



**CHILD, YOUTH &  
VULNERABLE ADULT POPULATIONS  
ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM  
GENESIS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

**ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 8, 2015  
REVISED January 26, 2016**

# **CHILD, YOUTH & VULNERABLE ADULT POPULATIONS ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM GENESIS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

## **Introduction**

To help protect children, youth and vulnerable adults, GENESIS UMC has adopted the following Child, Youth & Vulnerable Adult Populations Abuse Prevention Program. It is important that all GENESIS UMC paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent abuse against children and vulnerable populations. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with participants.

## **Purpose**

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of abuse in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist GENESIS UMC in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children, youth and vulnerable adult populations.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

## **Definitions**

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff*: Any pastor, minister, preacher, cleric, or employee who is paid.
2. *Participants*: Children, youth or adults from vulnerable populations who are registered, enrolled, attending or otherwise participating in an event or activity sponsored by or under the auspices of GENESIS UMC.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
4. *Volunteer*: Means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of children and vulnerable populations or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over children, youth and vulnerable populations.

5. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law.
6. *Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.
7. *Physical Abuse*: Any physical force applied by an adult or older youth in a position of care or authority to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Physical force (hitting, spanking, shaking, shoving, etc.) is not to be used by staff or volunteers in any GENESIS UMC program.
8. *Adult from Vulnerable Populations*: Persons, 18 years of age or older, who are unable to protect their own interest due to a substantial mental or functional impairment or for whom a guardian has been appointed.
9. *Risk Management Team (RMT)*: The Risk Management Team is the team responsible for administering this policy. The team shall consist of the Pastor, the Director of Youth and Children Ministries, the Chair of the Staff and Parish Relations Team (SPRT) and the Safety Officer.

## **Protection and Prevention**

### **Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures**

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of participants or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over participants. All information collected will be maintained in confidence in locked storage areas.

1. *Employment Application and Volunteer Application*: Any paid staff and volunteers who will work with a participant must complete the Employment Application and/or the Volunteer Application. The release statement attached to the Application must be signed by the individual completing the Application to apply for and qualify for service.

Applications include a statement, which the applicant shall acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes GENESIS UMC to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

2. Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
3. Conduct interviews with qualified applicants.

If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired or accepted as a volunteer, document the reasons for overriding the prior information.

Whenever possible, GENESIS UMC will have an associate participate in the interview.

4. Contact all listed references for volunteers. Contact each of the volunteer applicant's references and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
5. Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
6. *Criminal Background Check*: GENESIS UMC will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of children and vulnerable populations or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over children and vulnerable populations. All criminal background checks will be repeated annually.
7. *90-Day Rule*: All volunteers will be required to have been a member or constituent by regular attendance of GENESIS UMC for 90 days and have reviewed and signed the Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program.

## **Confidentiality**

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted. These materials will be archived.

## **Supervision Procedures**

Unless an extenuating situation exists, GENESIS UMC:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving participants. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.

2. Will monitor facilities during activities involving participants. Parents are responsible for their children when they are not in a scheduled activity.
3. Will release participants only to a parent or guardian and utilize check-in and check-out procedure.
4. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking participants on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.
5. Will use two paid staff or volunteers when transporting participants in vehicles. Drivers must be over the age of 21 and provide verification of automobile insurance.
6. Will require that young children be accompanied to the restroom. The paid staff or volunteer shall check the restroom prior to allowing the child to enter and wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the participant.
7. Will encourage minors to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of GENESIS UMC property.
8. Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.
9. Will designate a "confidential counselor" to whom any participant can go at any time, without special permission, to discuss any problems he or she is having. The Confidential Counselors for GENESIS UMC are the Director of Youth and Children Ministries and the Lead Pastor.
10. If there is an accident, the paid staff or volunteer witnessing the accident must fill out an accident report and give a copy to the parents (or notify by phone) and provide a copy to the RMT.

## **Behavioral Guidelines for Paid Staff and Volunteers**

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to children or vulnerable populations.
2. To the extent possible, GENESIS UMC events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. At least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers will be in the room when participants are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily (i.e. to escort a child to the bathroom) and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present. Speaking to a participant or participants one-on-one should be done in public

settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people. If one-on-one pastoral care is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.

4. Avoid all inappropriate touching with participants. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a participant initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the participant that such touching is inappropriate.
5. Never engage in physical discipline of a participant. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse participants in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
6. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a participant and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the participant to another individual with supervisory authority.
7. Anyone who observes abuse of a participant will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of GENESIS UMC for handling. Complete the "Child/Youth Protection Incident Report Form."

## **Disqualification**

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of participants or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over participants who has been convicted of or adjudicated for the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of participants:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related felonies, or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

## **Response to Abuse**

GENESIS UMC will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of abuse. All accusations of abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege abuse and those who have been accused of abuse.

When an allegation is made involving abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Director of Youth and Children Ministries or an appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Director of Youth and Children Ministries is the individual accused of abuse, then the Lead Pastor will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to GENESIS UMC's insurance carrier.
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. GENESIS UMC may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
5. An official of GENESIS UMC (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the governing body of GENESIS UMC and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.
6. An official of GENESIS UMC will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
7. An official of GENESIS UMC will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
8. During the investigation, an official of GENESIS UMC shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.
9. An official of GENESIS UMC (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
10. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of GENESIS UMC.
11. Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.
12. Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of GENESIS UMC's attorney.

**Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Populations  
Abuse Prevention Program  
Acknowledgment**

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with participants. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. GENESIS UMC reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with the GENESIS UMC or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the GENESIS UMC's Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Populations Abuse Prevention Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of the GENESIS UMC.

---

Print Name

---

Signature

---

Date