

# CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY



## GUIDEBOOK

*The people of Ankeny First United Methodist Church believe it is in the best interest of the Church and the children and youth of the church, and in the advancement of our Christian beliefs, to follow policies, procedures and screening tools to assist us in protecting the physical, mental and emotional well-being of the children and youth who participate in church sponsored activities at Ankeny First United Methodist Church.*

Revised September 2021

## I. DEFINITIONS

### 1. Abuse

- **Physical Abuse** is any deliberate act that inflicts bodily harm to a person.
- **Sexual Abuse** is any sexual contact or sexually explicit language, gestures, or images displayed by a volunteer or staff person with, or directed to, a participant.
- **Emotional abuse** is an emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Neglect** is failure to provide nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the well being of the children or youth.

2. **Staff** includes any clergy person and paid employee of Ankeny First United Methodist Church who has the care/supervision of a participant at an event.

### 3. Volunteers

- **Certified Volunteer** is any lay worker who has been a church participant for at least six months and who is providing care/supervision at an event and has successfully completed the Child and Youth Safety Screening process. This may include paid staff members. To be considered an adult volunteer or staff, the person must be at least 18 years old and 5 years older than the oldest participant.
- **Probationary Volunteers** have not yet participated in church for six months and may be:
  - a parent/legal guardian/family member who is providing care/supervision at an event in which their children or youth are participants
  - a new coach/athletic team leader/special event volunteer

All Probationary Volunteers must have successfully completed the Child and Youth Safety Screening process prior to serving. Probationary volunteers will be shifted to certified volunteers after six months of church participation and ministry staff member approval.

- **Youth Volunteer** is a person who is at least 14 years old and 3 years older than the oldest participant. **They must be under the supervision of an adult Certified Volunteer.**

4. **Participants** are children and/or youth who are registered, enrolled, attending or otherwise participating in an event sponsored by Ankeny First United Methodist Church.

- a. **Adults** are persons over 18 years of age and at least 5 years older than the oldest participant.
- **Children** are persons 0-10 years of age. At Ankeny First, Children's Ministry refers to programs for children up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **Youth** are persons 11-17 years of age. At Ankeny First, Youth Ministry refers to programs for children in grades 6-12.

5. **Event** is defined as an activity or ministry sponsored by Ankeny First United Methodist Church that involves a gathering of children and/or youth.

6. **Supervision** is the act of being in charge of a group of children or youth, including giving directions, explaining boundaries, managing behavior appropriately, and ensuring safety in all situations. Paid staff with supervision responsibility for children or youth must be at least 20 years of age. **There must be a minimum of 2 adults whenever children are present.** As a point of reference for the number of adults required, the Iowa state childcare guidelines for adult to child ratios are listed below.

	State of Iowa	Ankeny First
Nursery	1:4	1:3, meaning 2 adults for up to 6 children
2 years	1:6	2 adults for up to 12 children
3 years	1:8	2 adults for up to 16 children
4 years	1:12	2 adults for up to 24 children
5-17 years	1:15	2 adults for up to 30 children

## II. POLICIES

### 1. Team Approach

- All church events involving children or youth will be supervised or conducted by two Certified Adult Volunteers or one Certified Adult Volunteer and one Probationary Adult Volunteer/Youth Volunteer.
- In instances when children or youth are not being supervised by two Certified Adult Volunteers, such as small groups or break out sessions, the door to the room must remain propped open and a Certified Adult must rotate through all groups throughout the duration of the activity.

### 2. Parental Consent

- All children and youth must have an **annual permission, medical, transportation, and media release form on file**. These forms are required for participation in regular children's and youth ministry programming as well as off site events. It is the responsibility of the ministry staff person to distribute either copies of the forms or a link for online completion at the beginning of the school year.
- In addition to the annual consent form, ministry staff is encouraged to obtain parental consent for individual events as they occur throughout the year. While the annual form gives the child or youth permission to be transported, it should not serve as a substitute for notification of individual off site events. Parents should receive advance notice any time an event will occur outside of regular program times and locations.
- Should a child or youth join an activity at a time other than the beginning of the year, efforts should be made to obtain the consent forms as soon as possible. We understand that children or youth may attend as a guest from time to time, but staff is responsible for getting the child's information when it becomes clear their attendance will be at least semi-regular. If at all possible, provide the parents/guardians with the consent forms at the time of the first drop-off. Forms are included at the end of this guidebook.
- Any time a church staff member or volunteer has a need to be alone with a child or youth they must obtain parental/guardian permission. Probationary Volunteers and Youth Volunteers are never allowed to be one on one with a child or youth.

### 3. Youth Volunteers

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

- Must be at least age 14 and 3 years older than the oldest participant
- Must be at least age 16 to assist in supervision of children, including nursery
- Must be screened and approved as specified in the Staff and Volunteer Screening
- Must be under the supervision of a Certified Adult Volunteer
- Must demonstrate appropriate behavior at all times

### 4. Participant Drop-Off

- All infants and toddlers will be signed in by parents/caregivers on a paper sign in each time they are left in the nursery/toddler room for any childcare activity. This includes parent contact information and the name of the person who will pick up.
- All children and youth will check in by computer or paper sign-in (specified at the beginning of the school year), whether for regularly programs or special events.

## 5. Participant Pick-Up

- All infants and toddlers will be signed out by parents/caregivers at the conclusion of the childcare activity in the nursery/toddler room.
- Before a child or youth leaves the area in which an event takes place, the supervising **volunteer must make contact with the parent/guardian** who picks up the child. **Children are not to be allowed to leave the area** without permission of the volunteer.
- If someone other than a parent or guardian is going to pick up the participant, the parent/guardian must **notify the supervising volunteer beforehand and specify** who will be picking up. Volunteers are never to release a child to an unknown person. If in doubt, ask for identification.
- All participants must remain at the activity and under the supervision of volunteers **for the duration of the event**. Should a child or youth need to leave at an unusual time, the parent/guardian would pick up directly or notify volunteers beforehand.

## 6. Transportation

- Drivers of children or youth must be Certified Adult Volunteers.
- Passengers must wear seatbelts and use child safety seats as required by Iowa law.
- A minimum of 2 adults is required when there is only one child being transported.
- All drivers who are transporting children or youth outside of the metro area will have their driving record reviewed.

## 7. Open Door

- All rooms in which an event for children/youth is being held must be visually accessible from the outside.
- If there is not a window, the door must be left open.
- In group situations where only one volunteer is leading, the door must be left open at all times. (An additional Certified Adult Volunteer must be circulating between all groups as well.)

## 8. Overnight/Off Site

- All children and youth events that are overnight or off site will be supervised by two unrelated adults
- Males and females are to be assigned separate living and sleeping areas.
- Each participant is to have an individual sleeping area (such as an air mattress, sleeping bag, or cot). Individual sleeping areas are never to be shared.

## 9. Restroom Policy

- If a child (defined as up through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) needs to use the restroom, an adult should accompany them to the hallway in which the restroom is located and remain in the hallway with the restroom door open.
- The adult must first ensure that no other adults are in the restroom prior to children entering.
- If the child requires assistance, two Certified Adult Volunteers should be present. An adult should never be in a stall with a child with the door closed.
- If the participant is a youth (grades 6-12), the adult does not need to accompany the youth but should watch to ensure the participant returns in a reasonable amount of time.

## **10. Volunteer Conduct**

All church employees and volunteers are prohibited from committing any act of child/youth mistreatment, neglect, physical or sexual abuse. Prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Physical striking, hitting, spanking
- Failure to supervise adequately, neglect
- Touching in an inappropriate or sexual manner
- Fondling, kissing or unwelcome physical contact
- Inappropriate or intimidating actions or body language
- Verbally or emotionally abusive or derogatory language
- Using sexually implicit or explicit language or behavior

Additionally, any behavior deemed by ministry staff to be unacceptable for a volunteer of Ankeny First United Methodist Church may be used as grounds for dismissal or reassignment.

### III. ADMINISTRATION AND SCREENING

#### 1. Administration of Policies and Procedures

Administration of the Child and Youth Safety Policies and procedures will be handled through the ministry in which the volunteer serves. A Child and Youth Safety Policy Administrator will review the application and conduct a background check. An additional church staff member will conduct or review the written interview and contact the professional character reference (if needed). Both the Child and Youth Safety Policy Administrator and a ministry staff member must sign off on all volunteers. Any red flags will be reviewed with a pastor before approval. A volunteer is eligible to serve for 5 years before they must renew their application.

#### 2. Staff and Volunteer Screening

- All children and youth workers, paid or volunteers will undergo basic screening for suitability and safety to work with children and youth. The screening process is available on the church web page, [www.ankenfirst.org](http://www.ankenfirst.org).
- **All** staff and volunteers will be screened and must submit the following:
  - A completed application form and written (or personal) interview reviewed by a church staff member or member
  - A signed authorization for background records check
  - A valid driver's license or other identification
- Volunteers who are applying to be a **Probationary Volunteer** must additionally provide a professional character reference from a non-relative who has witnessed the volunteer interacting with children and/or youth - preferably from the pastor of their church (or former church).
- If at any time a staff person determines the need to run a background records check at a time sooner than the 5 year mark, the volunteer will sign an additional authorization. We reserve the right to ask for a background records check authorization at any time.
- Should the volunteer refuse to consent to the background records check, ministry staff has the authority to dismiss the volunteer.

#### 3. Staff and Volunteer Selection

*Satisfactory screening defined:*

- Background check indicating no known history of abuse/molestation of children or youth or criminal record
- Has had experience working with children or youth or demonstrates ability to learn
- Personal or written interview does not reveal information of concern to reviewer
- Positive character reference check

*Unsatisfactory screening defined:*

- Prior conviction/guilty plea for child abuse/molestation
- Other findings of a criminal record: a case-by-case review should be conducted with the supervising pastor
- Suspicions or prior accusations of abuse/molestation, even without conviction or plea.
- Negative personal reference or interview: evaluate on a case-by-case basis, with additional references or follow-up as necessary

These findings warrant the exclusion of the applicant from service with children and youth. These individuals should be offered opportunities to volunteer services in other areas of the church, and pastoral guidance and counseling should be offered to assist them to understand the church's duty to provide the highest level of protection to its children and youth and to the members of the church.

#### IV. ONLINE TRAINING

Upon successful completion of the screening process and prior to actually working with children and/or youth, the volunteer is required to complete Child and Youth Safety Training online. This consists of watching a video and completing the corresponding quiz.

#### V. INCIDENT REPORTING

All allegations of incidents involving improper touching, physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect of a children and youth must be brought to the attention of a staff member as soon as possible, but no more than 24 hours after becoming aware of the incident.

Once a staff member is informed, he or she will notify an additional staff member (for corroboration). Both staff members and the witness will together complete a written incident report within 48 hours of the oral report.

(See Incident Reporting Form)

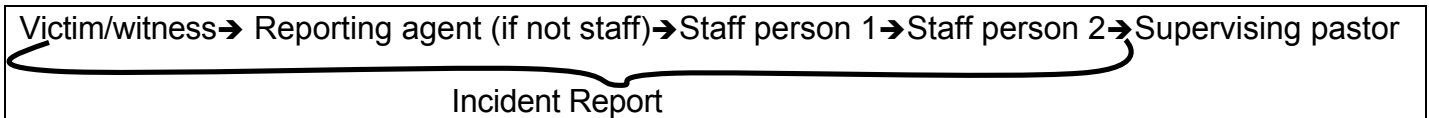
#### VI. RESPONSE TO INCIDENT REPORTS

It will be the policy of Ankeny First United Methodist Church to deal with all allegations of improper conduct involving children and youth with respect and dignity for all parties involved. Opportunities for spiritual and emotional support will be offered to all parties involved. Ankeny First United Methodist Church will follow the following guidelines for dealing with allegations of improper conduct:

- Ministry staff members are to remain unbiased during the investigation of the allegation and reserve personal judgment; however, the alleged perpetrator is suspended from working with children or youth until the investigation is completed.
- Ministry staff members and reporting agents are to keep the allegations strictly confidential, limiting the sharing of information only to the supervising pastor(s) and parties directly involved.

Ankeny First United Methodist Church reminds all volunteers, staff, and members to call 911 in case of an emergency or the nonemergency police line for less immediate concerns that may warrant a law enforcement presence. The following steps are to be taken upon receipt of a non-emergent allegation:

1. The reporting agent, if not a staff person, notifies a staff person.
2. The staff person and reporting agent together notify a second staff person for corroboration.
3. The staff members along with the reporting agent or witness will complete an incident report within 48 hours of the incident.
4. The staff person will notify the supervising pastor with 24 hours of receiving any oral or written incident report. The supervising pastor may then inform the other pastors or other staff as needed.
5. The supervising pastor, ministry staff person, and/or reporting agent will meet as soon as possible to begin the investigation of the allegation and determine the next steps, which may or may not include notification of parents/guardians, law enforcement, social services, and/or the church's insurance and legal counsel. All state and federal laws will be followed.



**ANKENY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY**

**INCIDENT REPORT**

Name of victim \_\_\_\_\_ Date of report \_\_\_\_\_

Alleged perpetrator(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Witness(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Date, time and location of incident \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a mandatory reporter.

\_\_\_\_\_ I choose to remain anonymous regarding this incident.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reported or intend to report this incident to criminal authorities.

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS FREELY PROVIDED AND IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship (if different from victim)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff #1 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff #2 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reporting Agent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Signature



**ANKENY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY**

**VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

**TO BE FILLED OUT COMPLETELY BY ALL PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEERS**

*This information is kept confidential and is used for the sole purpose of helping the church provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.*

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Current Age \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's Lic. # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Length of current employment \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last CPR or First Aid certificate (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of membership at Ankeny First United Methodist Church \_\_\_\_\_

If not a member, how long have you been attending? \_\_\_\_\_

If not a member, list other church affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

If not active at Ankeny First United Methodist Church please provide a professional character reference from a non-relative who has witnessed you working with children/youth/vulnerable adults (pastor or church staff from your home church is preferable)

Reference name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**INDICATE AREAS FOR WHICH YOU ARE VOLUNTEERING:**

- |  |  |   |                                       |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery         | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music Ministry      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Promise |                                       |

Are there any limitations you believe prevent you from doing certain types of activities?

Is there any other information that you think we should know?

**ANKENY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY**

**INTERVIEW FORM**

(To be completed unless a personal interview is completed with the appropriate Child and Youth Safety Policy staff)

Please consider the following questions and reply in a brief statement or two.

1. Give one concern you have about working with children/youth.
  
2. What frustrations have you experienced when working with children/youth?  
How were they resolved? Please be specific.
  
3. What technique works well for you when discipline is needed, in the classroom or other church related activity?
  
4. What satisfaction do you hope to have in working with children or youth?
  
5. When working with children or youth, with whom would you feel comfortable talking about any situation you might experience?

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Applicants must complete quiz "ACT to Keep Children's Ministry Safe" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UntsXsbqi4s>) and corresponding quiz (<https://www.cognitofrms.com/AnkenyFirstUMC1/ChildYouthSafety>).

**FOR OFFICE USE:**

Work Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Reference \_\_\_\_\_ Date Contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Review by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(AFUMC Staff Member)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(C&YSP Administrator)