

**Safe Sanctuary Protection Policy**  
**Laingsburg United Methodist Church**  
*Child, Youth and Vulnerable Persons*

**Introduction**

The Detroit Annual Conference has adopted a policy for the protection of babies, children, youth, and vulnerable persons in local churches.

Thus, in covenant with God and with United Methodist congregations, and in light of its commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Laingsburg UMC affirms its commitment to the safety of babies, children, youth, and vulnerable persons and adopts this policy.

**Purpose**

The Laingsburg United Methodist Church's purpose for adopting this baby, child, youth, and vulnerable persons safety policy and supporting procedures is to demonstrate its commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of its children, youth, and vulnerable persons.

As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, the Laingsburg United Methodist Church is committed to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of its babies, children, youth, and vulnerable persons, as well as all those who work with its babies, children, youth, and vulnerable persons. This policy and its supporting procedures will apply to all programs and events at the Laingsburg United Methodist Church and off-site church-sponsored programs.

- a) **Screening:** All adults 18 years of age and older who have a direct involvement with activities covered by this policy and its procedures will be screened by the Laingsburg UMC in accordance with the policy.
  - The screening required by this policy will be conducted at no cost to the applicants.
  - All persons who are subject to this policy will be rescreened every two (2) years after the initial screening
  - Rescreening also will be required upon a change of address within 45 days after the change of address.
  - Any person who has been screened but, for whatever reason, has not participated in any church activities, such as worship, Sunday School, etc., for one (1) year or more and then returns, will be rescreened within 45 days after returning to church activities and expressing an interest in volunteering to assist with activities covered by this policy and its supporting procedures
- b) **Training:** Training on this policy and its supporting procedures will be conducted for adults involved in baby, child and youth activities.
  - The training required by this policy will be conducted at no cost to the applicants.
- c) **Supervision:** All activities covered by this policy and its supporting procedures will be supervised by the appropriate number of designated workers, as defined by the policy.

## Conclusion

In all of our ministries with babies, children, youth, and vulnerable persons, the Laingsburg United Methodist Church is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each baby, child, youth, and vulnerable person will be “surrounded by steadfast love, established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal” (“Baptismal Covenant 11,” *United Methodist Hymnal*, p.44).

Approved by the Church Council on this \_\_22nd\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_February\_\_, 2015 for full implementation by the \_\_\_\_\_1st\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_September\_\_\_\_\_, 2015

---

Rev. Brian G. West  
Pastor

---

Jeffrey L. Holyfield  
Chair  
Church Council

**Procedures Implementing  
The Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Persons Safety Policy  
of  
Laingsburg United Methodist Church**

I. Procedures

A. Definition

1. **Activity:** The event or program in its entirety unless otherwise defined.
2. **Worker:** Any person who serves as an employee, volunteer, and/or is financially compensated and is 18 years of age or older.
3. **Helper:** Any youth, adult volunteer or visitor who assists the worker(s) but is not subject to the two-worker rule.
4. **Parent:** The legal parent and/or guardian of a baby, child or youth.
5. **Non-Legal Guardian:** Anyone other than a parent who has been designated as a responsible party for a baby, child or youth.
6. **Adult:** Anyone at least 18 years of age or older.
7. **Baby:** Anyone, birth to age 36 months (3 years).
8. **Child or Children:** Anyone age 36 months (3 years) through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade.
9. **Youth:** Anyone in grades sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) through twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) and less than 18 years of age.
10. **Vulnerable Person:** An individual who because of age, developmental disability, mental illness, or physical handicap requires supervision or personal care or lacks the personal and social skills required to live independently.
11. **Participation Covenant:** All activity workers are required to review the church's policy and sign a "Covenantal Participation Statement," verifying that he/she has read, understand, and plans to follow the church's policy.

B. Screening.

1. Who:
  - i. All appointed clergy
    1. Screening of appointed clergy by the Detroit Conference and/or the Crossroads District is deemed to be sufficient to meet the screening requirement of this policy.
  - ii. All paid staff members or employees who have a direct involvement with the programs and activities covered by this policy.
  - iii. Adult volunteers who have a direct involvement with the programs and activities covered by this policy.
2. How:
  - i. The persons to be screened pursuant to these procedures will provide the necessary information required on forms prepared by Laingsburg UMC (See Appendix I, Appendix II, and Appendix III).

- ii. All material requested on the forms must be supplied. No screening will be done for those submitting forms with incomplete or missing information
- iii. Any applicant who is likely to serve as the driver of a motor vehicle as part of an off-site church activity also is required to provide proof of a valid driver's license and proof of auto insurance for the vehicle(s) to be used in support of the off-site church activity.
  - 1. Copies of the applicant's driver's license and proof of insurance for the vehicle(s) that may be used will be retained in the applicant's file in the church office.
- iv. The completed forms will be submitted to the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee through the church office.
- v. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee is responsible for forwarding the information to a selected agency or service to conduct the background check.
- vi. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will forward the information to the selected agency or service within seven (7) days of receiving it.
- vii. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee is responsible for reviewing the results of an applicant's background check.
- viii. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will review the results of an applicant's background check within seven (7) days of receiving it from the selected agency or service.
- ix. After reviewing the results of the background check, the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will determine if:
  - 1. The results of the background check are satisfactory, e.g., no history of criminal behavior
  - 2. The results of the background check are questionable, e.g., a history of isolated or dated criminal behavior (criminal behavior that is 10 years or more older)
  - 3. The results of the background check are unsatisfactory, e.g., there is a history of criminal behavior
  - 4. No one shall be designated to serve as a worker if he/she is known to have been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to any crime arising out of any act or conduct involving sexual abuse, or any act of 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, incest, rape, assaults involving children, youth, or vulnerable persons, murder, kidnapping, pornography, sexual harassment, and the physical or sexual abuse of a baby, child, youth, or vulnerable person. This qualifying rule shall be applicable no matter how long ago the crime occurred.
- x. In instances where the results of an applicant's background check are satisfactory, though further information about the applicant is deemed necessary by the appointed clergy person, he/she and/or his/her designee

will conduct telephone or in person interviews with up to three (3) references provided by the applicant.

1. Necessary interviews will take place within seven (7) days after the review of the background check has been completed.
  2. Each interview will be conducted using a standard set of questions.
  3. The reference's responses to the questions will be noted and the questions and responses will be retained for the applicant's file.
  4. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will evaluate the responses from the interview(s).
    - a. In evaluating the responses, the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will focus primarily on the comments of the reference(s) about the applicant's character, integrity, and history of interactions with babies, children, youth, and vulnerable persons.
  5. After evaluating the responses, the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will determine if the applicant's background check and references support allowing the applicant to serve as a worker.
  6. After making that determination, the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will notify the applicant within seven (7) days.
  7. The notification to the applicant shall be verbal and written with the written notification provided to the applicant in person.
  8. In both communications, the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will notify the approved applicant of the two-year or change of address rescreening requirement.
  9. The approved applicant will be required to sign a document (see Appendix V) certifying the applicant has been informed of the determination and the two-year rescreening requirement.
  10. This document will include a date by which the rescreening must be completed and a tentative date to begin that process.
  11. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee shall maintain the deadline date for the rescreening process for the approved applicant and the tentative date to begin that process.
  12. Fourteen (14) days before the start of the tentative date to begin the process, the appointed clergy person and/or his/designee shall notify the approved applicant of the need to begin the rescreening process and provide necessary form(s).
- xi. In instances where the results of an applicant's background check are questionable, the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee shall convene a meeting with: the chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee or his/her designee; the chair of the Administrative Council or his/her designee; and the chair of the Trustees Committee or his/her designee. Other members of the congregation – except for the applicant – may be invited to the meeting at the discretion of the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee.

1. The meeting shall be conducted within seven (7) days after the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee have notified the participants of a need for the meeting.
2. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee shall maintain minutes of the meeting.
3. The minutes of the meeting shall be retained in the applicant's file.
4. The chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and/or his/her designee shall serve as the chair of the meeting.
5. During the meeting, those attending shall discuss the results of the applicant's background check and evaluate the information it provides and their personal experience and knowledge of the applicant in light of the church's policy in regard to the safety of babies, children, youth, and vulnerable persons.
6. After the discussion, those attending shall, by majority vote, choose from one of three options:
  - a. Based on their analysis of the information provided by the background check and their personal experience with and knowledge of the applicant, deem that the application be found to be "satisfactory" and to be processed through that procedure.
  - b. Invite the applicant to attend another meeting of the group to discuss the information in the background report. At that meeting, the applicant will be afforded the opportunity to offer his/her perspective on the information and to provide any documentation available to support that perspective.
    - i. This meeting will take place within seven (7) days after the group's initial meeting, depending on the availability of the applicant.
    - ii. If the applicant declines to participate in the meeting, then the applicant's application is deemed to be terminated.
      1. The applicant may submit another application after one (1) year.
    - iii. If the applicant doesn't respond to the invitation to the meeting within thirty (30) days, then the applicant's application is deemed to be terminated.
      1. The applicant may submit another application after one (1) year.
    - iv. If the applicant participates in the meeting, the applicant will share his/her perspective and any accompanying documentation that he/she makes available.
    - v. After hearing from the applicant and reviewing any accompanying documentation that he/she makes available, the group will, by majority vote, choose from three options:

1. Deem that the application be found to be “satisfactory” and to be processed through that procedure.
2. Request more information, including available documentation, from the applicant.
  - a. If the applicant declines to provide more information, then the applicant’s application is deemed to be terminated and the applicant will be notified.
  - b. The applicant will be barred from submitting applications in the future.
  - c. If the applicant provides more information, then the group shall evaluate the information in its entirety and will, by majority vote, choose from two options:
    - i. Deem that the application be found to be “satisfactory” and to be processed through that procedure.
    - ii. Deem that the application be found to be “unsatisfactory,” terminate the processing of the application and notify the applicant.
    - iii. The applicant will be barred from submitting applications in the future.
3. Deem that the application be found to be “unsatisfactory,” terminate the processing of the application, and notify the applicant.
  - a. The applicant will be barred from submitting applications in the future.

3. Confidentiality

- i. All information related to applications and the evaluation and review process shall be confidential.
- ii. The only exception to this confidentiality is a public listing of the applicants who have been approved, completed the required training, and been designated as workers.
- iii. A list of applicants, their applications, the results of the background checks, any supporting or accompanying documents, including, but not limited to the rescreening schedule will be retained in a secure location in the church office by the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee.

- iv. Any computerized files related to an application will be retained on a designated computer work station at the church. Access to this computer will be protected by a password.

4. When

- i. Any person who wishes to be involved directly with baby, child, youth, and/or vulnerable persons activities must apply for a worker designation.
- ii. This application must be made as soon as possible after the individual has expressed interest in direct involvement with baby, child, youth and/or vulnerable persons activities.
- iii. Applicants may be allowed to take part in baby, child, youth and/or vulnerable persons activities for two (2) weeks while his/her application is being processed provided that the applicant is not the primary supervisor.

5. Training:

- i. Training on the church's protection policy and related issues, including, but not limited to physical, sexual, and other forms of abuse.
- ii. The training will be provided by the church at no cost to the applicant/participant.
- iii. The training will be conducted on the applicant's own time using a pre-recorded video containing policy information necessary for worker training.
- iv. An applicant will confirm that they have completed the training video and understand the policy's information and practices by signing and submitting the Covenant Agreement.
  - 1. To indicate proof of having completed and understood the training, the applicant will complete a short questionnaire and submit it to the coordinator or his/her designee, along with the Covenant Agreement.

C. **Participation Covenant:** All activity workers are required to review the church's policy and sign a "Covenantal Participation Statement," verifying that he/she has read, understand, and plans to follow the church's policy.

D. **Supervision.**

- 1. Two-Worker Rule. An appropriate number of adults will supervise any baby, child, youth or vulnerable adult activity, both on and off premises.
  - a. At such an activity, a minimum of two (2) workers will be present with babies/children/youth. The younger of the workers will be at least five (5) years older than the oldest child or youth to be supervised.
  - b. The adults in charge may be assisted by younger youth ("helpers"), though such helpers are not to be included in the "two-worker rule."
- 2. Classroom Doors and Windows. All rooms and areas where activities are taking place are to have at least one (1) windowed door. Where this is not possible, the door is to remain open.



3. One-on-One: A worker/volunteer should not visit in seclusion with a baby, child, youth or vulnerable adult or be present with a baby, child, youth or vulnerable adult on a one-on-one basis.
  - a. In activities where there is a legitimate reason or parental consent for being alone with a child or youth (e.g. pastoral counseling), the visitation must be conducted in a place where there are other people nearby to observe the activity or in a room that observes the classroom door guidelines.
4. Communication: At all times, activity workers and helpers should have access to electronic communications (i.e. cell phones, landline phones, etc.).
  - a. In the case of off-site activities, the director of the off-site activity will be required to provide the church office with his/her cell phone number and other contact information prior to the activity/group's departure.
5. Touch: Touch and physical contact are important elements in developing healthy and appropriate relationships, especially among adolescents. However, it is vital that physical touch remain appropriate and safe.
  - a. Examples of appropriate touch include, but are not limited to: brief hugs, hand-pats on the shoulder or upper-back, handshakes, "high-fives," and holding hands while walking with small children or praying. Examples of inappropriate touch include, but are not limited to: inappropriate or lengthy hugs, kisses on the mouth, holding school-age children on the lap, touching "bathing suit areas" for purposes other than diapering or toileting infants and toddlers, tickling children or youth, and adult-to-minor or minor-to-adult massages.
  - b. In the event that a minor initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult or adolescent peer, regardless of intent or outcome, the worker and/or helper immediately should notify the director of the activity and the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee
6. Outings All minor activity participants in out-of-town and overnight outings must have a written parental consent and a signed medical release form.
  - a. Copies of these forms will remain in the church office while original forms will accompany the group's leader on the outing. Forms will contain the following information:
    - i. Child's name and address
    - ii. Parent/guardian information
    - iii. Emergency contact information
    - iv. Medications (with permission to self-administer)
    - v. Allergies to be considered
    - vi. Medical insurance information
    - vii. Statement of liability and consent
  - b. On youth overnight outings, there will be a minimum of two (2) adults and no more than seven (7) children or youth per adult worker.
  - c. Workers and participant(s) will not occupy the same bed or sleeping bag.
  - d. Female staff will supervise female participants in their sleeping quarters.
  - e. Male staff will supervise male participants in their sleeping quarters.

- f. Married couples will observe the female/female and male/male sleeping arrangements.

#### E. Nursery Care

1. When the church's nursery facility is being utilized for program/child care space, the two-worker rule applies.
2. The two-worker rule does not apply if a baby or child is being cared for/supervised by their parent/legal guardian (e.g., if the nursery is being used as a "cry room" during a worship service).

#### F. Classroom Discipline

All workers will use the following discipline measures:

1. If a child or youth is behaving inappropriately, the worker will tell the child or youth specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is.
  - i. If this measure is not effective, the child or youth will be guided to another activity.
2. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child or youth may be placed at a table to work alone away from the other participants while remaining under proper supervision.
3. If the disruptive behavior of the child or youth continues after these steps have been taken, the worker and director of the activity immediately will notify the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee.
4. The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will talk with the child or youth and work with the child's parents/guardians to find a solution to the behavior.
5. No physical punishment or verbal abuse is allowed to be used to discipline a child or youth.

#### G. Drop-off and Pick-up for Children and Youth

1. Check-In: For all church activities during which the child or youth will not be with his/her parents, participants must be checked in according to established procedures.
  - i. The parent or legal guardian is required to sign their child into the class on the sign-in sheet provided to them upon arrival. The sign-in sheet shall include:
    1. Child's name
    2. Parent/guardian's name
    3. Name of pick-up designee (if not the same or if it is the child, themselves)
      - a. Children and youth are permitted to sign themselves in, provided that a pre-signed parental consent and medical authorization form is provided and on file (See Appendix IV).

- b. If a parent wishes his/her child to be able to sign themselves out, permission must be given on the check-in sheet at the time of check-in.
    - c. An alternate pick-up designee may be verified by telephone with the parent/legal guardian, if necessary.
  - 4. Emergency telephone contact number
  - 5. Time of check-in.
- ii. Only children and youth who have been checked in through established procedures will be allowed in the activity's assigned space.
- iii. Once a child or youth has been signed in according to established procedures, they are under the supervision and care of the church's workers.

## 2. Sign Out

- i. Once a child is signed into the activity, then he/she may be released only to a parent or legal guardian, unless another individual is designated on the sign-in form or by telephone.
  - 1. In the event that the designated individual is unknown to the worker(s), a photo identification may be requested at the time of sign out.
- ii. Participants will be signed out when leaving all children and youth activities.
- iii. After a child or youth has been signed out they are under the care and supervision of their parent or non-legal guardian, even if they still are on church property on property where an off-site activity is taking place.
- iv. If a parent wishes his/her child to be able to sign themselves out, permission must be given on the check-in sheet at the time of check-in.

## 3. Releasing

- i. Supervision, according to the two-worker rule, must be maintained after an event until all participants have been released in accordance with this policy.
- ii. Children and youth are permitted to be self-released only when written parental permission is documented with the activity director.
- iii. Minors are not allowed to pick-up siblings without a signed parental permission.
- iv. Minors are to be released only to the person(s) identified at the time of check-in.
  - 1. Photo identification may be required in certain circumstances at the discretion of the activity director and/or his/her designee or the appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee.

## H. Health Related Concerns

- 1. If a participant needs medication while they are taking part in a church activity, the parent or guardian of the baby, child or youth is required to administer the medication.

2. A child or youth may be allowed to self-administer medication with prior approval from a parent or legal guardian and notification to the activity director. A consent and medical authorization form signed by the parent or legal guardian must be on file in the church office for a child or youth to self-administer medication.
  3. Babies, children or youth with a known illness that is of a contagious nature should not be left in the care of any worker.
  4. Participant's allergies are to be listed on the parental consent and medical authorization form prior to sign-in.
- I. Operation of motor vehicles
1. Age and licensing. All workers and helpers operating motor vehicles as part of or in conjunction with a church activity shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age, possess a valid driver's license, and proof of insurance when operating a privately owned vehicle.
  2. Other requisites. While operating any vehicle during a church activity involving babies, children, youth and/or vulnerable persons, all state vehicular laws are to be observed.
  3. Prior written consent. The prior written consent of a parent or legal guardian is required for activities requiring transportation to and from a specified off-site location.
- J. Use of Photo/Video
1. A photo release must be signed by the parent/legal guardian of participants in a church activity in order for:
    - i. Photos and/or video to be taken of the participant
    - ii. Photos and/or video of the participant to be used for lawful purposes, including, but not limited to: publicity, illustration, advertisement, and Web content.
- K. Miscellaneous.
1. Co-ed functions: Co-ed, overnight functions require both male and female adult supervision at the levels stipulated in this policy.
  2. Exceptions to Two-Worker Rule:
    - i. If it is not possible to have two workers in each program space (e.g., during Vacation Bible School), it is permissible to have one worker in each room with a roaming worker moving between program space.
    - ii. In the event of an emergency requiring one or more babies, child/children, youth or vulnerable adults be transported to emergency medical facilities leaving only one worker or adult helper in attendance, that is recognized as a legitimate exception to the two-worker rule.
- L. Reporting of Abuse.
1. State requirements. The reporting requirements of this policy will conform with the state reporting requirements.
  2. Church requirements.

- a) The appointed clergy person is designated as the primary person to receive reports of alleged abuse.
- b) The appointed clergy person is to be notified as soon as possible
- c) After being notified, the appointed clergy person shall make a verbal report to the Michigan Department of Human Services
  - (i) The appointed clergy person shall make this report by calling the MDHS at ?
- d) This verbal report shall be made in conjunction with the person who made the observations or received the disclosure.
- e) The following information will be required in the verbal report:
  - Name, age, and gender of the alleged victim and other family members.
  - Address, phone number, and/or directions to the alleged victim's home.
  - Place(s) of employment for the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s).
  - Description of the suspected abuse or neglect and information that might establish the cause of or manner in which the abuse or neglect occurred.
  - Current condition of the alleged victim.
- f) The report shall be documented in writing on the Incident Report Form (See Appendix V) by the appointed clergy person.
  - (i) The report will include information about the relevant dates, times, and persons involved in the process.
  - (ii) Copies of this shall be made available to any conference, district, or episcopal office staff as deemed necessary by the appointed clergy person.
- g) In cases of suspected/reported abuse by an activity worker, unless otherwise instructed by the Michigan Department of Human Services, the worker will be removed immediately from contact with babies, children, youth, and vulnerable adults at church activities until otherwise notified.
- h) The appointed clergy person and/or his/her designee will inform the activity worker of this removal.
- i) If the appointed clergy person is absent or unavailable, the following persons (in the order designated) are authorized to receive reports and implement the ensuing procedures:
  - (i) The on-call clergy
  - (ii) The church's administrative assistant,
  - (iii) The activity director.