

BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

HOUSTON, TEXAS

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Statement of Purpose:

When the disciples tried to keep the children away from Jesus, he was quick to respond, “Let the children come to me.” Jesus taught that children were to be included and provided for within the community of faith. As Christians, we must take our responsibility to our children very seriously. We fail in our responsibilities if we neglect to take adequate precautions against abuse in our church. This policy attempts to do just that for our church.

The purpose of this policy is to protect all persons that come to us, to protect both our staff and volunteers from potential false allegations of abuse and to limit the extent of legal liability of the church.

Definitions: the following terms shall be utilized within this document;

Adult	a person 18 years of age or older
Criminal History	refers to any items reported on a person’s criminal records including arrests, charges, indictments, convictions, probations and deferred adjudications.
Director	shall mean the person in charge of a particular Ministry. The director shall be responsible for coordinating applications and achieving compliance with this policy by staff and volunteers within such director’s particular ministry.
Incident of Abuse & Neglect	as defined by the Texas Family Code found at www.http://law.justia.com . Excerpts from which can be found in Child Abuse & Neglect (Appendix A)
Ministry(ies)	shall mean on campus, or church sponsored off campus, activities or programs involving protected persons.
Protected Persons	Any person under the age of 18 and adults whose mental or physical condition makes them susceptible to abuse.
Staff	paid employee of Bear Creek United Methodist Church.
Volunteer	Any adult who assists in conducting protected person’s activities under the supervision of a staff person and has direct contact with children.

1.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- By fostering awareness of appropriate, as well as inappropriate behavior with, or in the presence of, protected persons, Bear Creek, as part of the body of Christ, will demonstrate Christian like love and respect for one another.
- Bear Creek recognizes that certain workers have exceptional talents for teaching and supporting the growth and development of protected persons, and wishes to encourage them to use their spiritual gifts. Bear Creek has set certain criteria for those workers who choose to serve in ministries in order to promote and protect the well- being of Protected Persons.
- It is not the intent of the membership of Bear Creek to be judgmental, for we are all accountable to God. The membership of Bear Creek will rely on God's wisdom in developing, implementing and carrying out God's will through this policy. Compassion and truth will be the guiding forces for any investigation, reporting or follow up action that results from the procedures as outlined in this policy.
- Congregational support is critical for adherence to this policy. The limited nature of our resources and our desire to devote as much time and effort as possible to the work of the Lord, mandates that this policy be fully understood by every member of our congregation and church family. This will enable church staff and leadership to do what is necessary to preserve the church's resources for the work of the Lord.

1.0 BEHAVIOR

1. The following behaviors are prohibited for Workers:

- Threatening or intentionally inflicting emotional or physical injury.
- Committing any sexual offense or engaging in any sexual contact
- Making any kind of sexual advance or making a request for sexual favors
- Engaging in verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, i.e. back rubs, massages, kissing or similar contact.
- Physical discipline, such as spanking

2. Touching to comfort or affirm a protected person in an age-appropriate manner is permitted. Side-by-side hugs are suggested instead of full-body contact. Appropriate touching need not be completely avoided but is acceptable only in public. Workers shall be aware of how it looks and how the person being contacted may interpret the contact.

3. The following are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at any ministry:

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Firearms or other weapons
- Foul or offensive language

The said examples are not "all-inclusive". Any appropriate behavior that contravenes the Statement of Purpose shall be considered prohibited behavior.

4. All workers and staff must sign Appendix G-2 before beginning work in any ministry.

2.0 WORKER ENLISTMENT AND SCREENING PROCESS

1. Persons shall meet the requirements and approvals for service set out herein in order to be a worker in a Ministry.
2. All workers/volunteers must attend safe sanctuary and have background checks annually.

3.1 Application Process

1. Workers shall complete the Employment or Volunteer Application (Appendices B or C) and a Form for Authorization for Release of Information (Appendix D) for criminal records check.

3.2 Certification Process

1. A criminal records check shall be made on applicants by an outside source specializing in such confidential screening. Results will be given to the applicable director. Issues requiring a discussion with the clergy or designate will be treated with confidentiality.
2. References found on the Employment and Volunteer Application may be randomly checked by the applicable director. The Employee and Volunteer Reference Check Form (Appendix E) may be used to document discussions and findings.
3. The information and the Employment and Volunteer Application will be used to screen any potential driver(s) through the church's insurance company and the State Department of Motor Vehicles to determine if the potential driver is a safe driver.

3.4 Approval/Disapproval Process (initial certification and during service in a Ministry)

1. Sunday School teachers shall be members of Bear Creek for three (3) or more months prior to beginning service. Exceptions will be allowed only if the applicant provides a recommendation letter from a pastor and/or relevant staff person at a prior church of applicant, or if written recommendations are received from three (3) current members of Bear Creek, who have been members for more than one (1) year.
2. Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry:
 - Child Abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual or neglectful
 - Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.
3. Persons having a criminal history of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.

4. Workers shall be at least twenty-five (25) years of age or salaried staff to drive. Drivers must have a valid Texas driver's license and proof of insurance covering at least liability and un-insured motorists.
5. Other offenses, depending on how recent, the frequency and the nature may also preclude an applicant or worker from serving in a ministry. This will be determined on a case by case basis by the senior clergy and the applicable director. In such cases, the determining factors will be the best interests, safety and well-being of the protected persons. Any applicant or worker whose criminal history is such that his or her approval is subject to decision by the clergy and the applicable director will be given the opportunity to explain the circumstances to the clergy and the applicable director.
6. Lying on an application is cause for removal from service in a ministry.
7. Workers who refuse to comply with this policy or repeatedly fails to follow it shall be subject to dismissal.
8. Workers who do not attend mandatory training are subject to dismissal.
9. Persons may begin working in a ministry when the application paperwork and certification work is complete and the person is found to meet the acceptance standards.

4.1 GENERAL POLICY

4.2 Staffing

1. A minimum of two (2) workers shall be present in any room or area where protected persons are participating. Exceptions to the above rule include:
 - Escorting protected persons between on-campus buildings or in hallways
 - Monitoring the arrival or departure of protected persons
 - In cases of emergency care
 - Line of sight exists within field of vision of another certified adult
 - Safety in numbers exist
2. If the required number of workers cannot be obtained for the number of rooms or areas, then the group shall be combined with another group or the ministry cancelled.
3. While on campus, there shall always be a director or their designee on duty while the ministries are in session

4.3 On Campus Policies

1. Doors to rooms shall be kept open or, in the case of rooms with Dutch doors, the top half of the door shall be kept open. It is acceptable to close the door to a room if there is a window to the hallway that allows observation of activities in the room. Under no circumstances shall a worker be alone with a protected person behind closed doors with no window. Doors shall never be locked while occupied by workers or protected persons, unless such doors are of the "Dutch Door" variety, and the top portions of doors are left completely open.
2. If there is to be a change of class location, the director or designee shall be notified.

3. Workers are encouraged to wear their nametags while working on campus in a Ministry.

4.4 Discipline

1. The applicable director shall advise workers on the best Age-Appropriate Discipline Methods (Appendix F&G-1)

2. The behavior of the protected person who is a constant disruption shall be discussed with his or her parents or legal guardian and the applicable director. Parents or legal guardian shall be asked to attend the ministry to observe or control the problem behavior. A protected person who is disruptive or a danger to him/herself or others shall be removed immediately by the worker and the parents, legal guardian and the applicable director shall be promptly notified.

4.5 Continuing Education

1. Directors shall encourage and may require workers to attend continuing education opportunities.

2. Directors shall communicate the substance of this policy to workers, and workers shall agree to comply with this on the Employee/Volunteer Agreement Policy Form (Appendix H) and read and sign the Fire and Building Safety Guidelines (Appendix I).

4.6 Communication with Parents/Legal Guardian

1. Workers should attempt to keep open lines of communication with parents or legal guardians. When behavioral issues occur, contact the applicable director to speak to the parents/legal guardians.

2. Parents or legal guardians shall always be permitted to observe in a classroom.

3. Parents and legal guardians shall be advised by the applicable director where to report suspected abuse or other concerns regarding a situation and be assured the reports shall remain confidential.

4. Information concerning the sleeping accommodations for protected persons at any overnight event shall be made available to parents or legal guardians by the applicable director.

5. A signed Emergency Medical Release Form shall be obtained for each protected person in order to participate in any ministry.

6. A signed parental/guardian Consent form shall be obtained for each protected person in order to participate in any off-campus ministry. The consent form may cover events for a stated time period or it may cover specific events.

5.0 ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR MINISTRIES OF CHILDREN BELOW GRADE SIX

1. Ministries with protected persons will require a positive identity security system to be used so that the person picking up the Protected Person can be positively matched.

2. For protected persons, infant through fifth grade, the parent shall complete child custody release form that identifies who may pick up the protected person and where the parent(s) are likely to be

found while the protected person is participating in ministry. Only a parent or other person specifically designated by the parent and known to the staff/volunteer may pick up children.

3. Parents shall provide the director with any special information regarding a possible child custody dispute where workers shall pay particular attention to who picks up the child.

4. Diaper changing shall be done in the open and not behind closed doors.

5. Staff/volunteer shall periodically check the bathrooms.

6. The staff/volunteer may release a protected person to a designated staff/volunteer serving as a hall monitor in order to stay in the classroom.

7. The applicable director shall maintain a student information file. This file shall contain a listing of the students enrolled in the ministry with references or remarks as to any parent instructions or special information regarding a child in such ministry.

8. Fourth and fifth graders in Sunday school classes may be released from activities by the workers without being picked up by parent/legal guardian or other designated person if the parent/legal guardian provides the applicable director with written permission on waiver form (Appendix L).

6.0 ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR MINISTRIES OF YOUTH

1. When two adults are working with the youth, at least one of the adults must have a 3 year age span from the youth they are supervising.

2. The two (2) Worker rule shall be followed, excepted as noted below:

- Planned one-on-one worker/youth activities: provided they are held in public places and shall only occur if permission has been given by the parent.
- A worker may “pick-up” or “drop off” a youth at their home provided permission has been given by the parent/legal guardian. (Appendix L)

7.1 ADDITIONAL POLICIES CONCERNING DRIVING, TRIPS AND OVERNIGHT STAYS

7.2 Driving Rules

1. When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-adult rule applies. When multiple vehicles are used for an event, a single worker may drive if all the vehicles travel together.

In the event only one driver is in the car, the applicable director shall have written permission from the parent/legal guardian. (Appendix L)

2. Occupants of vehicles shall wear seatbelts.

3. Protected persons twelve (12) years and younger, shall not sit in the front seat of vehicles with air bags.

7.3 Overnight and Trip Rules

1. The two-adult rule shall be followed throughout the trip. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirement of planned activities. The ratio of adults to protected persons shall be no less than 1:10. Additionally, for youth activities if the group of protected persons contains both male and females, there shall be at least one (1) female Worker and one (1) male Worker on the trip.

8.0 WAIVERS AND REVOCATIONS

1. Waivers may be made to the policies outlined in Sections 4.0 through 7.0 utilizing the following procedure:

- The director prepares a Waiver/Revocation form highlighting those areas where the policies will not be followed and the duration of the waiver. (Appendix L)
- The parents of the protected persons sign and date the waiver.

2. Parents may revoke any waiver. The revocation shall be in writing and given to the applicable director.

9.1 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS

9.2 Notifications Requirements

1. Workers shall immediately notify a director or clergy of any incident or abuse or violation of the above policies.

2. Subject to his or her obligation to report such an incident as set forth hereinafter, any person making and/or receiving such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

9.3 Imminent Threat

1. Where an imminent threat of continued or additional abuse exists, and worker with knowledge or information about such abuse shall immediately contact another adult and take steps to ensure the safety of the protected person. In connection herewith, any needed emergency healthcare shall be provided, such as (1) first aid, (2) emergency services, and/or (3) transport to a hospital emergency room. The alleged victim shall be immediately removed from contact with suspected abuser. The protected person is paramount before any reporting.

2. Where the abuse of a protected person is alleged to have occurred at home, and the protected person's safety at home is in doubt, the worker reporting the alleged abuse shall call 911 to notify the appropriate law enforcement officials.

9.4 Reporting Procedure

1. In cases where any worker has cause to believe that a protect person may have been abused or neglected, the worker is required by state law to make a report to the State of Texas Child Protective Services "CPS". Pertinent portions of the law relating to timing and substantive requirements of such reports to CPS are set forth on Appendix A. Since such law may be changed from time to time, the

reporting person shall follow the law covering such reporting procedures which is in effect at the time the report is made.

2. Contact the proper civil authorities following the guidance of the church's insurance company and attorney.

3. Allegations shall be taken seriously and no pre-judgments shall be made.

4. Situations shall be handled confidentially with due respect for the privacy of the alleged victim and others involved in the incident.

5. The person making the report shall provide the facts known with respect to the incident.

6. The director, together with the person making the notification shall complete an Accident/Incident Report Form (Appendix J)

9.5 Responding to the Report

1. The Director receiving a report of an Incident of Abuse shall:

- Immediately contact parents or guardian of the alleged victim and inform them of the alleged incident
- Immediately contact Bear Creek legal counsel, who shall within seventy two (72) hours of the report conduct an investigation (with the assistance of the clergy and the applicable director if the attorney requests such assistance) and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that the abuse may have occurred.
- Take reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending the investigation.

9.6 Investigations

1. Upon notification of an Incident of Abuse a "Supervising Committee" consisting of the clergy or the applicable director and an attorney shall select an appropriate "Investigation Team". The charge of the Investigation Team is to determine if there is reasonable cause of abuse.

2. The Supervising Committee shall take reasonable steps to ensure:

- That the investigation is kept strictly confidential and the evidentiary privileges are maintained.
- That the investigation is thoroughly documented and that the confidential file is maintained.
- That witnesses with information concerning the alleged abuse are contacted and interviewed
- That the interests of the alleged victim and alleged wrongdoer are protected during the investigative phase

9.7 Finding of No Abuse

1. If the Supervising Committee finds that there is no reasonable cause to believe that the alleged abuse may have occurred the committee shall provide a report to the trustees, preserving the identity, confidentiality and privacy of the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer and the witnesses.

2. If there is a finding of no abuse the worker may resume his or her position of service upon approval of the clergy and the applicable director.

9.8 Finding of Abuse

1. If the Supervising Committee finds there is reasonable cause to believe abuse may have occurred, the Supervising Committee shall provide a written report to the Trustees and/ or Staff Parish Relations (SPR) committee, as appropriate, and shall meet with the governing body to discuss the report.

2. The written Investigation Report shall include:

- Preservation of the identity, confidentiality and privacy of the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, and witnesses
- The allegations and the steps taken to investigate allegations
- The facts discovered during the investigation
- The conclusion reached as a result of the investigation and the reasons supporting the conclusion
- Recommended actions as to the level of participation in ministries for the alleged wrongdoer

3. The clergy shall ensure that the following actions shall be taken:

- Send notice of a claim or potential claim to the general liability insurance carrier and, if appropriate, the sexual misconduct insurance carrier.
- Cause the Media Response Plan to be implemented
- Report the incident to the District Superintendent and the Bishop

4. In addition, the Supervising Committee may recommend the need for, and may assist in making necessary arrangements for counseling for the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, their respective families and others who may be aware of the incident.

10.0 MEDIA RESPONSE PLAN

1. The Supervising Committee shall;

- Select a spokesperson to handle dissemination of information to staff, media and congregation. In his or her absence, the Senior Clergy will be the spokesperson
- Have ready for release, a clear position statement outlining Bear Creek's policy regarding any abuse of Protected Persons the establishment safeguards
- Select an attorney who will be present with the spokesperson while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies

2. The Church Spokesperson shall;

- Use text or a prepared statement to answer questions from the media and/or inform the congregation
- At all times the identity, privacy and confidentiality of those involved shall be strictly maintained
- Keep in mind that information given to or obtained by media may have a bearing on the Church's liability, so careful judgment shall be exercised.

- Should anticipate media questions

3. Guideline for Spokesperson

- Be Prepared
- Define strategy
- Be candid and honest
- Be clear, concise and in context
- Do not answer more the what I asked
- Do not volunteer information
- Do not ask for quote review
- Do respond to calls and questions as quickly as possible
- When an answer is unknown, the spokesperson shall simply state, "I don't know, but I'll do my best to find out the information for you." Never say "No comment."

11.0 POLICIES APPLICABLE TO OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

1. Any outside organizations, group(s) or individual(s) who use any of the facilities of Bear Creek on a regular basis, shall sign Indemnification and Release Form (Appendix K) stating that they are in compliance with this policy. Except for Scouts (see 11.0.03) the Bear Creek Safe Sanctuary Policy supersedes any other policies that may be place.

2. Any outside organization, group(s) or individuals(s) who do not use facilities of Bear Creek on a regular basis, shall sign indemnification and Release Form (Appendix K) stating that they understand and are in compliance with the policies outlines herein, except sections 3,8,9, and 10.

3. However, certified leaders of the Boy's and Girl's Scouts of America shall be subject to their own respective organizations rules and regulations concerning safety of those individuals they are charged with caring for.

12.1 AMENDMENT TO POLICY

This policy may be amended as approved by Bear Creek United Methodist Church Council and the directors of children and youth ministries.

Senior Pastor

Date: _____

Signature_____

Printed signature_____

Church Council

Date: _____

Signature_____

Printed signature_____

Youth Director

Date: _____

Signature_____

Printed signature_____

Children Director

Date: _____

Signature_____

Printed signature_____

APPENDIX A

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Texas Family Code

Bear Creek United Methodist Church

TITLE 5 – THE PARENT – CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND THE SUIT AFFECTING THE PARENT – CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Subtitle E – Protection of the Child

Chapter 261 – Investigations of Report of Child Abuse or Neglect

Subchapter A – General Provisions

Sec.261-001. Definitions.

In this chapter:

- (1) "Abuse" includes the following acts or omissions by a person:
 - (A) mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
 - (B) causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
 - (C) physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;
 - (D) failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child;
 - (E) sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare;
 - (F) failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child;
 - (G) compelling or encouraging the child to engage in **sexual conduct** as defined in Section 43.25 (see page 7), Penal code; or
 - (H) causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is **obscene** as defined in Section 43.21 (see page 7), Penal Code, or pornographic.
- (2) "Department" means the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.
- (3) "Designated Agency" means the agency designated by the court as responsible for the protection of children.
- (4) "Neglect" includes:
 - (A) the leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the
 - (B) which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, and day-care employees.
 - (C) The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, and a mental health professional.
 - (D) The identity of an individual making a report under this chapter is confidential and may be disclosed only on the order of a court or to a law enforcement officer for the purposes of conducting a criminal investigation of the report.

Sec. 261.102 Matters to be Reported

A report should reflect the reporter's belief that a child has been or may be abused or may be abused or neglected or has died of abuse or neglect.

Sec. 261.103 Reports Made to Appropriate Agency

A report shall be made to:

- (1) any local or state law enforcement agency;
- (2) the department if the alleged or suspected abuse involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child;
- (3) the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred; or
- (4) the agency designated by the court to be responsible for the protection of children.

Sec. 261.104 Contents of Report

The person making a report shall identify, if known:

- (1) the name and address of the child
- (2) the name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child: and
- (3) any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

Sec. 261.106 Immunities

- (a) a person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of alleged child abuse or neglect or who testifies or otherwise participates in a judicial proceeding arising from a report, petition, or investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

Texas Penal Code – Section 43.21. and 43.25

Sec. 43.21 Definitions

- (a) in this chapter:
 - (1) **“Obscene”** means material or a performance that:
 - (A) the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest in sex;
 - (B) depicts or describes:
 - (i) patently offensive representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual intercourse, sodomy, and sexual bestiality: or
 - (ii) patently offensive representations or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, sadism, masochism, lewd exhibition of the genitals, the male or female genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal, covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state or a device designed and marketed as useful primarily for stimulation of the human genital organs; and
 - (C) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value.

Sec. 43.25 Sexual Performance by a Child

- (2) **“Sexual conduct”** means actual or simulated sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, sexual bestiality, masturbation, sado-masochistic abuse, or lewd exhibition of the genitals.

Texas Family Code – Chapter 71

Sec. 71.01 Definitions

- (3) **“Family”** includes individuals related by consanguinity or affinity, as determined under Sections 573.022 and 573.024, Government Code, individuals who are former spouses of each other, individuals who are the biological parents of the same child, without regard to marriage, and a foster child and foster parent, whether or not those individuals reside together.

APPENDIX B

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

Bear Creek United Methodist Church
16000 Rippling Water Drive
Houston, TX 77084-2809

Date: _____

Personal Information

Name (Last Name, First Name, Middle Name)		Social Security Number	
Present Address	City	State	Zip Code
Permanent Address	City	State	Zip Code
Phone No ()	Referred by		
Cell No (optional)	Email address:		
Are you under the age of 18 YES NO	Drivers License Number & State		
Emergency Contact: Name	Emergency Contact Phone Number:		

Employment Information

Position	Date you can Start	If Seeking Employment, Salary Desired
Are you employed YES NO	If so, may we may inquire of your employer:	YES NO

Education History

Name & Location of School	Yrs Attended	Did you graduate	Subjects Studied
High School			
College			
Other			

Former Employers

Date (Month & Yr)	Name & Address of Employer	Position	Reason for Leaving
From			
To			
From			
To			
From			
To			
From			
To			

References Give below the names of 3 persons not related to you, whom you have known at least 1 year

Name	Address	Phone	Business/Title	Yrs Known

General Information

Special training or skills, organizations, etc.

Have You Ever...

Been convicted of a crime other than minor traffic violations YES NO	If yes, please explain
Been convicted of a traffic offense in the last five (5) years YES NO	If yes, please explain

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work. I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluation to you, provided they do so in good faith and without malice. I waive any right that I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf. Should my application be accepted I agree to be bound by the policies of this church and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my service on behalf of this church.

I understand and agree that, if hired, my employment is for no definite period and regardless of the date of payment of my wages or salary, I may be terminated at any time without any prior notice. Further, I understand and agree that no oral representations made by anyone on behalf of the employer may change the at will status of my employment and/or service with Bear Creek United Methodist Church.

I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing releases. This is a legally binding agreement that I read and understood.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

_____ Do Not Write Below This Line _____

Remarks

APPENDIX C

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION
 Bear Creek United Methodist Church
 16000 Rippling Water Drive
 Houston, TX 77084-2809

Date: _____

Personal Information

Name (Last Name, First Name, Middle Name)		Social Security Number	
Present Address		City	State
Permanent Address		City	State
Phone No ()		Email Address	
Are you under the age of 18 YES _____ NO _____		Drivers License Number & State	
Emergency Contact Name:		Emergency Contact phone number:	

Volunteer Information

Position	Date you can Start	Days/Time Available

Special Skills & Gifts

Please list any special training or skills, organizations, hobbies			

References Give below the names of 3 persons not related to you, whom you have known at least 1 year

Name	Address	Phone	Business/Title	Yrs Known

Have You Ever...

Been convicted of a crime other than minor traffic violations YES _____ NO _____	If yes, please explain
Been convicted of a traffic offense in the last five (5) years YES _____ NO _____	If yes, please explain

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APPENDIX D

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Bear Creek United Methodist Church
16000 Rippling Water Drive
Houston, TX 77084-2809

Date: _____

Name (Last Name, First Name, Middle Name)		Social Security Number		
Present Address		City	State	Zip Code
Permanent Address		City	State	Zip Code
Phone No ()				
Are you under the age of 18? YES N		Drivers License Number & State		
Birthdate Month /Date / Year		Birth Place	Maiden Name	

Former Residences (Include last Ten (10) years)

Date (Month & Yr)	Previous Address (Address, City, County, State, Zip)	Reason for Moving
From		
To		
From		
To		
From		
To		
From		
To		

Please provide a copy of a photo identification.

READ CAREFULLY:

I hereby authorize Bear Creek United Methodist Church to request any information regarding any record of indictment, charges or convictions contained in any file maintained on me, whether said file is a local, county, state, or national file, and including, but not limited to, accusations, charges, indictments and convictions for crimes or traffic convictions, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law. In connection herewith, I hereby authorize any agency (including law enforcement agencies) to release such information. I hereby RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS Bear Creek United Methodist Church, and all of the herein referenced agencies which provide the contents of said files from all liability that may result from any said request and/or disclosure made in response to such request.

This authorization is given as part of my application for employment or volunteer work at the church. All information relative to the background investigation is confidential and any dissemination will be in accordance with state and federal law.

I certify that I have read and understand the foregoing language that information developed as a result of my authorizing this investigation shall only be shared with the Senior Clergy and the appropriate Director(s) of Bear Creek United Methodist Church. I further certify that the information on this form is true and correct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent signature if under 18 _____ Date: _____

SEND THIS BACKGROUND CHECK TO:

Bear Creek United Methodist Church
16000 Rippling Water
Houston, Texas 77084
Attn: Lead Pastor

APPENDIX E

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH
EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER REFERENCE CHECK FORM
Bear Creek United Methodist Church

To be completed, if needed, by applicable Director

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Reference: _____

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How well do you know the applicant?
4. How would you describe the applicant?
5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to children and/or youth?
6. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?
7. How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities?
8. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child and /or youth?
9. Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children and/or youth? If so, please describe.
10. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.

Additional Comments:

Reference inquiry completed by (Print Name): _____

APPENDIX F

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Age-Appropriate Discipline Methods

Bear Creek United Methodist Church

Our goal is to ensure that every child who participates in a Ministry is offered a safe environment where God is the center of all that we do and say.

To do this, we need the children to follow these basic rules:

1. Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
2. Follow directions given by the teacher or leader of a ministry.
3. Stay in the classroom at all times unless escorted by a teacher or leader.
4. Remember, there is no fighting, name calling or rude behavior.
5. Use all equipment properly. Treat property with respect and clean-up after yourself (remember this is God's House)

As parents and teachers we realize that children are filled with energy. However, should a child's behavior become disruptive to the class or any ministry, the following actions shall be taken.

Pre-School:

1. The teacher/leader shall redirect the child's focus to an activity.
2. A verbal warning and separation from the source of disruption.
Ex: separate children, put toy away, etc.
3. Time-out in the classroom. Use this time to explain to the child why it is important to exercise proper behavior.
4. As a last resort, the parent/guardian shall be located and asked to sit with the child or remove them from the activity for that day.

Elementary:

1. The teacher/leader shall redirect the child's focus to an activity.
Ex: ask the child to help.
2. A verbal warning and separation from the source of disruption.
Ex: separate children, put toy away, etc.
3. Time-out in the classroom. Use this time to explain to the child why it is important to exercise proper behavior.
4. As a last resort, the parent/guardian shall be located and asked to sit with the child or remove them from the activity for that day.

Youth (Grades 6-12):

1. The teacher/leader shall redirect the student's focus to an activity.
Ex: ask the student to help.
2. A verbal warning and separation from the source of disruption.
Ex: separate students
3. As a last resort, the parent/guardian shall be located and asked to sit with the student or remove them from the activity for that day.
4. If a student becomes a danger to themselves or others, the student will be removed immediately by the worker and the parents/legal guardian and the applicable director shall be promptly notified.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX G-1

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Covenant of Conduct– Youth Bear Creek United Methodist Church

Galatians 5:22-23

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with passion and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

I agree to participate in activities of the UMYF and other youth sponsored activities.

During these events I agree to:

- treat all persons, regardless of race, religion, and culture, with respect and consideration
- respect the facility we are using
- portray a positive role model for others by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, tact and maturity

During these events I agree to not:

- use profanity
- purchase or participate in the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- participate in inappropriate displays of affection or sexual activity
- conduct myself recklessly such that I cause injury to myself or others
- make terroristic threats that would indicate intent to do bodily harm to self or others
- participate in criminal mischief, reckless damage or destruction of property, structures, equipment, or vehicles, and theft
- bring or use any weapon(s), fireworks, pets, pornographic materials or any other inappropriate items
- abuse others; physically (e.g. strike, spank, shake, slap), verbally (e.g. humiliate, degrade, threaten), sexually (e.g. inappropriate touching, exposure or comments), mentally (e.g. inconsistent standards, communicating one behavior and rewarding the opposite), or spiritually.
- use cell phones, iPods, tablets, or other electronic devices without the permission of the Director of Youth Ministries or the adult in charge of the youth event. While using an electronic device, I will uphold the values of the youth ministry of Bear Creek United Methodist Church as outlined in this Covenant of Conduct.

Above all, I agree to have fun at UMYF and all youth sponsored activities.

I understand that:

- any damage that should occur because of my negligence, I am financially responsible.
- all penalties are left up to the discretion of the Director of Youth Ministries, or his/her representative, with consultation of other Youth Counselors. Note that penalties may include the possibility of being sent home at the parents expense.
- The Bear Creek Youth Covenant of Conduct does not cover all situations. In the event that something arises that is not mentioned, the Director of Youth Ministries, or his/her representative, reserves the right to make all necessary decisions.

I have read the "Covenant of Conduct" and fully agree with the conditions. I understand that I will be excused from participating in UMYF or other youth sponsored activities if I violate any conditions of this covenant.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Parent, if Participant is under 18

Printed Name of Participant

APPENDIX G-2

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Covenant of Conduct– Workers and Staff

Bear Creek United Methodist Church

1 Peter 4:10-11

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Our Goal

We at Bear Creek United Methodist Church strive to model and share the sacrificial and unconditional love of Christ with each child and youth who enters our doors through our speech, teaching, and behavior. We work to create a safe and loving environment for all who are in our care.

This means we are:

- Intentional with our interactions with students and other adults, both in person and through social media, texting, email, etc.
- Disciplined in our own personal study of scripture and worship
- Thoughtful in how we present ourselves as representatives of the body of Christ

At these events, I agree to:

- treat all persons, regardless of race, religion, and culture, with respect and consideration
- respect the facility we are using
- portray a positive role model for others by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, tact and maturity

At these events, I agree to not:

- use profanity
- purchase or participate in the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- participate in inappropriate displays of affection or sexual activity
- conduct myself recklessly such that I cause injury to myself or others
- make terroristic threats that would indicate intent to do bodily harm to self or others
- participate in criminal mischief, reckless damage or destruction of property, structures, equipment, or vehicles, and theft
- bring or use any weapon(s), fireworks, pets, pornographic materials or any other inappropriate items
- abuse others; physically (e.g. strike, spank, shake, slap), verbally (e.g. humiliate, degrade, threaten), sexually (e.g. inappropriate touching, exposure or comments), mentally (e.g. inconsistent standards, communicating one behavior and rewarding the opposite), or spiritually.
- use cell phones, iPods, tablets, or other electronic devices without the permission of the applicable director or the adult in charge of the event. While using an electronic device, I will uphold the values of the Bear Creek United Methodist Church as outlined in this Covenant of Conduct.

I understand that:

- any damage that should occur because of my negligence, I am financially responsible.
- all penalties are left up to the discretion of the applicable director and pastoral staff.
- The Bear Creek Worker and Staff Covenant of Conduct does not cover all situations. In the event that something arises that is not mentioned, the applicable director, or his/her representative, reserves the right to make all necessary decisions.

I have read the "Covenant of Conduct" and fully agree with the conditions. I understand that I will be excused from participating in UMYF or other youth sponsored activities if I violate any conditions of this covenant.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

APPENDIX H

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Staff/Volunteer Agreement to Policy Form

Bear Creek United Methodist Church

This is to confirm that I have received and read a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policies of Bear Creek United Methodist Church of Houston, Texas. Included within these policies is a legal definition of child abuse and neglect from the Texas Family Code and written information describing the Texas Laws regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Worker Name: (please print) _____

Worker Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX I

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Fire & Building Safety Guidelines Bear Creek United Methodist Church

Prevention Measures

Be alert to any potential causes for accidents, injuries, or fire in your area and during your event. If repairs are needed in an area, (frayed cords, broken chairs/tables, water on the floor, etc.) notify the Applicable Director or leader of ministry event. The buildings, grounds, and equipment must be maintained in order to protect the safety of all.

First – Aid

First – Aid care shall be administered as soon as possible. First – Aid kits and a guide to emergency care shall be available. If necessary, 911 shall be called for local emergency services to respond. Advance emergency release forms from the parent/guardian shall be obtained granting permission for a child's emergency medical care.

If a child/youth arrives ill or becomes ill (fever, vomiting, etc.) during a ministry event, the parent/guardian shall be contacted and asked to pick up their child/youth.

These steps shall be followed when providing first-aid that involves cleaning a open wound, bleeding cut, or examining the mouth:

- Wear disposable gloves
- Wash hands before and after administering aid
- Use care in disposing trash. Place refuse that contains body fluids or blood in a sealed plastic bag and place in a trashcan with a plastic liner.
- Clean the area with a disinfectant spray.

Accident / Incident Response

After First – Aid has been administered and the injured person has been cared for, complete a BCUMC Accident/Incident Report and notify the Applicable Director. The Director shall follow through with any additional actions to be taken.

Fire Evacuation & Response

Fire evacuation plans shall be posted in each room. Workers shall be trained to understand evacuation procedures and locations of fire alarms, extinguishers and flashlights in the event of electrical failure. In the event of a fire, the first priority is to ensure the safety of all persons in your care. Secondly, pull the fire alarm or dial 911. Only if it is safe to do so, *then* attempt to contain the fire by shutting door or using a fire extinguisher. Do not use the elevator for evacuation. Evacuation plans shall be reviewed with children/youth periodically.

Severe Weather Response

Severe weather plans shall be posted in each room. Workers shall be trained to understand safety procedures including evacuation plans and location of flashlights in the event of power outages. Do not use the elevator for evacuation. Evacuation plans shall be reviewed with children/youth periodically.

Vandalism & Suspicious Behavior

Any suspicious behavior or activity shall immediately be reported to the Worker in charge of a Ministry. If necessary, 911 shall be called for local police services to respond. All precautions shall be taken to maintain safety and security. This may include moving children/youth to a safe location, locking doors, etc. In cases deemed to pose an imminent danger to persons or property, no one shall attempt to intervene but shall wait for police to assess and act. After assuring that a situation is secure, the Worker shall complete a BCUMC Accident/Incident Report and notify the Applicable Director.

Automobile Incident Response

In the event of an automobile accident during a ministry event, the driver shall first ensure the safety of all passengers, administer first-aid and/or call 911 for emergency services as necessary. After assuring that the situation is safe, the driver shall notify the Worker in charge of the ministry event and complete a BCUMC Accident / Incident Report. The Worker shall contact the applicable Director and/or Sr. Pastor. The Applicable Director or Sr. Pastor shall notify parents/ guardians promptly.

APPENDIX J

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT
Bear Creek United Methodist Church

Date: _____

Time: _____

Name of Injured Person:

Location of Incident:

Program or Event:

Description of Injury:

Description of how Incident occurred:

Supervisor of event at time of Incident:

Witness (s) to
Incident:

Procedures followed:

Other pertinent information:

Name of person completing Incident Report:

Phone Number: _____

Continued Next Page

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICABLE DIRECTOR OR SENIOR CLERGY

Reported to Director or Senior Clergy

Date: _____

Time: _____

Summary: _____

Contact with victim's parent/guardian: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Contact local children and family service agency (if necessary) _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Contact local law enforcement agency: _____

Date/ time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Other contacts: _____

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

APPENDIX K

POLICY OF BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT
Bear Creek United Methodist Church

WHEREAS, BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ("Church"), has allowed

_____ ("Organization") to use its campus facilities;

WHEREAS, The Organization desires to use said campus facilities on a one time or repetitive basis;

NOW, THEREFORE, KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that for and in consideration of the Church allowing the Organization to use the Church's campus facilities on a repetitive basis:

The Organization hereby **INDEMNIFIES, RELEASES, DISCHARGES AND HOLDS THE CHURCH**

HARMLESS from and against any and all actions, claims and/or damages arising from the Organization's use of the Church's campus facilities;

The Organization hereby represents that it has read The Policy Of Bear Creek United Methodist Church For the Prevention Of Abuse Of Children And Youth, and that it will adhere to all rules, policies and procedures set forth therein;

The Organization hereby agrees this Hold Harmless and Indemnity Agreement shall include all costs, including, but not limited to, attorney's fees and costs of court;

The Organization hereby agrees that in the event that the Organization is notified of, or should have knowledge of, any action, claims and/or damages covered by this Hold Harmless and Indemnity Agreement, it shall promptly notify the Church's Senior Clergy in writing, and the Organization shall immediately assume the cost of defense of such actions, claims and/or damages.

Executed this ____ day of _____, 20__

By _____ (Signature)

Printed Name: _____

Title/Position _____

Appendix L
Bear Creek United Methodist Church
Waiver and Release Form

This waiver and release form is to allow the parent or guardian to release Bear Creek United Methodist Church from total compliance of the Safe Sanctuary Policy in the event that the policy cannot be followed for a church event.

I _____, give my permission for _____ to
(Parent/Guardian) **(Ministry Area)**

care for my child _____ on this date _____, knowing that it does not meet all safe sanctuary requirements.

The reason for this waiver on this date is:

Parent/Guardian name and contact number (Print)

Parent/Guardian signature

Name of Bear Creek Employee during this event
