

Safe Sanctuary Policy – Preventing Abuse in the Church

Tate United Methodist Church

Tate, Georgia 30177

Approved by Trustees: _____

Approved by Administrative Council: _____

Submitted to Charge Conference: _____

Introduction:

Tate United Methodist Church ("Tate") believes that the spiritual, emotional and physical well being of our children, youth and vulnerable adults is imperative. We must do all we can to nurture and protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults. This policy is intended to provide a guide for that protection, as well as the protection of our adult workers and the church. This policy is enacted to insure that the parents, members, visitors, volunteers and staff of Tate have a clear understanding of what the policies and procedures are regarding the safety of our children, youth and vulnerable adults. The leadership of Tate requests the cooperation of all in our church, as they must abide by the guidelines in this policy.

Policy Standards and General Christian Moral Standard:

Staff and/or volunteers of Tate who work in any area of the children and youth ministries or with vulnerable adults that includes but is not limited to: Sunday School, preschool, sports, scouts, adult ministry trips, homebound visitations, etc., are required to adhere to these policies and standards as moral Christians. A signed covenant statement in support of this policy is required before a person may serve.

Supervision of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy:

The Pastor will appoint the person or committee (staff or volunteer) with the responsibility of the oversight of the Safe Sanctuary Policy. These policies govern all activities held by the church that

involve children and youth under the age of 18, and/or any vulnerable adult (persons with a mental age of 18 years or less, or over the age of 65).

These policies must be reviewed annually, reapproved by the Administrative Council and presented at Charge Conference. These policies may be altered at any time with the approval of the Administrative Council and the Trustees.

The following are basic procedures that Tate will follow to reduce the possibility of abuse:

The "Two Adult" Rule:

The Two Adult Rule requires that no fewer than two adults be present at all times during any church sponsored program, event or ministry involving children and youth. To the best of our ability, the two adults will not be related. If it is impossible to have two adults in the room, an "Open Door" policy must be followed. No adult shall take children or youth off site without a second adult.

The "Five-Years Older" Rule:

Those who are paid or volunteer to work with children and youth will be at least five years older than those in the class or program. Those under age 18 may serve as "assistants" but not as lead workers or teachers.

Classroom Windows:

All classrooms will have at least one window in the door, if possible. The window must not be covered at any time with decorations, etc. If a classroom has no window in the door, the door must remain open.

6 Month Hospitality Rule:

No person who has not been a member of or a regularly participating visitor in the congregation for less than 6 months shall serve as a lead teacher or volunteer with children and youth.

Open Door Counseling:

Any one-on-one counseling session with any person will be done with the door open. If at all possible, it should be done when another adult is nearby but not necessarily within hearing distance.

Transportation:

Transportation to and from activities held at the church is not the church's responsibility. Church approved volunteers may provide transportation to and from activities held away from the church. Church approved volunteers must have a valid driver's license and an insurance card on file in the church office. All participants should carry information regarding: (a) current medical condition, including but not limited to medications, allergies, etc.; (b) current physician; (c) a copy of any Advance Directive signed by participant; and (d) contact person, in case of emergency.

REMEMBER, THE CONTACT PERSON SHOULD NOT BE ON THE TRIP.

Training:

"Tate" will provide yearly training for all volunteers on the policies and procedures outlined above.

Each new volunteer must complete formal Safe Sanctuaries training provided by the district, the local church, or on-line through Trak-1. Records of those volunteers successfully completing training must be kept on file in the church office.

Vulnerable Adults:

While much of this policy addresses the need to protect our children and youth, "Tate" recognizes that abuse of impaired and older adults is a major concern. Many older adults are also subject to financial abuse. We must be vigilant for signs of abuse in our adult membership and report any suspected abuse, following the process outlined below. The local Department of Family and Children's Services has a division with responsibility for supervising elder care.

Reporting Abuse:

"Tate" regards any form of abuse and evidence thereof as unacceptable and has a strict policy regarding the reporting of such abuse. This is a serious criminal allegation and will be taken seriously. As of January 2012, church volunteers are MANDATORY reporters. If a volunteer or staff member becomes aware of an abuse allegation, he or she must report it to the person responsible for the program IMMEDIATELY. The Pastor or his or her designee must be contacted as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to contact a staff member if you feel there is abuse occurring. For ALL allegations, a report MUST be made by the reporter by phone to the Department of Family and Children's Services in the county of the victim's residence. A copy of the incident report must be turned into the Pastor within twenty four hours. If any further reporting is needed, the Pastor and/or designee will handle future reporting, including a report to the District Superintendent and law enforcement. Should the press or TV become involved, only an approved church spokesperson should respond. It is better not to make any response. Do not try to interview the victim. Leave that process to the proper professional law enforcement official, who is better qualified.

Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church
Tate United Methodist Church
Tate, Georgia

Pastor

Kathy Howard

Administrative Council Chairperson

Kathy Morris

Committee on Prevention of
Abuse in the Church

Jean Ray

Policy Effective

January 1, 2000

Revised

June 2, 2007

Revised

, 2015

Selection of Staff

Employed Staff

All persons employed to serve in a supervisory capacity for children/youth 18 years old or younger shall:

- *Be at least 18 years of age
- *Complete Volunteer/Staff Information Form
- *Provide three character references
- *Be interviewed by the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee
- *Satisfactorily complete Safe Sanctuary Training provided by the district, the local church, or on-line through Trak-1 including a background check

Volunteer Staff

All volunteers serving in a supervisory capacity for children/youth 18 years old or younger shall:

- *Be at least 18 years of age
- *Be a regular attender of this church for at least six months
- *Complete a Volunteer Information Form

*Satisfactorily complete Safe Sanctuary Training provided by the district,
the local church, or on-line through Trak-1 including a background check

Volunteer/Staff Information Form

Volunteer/Applicant's Full Name: _____

(Please Print)

Driver's License Number: _____ Exp Date: _____ Issuing State: _____

Current Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell: _____

List areas of service in which you would like to volunteer/work:

Are you trained in C.P.R.? _____ Date Completed _____

Are you trained in First Aid? _____ Date Completed _____

If above answers are NO, would you be willing to take a training course in

C.P.R. / First Aid? _____

I have read the Tate United Methodist Church policy for Preventing Abuse in the Church. As a volunteer/employee in the congregation, I agree to complete Safe Sanctuary Training, provided by the district, the local church, or on-line through Trak-1 including a background check and observe and abide by all church policies.

(Print Full Name)

Signature

Date

Prevention Guidelines

1. All meetings of children/youth 18 years of age or younger shall be governed by these guidelines:

* Two adults shall be present at all times, or an "Open Door" policy must be followed.

*There shall be access to a telephone.

*Written parental permission shall be obtained when groups leave church property.

*Unauthorized visitors will not be allowed to remain with the group.

*Children/youth shall not be allowed to leave the designated meeting area without permission/supervision.

2. Insurance Coverage:

*The church's policy provides liability coverage for employed and volunteer staff. The policy includes coverage for acts of molestation occurring on church property or during a church sponsored activity.

Procedures for Reporting Alleged Abuse

Should an adult in charge suspect abuse, or should a child, youth or vulnerable adult report abuse, the following procedures shall apply.

The adult in charge shall:

1. Document the incident in writing. Document shall be signed and dated.

2. Notify the minister in charge immediately. If the minister is the accused party, notify the chair of the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee, the chair of the Administrative Council and the District Superintendent.

3. Along with the minister in charge, notify Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services and/or the local law enforcement authority.

The minister/chair of Staff Pastor Parish Relations or Administrative Council shall notify:

*District Superintendent

If the alleged abuse was by a church employee or church volunteer or on church property, notify:

*Insurance Carrier

Accident Report Form

(Please Print all information)

Date of accident: _____ Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person (or people) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Describe Accident:

Signature of Person Making the Report

Date

Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of abuse:

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 a 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:

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian if appropriate:

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

8. Call to local department of family and children's service agency:

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to local law enforcement agency:

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Other contacts:

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

Signature of Person Making the Report

Date

Important Phone Numbers

Pastor

Rev. Kathy S. Howard

[678-454-8515](tel:678-454-8515) Parsonage