

**St. James UMC**  
**111 West Lake Drive**  
**Athens, GA 30606**  
**706-548-1680**

**Child and Adult Protection Policy**

*On February 7, 2005, St. James UMC adopted child protection policies, which were revised in both May, 2006 as well as February, 2011. The following policies are the latest revision, being done in February of 2013 in order to improve the policy.*

The disturbing and dramatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of infants, preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults has claimed the attention of our nation and society. These guidelines reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all nursery, children, youth, vulnerable adults, and volunteers who participate in church-sponsored activities.

To protect our nursery (birth through 3 years old) and children (pre-k4 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) and youth (6<sup>th</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) and any vulnerable adults (18 years or older) from the risk of sexual abuse, to protect innocent staff and volunteers from unsubstantiated allegations, and to protect our church from liability, the Leadership Board of St. James UMC moves that the policies be amended as follows:

PAID STAFF AND VOLUTEERS

A. Selection and Screening of Workers

1. St. James UMC will conduct a background screening on all paid staff that will work with all children or youth under the age of 18 as well as all vulnerable adults. The screening will include a written application, a criminal background check, a references check, and an interview/orientation.
2. All volunteers who work with infants, preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be screened. This screening will include a written application, a background check, a references check, and an interview/orientation. Background checks on current volunteers will be rerun every 3 years.
3. A volunteer must be an active participant at St. James and, under the discretion of the person(s) on staff responsible for area of ministry in which applicant wishes to serve in, they may be allowed to work with infants, preschoolers, children, youth, or vulnerable adults. However, a volunteer may not be a lead teacher until they have been active at least 6 months. This will not, however, prevent presentations or instruction by visitors such as missionaries, if the session is conducted in conjunction with workers previously approved for nursery, children or youth work under St. James UMC policies.
4. All chaperones or supervisors of overnight or off-campus activities for infants, preschoolers, children, youth, or vulnerable adults must be approved in advance by the St. James minister/director responsible for the age group involved in the activity. In the absence of the minister/director, the Executive Minister can also approve chaperones and supervisors.
5. St. James UMC will not knowingly allow anyone who is a known abuser of minors and/or vulnerable adults to work with our infants, preschoolers, children, youth, or vulnerable adults and will take measures, as outlined above, to ensure that such persons are not allowed to work with our infants, preschoolers, children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.

B. Worker Supervision and Training

6. “Two Adult Rule”: There will be 2 unrelated adults in each classroom or 2 related adults and a “rover”, someone who moves amongst the classrooms during the program period.

7. Any person who works with infants, preschoolers, children, or youth must obtain written parental permission before going out alone with an infant, preschooler, child, or youth or before spending time with him/her in a situation in which no other adult is present. This applies to any child or youth under the age of 18.
8. All volunteers and staff who work with infants, preschoolers, children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults will be trained in the following areas:
  - a. St. James policies designed to promote safety of our infants, preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults and to prevent any form of abuse.
  - b. How to recognize signs of sexual and other kinds of abuse.
  - b. The obligation to report suspected incidents of abuse, inappropriate contact, or suspicious behavior to the appropriate minister/director for the age group involved in the activity. In the absence of the minister/director, the Executive Minister should receive the report.

Volunteers and paid staff who do not consent to a background check and attend orientation/training shall not be allowed to work with nursery, children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

9. A security system must be maintained to insure that children are returned to their appropriate custodial parent or guardian. Children who are newborns through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade must be picked up by a parent or guardian. Children in grades three through five may be released from their classroom with previously obtained written parental permission (Exhibit 7)
10. Parental permission, including a signed waiver/release form, must be obtained in writing in advance for involvement of infants, preschoolers, children or youth under the age of 18 in St. James sponsored programs or activities which involve leaving the St. James campus. Parental permission, including a signed waiver/release form, must be obtained for children or youth in advance of involvement in overnight activities. No adult who is not on the approved volunteer or staff list may be present at these events.

### C. Responding to Allegations

11. Any allegations of abuse will be promptly investigated by a St. James staff member.
12. Any allegation of abuse as defined by GA Code 1975 will be promptly reported to both the pastor and Executive Minister, who will then in turn contact DFACS.
13. The pastor, Executive Minister, or legal spokesperson shall be the only persons authorized to discuss allegations of abuse with news media on behalf of St. James.

#### Reporting Flowchart



### D. Implementation of these Policies

14. The Nursery Coordinator and Children’s Minister, in conjunction with the appropriate ministry teams, are responsible for implementation of these policies. The Executive Minister, with the assistance of the ministers of each separate ministry, shall review compliance with these policies on a yearly basis.
15. The Nursery Coordinator and Children’s Minister, in conjunction with the ministry teams associated with nursery, children, or youth programs, and the appropriate staff members, are authorized to draft forms and develop procedures necessary to implement these policies.

16. Any activity not directly under the control of St. James in which the church's facilities are being utilized will be required to: 1) follow the guidelines in the St. James UMC Child and Adult Protection Policy or their own policy if more stringent and 2) sign release form of church liability.

## **Procedures to Implement Child and Adult Protection Policy**

The following procedures have been taken from the Child Protection Policy and Procedure to Reduce Risk of Sexual Abuse Manual on file in the church office. The procedures for “Responding to Allegations”, and the Exhibits that apply to each have been omitted from this booklet. Only the sections of the manual that apply to volunteers are included.

### **A. Selection and Screening of Workers**

#### 1. Paid Staff

##### a. Applications

All paid staff must complete a Paid Worker Application (Exhibit 1) and return to the staff person responsible for the ministry they wish to work in.

##### b. Background Check

An authorized staff member will perform a background check on each applicant. Background checks will be updated every three years.

##### c. Reference Check

Reference checks on each applicant will be performed by an authorized staff member using the Reference Check Form (Exhibit 2).

##### d. Interview/Orientation

Interview/orientation will be conducted by the staff person responsible for area of ministry in which applicant wishes to work in.

Each staff person will use the appropriate Paid Worker/Volunteer Interview Form (Exhibit 3)

No one may be hired until all screenings and checks are completed.

NOTE: If a reference will not return the form, and will not respond to follow-up calls, that refusal to cooperate will be documented.

#### 2. Volunteers

##### a. Applications

All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application (Exhibit 4) and return to the staff person responsible for the ministry they wish to serve in.

##### b. Background Check

An authorized staff member will perform a background check on each applicant. Background checks will be updated every three years.

##### c. Reference Check

A reference check on each applicant will be performed by an authorized staff member using the Reference Check Form (Exhibit 2).

##### d. Interview/Orientation

Interview/orientation will be conducted by the staff person responsible for area of ministry in which applicant wishes to serve in.

Each staff person will use the appropriate Paid Worker/Volunteer Interview Form (Exhibit 3).

No one may serve as a volunteer until all screenings and checks are completed.

NOTE: If a reference will not respond to phone calls, that refusal to cooperate will be documented.

After the completion of the screening process, the volunteer will be placed on the Approved for Nursery/Children/Youth Worker List (Exhibit 6). The staff person responsible for the area of ministry will maintain this list. Current volunteers should have an application and background check on file. Background checks on current volunteers will be updated every three years. All personal information will be kept confidential.

### 3. Participation Requirement

A volunteer must be an active participant at St. James before being allowed to work with nursery, children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This will not, however, prevent presentations or instruction by visitors such as missionaries, if the session is conducted in conjunction with workers previously approved for nursery or children work under St. James UMC policies.

### 4. Overnight and Off Campus Activities

All groups conducting overnight or off-campus activities must use chaperones and/or supervisors from the Approved for Nursery/Children list maintained by the staff person responsible for area of ministry.

5. Other requirements: Whenever two volunteers are required, the volunteers should not be related to each other whenever feasible. All volunteers must be over the age of eighteen (18) and all volunteers must be at least five (5) years older than the children or youth they are assisting with. Youth helpers under 18 must be accompanied by two adults at all times.

## B. Worker Supervision and Training

1. The supervision and training will be managed by the ministry director responsible for that age group.
2. A minimum of two adults will be present during any activity involving infants, preschoolers, children, youth, or vulnerable adults. In situations such as taking children to the restroom when there are only two teachers available, the teachers should take them as a group, keeping them together and remaining visible to all. In the nursery, the bathroom door should be left ajar. When diaper changes are taking place in the nursery, two adults should be present and within view of the child whose diaper is being changed.
3. The Parental/Guardian Permission Form (Exhibit 5) must be signed by the parent or guardian before a worker can be alone with a nursery, child or youth in an isolated location and/or situation. The card must be turned into the staff person responsible for the area of ministry, a copy of the card given to the Executive Minister, and all cards should be maintained in secure storage.
4. Infants, preschoolers, children and youth should be supervised at all times (e.g., restroom breaks, outside time, getting water, etc.) Children from nursery through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade should only be released to parents or guardians or some other adult they have designated.
5. Each room or space where children or youth are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open. All activities should occur in open view.
6. During church events that involve children or youth, as much as feasible there will be a "rover", someone who moves amongst the classrooms during the program period.

7. Worker training will be held annually. A video will be made of the event and made available to anyone that is enlisted after that date. All volunteers and staff must receive training within three months of being placed on the Approved for Nursery/Children/Youth Work List to be eligible for service. All volunteers should sign a statement that they have completed this training and that the Child Protection Policy was explained to them. This statement will be kept with the other volunteer information. Volunteers will also sign a participation covenant wherein each person states their understanding of the rules and their agreement to follow the rules.

Training will include the following three parts:

- a. St. James UMC Child and Adult Protection Policy
- b. How to recognize signs of sexual or other abuse and our obligations/procedures for reporting
- c. Training for specific age groups

If a volunteer is unable to attend a training event, the video may be used and a listening sheet completed and given to the director responsible for that age group. All volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend the event as it will have more to offer than viewing the video.

The date each volunteer completes training will be noted on the Approved for Nursery/Children/Youth Work List (Exhibit 6)

6. A security system must be maintained to insure that children in the nursery children through the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are returned only to their appropriate custodial parent or guardian.

Nursery will use the Security Stickers (Exhibit 8). The adult responsible for each nursery child must fill out one sticker each session and place it on the child's back. That adult must present the matching copy before the nursery child will be released. If the sticker is lost or otherwise unavailable when the adult returns to pick up his/her child, the worker in charge of that nursery child must notify the Nursery Coordinator, who then becomes responsible for releasing the child. Sign-in/out sheets must also be completed for each child in the nursery, by room. These sign-in/out sheets should be maintained by the Nursery Coordinator for 2 years.

7. Parental permission, including a signed Event Permission Form (Exhibit 10), must be obtained in writing in advance for involvement of nursery or children in St. James sponsored programs or activities which involve leaving St. James UMC. Parental permission, including a signed waiver/release form, must be obtained for children or youth in advance of involvement in overnight activities.

NOTE: Observations of suspicious behavior or concerns you may have as a teacher should be reported to the appropriate director. To maintain confidentiality and the integrity of this process, these matters should be discussed only with the appropriate St. James ministry staff.

8. No personal information of any kind (including, but not limited to, names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses) of minors shall be made public without prior written permission from the minor's parent or guardian. In the event the church wishes to use the photograph(s) of a child/youth for advertisement purposes, prior written permission from the child/youth's parent or guardian must be obtained in the form of a Photograph Release Form (Exhibit 9).

**St. James United Methodist Church**  
111 West Lake Drive  
Athens, GA 30606  
(706)548-1680

**Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse**

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse (include a contact number): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Victim's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Victim's age/date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Victim's statement (give your detailed summary here): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Name of person accused of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Reported to pastor/administrator: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Call to victim's parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Call to local children and family service agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Call to local law enforcement agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Other contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_