

First United Methodist Church Pflugerville (PFUMC)  
Southwest Texas Conference  
Austin District

**Definitions:**

**Abuse** means harm or threatened harm to the health and welfare of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by any person responsible for the health and welfare of a child, youth, or a vulnerable adult that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or mistreatment, sexual harassment, sexual contact, sexual molestation; disseminating, exhibiting, or displaying sexually explicit material.

**Adult** means any person at least 18 years of age.

**Appropriate** means conduct that one would reasonably assume would be acceptable and permissible by a child's parent or guardian.

**Child, Children or Youth** refer to a person under 18 years of age.

**Leader** means anyone directly responsible for supervising and overseeing the specific Church related function, event or activity.

**Parent or guardian** means any parent, step-parent, foster parent, grandparent or appointed guardian with the general responsibility for the health, education, or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult.

**Sexual abuse** means engaging in any sexual contact, sexual penetration, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, of a vulnerable adult, child or youth; or the dissemination, exhibiting, or displaying of sexually explicit material to an adult with special needs or child or youth, regardless of whether such conduct is with or without the knowledge or consent of the adult with special needs, or child or youth. This abuse may be violent or nonviolent. It includes any conduct that involves vulnerable adults, or children in sexual behavior for which they are not personally, socially, emotionally or developmentally ready.

**Sexual contact** means the intentional touching of the intimate parts or the clothing covering the immediate area of intimate parts of a youth, child or vulnerable adult.

**Sexual exploitation** means allowing, permitting or encouraging a vulnerable adult, child or youth to engage in prostitution or in the photographing, filming, creating electronic or computer-generated images or other forms of depicting a child, youth or vulnerable adult engaged in actual or suggestive sexual conduct.

**Sexual harassment** means any sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, which is perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive.

**Staff** means any employee of the Conference, District or ministry, volunteer or paid.

**Volunteer** means a person who participates as a leader or assists a leader in activities relating to any conference and/or district event or ministry without compensation

**Vulnerable adult** means an adult who has one or more mental, physical or emotional impairments that render the person incapable of self-care and/or independent living without help.

**Statement of Policy**

These procedures are adopted by the PFUMC and reviewed annually by the Health and Wholeness Ministries Committee. They will be used to guide all PFUMC events beginning December 1, 2008. These procedures are in

accordance with the Southwest Texas Conference Child, Youth, and Adult Safety Policy adopted by the Annual Conference in June 2000.

1. Background checks on paid staff members (full or part-time) shall be required. Access to the information received from the background check shall be limited; but the information shall be held in confidence. The SWTX Conference will be the agency to obtain police or law enforcement background checks to the extent that any are requested. Only (a) Episcopal Office, (b) Austin District Superintendent, or (c) the person in charge of the PFUMC event may request and be privy to the background check results. The Conference Office will report only relevant information as it pertains to the safety of children, youth, and adults to the requesting party.
2. All volunteers working with vulnerable adults at a church event must be involved in their church. If the volunteer has been involved for less than six months, then a letter of recommendation from a staff person at their local church is required.
3. Any adult who is the subject of current judicial proceedings in which he or she is charged with child, youth, or adult abuse or who has been convicted of child, youth or adult abuse will not be permitted to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults in any church sponsored activity.
4. All drivers of vehicles for church or other sponsored events described herein must be at least twenty-one years of age and possess a current, valid driver's license, have proof of insurance at the State minimum limits, and not be otherwise disqualified from driving (i.e. under medication and the like). Prior written parental (or guardian) permission is required for events requiring transportation to and from the event location. There may be times when only one adult volunteer is in a vehicle. In this case, an effort will be made to inform the parents or guardian.
5. Where possible, it is recommended that two unrelated adults be involved in visitation programs.
6. The PFUMC will provide materials and/or training to keep volunteers informed of church policy and state laws regarding adult abuse.
7. A person who suspects abusive behavior or abusive activity shall report it in accordance with the "Austin District Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Abuse" (see attachment).

Adopted by the First United Methodist Church Pflugerville on November 23, 2008.

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**Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Abuse Texas State Law Obligation To Report**

A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person is obligated by Texas law to immediately make a report to a law enforcement agency or to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (DPRS) Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400). If the person is in doubt regarding whether a report should be made, he or she shall telephone the agency and discuss the situation with a counselor to determine whether a report should be made. This call may be made anonymously. A person shall make a written record of the name and title of the counselor with whom he or she spoke and the recommendation made by the counselor.

**Notification to Austin District Event Leader/District Superintendent**

- Any person having cause to believe that a child or youth is subject to abuse in connection with any district event should immediately report the incident to the Event Leader. If the allegation is in relation to the Event Leader, the person is to contact the District Superintendent. If the allegation is in relation to the District Superintendent, the person is to contact the Bishop.
- Should abuse allegations occur:
  - Respond to each allegation in a serious manner,
  - Treat each allegation with confidentiality and respect for the privacy of all involved persons;
  - Cooperate fully with civil authorities;
  - Extend genuine care to all victims of abuse.

**Responding to the Report**

When someone receives a report of an incident of abuse, or suspected abuse, he or she shall immediately take steps necessary to ensure the safety of the alleged victim.

- The person reporting the suspected abuse and the Event Leader shall work together to complete a written incident report.
- In the case of an allegation, these guidelines should be followed by the Event Leader:
  - Document the incident or allegation.
  - Report the incident as required by state law, notify the church's legal counsel, and notify the insurance company.
  - Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously. If morally indicated, reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed.
  - Treat the accused with dignity and support. The accused should be removed from his or her position as a worker with children or youth until the allegations are fully investigated and resolved. In the case of paid church workers, the District Superintendent, in consultation with the appropriate church body, shall determine the extent to which employment and compensation should be continued during the investigation.

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