

Union Baptist Church Child Safeguarding Policy

Vision

The following Bible verses serve as the guiding principles for Union Baptist Church's ("UBC" or "church") ministry to children:

Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates."—Deuteronomy 6:4-9

...Love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.—Leviticus 19:18b

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.—2 Timothy 3:14-15

General Purpose Statement

UBC seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of UBC from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations. We also seek to do the following:

- Support and encourage parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children. (Ephesians 6:4)
- Make the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Pray for the children and rely on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word. (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Live faithfully before the children and model for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us. (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- Encourage children to learn to serve and to not just be served. (Mark 10:43-45)
- Maintain high ethical standards, thereby expecting volunteers and teachers to live and serve above reproach and protect the reputation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Prepare children to one day walk with God as adults, involves training them to participate in our public services and ministries, helping them spiritually mature to become fully participating adult members.

Staff and Volunteer Expectations

All Children's Ministry staff and volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them.
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives.
- Ministering to the children.

- Understanding that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children.

Child Protection

One of our primary concerns is the safety of children. To this end we:

- Screen all Children's Ministry volunteers.
- Perform background checks on all full-time church staff, regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.
- Require training for all Children's Ministry staff and volunteers.
- Use a parent/guardian authentication and identification system.
- Employ scheduling procedures and volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety.
- Educate our staff and volunteers to recognize suspected child abuse, require them to understand and follow any applicable reporting laws, and encourage them to report suspected abuse to church officials.
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for participation in Children's Ministry programs (see "Health and Safety Guidelines" below).
- Adhere to a two-volunteer per room policy whenever possible.
- Equip our volunteers to know how to evacuate children safely or shelter in place in case of an emergency.

Personnel Definitions

- "Child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- "Adults" are individuals eighteen years or older.
- "Staff" are paid employees of the church.
- "Volunteers" are adults who work with children and are not in the employment of the church. This includes childcare workers, team leaders, teachers, coaches, coordinators, and anyone else who serves the children.
- "Helpers" are minors who are at least one grade older than the children they are assisting and are assisting in some area of Children's Ministry alongside an adult. Helpers do not count towards the adult-to-child ratios.
- "Deacons/Deaconess" are elected officers of the church who serve the church by assisting in various areas of ministry.
- The "Lead Pastor" is an elected officer of the church who serves the church by providing teaching and leadership to the congregational as a whole.
- The "Children's Ministry Committee" is a standing committee comprised of the Deacons and the Board of Education. As designated by UBC's bylaws, the pastor is an ex-officio member of the committee.

Policy Dissemination

This Policy shall be disseminated widely to the church community through publications, public discussion, educational opportunities, training programs, and other appropriate means of communication that will raise awareness and create a safe environment for our children.

Specifically, the most current version of our Policy shall be:

- Posted on the church website
- Readily available in the church office

- Communicated to every member semi-annually via email
- Included in new-member packets
- Distributed to local schools and local law enforcement

This church requires all staff, volunteers working with children, parents, and church leaders to sign an affirmation that they have read and agree to abide by the terms of this Policy, as a precondition to engagement with the church or receiving access to children. The affirmation will be reviewed and signed annually at the start of each school year. Affirmations will be stored in the church's office files, and a copy will be given to the signee as well.

Selection of Workers

All volunteers and helpers who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. Any staff, deacons, and pastors/elders will be screened as part of the appointment/hiring process. The following selection process must be followed for new workers and screening procedures will be repeated every five years:

a) Six Month Rule

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with UBC for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant to work with children.

b) Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by UBC. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous UBC affiliation, references and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions other than traffic or parking violations regardless of location or timeframe of conviction. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at UBC.

c) Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, the Children's Ministry Committee may schedule and conduct a face-to-face interview with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d) Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at UBC.

e) Criminal Background Check

A criminal records check is required for all pastors/elders, staff (regardless of position), deacons, and "volunteers" as defined above. Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to perform the background check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he or she will not be permitted to work with children. A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be

determined by the Children's Ministry Committee on a case-by-case basis in light of all relevant circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at UBC.

f) **Social Media Search**

Applicants must provide UBC with all known names, email addresses, and screen names for social media accounts (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest). If Internet or social media searches reveal concerning information, such as sexually explicit photos or videos or sexual language, or activity indicative of child sexual "grooming," or other concerning behaviors, the applicant will not be allowed to work with children.

Teenage Workers ("Helpers")

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14.
- Must be the children of church members, but may or may not be members of the church themselves.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Training

UBC will provide training regarding this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these additional training events.

Classroom Management Guidelines

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

At the beginning of each ministry year, UBC will create a registration for any child who attends children's ministry activities and programs. The registration will record each child's name, contact information, best phone number to reach parents or caregivers during church events, allergies, persons who may safely pick-up a child from an event, and other helpful information about the child. Attendance will be taken at all events. Once a child's attendance is recorded for an event, it is the church's responsibility to supervise those children from the time they are dropped off until the time they are picked up by a designated caregiver.

For children below third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "child check" for the child similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the "child check" in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the "child check," the pastor or a member of the Board of Education will be contacted. The pastor or board

member will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the relevant circumstances with the parent or guardian.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our children's ministry programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Discipline Policy

All Children's Ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by proper preparation before each event, pro-actively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior may include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privileges or activities for a brief time, or separating a child from the situation or problem for a brief time (particularly if the child's behavior is endangering or upsetting other children). During correction, a child should never be removed from the classroom. Correction should be discrete; in the classroom (not in the hallway); and never outside of the sight of others. Steps of correction might include (depending on the age of the child): (1) removing the child from the situation or problem; (2) pointing out the problematic behavior and communicating with the child regarding the proper behavior in light of Jesus' teachings; (3) praying for the child and redirecting to a new activity; and (4) helping the child to reconcile with the offended children when appropriate. Volunteers should view misbehavior as an opportunity to introduce children to the gospel. Children's Ministry volunteers and staff members are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.

If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, the volunteer or staff should contact the parents. If the child assaults, harasses or bullies other children, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehavior, the parents should be immediately contacted so the child can be removed. Volunteers, staff or deacons are allowed to physically restrain a child if the child is physically endangering other children.

Diaper Changing and Restroom Guidelines

Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children prior to signing them

into the classroom. Volunteers will change diapers at least once or as needed during children's ministry activities. Both men and women are allowed to change diapers. Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer.

At check-in and drop-off, parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty-trained. Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available and the child is potty-trained. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to Sunday School or other children's ministry classes/events.

Physical Touch Policy

Two types of relationships are important to consider: volunteer-to-child and child/teen-to-child.

Volunteer-to-Child

While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or showing godly love and care, it can also be misinterpreted. Particularly in our interaction with children, we want to be blameless and above reproach. The following will help workers avoid any compromise or concerns in this area.

- Always remain in open sight of other adults.
- Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children and develops a sense of emotional security and maturity in their interactions with adults. Appropriate touch is applied to meet the needs of children and not the adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.
- Inappropriate touch involves, but is not limited to coercion or other forms of physical contact which exploits the child's lack of knowledge, satisfies adult physical needs at the expense of the child, violates laws against sexual or physical contact between adult and child, and any attempt to modify child behavior with physical force.
- For ages 2 thru 5, only women can take children to the restroom.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages 0 to 5.

- In general, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- Volunteers should refrain from rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing, massaging, or any physical activity that might make a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Only touch children in “safe” areas and for a brief time. “Safe” areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of the head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is private or personal, unless when necessary while assisting in a diaper change or restroom visit.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else’s child.

Child/Teen-to-Child

- No male or female under eighteen should ever be alone together with a child while in Children’s Ministry.
- No inappropriate touching (as defined above and in the appendix) of any kind will be accepted.
- Fighting between children, whether child-to-child or teen-to-child, will not be tolerated. Any child participating in violent action will be dismissed from a class/program and placed into his or her parent’s care.

Parents in the Classroom

If a child would feel more at ease with a parent who is not serving as a staff member or volunteer at a children’s ministry event or in the classroom, this is allowed temporarily (for a few minutes), especially for visitors or children who are going through separation anxiety. If this goes beyond a few minutes and the child cannot remain without the parents, the parents should remove the child from the classroom. While accompanying their children, a parent should be kindly but firmly dismissed if the parent is causing difficulty or presenting concerns for the welfare of the class.

Extra Attention

Staff are prohibited from displaying favoritism toward a child or group of children. Staff may not give gifts to individual children unless the gifts are:

- Able to be given to other children at other times for similar reasons (e.g., gifts to graduating seniors; a new Bible for students entering middle school; end of the year thank-you gifts to older children who volunteered in the nursery)
- Signed from the church rather than the individual staff member
- Given together with another staff member
- A personal gift from a staff member that meets social expectations and does not signify preferential treatment

In cases where staff believe that a child would benefit from extra attention, staff should be able to articulate a clear reason for providing extra attention to a child that focuses on the child’s needs, not staff needs. Staff must receive authorization from a supervisor before providing extra attention to a child. In cases where there is no supervisor (e.g., staff member is the lead pastor), staff should alert a colleague of the plan and request that the colleague function in the role of a supervisor. When possible, supervisors might organize a rotation of staff and volunteers so that

extra attention is not provided solely by one individual. Staff providing extra attention must always abide by the Child Safeguarding Policy, and supervisors should periodically reevaluate the situation to determine if extra attention is still necessary.

Sexual Language

UBC acknowledges that sexual language is more than mere jokes, but a serious boundary violation. As such, the following are prohibited:

- Sexually suggestive language, racy jokes, sexual innuendo, descriptions of sexual experiences/habits
- Uploading, downloading, or viewing of pornography
- Music, video games, and movies with sexual themes.

If the church staff or volunteers want to give a lecture or organize a program to help youth understand age-appropriate questions about their body or sexuality, the event must be planned in advance and parents notified beforehand. When children or teens raise questions about their body or sexuality, UBC volunteers and staff will answer the question at hand in an age-appropriate way and inform a supervisor.

UBC encourages positive verbal interactions, including encouragement, kind words, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes.

Health and Safety Guidelines

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at UBC. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child in UBC's care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be allowed to participate in Children's ministry programs: Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours; green or yellow runny nose; eye or skin infections; and/or other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease. Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children, and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of UBC not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered only by a parent. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with a Children's Ministry Committee member to develop a plan of action.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Security and Emergency Response

In emergency situations, if appropriate, 911 will be called to secure help and workers will summon staff and volunteers to the Children's Ministry area(s) to assist with the emergency.

Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire, a deacon/deaconess, staff, or volunteer should call 911 and also assist all children in immediately evacuating the building. Deacon/deaconess, team leader or staff will also summon the security team to assist staff, deacons, volunteers and teachers with evacuation. Staff and key responders will help keep parents away from the children's floors. Parents should not report to the children's floors because they risk creating chaos and blocking the exit stairwells for children. Instead, parents will meet their children in the designated areas outside of the church building. Evacuation information is located on all of the floors. Volunteers and parents should familiarize themselves with this information.

A Live Threat

A live threat includes a shooting or some other type of security hazard.

Step 1: Volunteers and Staff Evacuate Children

- As soon as staff, deacon/deaconess or a volunteer is confronted with a real threat, they respond immediately.
- If it is safe to do so, the first course of action should be to evacuate the building.

Step 2: Volunteers and Staff Communicate the Danger

- When it is safe to do so, whoever sees or hears the live threat should notify the deacon/deaconess, team leader, or staff about the problem. Staff, the team leader or deacon/deaconess will then notify the remaining volunteers about the live threat.
- When it is safe to do so, staff, deacon/deaconess or volunteer should call 911. Give the following information: Location and the nature of the threat. If shots have been fired tell police we have an "active shooter." Police are trained specifically to respond to an active shooter.

Step 3: Hide

- If running is not a safe option, hide in as safe a place as possible.
- Close the door, including the top portion of each door and pull the latch down.
- Barricade the doors with heavy furniture.
- Close and lock windows and close blinds.
- Turn off the lights.

- Silence all electronic devices.
- Maintain silence.
- Have children lie or sit on the floor away from the door. If possible, stay out of sight of any interior windows.

Step 4: Staff or Volunteers fight the Live Threat

- If neither running nor hiding is a safe option, as a last resort, when confronted by a shooter or some other danger, adults in immediate danger should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as a fire extinguisher or chairs.
- Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to confront the potential danger.

After the area has been made safe and secure by police, staff will communicate an “all clear” sign to anyone who is in lock-down mode.

Missing Child or Kidnapping

In the case of a missing child, the staff will first do a thorough check of the Children’s Ministry area(s) to make sure the child is not in another part of the building. If the child is not found after a thorough check of the Children’s Ministry area(s) then summon the key responders, each of whom will then block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff or the pastor who oversees children. Other volunteers will continue to search for the child until they are found. If the child is not found, the staff or deacons will call police to secure further help.

In the case of a kidnapping, staff, deacon/deaconess or the team leader should call 911 to secure help from the police and summon the key responders, each of whom will then block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff or an elder.

Parent involvement in Emergency Procedures

The deacons or Board of Education will decide how and when to notify parents about security or emergency situations. Involving parents too early might cause unnecessary fears or panic. If an emergency does happen, parents will need guidance, pastoral care and counseling, so we rely on a pastor/elder or a deacon/deaconess to walk with parents through difficult situations.

Policy Violations

UBC takes policy violations seriously. Any staff, volunteer, parent, or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to respond in an appropriate way. UBC expects all adults to practice bystander intervention when they see a policy violation. Bystander intervention means that the problematic behavior should be named, the policy rules explained, and the individual redirected toward safer behavior. Policy exceptions should be rare. UBC allows policy exceptions that are preapproved or for emergencies. All exceptions should be documented. Church leaders will respond to all documented violations according to the following:

LOOKING AT THE DOCUMENTATION, FIRST ASK: Does the violation fit the legal definition of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse? Does the violation raise suspicion of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse?

- **YES** → Document the violation and report the abuse to the legal authorities
- **NO** → Ask, Is the violation minor? Has it occurred only once? Has the individual been receptive to redirection and compliant thereafter?
 - **YES** → Move on
 - **NO** → Escalate the response: Follow up with the person violating the Policy for further education

FOLLOWING THE MEETING, ASK: Has your meeting given you cause for increased concern? Has the individual continued to violate the policy? Is there a suspicion of child abuse? Is there an allegation of child abuse?

- **YES** → Report (in the case of abuse disclosure or suspicion and/or enact a Limited Access Agreement)
- **NO** → Document, follow up with the case periodically

Limited Access Agreements

UBC utilizes Limited Access Agreements to clarify safe behavior around children for community members who have engaged in concerning or risky behavior and/or have violated the Policy repeatedly. These agreements may also be used for offenses that are not related to children (e.g., stealing, drug use, DUI, etc.)

A Limited Access Agreement is a written and agreed-upon boundary between an individual and UBC wherein we outline specific concerns about an individual's behavior, detail appropriate behavior toward children, and plan ongoing accountability for the individual. Limited Access Agreements apply to members of the church. They do not apply to known offenders (see section below, "Sexual Offenders in the Church"). They also do not apply to church staff members, as they will be formally warned and then fired if the violation occurs again.

Defining Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child, that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child. Physical discipline, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child.
- Emotional abuse – acts toward a child that cause or have a substantial likelihood of causing harm to the child's physical, psychological, social, spiritual, or moral development. Emotional abuse might include, but is not limited to, patterns of restricting a child's movement, discrimination (e.g. serving snacks to all the children in a youth group except for one child or one group of children), blaming, belittling, denigrating, ridiculing, humiliating, threatening or scaring, unrealistic expectations and demands, and other non-physical forms of hostility or bullying.

- Sexual abuse – any physical contact with a sexual or intimate part of the body, or other forms of sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, which is conducted without consent or engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse.
 - Physical contact includes touching, grabbing, patting, slapping, pinching, rubbing, fondling, groping, poking, or other forms of contact, whether over or under clothing. It also includes sexual intercourse of any kind, as well as rubbing one’s genital area up against another person or touching another person with one’s genitals, whether over or under clothing. This includes instances when an individual acts as though the rubbing was inadvertent but was in fact intentional.
 - Sexual or intimate body parts include, but are not limited to, breasts, buttocks, genitals, groin area, and upper thighs.
 - Other forms of sexual activity include photographing, videotaping, or making any other visual, descriptive, or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person’s body. This also includes displaying to another any writings, photographs, videotape, or other visual or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person’s body.
 - Lack of consent includes explicit indication of lack of consent and physical/verbal force or intimidation, whether express or implicit. There can also be circumstances making it obvious that consent has not been granted, such as if one individual is an adult and one individual is a child, since children cannot legally consent to sexual activity with an adult; being too intoxicated to say “no”; being asleep; lack of knowledge of the activity’s occurrence; and otherwise not having the physical or mental capacity to consent.
- Spiritual abuse – any abuse administered under the guise of religion. Examples include the use of religious ideology, precepts, tradition, or sacred texts to harm a child; compelling a child to engage in religious acts against his or her will; abuse that occurs in a religious context or is perpetuated by a religious leader; and the invocation of divine authority to manipulate a child into meeting the needs of the abuser.
- Neglect – the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child’s health, safety, and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardized. Neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations.

Identifying Child Abuse

UBC takes all indicators and suspicions of child maltreatment seriously. We are aware of the research that indicates children who are maltreated in one way are at significantly increased risk of being maltreated in multiple ways. Therefore, as our church becomes aware of an indicator or report of a child being maltreated in one way, we will be alert to the possibility that this child might also be maltreated in another way. We will take steps to protect the child from known risks and be extra attentive to and supportive of the child. (For more information on indicators of abuse, see Appendix A, “Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse and Child Maltreatment”.) Though a child’s injuries may be hidden from the untrained eye, child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment can result in immediate and/or lasting impact in all realms of the persons’ well-being. Understanding how child sexual abuse can traumatize the child and have lasting impact in the life of a surviving adult is a critical first step in preventing abuse and responding

compassionately. Not every child will display the impact of their maltreatment and not every adult will experience the long-term consequences of their traumatic childhood experiences, but all are at risk. (For more information, see Appendix B, “Impact of Child Maltreatment”.) Because children and adult survivors are reluctant to disclose abuse, UBC acknowledges that survivors who choose to do so need our community’s utmost support. (For more information on how to respond to abuse disclosures, see Appendix C, “Responding to Abuse Disclosures”.)

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at UBC becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the pastor for further action. In Ohio, members of the clergy, including pastors and church leaders, have a mandatory duty to report known or suspected child abuse. This duty is established under Ohio Revised Code § 2151.421, which requires that any cleric or person designated by a church as a leader, official, or delegate on behalf of the church who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or faces a threat of suffering abuse or neglect must report that information to the appropriate authorities, such as a public children services agency or a peace officer. This mandatory duty also applies to a “person, other than a cleric, rendering spiritual treatment through prayer in accordance with the tenets of a well-recognized religion.” The statute does not provide an exception for information obtained through confidential communications or confessions made to clergy members. This means that the mandatory reporting requirement applies even if the information was received in a confidential context.

This mandatory report must be made in the county where the child resides or in the county where the abuse/neglect is occurring or has occurred. The reporter can also call 855-642-4453, which will link callers directly to a child welfare or law enforcement office in their county. If possible, the report should include the name and address of the child you suspect is being abused or neglected; the age of the child; the name and address of the parents or caretakers; the name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the child and the address if available; the reason you suspect the child is being abused and neglected; and any other information which may be helpful to the investigation. You have the option of giving your name or reporting anonymously. Giving your name can help the investigator clarify information. The agency will not give your name to the person suspected of abusing the child. If anyone filing a report needs help reporting to the proper authorities, the ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline (800-422-4453) provides confidential guidance to callers who are considering filing a report. They offer crisis intervention, educational information, and referrals to emergency, social service, and support resources.

The abuse of children is not only a sin; it is also a serious crime. When adults report suspected child abuse to the legal authorities, their report could save a child’s life. In contrast, silence about suspected abuse brings incredible harm to victims and emboldens offenders. UBC encourages its members, both mandated reporters and not, to contact the authorities immediately when a child discloses abuse, they witness child abuse, or they observe signs of abuse.

Child Abuse Response Procedure

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at UBC or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and UBC will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the church will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The church will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.
8. Under the following circumstances, UBC will consult with a child protection expert to determine if an independent review should be pursued: A) When a suspicion of child maltreatment is reported to the civil authorities and they decline to investigate or prosecute the alleged abuses; or B) A district attorney has not pursued legal prosecution because no suspected criminal behavior is reported; however, the Children's Ministry Committee believes the individual's behavior might still violate the church policy, be immoral, be inappropriate, or be unsafe. If an investigation is deemed necessary, UBC will retain an organization that is completely independent of the church, is experienced in proper investigation techniques, and is up-to-date on child maltreatment research.

Ongoing Survivor Support

The purpose of this policy is to prevent occurrences of child abuse. Yet we understand that no matter how hard we try to protect children, there will always be individuals seeking to harm children. If UBC becomes aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been, abused, they will take the following steps to clearly communicate support for the child and the child's family:

Terminate/Suspend: Immediately suspend or terminate the alleged perpetrator of abuse from any church positions he/she may hold, pending the results of an investigation and assign a liaison to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator.

Support Person: A member of the church's leadership will be designated as a "Support Person(s)" and will reach out to the child and the child's family within 24 hours of learning of the abuse to express the church's unequivocal support. Understanding that the abuse can have

ongoing impact on a child and the child's family, the Support Person will seek permission from the child and the child's family to continue offering support on an ongoing basis. This support will include:

- Showing up
- Listening
- Affirming
- Offering to accompany the child/family in filing a police report, meeting with Child Protective Services, to court hearings or trial and other related meetings, interviews, or hearings
- Asking the child and the child's family how else the church can offer support.

Support Persons will understand the limitations of their role and will not offer therapeutic, legal, or other expert advice, but will instead function as members of a multidisciplinary team, working when possible to support and complement the efforts of involved professionals to support the child and family. For instance, a child who has been abused may have theological questions or experience spiritual injuries, but at the same time, may find comfort in spirituality, prayer, and other forms of religious engagement. The pastor has a unique role to fill in that situation and will make himself available to provide regular ongoing pastoral support to the child and the child's family.

Support Persons will be careful to avoid causing further harm, and under no circumstances—even when the abuse is alleged and not proven—will Support Persons:

- Place any portion of blame for the abuse on the child or the child's family
- Probe for intimate details of the abuse
- Express disbelief of the child
- Attempt to silence the child or the child's family in any way or for any reason
- Encourage noncompliance with the law
- Express support of the perpetrator
- Urge reconciliation with or forgiveness of the perpetrator

Mental Health Treatment: The church will offer to help the family find a qualified mental health practitioner with expertise treating victims of abuse and their family members. If the family requires assistance paying for mental health treatment, the church may offer to subsidize such treatment or connect the family with resources that may be able to assist in this regard.

Creating a Culture of Ongoing Support for Victims of Childhood Abuse: Our church aims to create a space that is safe for all victims of childhood abuse—both those we know about and those we don't. To this end, the church will do the following:

- Create and distribute a referral list of local organizations and therapists who specialize in sexual abuse prevention and treatment
- Publicize the Policy, communicating that this institution takes child protection seriously and does not tolerate abuse
- Post the contact information for church leaders who are available to answer any questions about child safety

Child Sex Offenders in the Church

When An Alleged or Convicted Child Sex Offender Attends UBC or a UBC Related Activity

If UBC's pastor, deacons, or children's ministry staff learn in advance that an alleged or convicted child sex offender is wanting to attend a UBC service:

- The Children's Ministry Committee must decide whether to permit him or her to attend church services or other UBC related activities. Admission of the offender will be based on factors such as extent and history of prior convictions, and his or her willingness to follow guidelines set out by this Policy. This is not a comprehensive list of admission criteria.
- A member of the Children's Ministry Committee (or a designated member of UBC) will contact the offender letting him or her know that he or she must be accompanied at all time while on UBC's property or anywhere in UBC's building.

If an alleged or convicted child sex offender participates in any UBC related activity or public service that has the possibility of children being present:

- The pastor and any church leadership serving that day should be notified.
- The Children's Ministry Committee will designate UBC members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on UBC's property or anywhere in UBC's buildings.
- He or she will not be allowed beyond the first floor of the church and will not be allowed in areas of the church where children's ministry activities are being held. He or she must stay away from the nursery and the basement, where children's classes meet.
- The Children's Ministry Committee will work with members to prepare guidelines for UBC related activities that are not held on church property.

When An Alleged or Convicted Child Sex Offender Attends Regularly

If an alleged or convicted Child Sex offender chooses to attend UBC services regularly:

- The pastor, elders, and deacons will be notified.
- UBC reserves the right to forbid anyone from coming onto church property for worship services, programs or activities. When participating in church activities on church property but outside of the church building, the same guidelines apply.
- The child sex offender should provide a member of the Children's Ministry committee with the name of his/her reporting parole or post-release control officer if the offender is still under such required supervision. Someone from the Children's Ministry Committee will contact the law enforcement officer to obtain information about 1) the underlying offense – offenders tend to minimize their offenses, and 2) the decision regarding the offender's participation at UBC and to ensure offender compliance while at the church.

When A Child Sex Offender Seeks Membership at UBC

If the child sex offender seeks membership at UBC, the pastor and deacons retain a right to refuse membership. If the pastor and deacons offer membership to a child sex offender, it will be conditional on his or her agreement to:

- Verify the history of offenses, convictions, and adjudication of sexual offenses and disclose them to the UBC pastor/deacons and the members of the Children's Ministry Committee

- A member of the Children's Ministry Committee contacting his/her supervising law enforcement officer to confirm the underlying offenses and the specific terms of supervision.
- The church staff conducting a thorough criminal background check. If the information provided by the offender differs from the information given by the local police/court authorities or gathered by the staff, that will be grounds for denying membership.
- Refrain from any form of communication (including phone, IM, texting, e-mail, social media or any type of technology), social fellowship, physical contact, mentoring, baby-sitting, or coaching with children or youth or participate in any activities or programs related to children or youth both inside and outside of the church.
- The Children's Ministry Committee will designate UBC members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on UBC's property or anywhere in UBC's building or in attendance at any church related services, activities or gatherings where there is a possibility of children being present.
- Any other reasonable restrictions that the pastor and deacons determine are appropriate given the circumstances.
- A warning that the church will report any suspected activity to local police authorities.
- A warning that any violation of the code of conduct (including allegations or suspicion of abusive behavior) can result in discipline and banning from the church facilities or any church related programs and activities.
- Signing a written agreement that details all of these terms, plus anything else that the deacons or the Children's Ministry Committee deem important to include.

Other Guidelines About Sexual Offenders

If a convicted child sex offender applies for a volunteer or staff position that involves ministry to children, he or she will be denied by the church.

If a child sex offender does not disclose a former allegation, conviction or adjudication, and it is revealed later, the offender will be removed from any staff or volunteer position immediately and may be removed from membership as well.

If a sexual offender is a minor, the church reserves the right to bar that minor from any children or youth activities, and will follow the guidelines set out above for any sexual offender who seeks participation in church-related public services, programs or activities.

Appendix A: Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse and Child Maltreatment

Union Baptist Church is familiar with and attentive to potential indicators of child sexual abuse. As the church's frontline for children's and youth programming and pastoral counseling, church professionals and volunteers have regular opportunities to observe children's behavior, family dynamics, and caregiving styles. They are often privy to the intimate details of congregants' lives. Unlike formal educators, church professionals have ongoing contact with the entire family unit and its acquaintances, and as such may be in the unique position to detect child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment. Therefore, we have compiled the following list of indicators for sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect to help our professionals and volunteers identify potential cases of abuse.

Physical Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Difficulty, pain, or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom
- Discharge from the penis or vagina
- Injuries, itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy

Atypical Sexual Behaviors in Children

- Placing mouth on sex part
- Asking others to engage in sexual acts
- Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse
- Undressing others, especially if done forcefully
- Imitating sexual positions with dolls
- Inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain
- Manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets
- Making sexual sounds
- Inserting tongue in mouth when kissing

Emotional or Behavioral Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Depression; emotionless or passive behavior; withdrawal from family, friends, church, or school; exhibiting low self-esteem or self-loathing
- Lack of attachment to a caregiver; displaying distrust or wariness at the approach of adults, caregivers, or specific people; fear of going home that may manifest by arriving at youth groups early, staying late, and appearing frightened or upset when it is time to return home
- Being constantly watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Sudden changes in behavior, including academic changes
- Extremes in behavior, such as over-compliance, overachieving or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or behaving more responsibly than would be expected of a child that age
- Aggressive, destructive, demanding, or disruptive behavior; frequent and inexplicable anger, rebellion, or running away

- Self-degradation; self-injury or wearing long sleeves on hot days (to hide bruising or other injuries); suicide attempts
- Delays in emotional, cognitive, physical, or academic development
- Unwillingness to change for or participate in certain youth department activities such as a gym night or swim program
- Being inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or infantile (rocking or head-banging)
- Bed-wetting in children who have previously outgrown it; nightmares; difficulty sleeping
- Exhibiting high anxiety, including through physical problems associated with anxiety, such as chronic stomach pain or headaches
- Frequent, unexplained absences at school

Indicators of Possible Physical Abuse

- Frequent injuries of any kind (bruises, cuts, fractures, burns)
- Especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of injury
- Injuries may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments
- Pay particular attention to injuries that present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body

Indicators of Possible Neglect

- Is obviously malnourished, listless, or fatigued
- Begs, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger
- Is consistently dirty or has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities) or serious educational needs
- Broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aid, or other necessary aids or equipment
- Has an untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Stays at school outside of school hours
- Frequently absent or significant academic struggles
- Is inappropriately left unsupervised
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs

Appendix B: Impact of Child Maltreatment

Impact on Emotional Health

Children who had suffered adverse childhood experiences were at an increased risk throughout their lifetime for obesity, smoking, illicit drug use, alcohol abuse, marrying an alcoholic spouse, early initiation of sexual activity, unintended or teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, anxiety disorder, depression, attempting suicide, experiencing domestic or sexual violence, difficulties with academics, employment, or relationships, hallucinations, memory disturbances, or sleep disturbances.

Impact on Physical Health

Children who had experience maltreatment were more likely to suffer from a variety of serious medical problems, including cancer, heart disease, lung disease, liver disease, autoimmune deficiencies, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and obesity as adults.

Impact on Spiritual Health

Spiritual injuries from child sexual abuse or child maltreatment might include negative shifts in victims' perception of God (e.g., perceiving God as cruel, unfair, punitive, and distant), a ruptured faith with God (e.g., feeling unloved by god), disruptions of faith (e.g., doubting God's existence), decreased involvement in organized religion, and a decline in spiritual well-being and functioning (e.g., feeling angry, guilty, or disconnected from one's sense of personal spirituality). Children who have suffered sexual abuse often endure spiritual injury and may feel guilty, doubtful of God's existence, or believe that God is unjust. Victims report a sense of enhanced betrayal when their abuser is a person they perceived as holy, and numerous studies have found that spiritual injuries are more pronounced in instances when the perpetrator is a member of the clergy.

Appendix C: Responding to Abuse Disclosures

When children disclose, they almost always do so tentatively or by accident, and may later recant even when there is proof that the abuse occurred. If questioned directly, many child victims may deny the abuse. When children disclose intentionally, children may first test the adult's reaction by pretending that the abuse happened to a friend or by supplying only a small bit of information. If a child discloses abuse to you, the following are helpful tips on how to respond in the moment.

- Stay calm.
- Show love and respect for the child.
- Thank the child for telling you and praise the child's courage.
- If the child expresses guilt or concerns about getting in trouble, reassure the child that no matter what happened he or she is not to blame.
- If the child expresses concerns about not being believed, reassure the child that you believe him/her.
- Allow the child to talk freely; do not interrupt, ask the child to repeat words, or probe for details. Use open-ended questions such as "What happened next?" or "Tell me more."
- Do not offer false assurances, such as promising to keep the child's disclosure a secret.
- Let the child know what to expect next and incorporate their input where possible.
- Protect the child immediately from the suspected offender.
- Report the abuse to authorities and your supervisors/church leaders.
- Document the disclosure and your report.
- Protect the child's right to privacy and avoid the urge to turn indiscriminately to colleagues, friends, or family for advice. Instead turn to professionals experienced in handling cases of child sexual abuse and to carefully selected individuals who can provide assistance and support to the child and you.

Receiving an adult's abuse disclosure is an honor, not a burden; it is a sign of trust. Victims often choose to disclose their abuse years, even decades, after it occurred. Union Baptist Church encourages anyone receiving an adult's abuse disclosure to be guided by the following responses:

DO Say	DON'T Say
Thank you for telling me.	Why are you telling me this?
I'm glad you're safe now.	Why didn't you (scream/stop him, etc.)?
You did the right thing (asking for help, telling me, reporting the abuse, etc.)	What do you mean when you say he abused you? What exactly did he do?
I'm glad you're talking with me.	Tell me more details about what happened.
I'm sorry this happened to you. How can I help?	Why did he do that to you? Had you done something to make him think that was okay?
Take as much time as you need.	You need to forgive and move on.
Things may never be the same, but they can get better.	Don't worry, it's going to be all right.
I am here.	It'll take some time, but you'll get over it.
I stand with you. This congregation stands with you.	Calm down and try to relax.

<i>The following should only be said if the victim indicates these concerns are on his/her mind.</i>	
It is okay to be angry.	You should get on with your life.
It is okay to still love your abuser.	Time heals all wounds.
It's understandable you're feeling that way.	Out of tragedies good things happen.
Your reaction is not an uncommon response.	You're lucky that (fill in the blank) didn't happen.
You're not going crazy. These are normal reactions following an assault.	It was God's will. I know how you feel.
I believe you.	Perhaps you misunderstood...
It wasn't your fault.	Better to receive punishment in this world than the next.