

Big Beaver United Methodist Church Policy On

**Reducing the risk of child,
youth and vulnerable adult
abuse within the church.**



Fourth Revision August 11, 2008
Adopted by the Administrative Council
Big Beaver United Methodist Church
3753 John R Road
Troy, MI

I. GOAL

To provide an environment free of behavior that constitutes child abuse by establishing a policy and training program to educate our paid staff, volunteer staff, and congregation as respects the safeguards to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults from physical, mental, and/or sexual abuse. For the purpose of this policy, youth/child shall mean anyone under the age of 18; and vulnerable adult shall mean an individual, age 18 or over, 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.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The Administrative Board of the Big Beaver United Methodist Church of Troy, Michigan, desires to provide children an environment free of behavior that constitutes sexual harassment or abuse. We believe that the children of the world are the most precious resource of our churches and our nations. We have adopted policies, that include training for children, youth, and workers of the church in our effort to provide safeguards to protect children, **youth, and vulnerable adults** from physical, mental, and sexual abuse.

Henceforth “child/children” will refer to children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

III. Michigan Law

Michigan Act No.238, Public Acts of 1975 as amended, defines:

- 1) "child" or (“youth”) to mean "a person under 18 years of Age."
- 2) "Child Abuse..." as defined "means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare, or by a teacher or teacher's aide which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment."

- 3) "Person responsible" for the child's health or welfare means legal guardian, person 18 years of age or older (staying) for any length of time in the same home in which the child resides, or an owner, operator, volunteer or employee of one or both of the following:
 - A) "A licensed or unlicensed child care organization as defined in section 1 of Act No.116 of the Public Acts of 1973, being section 722.11 of the Michigan Compiled Laws."
 - B) "A licensed or unlicensed adult foster care family home or adult foster care small group home as defined in section 3 of the adult foster care facility licensing act, Act No.218 of the Public Acts of 1979, being section 400.703 of the Michigan Compiled Laws."
- 4) "Sexual abuse" means "engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration as defined in section 520a of the Michigan penal code, Act No.238 of the Public Acts of 1931, being section 750.520a of the Michigan Compiled Laws with a child."
- 5) "Sexual Exploitation", includes "allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution, or allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the photographing, filming or depicting or a child engaged in a listed sexual act as defined in section 145c of Act No. 238 of the Public Acts of 1931, being section 750.145c of the Michigan Compiled Laws."

Michigan Act No.238 defines those persons required to report suspected child abuse or neglect as "A physician, coroner, dentist, medical examiner, nurse, person licensed to provide emergency medical care, audiologist, psychologist, family therapist, certified social worker, social worker, social work technician, school administrator, school counselor or teacher, law enforcement officer or regulated child care provider...." As noted above, the law does not require churches to report; however, the individuals listed above may be required to report regardless of the lack of such requirement for churches.

Also, "In addition to those persons required to report child abuse or neglect under section 3, any person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect may report the matter to the department or a law enforcement agency."

IV. REPORTING

- 1) Michigan Act No.238 requires certain persons that must report suspected child abuse or neglect. The Church at large, exclusive of those persons indicated in Michigan Act No.238, have not been included among those that must report suspected child abuse or neglect. However, the church or any of its members may report as prescribed by Michigan Law. Certain persons required to report may still be required to report regardless of status as a member of a church congregation.
- 2) Any person that shall become aware of or have knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect involving a church-directed or sponsored activity are to report immediately, verbally or in writing, the suspected child abuse or neglect to the person(s) in charge of the activity or to the pastor.
- 3) The person(s) in charge shall when receiving a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, within 48 hours, make a written report to the Pastor or Chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee. The format for this written report should include the information indicated in Addendum No. 7.
- 4) The Pastor or Chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee shall act as prescribed by law and addressed in Addendum No. 7, directed by the United Methodist District office, the Discipline, this policy; and the Staff Parish Committee when consulted.
- 5) All reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be treated with due respect, sincerity, and confidentiality as defined by law, directed by the United Methodist District office, the discipline, this policy, and the Staff Parish Committee when consulted.

- 6) Any child that feels s/he has been or may have been abused or neglected, is encouraged to immediately report such abuse or neglect to the person(s) in charge of the activity in which s/he is participating, the Pastor, some other person they trust, the police, or other public service or protective agencies.
- 7) All reports of child abuse or neglect when received by the Pastor or Chairperson of Staff Parish Committee shall be reported as soon as practical to the District Superintendent or United Methodist District office.

V. SCREENING

Who Will Be Screened

As an integral part of our efforts to reach our goal of providing safeguards to protect children and youth from physical, mental, and sexual abuse, the following procedures are established for all paid employees and volunteer workers of the church working directly with youth and children. Volunteer workers will include youth directors, counselors and assistants, Sunday school teachers, assistant teacher aides and substitutes, all nursery attendants, those persons who regularly or occasionally have contact with youth or children as chaperones, those who are involved with overnight activities, and one-on-one mentoring, or counseling situations. This would also include anyone working in the following capacity:

- A. child care centers, day care centers, or group day care centers
- B. head start centers
- C. mothers' day out
- D. preschool centers

All persons working with children or youth should be active attendees of Big Beaver United Methodist Church for six months. All adults working with children and youth will attend a mandatory orientation and training meeting.

It will be required that a 2:1 ration (two trained adults and one who may not have been through the training or comply with the six-month rule) be the minimum required for watching the children in the Parent's night Out program. It is understood that any adult signed up for this program will go through the necessary requirements as per this policy as soon as possible.

Screening Procedures include:

- 1) Employment Application (see Addendum No. 1).
- 2) Telephone Reference Check (see Addendum No. 2).
- 3) Criminal records check: with the exception of Sunday school teachers, VBS teachers, volunteer nursery workers on Sunday morning,
 - a) A release for Criminal Records Check (see Addendum No. 3).
 - b) Records checks are made through:
 1. ICHAT Internet Criminal History Access Tool
Criminal Justice Information Center
Michigan State Police
Central Records Division
7150 Harris Drive
Lansing, MI 48913

Phone: (517) 322-1377

Cost: None to 501C Organization
(See Addendum No. 3 for directions)

or...
 2. Federal Background check
 3. A statewide criminal background search
 4. A statewide sexual offender search
 5. GuideOne Insurance
 - c) All Criminal records checks will ONLY be reviewed by the pastor and no others.
 - d) Criminal records checks of all paid and volunteer staff will be ordered initially and every two years thereafter.
 - e) or at a minimum we are to check the sexual offender list on the Internet with the exception of:
 1. child care centers, day care centers, or group day care centers
 2. head start centers
 3. mothers' day out
 4. pre-school centers

A copy of this list should be attached to the person's application and remain on file.

4) Motor Vehicle Driving Records (see Addendum No. 5).

a) These records checks are made through:

1. Michigan Department of State
7064 Crowner Drive
Lansing, MI 48918
Attn.: Commercial Lookup Unit

Phone: (517) 322-1624

Cost: varies
(See attached No. 5 for directions)

or...

2. Federal Background check
3. Through the statewide criminal background check.
4. Through GuideOne Insurance

b) All Motor Vehicle Driving Records will be treated in strict confidence by the pastor and the Staff Parish Committee.

c) Motor vehicle driving records for all persons driving vehicles for any church activity will be ordered initially and every two years thereafter.

d) No one may drive children if they have six or more points on their license or have any DUI convictions, or license suspended or revoked.

5) Parental Permission Slip/Permission to be transported by an approved driver (see Addendum No. 6).

6) Any applicant found to have been charged and convicted of any sexual offense shall not be permitted to work with youth or children in any capacity.

7) Persons found charged with any sexual offense but not convicted are subject to additional screening procedures including:

- a) Contacting law enforcement officials where the charge was made.
- b) Personal interviews by the Pastor and Staff Parish Committee.

- 8) The Pastor or Christian Education Director may advise the Staff Parish Committee, as to the suitability of an individual volunteer to work with children and youth.
- 9) The Pastor, Church Secretary, Christian Education Director, Chairman of Staff Parish Committee, or other person designated by the Staff Parish Committee may be utilized in the various aspects of the screening process, except for reviewing criminal records checks, which is reserved for the Pastor.
- 10) A job description outlining the requirements of the position will be provided.

VI. TRAINING

In order to provide an effective program for providing safeguards to protect children and youth from physical and sexual abuse a training program for paid and volunteer staff and congregation is to be provided on a continuing basis. This training is to include the church's policy regarding Child Sexual abuse and neglect and additional information the Christian Education Director and Staff Parish Committee feel is pertinent.

- 1) The Christian Education Director or Staff Parish Committee is to make available to all paid and volunteer staff working with youth and children a minimum of one training class annually.
 - A) Training is to include:
 - 1) A review of Church policy regarding child abuse and neglect including:
 - a) General Statement;
 - b) Reporting Procedures;
 - c) Changes in Church policy (if applicable)
 - 2) Information on recognizing child abuse and neglect.

- 3) Other information as determined by the Christian Education Director or Staff Parish Committee.
 - 4) May include materials, lectures, and audio/visuals provided by outside service agencies familiar with the problems/solutions associated with child abuse and neglect in addition to the above.
- B) A written record of attendance and minutes will be maintained on file for review and a notation in the individual's file of such attendance. Any paid staff or Volunteer staff working with youth or children who does not attend a minimum of one training session per every three calendar years shall be reviewed by the Christian Education Director and referred to the Staff Parish Committee for suspension of responsibilities as a paid staff or volunteer worker with youth or children until training requirement is met.
- 2) All children, youth, and the children's or youth's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be provided a training program on an annual basis. Any child or youth that attends this training program must have a parent(s) or guardian(s) in attendance during the training. Attendance in this program is not mandatory rather encouraged.
 - A) A written record of those in attendance and minutes of the training program will be maintained on file for review.
 - B) Training shall include:
 - 1) A review of the Church Policy regarding child abuse and neglect.
 - a) General Statement
 - b) Reporting Procedures
 - c) Changes in Church policy

C) May include materials, lectures, and audio/visuals provided by outside service agencies familiar with the problems/solutions associated with child abuse and neglect.

3) Other information as determined by the Education Director or Staff Parish Committee.

VII. MONITORING OF THE PROGRAM

It is anticipated that by establishing and maintaining a program such as set forth will require some frequency of review to determine if the program is meeting its established objectives and if there is need to change safeguards to meet changing laws, program shortcomings, or other requirements. This is the responsibility of the Staff Parish Committee and frequency of reviews determined as needed however, a review should not occur less than twice each year.

VIII. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- 1) Do not strike or push children or youth when attempting to discipline.
- 2) There should be at least two persons present in the nursery at all times. One of the two must be an adult. Teens may help only if an adult is present.
- 3) All children and youth classes should have two teachers per class, preferably one male, and one female.
- 4) Doors of classrooms used for children and youth should have windows in them or be left open.
- 5) Never be alone with a child or youth of the same or opposite sex. It is best to have a least another adult with you.
- 6) At any activity involving youth or children there will be at least two adults present. At a minimum an adult must be 21 years of age.

- 7) Where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child or youth, the Paid Staff or Volunteer worker is to obtain the consent of the child's or youth's parent(s) or guardian(s) before going out alone with that child or youth, or spending time with the child in any unsupervised situation. This includes transporting a child or youth to or from supervised activities. Consent should be in writing whenever practical.
- 8) Children or youth should have parental permission for involvement in Church sponsored programs or activities. Whenever practical this permission should be in writing.
- 9) Sunday school classrooms should be visited by the Christian Education Director or appointed assistant. Visits to the classrooms should be random. This should include periodic visits to inspect areas of the church building that are isolated from view.
- 10) Supervisory personnel, which may include teachers, chaperones, or others working with children or youth; are to be provided and maintained before and after the activity until all children or youth are in the custody of their parents. This applies to Sunday school classes as well as other activities.
- 11) The matter of acceptable touching of children and youth needs to be handled with a great deal of thought and caution. Clear, sensible judgment must be followed. For instance:
 - A) A child or youth should only be hugged in the presence of others, preferably adults.
 - B) A sideways hug only should be considered. Frontal hugs should be considered inappropriate.
 - C) Hugging should never be considered appropriate if it is unwanted or attempts are made to thwart it.
 - D) When working with teenage youth, hugging and kissing between counselors and youth should not occur. Exceptions may occur on special occasions or events and while in the presence of other youth and adults preferably including the youth's parent(s) or guardian(s).

12) Verbal comments must be delivered carefully. A thank you or congratulations and praise should be polite, never intentionally relating the idea of improper affection.

13) Two adults should be involved with restroom breaks for children.

14) Overnight activities:

A) All adult chaperones or counselors must be screened and cleared by the Christian Education Director for working with children or youth.

B) Activities should include chaperones and counselors with a ratio as follows:

Children age	0-2	1 adult to 4 children
	3-5	1 adult to 5 children
	6-11	1 adult to 6 youth
	12-17	1 adult to 10 youth

C) Whenever possible chaperones and counselors should be made up of both males and females.

D) All over-night activities will require written parent(s)/guardian(s) permission for youth to attend or participate. These permission slips should be kept on file with the youth or education director for a period of five years.

E) All overnight activities will require the approval of the Youth Director, Christian Education Director, or Pastor.

F) Require separation of sleeping areas for males and females.

15) Trips:

- A) All trip activities will require the approval of the Youth Director, Christian Education Director or Pastor.
- B) All trips will require each youth to have written parental/guardian permission for them to attend or participate. These permission slips should be kept on file with the youth or education director for a period of five years.
- C) All transportation of children or youth should begin and end at the church. See also VIII GENERAL GUIDELINES, Guideline No. 7 above.
- D) All drivers' driving records should be on file and approved by the Staff Parish Committee or Christian Education Director and drivers should be screened and approved to work with youth and children by the Staff Parish Committee or Christian Education Director.
- E) No driver under the age of 21 is ever to be an authorized driver for a youth or children's activity.
- F) All trips will require a written notification to the youth or child's parent or guardian of the:
 - 1) Purpose of the trip
 - 2) Estimated departure and return times
 - 3) Any other pertinent informationThis information should also be kept on file for a period of five years.
- G) If it is not possible for the group to return time, counselors should call the church and some parents, to inform them of the reason for delay and where they are.

16. Unsupervised children:

A. Children should not be allowed unsupervised anywhere in the church or on the grounds. Parents visiting or working at the church should not leave children of any age alone.

17. Discipline:

While caring for and supervising our children and youth, we intend to provide a loving and safe environment. Providing such an environment requires planning and discipline.

1. The preferred method of discipline recommended is distraction away from the problem area of activity.
2. Know your group and try to anticipate problems. Any form of physical punishment is not appropriate or tolerated.
3. Plan ahead and arrange the class and/or program to avoid problems.
4. Plan programs and activities that are age appropriate and match the make up of your specific group.
5. Expectations and appropriate consequences should be clear to the children and youth.
6. Children should never be isolated outside of the classroom.
7. If there are difficult discipline problems that consistently recur, talk to the Christian Education Director. For severe problems we will seek parents help in a solution workable for all concerned, which may include calling the parent to take custody of the child/youth.

Unacceptable behavior, include but are not limited to the following:

Throwing of objects

Kicking

Hitting

Pushing

Biting

Leaving the area without care giver's knowledge

Name-calling or any language that shows disrespect, puts down, or belittles another person.

18.) It is possible that a child or youth will either willingly or unintentionally indicate that he or she has been abused. This could be perceived through their words, or by noticeable harm to their body. This type of situation should be handled in a delicate manner so that no unnecessary or false accusations are made. If you suspect abuse, do the following:

A) Ask another adult (NEVER APPROACH THIS ISSUE ALONE) to assist you in listening to what the child has to say or in observing the physical evidence.

B) If one or both adults feel it is appropriate to pursue the matter, follow the reporting guidelines in Section IV. REPORTING.

19. Nursery Policy:

A. The nursery can only be used for church functions scheduled through the calendar with the proper notification given to the Nursery Coordinator or Christian Education Director.

B. If you are on a committee or belong to a group that would like to use the nursery for childcare notify the Nursery Coordinator or Christian Education Director so use of the nursery can be included on the schedule and the church staff and others are aware of when the nursery is being used. The nursery should not be used for childcare without notifying the nursery coordinator or Christian Education Director.

C. Anyone who works in the nursery must have an approved Ministry Application on file. These are kept confidential and should be given to the Pastor or Education Director in a sealed envelope when completed.

D. There should be two people at all times in our nursery; one must be 21 years or older. There may be a youth above the age of 15 that can work with an adult during the week for special activities. On Sunday mornings a youth above the age of 12 may help in the nursery with the adults. No one under the age of 21 will be in the nursery alone with children. If the age guidelines cannot be followed, then the church cannot provide childcare for the service or activity.

E. If a volunteer has been scheduled to work in the nursery they should not take the children from the nursery to other places in the church while in their care. Children should remain in the nursery for the safety of all involved. A restroom attached to the nursery should be used.

- F. On Sunday mornings the nursery is for children ages 0-3years.
- G. Weekday childcare ages are flexible. Supervision is necessary as indicated above.
- H. Children must be signed in to the nursery and cannot leave unless the parent is there to pick them up.
- I. Parents must take a pager on Sunday mornings.
- J. If a child is sick with a contagious illness they should not be left in the nursery.

IX. PUBLICITY

In the event a report is made and the alleged child abuse or neglect has involved the church or a church sponsored activity, the congregation should be informed as soon as practical and at the direction of the Pastor and/or Staff Parish Committee. In most cases this should not occur until the reporting procedures in Section IV REPORTING, above have been followed. Information on the specifics and details of an alleged child abuse or neglect incident should be at the discretion of the Pastor and/or Staff Parish Committee. Restraint should be used in disseminating this information. Information should be confined to the fact that an alleged child abuse or neglect incident has occurred involving the church and/or a sponsored activity, and that appropriate reports have been made to proper authorities. The person to deliver this information to the congregation should be the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee or the Pastor. Confidentiality of the parties involved, both the victim and alleged aggressor, must be respected.

Since these incidents often reach the News Media, we may assume it is possible for an incident involving our church also to reach the News Media. In the event this should occur, only a statement approved by the Staff Parish Committee and/or the Church's legal counsel will be the official church statement. Any other statements made will be at the sole discretion and responsibility of the individual making the statement and under no circumstances does the church or its congregation assume any responsibility for having made such statements.

ADDENDUM

Big Beaver United Methodist Church
3753 John R Road Troy, MI 48083
248-689-1932

Office Use Only
Sex Offender Registry_____
Reference check_____
ICHAT_____
Approved _____
Date _____
By _____

Ministry Application for Children and Youth Workers

This information is collected for the safety and security of our children and will be held in strict confidence.

Please Print and fill out completely

Name: _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Address: _____ City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Employer: _____

I am applying for a volunteer position with ____ Ed. Program (Sunday School, VBS, Nursery Etc.)
____ Youth (UMYF) _____ Music ministry.

Please list any ways your personal schedule may conflict with volunteering: (ex. do you work some Sundays or take classes?) _____

Previous Experience: _____

Please circle any season when you are NOT available to work:
Fall (Sept. to Jan.) Spring (Jan.-May) Summer (May-Sept.)

Are you willing to occasionally take on more than one assignment at a time? (Ex. youth leader and Sunday School Teacher) Yes No

Why do you think God is calling you to work with children and/or youth? _____

What skills and/or gifts do you have that will help you work with children and/or youth? _____

What is the best time for you to attend planning and training events? _____

Do you have your own transportation? _____

Please continue to the next page.

**TELEPHONE REFERENCE CHECK
CONFIDENTIAL**

Name of Applicant _____

Reference or church contacted (if a church, identify both the church and person or minister contacted)

Date and time of contact _____

Summary of conversation _____

Legible Signature

Position

Date

CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AND AUTHORIZATION

I hereby request the _____ Police Department to release any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in its files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state, or national. I hereby release said Police Department from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

Signature

Print Name

Print maiden name if applicable

Print all aliases

Date of birth

Place of birth

Social Security Number

Today's date

Record sent to:

Name _____

Address _____

ICHAT (Internet Criminal History Access Tool) Directions

Go to www.michigan.gov/ichat (all lower case, no prefix or suffix)

Click on “Login”

Email Login = MHAIGHT@BBUMCHURCH.ORG

Password = (not published here, see Christian Education Director or Pastor)

Click on “Sign in”

Click on “Background Search”

Complete information and submit.

TO: Michigan Department of State
7064 Crowner Dr
Lansing, MI 48918
Attn: Commercial Lookup Unit

FROM: Big Beaver United Methodist Church
3753 John R. Rd, Troy 48083

DATE: _____

RE: Motor Vehicle Driving Record Check

To Whom It May Concern:

Please provide a Motor Vehicle Driving Record for each of the following persons. We have enclosed \$ _____ for each record requested in the form of a check or money order.

Name	Date of Birth	Drivers License
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**Big Beaver United Methodist Church
3753 John R Road
Troy, MI 48083**

**Parental Permission Slip for Events of
Big Beaver United Methodist Church (BBUMC)**

I _____ give my permission for my son/daughter,
_____ to attend _____
at _____. I understand that he/she will be meeting
at _____ at _____ am/pm on _____
and returning to _____ at _____ am/pm on _____.

Medical Information

Allergies to medicine(s):

Allergies to foods, plants, insect stings, etc.:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Medicine(s) presently taking:

- 1. _____ Why? _____
- 2. _____ Why? _____
- 3. _____ Why? _____

Name of family physician: _____ Telephone number: _____

Name of insurance company & Policy number: _____

I understand that my son/daughter will be traveling in transportation provided or arranged by BBUMC. I authorize the Youth Advisors to administer first aid or to seek emergency medical treatment in the event of illness or injury. I hereby give my permission to the medical personnel selected to order x-rays and routine tests, and to provide medical treatment (including hospitalization), for the person named above. By signing below, the participant (or parent/guardian if participant is a minor) acknowledges and accepts the risks of physical injury associated with participation in the activity described above. Except for gross negligence on the part of the sponsor, the participant (parent/guardian) accepts personal financial responsibility for any bodily or personal injury sustained during the activity. Further, the participant (parent/guardian) promises to hold harmless the sponsoring organization and its representatives for any injury related to the activity. If a dispute over this agreement or any claim for damages arises, the participant (parent/guardian) agrees to resolve the matter through a mutually acceptable arbitration process.

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Parent's home telephone number: _____

Parent's alternate telephone number: _____

Date: _____

In the event of a suspected occurrence of child (vulnerable adult) abuse, follow this procedure:

1. Call Child Protective Services. If the Pastor is not immediately available, a Staff Member or Volunteer Leader can make the initial oral report to **Child Protective Services** by calling **(866) 975-5010**.
2. If there is potential of immediate danger to a child (or vulnerable adult), a call to the Troy Police Department (911) will remove the child(ren) from immediate danger and start the reporting process to Child Protective Services.
3. Complete this “Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Form” regardless of how the initial report is made to Child Protective Services and deliver it to the Pastor of Big Beaver United Methodist Church.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING FORM

The following information was provided to:

(Name of Person/Position/Agency)

(Telephone Number/Address)

Child's Name & DOB _____

Address _____

Parent's Names _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

PHYSICAL INDICATORS OBSERVED:

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OBSERVED:

Reporter's Name and Position _____

Signature

Date of Report