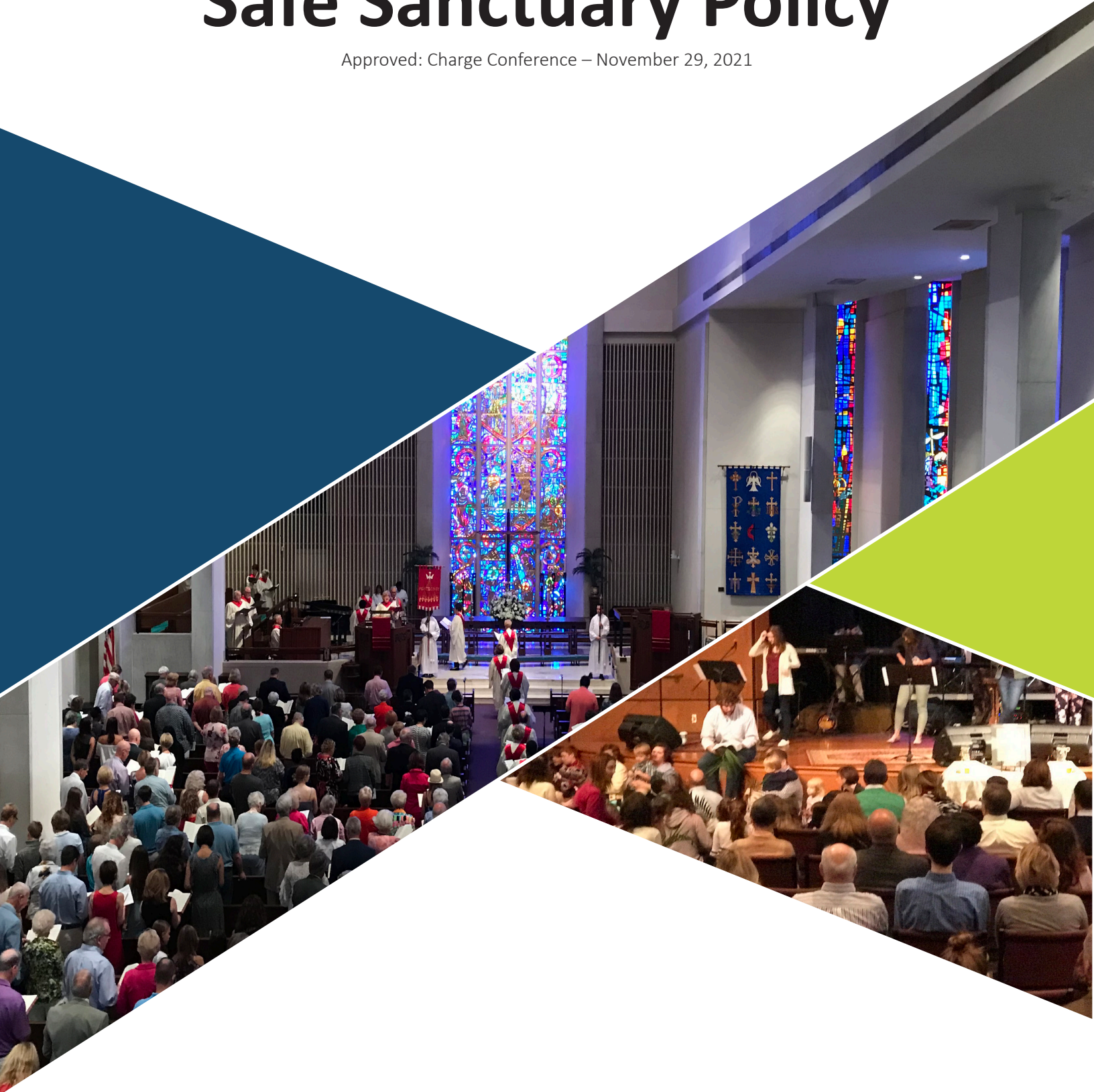


# Safe Sanctuary Policy

Approved: Charge Conference – November 29, 2021



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## Section 1: Safe Sanctuary Policy Overview

In all of our ministries with children\*, youth\*, and vulnerable adults\*\*, First-Centenary United Methodist Church is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be "... surrounded by steadfast love, established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." (Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44). Our Safe Sanctuary Policy demonstrates our commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

As a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to reduce the risk of abuse to children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and to protect children youth, and vulnerable adults, as well as adult workers (either paid or volunteer) who interact with those children, youth, and vulnerable adults in any church activity.

1. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers.
2. We will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events.
3. We will educate all of our workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding the use of appropriate policies and methods.
4. We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law.

## Section 2: Recruitment, Screening and Selection of Workers

The following forms are included in First-Centenary's recruitment, screening, and selection process for volunteer and paid workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults:

- Volunteer Application Form (Appendix A)
- Consent to "Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check" Form (Appendix B)
- Participation Covenant Statement (Appendix C, C-1)

All current and future volunteer and paid workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required to complete the Volunteer Application Form and Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check Form.

When a volunteer or worker is selected, they must sign and submit the Participation Covenant Statement. These forms and records will be maintained by the designated staff person and kept in a locked file cabinet. Any information from the criminal background check that raises concerns by the designated staff person will be discussed with the Senior Minister and the Youth or Children's Director and appropriate action will be taken. It is the intent of this Policy and Procedure that any actions will err on the side of protecting our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. These Background checks will be repeated every 3 years.

Prior to beginning work as a volunteer or paid worker with our children, youth, or vulnerable adults, each volunteer or staff member must complete appropriate Safe Sanctuary training as designated by the appropriate staff person. This training will be documented and records of the training will be kept by the designated staff person.

*\*Children, youth are defined as a person under the age of 18.*

*\*\*Vulnerable Adult is defined as a developmentally challenged adult (person age 18 or older) and/or an adult who may be incapacitated in any form.*

## Section 3: Procedures and Rules for Working with Minors

The following rules shall be a part of the Safe Sanctuary policy for First-Centenary United Methodist Church:

### ***The Two-Adult Rule***

As a matter of safety for both the children and adults it is required that no fewer than two adults be present at all times for any church sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This is inclusive of the nursery area. For the purpose of this rule married couples working with the same age group are considered one adult. If only one adult is present in a classroom then the door must remain open and an approved worker must be present in the hallway.

### ***The Eighteen-Age Limit Rule***

Persons hired to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults must be at least eighteen years of age. Any person serving as a helper, who is under the age of eighteen, must be supervised by adult staff at all times.

### ***The Five-Year Rule***

It is required that any volunteer or paid worker be at least five years older than the group with which they are to supervise. For example, if a junior (20-21 years old) in college is recruited to supervise youth as a "leader," he/she must be at least five years older than the group they are to lead.

### ***Off-Site Advance Notice Rule***

Parents or guardians shall be given advance notice of and full information regarding any off-site ministry involving their child. Parents or guardians must give written permission for their child's participation.

### ***State Reporting Rule***

All workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required by law to report any suspected cases of abuse to the proper authorities. First-Centenary will use the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form (See Appendix E) to capture the necessary information regarding allegations of abuse. This procedure will be covered in more detail in Section IV.

### ***The Six-Month Rule***

Persons supervising children, youth, or vulnerable adults must have been attending First-Centenary UMC for at least six months prior to serving.

### ***Check-in/out procedures***

All children participating in First Kids Ministry activities will be electronically signed in through Planning Center. Guardians will use their unique family code during pickup to follow safety protocols.

### ***Cyber Safety (Appendix F)***

All Youth and Children's ministry staff and volunteers will adhere to the church's Cyber Security Media Policy.

## Section 4: Implementation of Policies and Procedures

1. Staff persons will conduct an orientation on Safe Sanctuary policies for paid workers and volunteers prior to their first day of work. In addition, parents of youth and children shall receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy. New members shall receive this information as a part of their new member packet.
2. Every two years, First Aid/CPR training shall be required for all paid workers with children and youth and offered to all other Church Staff and workers as well as parents. A first aid kit will be maintained on each floor of the Education Wing and in the main Church Office. New employees with children and youth must complete First Aid/CPR training with 60 days of start date.

3. When there is an accident of any type that involves a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, the Witness shall complete the Accident Report Form (See Appendix D). An accident review shall be convened by the designated staff person, or staff supervisor, as soon after the accident as possible. If an incident involves a staff person that individual will be removed from ministry until a review has been completed and the staff person has the approval of the Senior Pastor. The review will focus on developing steps that would prevent the accident from reoccurring. The Accident Report Form and the minutes from the Accident Review meeting shall be filed with the designated staff person.
4. There shall be windows on all classroom doors where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are present. If the door does not have a window the door shall remain open while the room is in use. In the event of a meeting with one child, youth, or vulnerable adult and a worker, there shall be an “open door” policy. There should also be another staff or volunteer in the vicinity even if they are not within actual listening distance.
5. There will be no child, youth, or vulnerable adult in a staff member or volunteer’s home without a non-family member adult present regardless of the nature of the church– sponsored event, program or ministry.
6. There shall be an adult supervising the hallways during major use periods on the children’s/youth floors.
7. The Safe Sanctuary Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Any changes or updates will be approved by the Church Council or Charge Conference.

## Section 5: Plan for Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Every volunteer and paid worker with children, youth, and vulnerable adult must be trained to know Tennessee’s requirements for reporting abuse to law enforcement authorities and child protection services. With any incident at the Church, the Chattanooga Police Department at 423-698-2525 and/or the Tennessee Department of Children Services at 1-877-237-0004 shall be notified. If an alleged incident of abuse happens away from the Church but involves Church activities, then the incident must be reported in that jurisdiction. If a volunteer or staff member suspects abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult in a non-church situation, they are also obligated to report the alleged incident to the appropriate authorities. The 24-hour Child Protective Services hotline in Hamilton County is 423-266-0162.

The Senior Pastor will serve as a spokesperson for our Church in dealing with the congregation, the media and the public. In his/her absence, the Lay Leader will serve as the spokesperson. We will always protect the rights of the victim and the accused.

With guidance from a lawyer, the Senior Pastor shall initiate appropriate ministries and actions over a long period to enable healing by all affected people.

### **Quick Guide:**

24- Hour Child Protective Services Hotline: 423-266-0162

Chattanooga Police Department: 423-698-2525

Tennessee Department of Children Services: 1-877-237-0004

## Section 6: Forms

The following pages contain forms mentioned in the above policy.



## Appendix A: Volunteer Application



### CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Name:		Today's Date:	
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Daytime Phone:	Cell Phone:	E-mail:	

### BACKGROUND & VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Occupation:	Employer:
Do you have a valid driver's license? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date of Birth:
Do you have liability insurance on your own vehicle? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
List policy limits and name of carrier:	
Are you currently listed on First-Centenary's Approved Driver List for church vans? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults?	

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults?

Special Interests, Hobbies, and Skills:

Have you ever been charged, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence, theft, motor vehicle violations)? If yes, please explain fully (use back if necessary):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Do you prefer periodic volunteer training sessions on:

☐ Sunday morning    ☐ Weekday morning    ☐ Weekday evening

☐ Other (Please Explain):

## Appendix B: Criminal Records Request

The privacy of our volunteers is very important to us. We will not share your information with anyone other than our Criminal Records Check Service: "Protect My Ministry."



### AUTHORIZATION FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS REQUEST

Print Applicant's Full Name:

Print All Other Names that have been used by Applicant (if any):

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Social Security No.:

This will only be shared with our Criminal Record Check Service. It will not be shared with any other third party.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize First-Centenary United Methodist Church to request that Protect My Ministry perform a criminal and sexual abuse offender search to the extent permitted by state and federal law. I release said Protect My Ministry and First-Centenary United Methodist Church from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request. This background check will be repeated every 3 years until FCUMC is notified that I am no longer a ministry participant.

Signature of Applicant

Date

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Request sent to: Protect My Ministry

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Date Background Check completed:

Name of person completing Background Check:

The congregation of First-Centenary United Methodist Church (FCUMC) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and persons who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by FCUMC. The following policy statement reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving FCUMC 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. Any adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) may not work with children or youth in any FCUMC-sponsored activity.
2. All adult supervisors involved with children, youth, or vulnerable adults of FCUMC must have been attending First-Centenary for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
3. Adult volunteers and staff with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
4. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by FCUMC to keep volunteers informed of FCUMC policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
5. Adult volunteers shall immediately report any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate to the appropriate authorities, and a Children's or Youth Director, the Senior Pastor, or the designated staff person.

***Please answer each of the following questions:***

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all FCUMC Policies and Procedures regarding working in ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to abide by the six-month rule before beginning a volunteer assignment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by FCUMC related to your volunteer assignment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to the area supervisor or other appropriate person? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been charged with child abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(This is to be signed every year at the yearly review)



## Appendix C-1: Participation Covenant Statement for "The Centenary"



The congregation of First-Centenary United Methodist Church (FCUMC) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and persons who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by FCUMC. The following policy statement reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving FCUMC 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. Any adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) may not work with children or youth in any FCUMC-sponsored activity.
2. All adult supervisors involved with children, youth, or vulnerable adults of FCUMC must have been attending First-Centenary for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
3. Adult volunteers and staff with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
4. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by FCUMC to keep volunteers informed of FCUMC policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
5. Adult volunteers shall immediately report any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate to the appropriate authorities, and the Director of The Centenary or the Senior Pastor.

### ***Please answer each of the following questions:***

1. As a volunteer in this program of FCUMC do you agree to observe and abide by all FCUMC Policies and Procedures regarding working in ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by FCUMC related to your volunteer assignment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to the area supervisor or other appropriate person? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to inform a minister of First-Centenary UMC if you have ever been charged with child abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(This is to be signed every year at the yearly review)

## Appendix D: Accident Report Form

Please print all information



### GENERAL INFORMATION

Date of accident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of accident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child/youth injured: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of child/youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of accident: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

### WITNESSES

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: _____	Phone: _____
Name: _____	Phone: _____
Name: _____	Phone: _____
Name: _____	Phone: _____

### DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT:

Name of person completing form: _____	Date: _____
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## Appendix E: Report of a Suspected Incident of Child Abuse



### Quick Guide:

24- Hour Child Protective Services Hotline: 423-266-0162

Chattanooga Police Department: 423-698-2525

Tennessee Department of Children Services: 1-877-237-0004

For reporting suspected incident of child abuse, contact the 24-Hour Child Protective Services Hotline. With any incident at FCUMC contact the Chattanooga Police Department, and/or the Tennessee Department of Children Services. See contact information above.

### BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Name of person observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

Victim's name:

Victim's age/date of birth:

Date/place of initial observation/conversation with/report from victim:

Name of person accused of abuse:

Relationship of accused to victim (Paid Staff, Volunteer, Family Member, Other):

### COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Record of call to 24-Hour Child Protective Services Hotline (423-266-0162):

Date:

Time:

Spoke with:

Summary of conversation:

Record of call to Chattanooga Police Department (423-698-2525):

Date:

Time:

Spoke with:

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Summary of conversation:

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Call to Tennessee Department of Children Services (1-877-237-0004):

Date:	Time:	Spoke with:
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Summary of conversation:

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Your immediate supervisor and Senior Pastor:

Date:	Time:	Spoke with:
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Summary of conversation:

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Name of person filling out this report:

Signature:	Date:
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Note: It is imperative that the person filling out this report be familiar with the Tennessee law reporting requirements before taking any action or completing this report.

### **Definitions:**

“Bullying,” including “cyberbullying,” means any severe or pervasive (repeated over time) physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically (i.e., cyberbullying), directed toward a student or students, that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects:

- placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or property;
- causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s physical or mental health;
- substantially interfering with the student’s academic performance;
- substantially interfering with the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services activities, or privileges provided by the church.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation, one or more of the following: cyberbullying, harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, ostracism, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting, opposing or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this section. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this section.

### **Anti-Bullying**

First Centenary United Methodist Church believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy environment. We believe that bullying, as defined above, is inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, any behavior that infringes on the safety of any student should not be tolerated. A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions.

### **Reporting**

First Centenary United Methodist Church expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the staff person in charge of whichever ministry the incident occurred in or the lead pastor or designee. Staff who witness such acts should take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on church grounds, while traveling to and from church for a church-sponsored activity, or during any church-sponsored activity.

### **Prevention Steps**

In an effort to prevent bullying from occurring during church-sponsored events and activities the church will provide staff development training in bullying prevention. This training will include, but is not limited to:

- What qualifies as bullying and how to spot it.
- The development of a “Student Code of Conduct” or “Conduct Covenant” document.

- Procedures for when an incident of bullying does occur.

Leaders/Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

### ***Student Covenant of Conduct***

Each ministry will adopt a Student Code of Conduct to be followed by every student while on church grounds, or when traveling to and from church, and church-sponsored activities.

The Student Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the leader of whichever ministry the incident takes place in (Children, Youth, Centenary, etc.).
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact the lead pastor or designee. The church prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

### ***Intervention Procedures***

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- A summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying will be made available to all staff, students, and parents at the beginning of the school year, as part of the student handbook and/or information packet, as part of new student orientation, and as part of the church's system of notification to parents.
- The church will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.
- Staff who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.