Date (Month/Day/Year): _____