

The Union Baptist Church

Policy on Child Care and Children and Youth Programming

Guidelines for workers with Children/Youth at the Union Baptist Church of Mystic, CT

Because we desire to be faithful in responding to the biblical mandate to “*let the children come*” (Mark 10:14), because we want to provide safe, quality programs for the children and youth that participate in the ministries of the Union Baptist Church of Mystic, CT, and because we want to protect both those children and youth participating as well as those persons working with children and/or youth, we covenant to follow the guidelines below:

1. Children and youth will be respected in both actions and words. Abusive, threatening, inappropriate or derogatory language or actions will not be used.
2. Children and youth will be touched only in appropriate ways and places:
 - a. On the hand, shoulder or upper back;
 - b. Never against a child’s or youth’s will (unless in the case of clear and present danger to the child or youth or another child or youth);
 - c. Never causing discomfort to a child or youth;
 - d. Never in a sexual manner;
 - e. Never in a place on a child’s or youth’s body that could be covered by a bathing suit (unless for a clear medical necessity or when a church-approved caregiver is changing a diaper).
3. Children or youth will not be hit under any circumstance.
4. If encountering a particularly difficult child or youth, situation, or dispute, assistance will be sought from the Senior Minister if present, and a report given to the Senior Minister.
5. Ministries, events and activities will take place in open areas—not in private offices or spaces. Doors without windows will be left open when sessions with children or youth are taking place. A safety gate will be placed across open doorways as needed.
6. Written permission from a parent or guardian is required, and must be submitted to the church office, before children and youth are taken off church property for church sponsored events or activities.
7. When there is an emergency requiring immediate medical attention, 911 will be called and the church’s designated support person will be notified. The church’s designated support person is responsible for contacting the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child or youth as well as the Senior Minister.
8. All Adult Leaders must be 21 years of age or older.
9. All Adult Leaders are responsible for finding an approved substitute Adult Leader for the class or activity that they are leading or supervising in the event that they are going to be absent.
10. Ministries, events and activities for children and youth, including transporting children or youth, will be supervised by two unrelated, approved Adult Leaders. Should unanticipated circumstances result in an Adult Leader being alone with children or youth, that adult will immediately report those circumstances to the Senior Minister.
 - a. No Adult Leader may serve as an Adult Leader for a ministry, event or activity for children or youth without first going through the screening process outlined in this Covenant and then receiving the approval of the Church Council. Likewise, no Volunteer may serve as a Volunteer for a ministry, event or activity for children or youth without first going through the screening process outlined in this Covenant and then receiving the approval of the Church Council.
 - b. All Adult Leaders and Volunteers are expected to comply with this Covenant during ministries, events and activities. Adult Leaders are expected to supervise the conduct of the Adult and Non-Adult Volunteers during the particular ministry, event or activity to see that the Volunteers’ conduct complies with this Policy.
 - c. Youth and Children may from time to time ask or be asked to assist Adult Leaders with ministries, events or activities with children and/or youth. Youths sixteen-years-old and older who serve as volunteers assisting Adult Leaders will go through the screening process outlined in this Policy.
 - d. At the discretion of the Youth Director, one approved Adult Leader is permitted per vehicle when transporting youth 13 and older, provided there are at least two youth per vehicle and every reasonable attempt is made to keep all vehicles in sight of one another.
11. Adult Leaders shall be defined as: Sunday School Teachers, Junior Church Leaders, Youth Leadership Team members, Adult Leaders with the Music Program, and the like. Volunteers shall be defined as: chaperones, special event volunteers, mission trip volunteers, volunteers age 16-21, and the like. Children and youth shall be defined from birth to 18 years old.
12. Adult Leaders will have access to allergy or emergency medical information for each of the children and youth that they are serving. This information is private and will only be used in the event of an emergency.
13. Middle School or High School students who would like to assist the two Adult Leaders with Junior Church or classes for younger children that meet during worship, must inform his or her parent(s), along with a church leader ahead of time.
14. Firearms and concealed weapons are prohibited at any church activity. Special exceptions may apply for off-duty police officers or others required to carry firearms. Any exception must be approved by the Senior Minister.
15. Any programs, trips or events that involve children or youth must be approved by the Church Council and the Senior Minister.
16. No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the Church Council and the Senior Minister.
17. First aid kits will be stocked and available in spaces where children or youth programming takes place. Adult Leaders will know where these first aid kits are located. No volunteer or staff member will give medications.

18. The computers of the Union Baptist Church will have adequate password protection. Adequate supervision will be given to anyone using the Internet on a computer at the Union Baptist Church. Any activity on one of the church's computers is not considered private and may be accessed by authorized persons. The visiting or viewing of inappropriate websites or materials as well as the conduction of illegal activities is prohibited on church computers.
19. No one, under any circumstance, will:
 - a. Provide children or youth with alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs or pornography;
 - b. Consume alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children's or youth event;
 - c. Be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or the misuse of legal drugs at any children's or youth event;
 - d. Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior;
 - e. Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth;
 - f. Discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth;
 - g. Tell jokes or make comments that are sexual or disrespectful of others.

**SCREENING AND SELECTION FOR MINISTRY
WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

The Union Baptist Church will perform background checks on all clergy and staff who are called and hired to serve. Background checks will also be done on any employees, Adult Leaders or Volunteers who work regularly with children or youth.

Background Checks will include the following:

- a. A written application which includes reading and signing this safe church covenant;
- b. A public records check;
- c. An interview;
- d. Reference checks.

Volunteers with children or youth must be approved by the Church Council after they participate in the application process

Each year the Union Baptist church will conduct a review of these practices and policies. This document will be posted in areas where activities for children and youth take place. This document will be given to parents and signed by all adults who work with children or youth.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

All church staff, Adult Leaders and Volunteers who work with children or youth are required to attend training as appropriate to their role on how to prevent child abuse and promote healthy boundaries in church settings and during church activities. The Union Baptist Church will keep a record of those who have attended such training. All church staff, Adult Leaders and Volunteers who work with children or youth will participate in training every three years.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Anyone who knows of a violation of this Policy shall immediately report the violation to the Senior Minister. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies on the part of a staff member should also report these violations to the Executive Minister of ABCCONN and the Connecticut Department of Children & Families.

The Pastoral Staff of the Union Baptist Church, upon hearing reports of violations of this Policy shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and are responsible for taking appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer ministry with the church.

Anyone who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place, whether at the Union Baptist Church or away from church, shall report it to the Senior Minister and report to the appropriate civil authority. Anonymous reports may also be made directly to the appropriate civil authority.

CONTACT LIST

Senior Minister, Rev. Dr. Lonnie A. Brown (860) 536-9659

ABCCONN (860) 521-5421

Groton Police Department (860) 441-6712 Mystic Fire Department (860) 572-7567

Mystic River Ambulance Association (860) 572-0581 Connecticut Poison Control Center (800) 222-1222

The phone number to report suspected child abuse in Connecticut is:

Connecticut Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline
(800) 842-2288

Applicant's Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date