

Child and Youth Protection Policy
St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church
St. Augustine, Florida

Introduction

A central tenet of the Christian faith is the inherent value and worth of all children, youth, and adults. Children and youth are least able to protect themselves in our society and are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. The St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church is desirous of doing what it can to protect the youth and children who participate in the life of this congregation.

We believe implementing a policy and adopting procedures to protect our children recognizes that:

Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the Children. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church states that "... children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation and abuse." Tragically, Churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, and exploitation. . . occur in Churches, both, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. . . . God calls us to make our Churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from abuse.

"Child abuse prevention and Ministry Protection policies and procedures are essential for congregations, not only for the protection and safety of our children and youth, but also for our volunteers and staff working with youth."

"The Gospel calls us to be engaged in ministry with children and youth. We should not allow the risks to undermine or stop our ministry. Rather, we must:

- Acknowledge the risks and develop a practical plan to address these issues:
- Take steps to prevent harm to our children; and
- Continue to answer the Gospel's imperative to be in ministry with children, thus making a difference in their lives." (Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth).

I. Definitions

A. "Child" and "Youth" and "Adult"

Following the public school system, a "child" is anyone age of 11 or under. A "youth" is anyone not a "child" and under the age of 18. An adult is anyone 18 years of age or older and has finished high school.

B. “Paid Staff Person,” “Adult Volunteer,” and “Screened Adult”

A **Paid Staff Person** is someone paid by the church, overseen by Staff Parish and screened. An **Adult Volunteer** is someone who has not been screened. They can work in a room with a Screened Adult or paid staff person. A **Screened Adult** is a volunteer who has gone through the screening process. These persons may or may not be members, but they must be regular attendees and active in church activities for at least six months.

C. Youth Helpers - Youth below the age of 18 years assisting with child or youth activities. They can assist with activities but should not be considered an adult volunteer and should be supervised themselves.

D. Child Abuse For purposes of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures, child abuse is defined as any of the following:

1) **Physical Abuse:** Violent non-accidental contact which results in injury. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, biting, or shaking. Injuries include bruises, fractures, cuts, and burns.

2) **Sexual Abuse:** Any form of sexual activity with a child, whether at the church, at home, or any other setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent or other minor.

3) **Emotional Abuse:** A pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a child's/youth's spirit attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.

II. Screening and Selection of Church Staff and Adult Volunteers

The Pastor and the Staff Parish Relations Committee are charged with the responsibility of developing, implementing and evaluating the process for recruiting, screening, selecting, training and supervising of non-appointive church staff and adult volunteers. (¶ 258.12 2008 Book of Discipline)

A. Adult volunteers who regularly work with the Church's children and youth and each church paid staff person will be screened. Those who work regularly with children/youth will be trained on child protection issues prior to beginning their regular involvement with children and youth. The procedures for screening are as follows: Each person being considered to work regularly with children and/or youth, whether as a volunteer or paid staff person, shall fill out a Child/Youth Worker Application & Covenant (See Appendix I). This screening is good for 5 years after which time a re-screening will be necessary.

B. Before placing the applicant in a position of responsibility with children or youth, a designated paid staff member or other person charged with specific

responsibility will interview the applicant reviewing with them the Child/Youth Worker Application & Covenant. (See possible questions for interviews in Appendix II.)

- C. The persons conducting this interview will contact the references provided on the Child/Youth Worker Application & Covenant and any additional persons as the circumstances dictate. A written record of such contacts will be retained with the application form on the Reference Check Form (Appendix III).
- D. Each person applying to work with children and/or youth shall "authorize" the church to conduct a criminal background check. The application for service with St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church or when deciding whether to modify or continue the ongoing involvement Shores United Methodist Church may obtain a "consumer report" and/or and "investigative consumer report" on you from TRAK-1 Technology, a consumer reporting agency, or from any third party, in strict compliance with both state and federal laws.
- E. Before beginning work with either children or youth, each paid staff member and volunteer will sign a statement that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Child and Youth Protection Policy.
- F. After the interview and background check have been accomplished, the decision will be made to accept or reject the applicant as a paid staff member or adult volunteer who will work with youth and/or children.
- G. Where it has been determined that an applicant should **not** work with children or youth, those persons involved with the decision should handle it in a sensitive manner. The appointed clergy and her/his designee should inform the applicant in person. The specific reasons for the decision should be given, whenever possible.
- H. It is important that all records be kept in a locked cabinet in the church office. There should be a system in place that gives those who need these records easy access and a safe place to be stored when they are not needed.
- I. Although not required to personally accomplish the above tasks, the appointed clergy and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with sub-paragraphs (A) through (H) above.

III. Ongoing Education of Persons Who Work With Children and Youth

The Pastor and Staff Parish Relations Committee shall ensure that annual training focused on current issues of child protection is available to and received by those

working with children and youth. Attendance at this training shall be required of all paid staff members, screened and non-screened adult volunteers who work consistently with children and/or youth.

The training should include:

- A. The definition and recognition of child abuse.
- B. The Church's policy and procedures on child abuse and the reasons for having them.
- C. The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics.
- D. The appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of child/youth events.
- E. Abuse reporting responsibilities and procedures.
- F. Definition of appropriate interpersonal boundaries.
- G. The meaning and importance of confidentiality

IV. Supervision of Children and Youth

A. General Rules

- 1. All activities involving children and youth will be supervised by at least one screened adult.
- 2. When reasonably feasible, each room set aside for children/youth should have a door with a window.
- 3. Children toddler through grade 6 should be escorted to the bathroom when there is no bathroom adjoining the classroom. The adult may wait in the Gathering Room while a child is in a bathroom in the sanctuary.
- 4. Window curtain/blinds should be kept open at all times and door windows should not be covered at any time.
- 5. All children/youth activities must have a written record of the names of participants and supervisors. Records shall be kept in the church office for three years.

B. Supervision of Sunday School Activities

1. Crib/Toddler

At least two adults, one must be screened, will be present for all activities involving infants and toddlers. Where the two adults are family members, a third adult must be present. In addition, a designated screened adult shall periodically check each classroom.

2. Grades K-6

At least one **screened** adult will be present for all classroom activities. Two

screened adults are preferred. In addition, a designated person shall periodically check each classroom.

3. Grades 7-12

At least one **screened** adult will be present for all classroom activities. In addition designated person shall periodically check all classrooms.

C. Supervision During VBS, Wednesday Nights, Wednesday Afterschool program and other Larger Groups

1. Crib/Toddler to age 4

One screened adult for every 5 children. When two adults present are family members, a third adult must also be present. In addition, a designated screened adult will periodically check each classroom.

2. K-grade 2

One screened adult for every 7 children. When two adults present are family members, a third adult must also be present. In addition, a designated screened adult will periodically check each classroom.

3. Grades 3-6

At least one screened adult for every 8 children. In addition a designated screened adult shall periodically check each classroom.

4. Grades 7-12

At least one screened adult must be present for all classroom activities. In addition a designated screened adult shall periodically check each classroom.

D. Open Door Policy

Parents, volunteers or staff of the church will be permitted, as reasonableness dictates, to visit and observe all programs and classrooms at any time.

E. Sign-in/Sign-out Procedure

1. When a new child begins to participate in any church activity, the Sunday School Teacher, VBS Director, or the director of the specified children's/youth activity will inquire about any existing court orders or custody issues regarding that child. That information will be passed on to the child's teacher(s)
2. Adults responsible for children who are infant through grade 5 will sign-in the child and clarify who shall sign-out the child later that day.
3. Picking up children by non-authorized adults is forbidden

F. Supervision of Non-Classroom Activities

With the exception of the circumstances identified under the “Special Rules for Supervision of Specific Activities and Transportation”, at least two screened adults will be present for all non-classroom activities involving children and/or youth. Any meetings held in an individual’s home must be supervised by at least two adults who are not members of the same family. Meetings held in an individual’s home must be preapproved by the parents and the Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair or the Pastor.

G. Counseling of Youth and Children

In instances of youth or child counseling where circumstances dictate that counseling would be most effective on a one-on-one basis, an appropriate church paid staff person may meet individually with a youth with the knowledge of at least one other paid staff member. At any counseling session with children or youth, the door of the room used should remain open for the entire session, unless there is glass in the door or wall which gives a clear view into the room. If another adult is not in the building when the counseling occurs, the session should be moved to in a public place, such as a restaurant or outside where other people are present.

NOTE 1: At the initial meeting, the counselor should first determine if they are qualified to address the child’s/youth’s needs effectively. Counseling should be limited to no more than three sessions. Referral to another more qualified counselor should be considered.

NOTE 2: This is not meant to govern a licensed professional counselor in a paid counseling relationship with a child or youth.

H. Time Following Group Events

Following child/youth group events, it is inevitable that occasionally a child’s/youth’s transportation will arrive after all other participants have departed. In those circumstances, a child/youth may unavoidably be supervised by one screened adult. Under these circumstances, the general rule requiring the presence of two screened adults is suspended and the screened adult is responsible for exercising his/her best judgment for the participant’s well-being.

V. Transportation

A. General Rules

Transporting children and youth is an important concern. Their safety can be at risk in a variety of ways. Therefore, certain discretion must be used depending upon the event attended, the locale of the event, and the age group participating. This Policy includes both Requirements and Guidelines. When feasible, there should be adherence to the recommendations in the Guidelines. It is expected that the Requirements will always be followed.

B. Requirements

1. Drivers must be known to the designated adult leader of the event.
2. When a child/youth is transported in any vehicle, the driver must be either the child's/youth's parent/guardian, or a screened adult or a paid staff person who is at least 18 years old.
3. When a child/youth is transported in a church-owned vehicle, the driver must be at least 21 years of age; provided, however, exception is made when the driver is a paid staff member who is at least 18 years of age and for whom a motor vehicle record search has been made and the record has been found by the Appointed clergy and supply pastors or his/her designee to be satisfactory.
4. Drivers must have a valid driver's license for the vehicle being operated. For example, if driving a church bus, a commercial license is required. A copy of the driver's license should be on file at the church.
5. Drivers must require that seat belts be used at all times and the number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts.
6. Drivers should be advised of a designated route and should not deviate from it except in cases of emergency or road detours.
7. Drivers should not use cell phones unless required for communication with other drivers and should not text message while driving.
8. When there is reason to believe it would not be safe for a youth to ride in a vehicle driven by another youth, the adults responsible should intervene and take reasonable steps to make alternative arrangements for all concerned.
9. When a trip is planned and the destination is expected to be 100 miles or more from the point of departure, drivers are to be listed on an "approved driver list" maintained in the church office.
10. Persons who regularly drive church owned vehicles are to be listed on an "approved driver list" maintained in the church office.
11. In order to be listed on the "approved driver list" of drivers, a Motor Vehicle Record search must be conducted and the appointed clergy and supply pastors or his/her designee must determine if the record is satisfactory. (The Ministry Protection Conference office will advise how to obtain a Motor Vehicle Record of a driver. It is usually without charge. Call (800) 282-8011, ext. 137.
12. Drivers will read and sign an acknowledgement form indicating that the Child Protection Policy has been read and will be followed (See Appendix IV).

C. Guidelines

1. Drivers should be accompanied by at least one other adult.
2. Drivers should receive training for the church owned vehicle being operated.
3. Youth who drive their own vehicles should be reminded regularly of the importance of vehicle safety.

VI. Trip and Retreat Supervision

Trip and Retreat settings can call for different child/youth protection requirements depending on the circumstances. What follows are Requirements and Guidelines of this Policy. The Requirements should always be implemented. Depending on the circumstances of the setting, who is in attendance, etc., some or all of the Guidelines should be implemented. Those in charge of the trip or retreat should be mindful of both Requirements and Guidelines, in addition to applying their own wisdom to the needs of a given occasion.

A. Requirements

1. There will be at least two **screened** adults present for all trips, retreats and other events where the children and/or youth gather overnight at, or away from, the church campus.
2. There will be at least one **screened** adult for each gender present at co-ed overnight events. At single gender overnight events, at least one of the two screened adults present shall be of the same gender as the child/youth.
3. The person in charge of youth/children for each overnight trip and/or retreat shall carry parental permission slips including permission for emergency medical care. (See Appendix VI)

B. Guidelines

In a hotel type setting, rooms should be assigned as follows:

1. Separate rooms for adults and child/youth should be assigned with at least two children/youth per room.
2. Assignments should be made so that an adult room is between two children/youth rooms.
3. Adults should make random monitoring hall trips and room checks at night by two adults of the same gender as those being checked.
4. A hotel should be selected where the rooms open to the interior of the building (i.e., do not open to the outside).

VII. On-line Safety

It is acknowledged that the use of computers and other electronic means of communications may be useful tools in supporting child and youth ministries. However, it should also be recognized that these forms of communication also potentially pose a unique risk.

- a. Church computers that are set up for guests or program participants to access the internet should be in high-traffic places and randomly monitored by staff. Controls should be in place to prevent access to inappropriate content.

VIII. Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

Florida Statute 39.201 entitled "Mandatory Reports" states that: *"Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, as defined in this chapter, ... shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department"*

While the statute is limited to situations involving abuse by a parent, custodian, caregiver or other persons responsible for a child's welfare, the moral imperative to protect children extends to other situations where abuse is suspected. Suspected abuse within the context of a church day school or pre-school does fall within the description of the Florida Statute and a report is required.

Clearly, when child abuse is suspected or observed, the moral imperative, and potentially the legal requirement, is to call the Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-960 ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

- A. Immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with children and/or youth. Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the child or youth is secured, the appointed clergy or other designated persons should inform the accused that abuse has been reported.
- B. If abuse is observed by, disclosed to, or suspected by a volunteer and/or paid staff member of the church, the observer shall report the incident immediately to the appointed clergy and supply pastors. If the appointed clergy and supply pastors are not available, the matter should be reported to the District Superintendent.

If the accused is the appointed clergy and supply pastors or a member of her/his family, the allegations shall be immediately reported to the District Superintendent and immediately reported to the proper authorities as required by state or local law. The District Superintendent will take responsibility and act according to established rules of *The Book of Discipline* with respect to claims against a pastor. If the District Superintendent is not available, the incident should be reported to the Bishop's office in Lakeland.

- C. Notify the parents of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety and well being of the child or youth until the parent(s) arrive.
- D. **NOTE:** If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, follow the advice of the authorities concerning notification of others.
- E. Take all allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Show care and support to help prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the **first** priority. Respond in a positive and supportive manner to the victim and the victim's family.
- F. The church should provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing can take place.
- G. After having reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the appointed clergy and supply pastors is to report the incident immediately to the District Superintendent. If the District Superintendent is unavailable, the incident should be reported to the Bishop's office.
- H. Keep a written report of the steps taken by the Church in response to the reported abuse. (See Appendix VII). The report should be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. It should be kept in a secure place. It should be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed.
- I. Media contacts will be handles in accord with Media Crisis Response flowchart provided by the Northeast District Conference. Refer to Appendix VII; Media Crisis Response & Media Crisis Notification Flow Chart.

NOTE: The question that sometimes arises is: What about a "confidential communication" with a clergy person?

Florida law (FS90.505) provides that some specific communications may be considered confidential if they occurred in the context of "seeking spiritual counsel or advice" from a clergy person. Thus a clergy person may be confronted with the dilemma of discovering or suspecting abuse in the setting of a privileged conversation. While the church has historically placed a high value on clergy keeping such confidences, the 2008 *UM Discipline*, par. 341.5, provides an exception in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Again, the moral imperative is to do that which will best protect children.

IX. RESPONSE BY CHURCH WORKERS TO INCIDENT'S, INJURIES AND ACCIDENTS

In order to assure proper attention is given to any child who is injured or involved in an accident, an incident report must be completed by an adult supervisor within 24 hours of the incident (See Appendix VI). All completed accident reports should be given to the pastor.

X. Implementation

Unless otherwise specifically stated, it shall be the responsibility of the Staff Parish Relations Committee to implement this Policy, to design and conduct future training, and to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this Policy.

XI. Application

All of those who participate in the life of this congregation and use its facilities – individuals, organizations, and groups within and outside this congregation -- are expected to respect, implement, and adhere to these provisions as a minimum.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor-in-Charge: Carolyn Westlake: 507-208-5842

Chairperson of SPRC: Vicki Hall: 904-471-6697 or cell 904-823-6478

Director of Christian Education: Cheryl Jeffries: 904-461-8435

Youth Director: Taylor Lowery: 904-540-9859

District Superintendent: Jay Therrell, 904-396-3026

Conference Risk Manager: LaNita Battles, 1-800-282-8011 Ext. 199

Florida Conference Bishop's Office: Ken Carter: 863-688-4427

St. Augustine Police Department: 904-825-1074

St Johns County Sheriff's Department: 904-824-8304

County Child Abuse Reporting:

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-962-2873

Conference Media Spokesperson: Frank North, 1-800-282-8011, ext. 505

APPENDIX I

CHILD / YOUTH WORKER APPLICATION & COVENANT

Full Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Email Address _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Current job responsibilities: _____

Previous experience with children: _____

Special Interest, Hobbies, Skills: _____

Emergency Contact Information:

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Have you ever been charged, convicted of, or plead guilty to a misdemeanor or a felony related to child abuse or other crimes of violence? Yes or No

If Yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever had to deal with a child abuse situation? Yes or No

If Yes, please explain: _____

If Yes, what was your role: _____

The congregation of St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statement reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) should volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
2. All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been active participants of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
3. All adults involved with children and youth shall observe the Child /Youth Protection Policy **at all times**.
4. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and laws regarding child abuse.
5. All adults shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? ____ Yes ____ No
2. Do you agree to participate in annual training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignments? ____ Yes ____ No
3. Do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? ____ Yes ____ No

I have read this Application and Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above. _____(initial)

Signature of Applicant

Date

APPENDIX III

FORM FOR REFERENCE CHECK

Applicant name: _____

Reference name: _____

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/youth?

6. How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities?

7. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?

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/or? If so, please describe.

10. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted to a crime? If so, please describe.

11. Please list any other comments you would like to make:

Reference inquiry completed by: _____

Signature

Date

APPENDIX IV

AUTHORIZATION AND REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

Authorization and Request For Multi State Criminal SO, SST & MVR
(Consists of Motor Vehicle Report, Broad Screen & SSN Check)

I, _____ HEREBY AUTHORIZE
St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church to request Trak-1
Technology (Background Screening Company) to release information
regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in its files,
maintained on me, whether said file is a local, state, or national file,
and including but not limited to accusations and convictions for
crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by
state and federal law. I do release Trak-1 Technology from all
liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to
this request.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Applicant's Email Address _____

Print applicant's full name: _____

Current Address & Phone Number _____

Print all other name(s) that have been used by applicant (if any):

Date of birth: _____ Place of birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Driver's license number: _____ State of Issue _____

License expiration date: _____

SHORES United Methodist Church
Children / Youth Registration, Parental Consent & Medical Authorization Form

Child _____ Birth Date _____

Parent(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Mother Work/Cell (____) _____ Father Work/Cell (____) _____

School _____ Grade in _____

Emergency Contact Name (s) & Numbers _____

Special Needs: Allergies or Physical/Medical Needs: _____

Additional people PERMITTED to pick up my child (relation/phone #) _____

Who is PROHIBITED from picking up my child _____

DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR:

- ☐ Children Exploring L.I.F.E. Pre K 4-6th Grade; Wed 6:00-7:30 pm
- ☐ Children's Music/Choir Pre K 4-6th Grade; Wed 5:30- 6:00 pm
- ☐ S.W.A.G. Youth Group 7-12th Grade; Wed 6:00-7:30 pm

- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ **SUMMER:** Vacation Bible School

PARENTAL CONSENT AND MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION FOR TREATMENT OF A MINOR CHILD
Shores United Methodist Church

As the parent (or legal guardian) of: _____ (Child/Youth Name) I understand that my child/youth will be participating in a number of activities for the year _____, which carry with them a certain degree of risk. Some of the activities are swimming, boating, hiking, camping, field trips, sports and other activities which the church may offer. I consent for my child to participate in these activities.

Please indicate any restrictions on your child's/youth/s activities:

_____ I represent that my child/youth is physically fit and has the necessary skills to safely participate in these activities.

_____ I represent that my child/youth has restrictions on the following particular activities _____

_____ I also understand and give consent for my child to travel to and from these events in transportation provided by volunteer drivers.

MEDICAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION

It is my understanding that the Church will attempt to notify me in case of a medical emergency involving my child/youth. If the Church cannot reach me, then I authorize and I give my consent to the doctor or health-care professional, to provide the medical services he or she may deem necessary. I will notify the church if I feel there are any health considerations that would prevent my child/youth's participation in any of the activities listed above.

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____ Date _____

Notary Signature and Date _____

County _____

My Commission Expires: _____

Notary Seal

APPENDIX VI

CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Reason for report: _____

Date of incident: _____ Time: _____

Place of incident: _____

Name of reporter: _____ Title: _____

Name(s) of Child(ren)/Youth: _____ Age(s): _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

Were there any witnesses?: ____ Yes ____ No If yes, list: _____

What action did you take?:

Has the incident been resolved?: ____ Yes ____ No Explain: _____

In accordance with the Child/Youth Protection Policy instructions, who has been notified?

(Include Name & Date)

Pastor _____ Bishop's Office _____

Parent _____ SPRC Chair _____

Police _____ Sheriff _____

Connectional Relations _____ District Superintendent _____

Other _____

Name of reporter: _____

Signature of reporter: _____ Date: _____

Report submitted to: _____

APPENDIX VII

Media Crisis Response

For the purpose of this document, "Crisis" refers to:

An event or emergency associated in some way with the Church, which, beyond its control, can be expected to become public. A crisis situation presents potential for damage to individuals, or the image of the Church, and hinders their abilities to be in ministry.

Media Crises most likely to be faced by the church are usually in these categories:

- Personal nature (clergy or layperson engaged in inappropriate behavior)
- Illegal or criminal behavior
- Financial impropriety
- Violent acts, demonstrations, death or serious injury
- Perceived crisis (not of true crisis proportions, but perceived as such)

Notification Process

When clergy receives a media call, your statement should be similar to this:

"At this point, we are aware of the situation involving the church/pre-school, etc. We are very concerned about the potential impact on everyone involved and will diligently work to gather the facts and respond quickly and responsibly. I am certain you have deadlines to meet. I will have the Florida Conference Director or Connectional Relations, Gretchen Hastings, at 863-688-5563, get in touch with you."

Your **FIRST** phone call is to Gretchen Hastings, the Director of connectional Relations (800-282-8011 x505), to explain the situation and to inform her to expect contact from the media. (If Connectional Relations is not available, call Mickey Wilson, the treasurer, at x 113.)

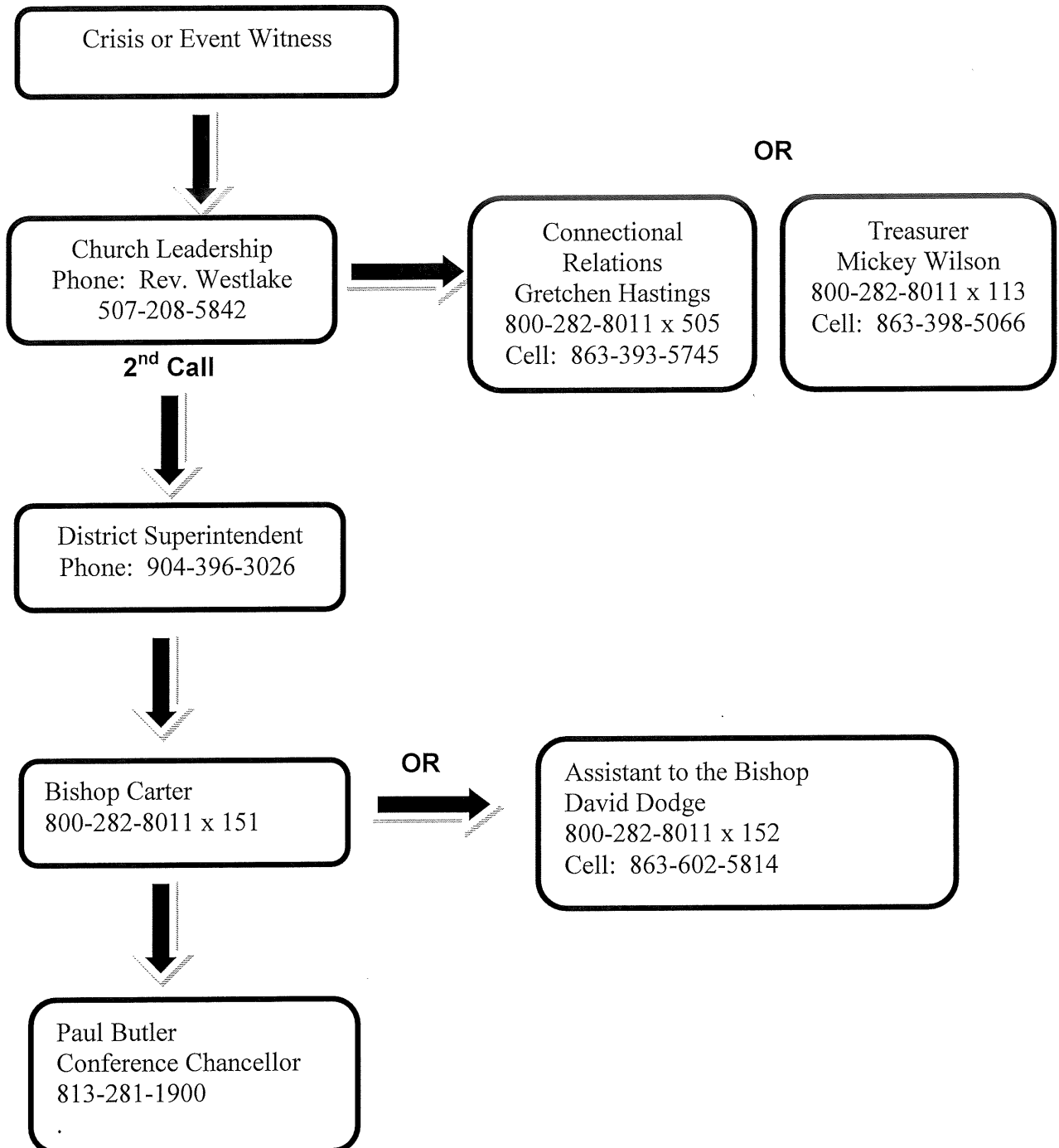
Your **SECOND** phone call is to your District Superintendent. Explain all that you know about the crisis and that you have referred the media to the conference Director of Connectional Relations.

The District Superintendent will inform the Bishop and/or Bishop's assistant about the crisis event.

The Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop, or District Superintendent, if the Bishop or Assistant cannot be reached, will inform Conference Chancellor Paul Butler.

A media crisis notification flow chart is below. Please post this chart at appropriate places in your church facility.

Media Crisis Notification Flow Chart



APPENDIX VIII

PASTOR'S LETTER TO PARENTS

Parents,

Please know that we value and appreciate both you and your child(ren)! Your church wants to stand behind and beside you in caring for them. It is important for us to clearly outline for you who is responsible when you are either here for special activities or are attending to other matters (a meeting, working, etc.).

St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church and its representatives in its programs can only be responsible for children who are **ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE ORGANIZED PORTION OF OUR PROGRAMS**. Also if you are working or attending a meeting and your spouse is caring for your child on our campus, then that child(ren) is clearly under your care and not under the protection of the church's leaders or teachers.

Part of our concern in all of this is, of course, liability. However, the **GREATER ISSUE** is the safety of the child(ren). We must be certain that the lines of authority are clearly defined as to where the church's responsibility starts/stops and the parents' responsibility starts/stops, so that all of our children are safe and protected while on church property.

Thank you for your help and understanding.

Carolyn Westlake