

## **Toms Brook United Methodist Church Abuse Policy**

In an effort to safeguard the children and youth of our church from sexual abuse, to protect the church staff and volunteer workers from potential allegations of sexual abuse, and to limit the extent of our legal risk and liability due to sexual abuse, the following guidelines are established for the Toms Brook United Methodist Church.

Teachers, volunteers and other occasional workers of children and youth should be screened, particularly for higher risk positions such as youth camps. This screening process should be done as a part of teacher/youth leader orientation. During a teacher/youth worker orientation, a confidential screening form for child or youth work should be incorporated for each individual and reviewed by a qualified professional. The screening form would require two references. All completed forms will be kept in a strictly confidential manner.

**Follow a six-month rule.** No one should be permitted to work with youth or children until after they have been actively attending and involved in the Toms Brook United Methodist Church for at least six months. This time would be used for evaluation and should help deter persons seeking immediate access to children.

Those with criminal abuse violations are not acceptable as children or youth workers. Adults who have been convicted or plead guilty to child sexual or physical abuse cannot work with children or youth in any capacity.

**Two adult supervisors** should be present during any church activity involving youth or children unless there has been parental notification and /or written parental permission granted.

**Parental permission** must be obtained when going out alone with a child or spending time in an unsupervised situation. Workers should notify an appropriate church leader of such meetings in advance. Children should also have written parental permission for involvement in church sponsored programs/activities.

**Discuss suspicious behavior immediately.** Church staff/pastor/leader should be notified of any behavior that appears to fall outside of proper volunteer conduct. Reporting abuse is a personal responsibility and a moral obligation as well as being required by state law.

Install windows on all classroom doors. Sunday School Superintendent(s) and /or other church leaders also can make random visits, particularly to rooms isolated from view.

**Nursery Identification Procedure-** Children should only be released to a properly identified and preauthorized adult. A suggested help with identification would be a bulletin board with photographs of all parents and children who use the nursery. New families should get pictures as soon as possible. Alternate identity measures such as colored ribbons or numbers can be utilized until photographs are available, or for visitors.

# **TOMS BROOK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

## **ABUSE POLICY & POSITION STATEMENT**

**November 12, 1997**

The following policies reflect our statement and our commitment to provide a safe environment and protective care of all children, youth and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities.

1. Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse should not volunteer service in any church sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
2. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of this church family. Such individuals are encouraged to discuss their desire to work with children or youth with the pastor prior to engaging in any volunteer service of that nature.
3. All adult volunteers working with youth or children are required to be actively attending and involved in the Toms Brook United Methodist Church for a minimum of six months.
4. Adult volunteers should observe “two adult” rule. This requires that adults are never alone with children or youth without an adult partner unless there has been parental Notification and written parental permission secured.
5. Adult volunteers should immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to the church staff, pastor or church leaders.