

# Policy on Reducing the Risk of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse in Church



**Safe Sanctuaries Training**  
(with addendum for Bullying Prevention)  
**Due West United Methodist Church**  
3956 Due West Road  
Marietta, GA 30064  
(Revised June 2018)

# Reducing the Risk of Physical and Sexual Abuse in Church

*“ . . . Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”* Mark 10, 14-15

We believe that God calls us to create communities of faith where persons of all ages may grow and serve in a safe environment. Our church’s original prevention policy was adopted in November, 1998. Since then we have prayerfully revised and updated the policy several times to meet the needs of our growing church. Official signatures are on file.

Aaron Zerkle \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson,  
Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Gordon Via \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson,  
Administrative Board

Dr. David Campbell \_\_\_\_\_ Senior Pastor

# Children in Our Church

*“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matthew 18, 2-6*

Children are a precious gift from God, and they are full participants in the life of the Church and in the realm of God. Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to our children. *The Social Principles* of the United Methodist Church state that “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse.” (As found in paragraph 162C, page 118 in the 2012 Book of Discipline.)

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and physical abuse. He also calls us to create an environment where children as well as adults can be nurtured in their faith journey. In response to this, the following document has been created, and subsequently updated and revised, to reduce the risk of child physical and sexual abuse in the church.

The primary source for the Due West United Methodist Church Policy on Reducing the Risk of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse in Church is *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church*, by Reverend Joy Melton.

## **Overview of Training Sessions**

Training sessions will be held at various times during the year so as to meet the needs of the Employed Staff, Supervisory Volunteers, and Non-Supervisory Volunteers that work with children and youth at the church. Sessions will include at least the following:

1. DWUMC policies and procedures.
2. Behaviors that could indicate problems.
3. Guidelines for prevention.
4. Procedures for reporting of alleged abuse.
5. Confidentiality.
6. Procedures for response.
7. Adequate supervision and appropriate discipline.

## **Responsibility for Training Sessions**

The Associate Pastor, or such person as shall be designated by the Senior Pastor, shall have the responsibility for ensuring that:

- Safe Sanctuaries training sessions contain up-to-date, appropriate materials to educate DWUMC children and youth workers as to the risk of child physical or sexual abuse in our church, and how to reduce such risk.
- The Safe Sanctuaries training sessions are provided often enough and at a variety of times during the year so that all employees and volunteers have sufficient opportunity to attend.

# Training and Documentation of Training

## Training

1. There shall be Safe Sanctuaries training sessions offered at the church at various times during the year so as to meet the needs of the Employed Staff, Supervisory Volunteers, and Non-Supervisory Volunteers that work with children and youth at the church.
  - This training will be required of all Employed Staff persons and Supervisory Volunteers that work with children and/or youth.
  - This training is also strongly recommended for Non-Supervisory Volunteers that work with children and/or youth.
  - All training will be done in-house via attendance at a Safe Sanctuaries training session OR a structured presentation (in person or online) provided by DWUMC.
  
2. It is recommended that each newly-hired Employed Staff person that will serve in a supervisory capacity for children and/or youth complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session before he or she begins working at the church. If this is not possible, the newly-hired Employed Staff person must complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session within 30 days of his or her starting date at the church. If no Safe Sanctuaries training session can be arranged within 30 days, the newly-hired Employed Staff person shall be suspended from work, continuing to receive full pay and benefits, until the required training can be arranged. It is the responsibility of the Associate Pastor, or other such staff member as shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor, to ensure that this training requirement is satisfied in a timely manner.
  
3. Each new Supervisory Volunteer, upon his or her appointment to that position, shall complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session within 90 days of the time of the appointment. If the new Supervisory Volunteer is not able to complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session within 90 days of the time of his or her appointment, that person shall be suspended from the position and shall not be allowed to serve in any supervisory capacity with children/youth until that person is able to complete a Safe Sanctuaries training session. It is the responsibility of the Employed Staff person that has supervisory authority over the newly-appointed Supervisory Volunteer, to ensure that this training requirement is satisfied in a timely manner.

## **Training (Cont.)**

4. Each Employed Staff member that serves in a supervisory capacity for children/youth and each Supervisory Volunteer, after his or her initial Safe Sanctuaries training session, is required to complete another Safe Sanctuaries training session the following year and each subsequent year so long as that person shall continue to serve in a supervisory capacity for children/youth. That is, each employed person that serves in a supervisory capacity for children/youth must complete at least one Safe Sanctuaries training session each calendar year so long as that person is serving in a supervisory capacity for children/youth.
5. A copy of this document will be provided to each Employed Staff member and Supervisory Volunteer. A copy of this document is on file in the main office of DWUMC.

## **Documentation**

1. Each Employed Staff member and Supervisory Volunteer must sign a statement certifying that he or she has attended a Safe Sanctuaries training session and has read, understood, and will abide by this policy. The Safe Sanctuaries training session is not deemed to be complete until a signed and dated certifying statement has been received by DWUMC.
2. Each signed, certifying statement shall be kept on file by DWUMC indefinitely, or until legal counsel advises that destruction of the certifying statements is permitted.

# Acknowledging that the Threat is Real

The threat of child physical and sexual abuse in our community, and sadly, in our churches, is real. Recent revelations about the depth of the problem of child sexual abuse by priests in the Catholic Church have alerted many to the potential dangers for children within our churches. Unfortunately, it is not limited to the Catholic Church. A quick survey of research on sexual misconduct reveals an unfortunate number of incidents wherein Protestant pastors, staff, and lay workers have been accused of child sexual abuse.

Various organizations and services, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Administration for Children and Families submit that approximately 3.3 million children were reported for prevention services in the year 2011. (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2011>)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau report *Child Maltreatment 2010* found that 9.2% of victimized children were sexually assaulted. Studies by [David Finkelhor](#), Director of the [Crimes Against Children Research Center](#), show that:

- 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse;
- Self-report studies show that 20% of adult females and 5-10% of adult males recall a childhood sexual assault or sexual abuse incident;
- During a one-year period in the U.S., 16% of youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimized;
- Over the course of their lifetime, 28% of U.S. youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimized;
- Children are most vulnerable to CSA between the ages of 7 and 13.

According to a [2003 National Institute of Justice report](#), 3 out of 4 adolescents who have been sexually assaulted were victimized by someone they knew well.

A [Bureau of Justice Statistics report](#) shows 1.6 % (sixteen out of one thousand) of children between the ages of 12-17 were victims of rape/sexual assault.

The statistics are staggering. For most recent data, you can visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/> , <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv10.pdf>

Even more frightening is that these numbers may be underestimated since many children are reluctant to report abuse.

In light of the statistics, it seems that any organization involved with children is a place where abuse could occur.

# What Is Abuse?

The depth and breadth of the problem of child abuse is far greater than can be effectively addressed within this resource. For our purposes, we must limit our focus to the prevention of child abuse in the church and its ministries.

## Types of Child Abuse

Generally, child abuse is categorized in five primary forms: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and ritual abuse.

1. **Physical Abuse.** Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, and so forth), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, hitting with fists, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.
2. **Emotional Abuse.** Abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved but undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove but can be devastating to the victim.
3. **Neglect.** Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.
4. **Sexual Abuse.** Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often, the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.

## Types of Child Abuse (cont.)

5. **Ritual Abuse.** Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports must not be ignored.

# Indicators of Child Abuse

Children suffering from abuse often will not tell anyone about it. Therefore, it is important to be able to recognize other signs of abuse. The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. Individually, any one of the indicators may be a sign of a number of other more or less serious problems. When these indicators are observed in a child, they can be considered as warnings and lead you into the situation further.

## Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

1. Hostile and aggressive behavior toward others.
2. Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults.
3. Destructive behavior toward self, others, and/or property.
4. Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage.
5. Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises.

## Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

1. Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal.
2. Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem.
3. Failure to thrive.
4. Threatens or attempts suicide.
5. Speech and/or eating disorders.
6. Goes to extremes to seek adult approval.
7. Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns.

## Possible Signs of Neglect

1. Failure to thrive.
2. Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate.
3. Begs or steals food; chronic hunger.
4. Depression.
5. Untreated medical conditions.
6. Poor hygiene.

## **Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse**

1. Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage.
2. Depression – cries often for no apparent reason.
3. Promiscuous behavior.
4. Runs away from home and refuses to return.
5. Difficulty walking or sitting.
6. Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas.
7. Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, and extreme fatigue.
8. Sexually transmitted diseases.

In addition to these indicators, children who have been sexually abused at church may exhibit some of the following:

1. Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in the nursery or Sunday School class.
2. Reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously enthusiastically approached.
3. Comments such as “I don't want to be alone with \_\_\_\_\_” in reference to a childcare worker or teacher.
4. Nightmares including a childcare worker or teacher as a frightening character.
5. Unexplained hostility toward a childcare worker or teacher.

## **Possible Signs of Ritual Abuse**

1. Disruptions of memory and consciousness.
2. Unexplained mistrust and mood swings.
3. Flashbacks.
4. Eating disorders.
5. Fear of the dark, especially at sundown or a full moon.
6. Agitation or despair that seems to occur in cycles.
7. Fear of ministers, priests, or others wearing robes or uniforms.
8. Nightmares or sleep disorders.
9. Any of the symptoms of sexual abuse.

# Due West UMC Guidelines

## Employed Staff

All persons employed by Due West United Methodist Church (DWUMC) to serve in a supervisory capacity for children/youth shall meet the following criteria:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Complete application form.
3. Be interviewed by the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), by a committee appointed by the SPRC, by the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor, or by a full-time DWUMC Employee with supervisory authority.
4. Complete an authorization and consent form for a background check.
5. Allow DWUMC to reserve the right to do fingerprinting as part of a background check.
6. Complete one Safe Sanctuaries training session each year.
7. Read and understand the DWUMC policy on reducing the risk of child physical and sexual abuse in the church, and sign a form certifying both.

## Due West UMC Guidelines (Cont.)

### **Supervisory Volunteer Staff (adult volunteers who serve on a regular schedule)**

**\*\* Includes youth counselors, Sunday School teachers, Children's Church leaders, Elementary Shepherds, Children's Choir directors, and other volunteers working in new or ongoing ministries with children and youth under the age of 18.**

All volunteers serving in a supervisory capacity for children/youth shall meet the following criteria:

1. Be at least 18 years of age and at least four years older than the age of the oldest person in the group with which the person is working.
2. Must be a participant in a DWUMC group for at least 6 months. For those with less than 6 months participation, be willing to grant DWUMC permission to call his/her previous church for information.
3. Complete an authorization and consent form for a background check.
4. Be selected by a Staff member.
5. Complete in Safe Sanctuary training once each school year (August – July)  
Volunteers may choose to either attend an onsite Safe Sanctuaries training or complete the church's online training. Safe Sanctuaries training must be completed within 90 days of the time of the appointment to the position. If the volunteer is not able to complete Safe Sanctuaries training within 90 days of his/her appointment, that person will not be allowed to serve in any supervisory capacity with children/youth until the training has been completed.

All trainings expire on July 31, regardless of when the training occurred during the school year.

## Due West UMC Guidelines (cont.)

**Non-Supervisory Volunteer Staff (adult and/or youth volunteers who serve occasionally-usually less than once a month)**

**\*\* Includes nursery volunteers, Children's Church volunteers and assistants, Choir assistants, VBS assistants, and similar positions \*\***

All volunteers serving in a non-supervisory capacity for children/youth shall meet the following criteria:

1. Must be in at least the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade and at least four years older than the age of the oldest person in the group with which the person is working.
2. Must be supervised by a staff person or supervisory volunteer at least four years older than the age of the non-supervisory volunteer.
3. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend Safe Sanctuaries training session each year, and to read the DWUMC policy on reducing the risk of child physical and sexual abuse in the church.

# Prevention Guidelines

## Staffing Ratios

**There must always be at least 2 employed Staff and /or volunteer staff supervising children/youth regardless of the number of children/youth in the group. At least one of these people must have a background check and current safe sanctuary training.**

If a volunteer finds himself/herself in a circumstance where ratios are not being met, the volunteer needs to notify the person in charge and make every attempt to resolve the situation. If at the end of a class, one adult must leave before all the children have been picked up, the remaining adult needs to move the class to a high traffic area (for example, the hallway) or into a room with another adult.

In order to provide adequate supervision for the safety and well-being of children participating in the programs and activities of DWUMC, the following ratios (Employed Staff + Supervisory Volunteers + Non-Supervisory Volunteers to children/youth) are recommended:

- |               |      |                                    |
|---------------|------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Infants    | 2:6  | infants (under 12 months)          |
| 2. Toddlers   | 2:10 | toddlers (12 months through age 3) |
| 3. Preschool  | 2:16 | preschool (4 years & up)           |
| 4. Children   | 2:20 | K – 5 <sup>th</sup>                |
| 5. Youth      | 2:24 | 6 <sup>th</sup> – age 18           |
| 6. Mixed ages | 2:10 | newborn - 5 <sup>th</sup> grade    |

## **Special Events, Field Trips, and Overnights**

- |   |      |             |
|---|------|-------------|
| 1. Children K – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade             | 2:12 | children    |
| 2. Youth 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  | 2:14 | youth       |
| 3. Youth 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | 2:16 | youth       |
| 4. Weekday Preschool                              | 2:14 | 4 years old |
|   | 2:16 | 5 years old |

## **Weekday Preschool**

- |                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| 1. Infants         | 2:4  |
| 2. One year old    | 2:6  |
| 3. Two years old   | 2:10 |
| 4. Three years old | 2:12 |
| 5. Four years old  | 2:14 |
| 6. Five years old  | 2:16 |

## Supervision Guidelines

The following guidelines shall be used when planning supervision for all church gatherings where youth/children will be in attendance. These guidelines apply to all activities and programs of Due West UMC, and to any programs or events that are held on the grounds of DWUMC with the permission of DWUMC, such as Boy Scout meetings, and private or small-group music lessons.

1. At least two employed staff and/or volunteer staff shall oversee any small group within the church buildings. In the event of only 1 adult, a roving monitor that checks on each program room regularly is required.
2. In the State of Georgia, a married person cannot be compelled to testify against their spouse. Therefore, when a married couple volunteers with children or youth, there must always be another employed or volunteer staff member present.
3. Visitors must be authorized by a supervising staff person. A visitor is defined as someone who not the parent of a child in the group.
4. Children, 5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger, are not released on their own. They must be picked up by a parent or sibling over age 16.
5. Children, 5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger, are escorted to the restrooms. Restroom doors are left propped open. The volunteer remains in the doorway while the child uses the facility.
6. Diapers are changed only by nursery staff members.
7. Children (5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger) should be in a designated program area or be with a parent/guardian or in child care.
8. All off-site functions for children and youth through Eighth Grade will require written permission from parents / guardians. Any spontaneous offsite gatherings will require verbal permission from parents / guardians obtained by the supervising person.
9. All off-site, non-overnight trips for youth in Grades 9-12 require written or verbal permission from parents/guardians.



# Special Overnight Activities and Trips

1. Written permission from a parent/guardian shall be obtained for each child/youth that is part of a group participating in any overnight activity. Written permission is also required for any friends of children/youth that wish to participate in the activity.
2. Offsite events for children and youth, or an overnight event held at the church require the appropriate adult to children/youth supervisory ratios indicated in the “Prevention Guidelines” section.
3. Two adults must always be present to protect both children and adults by providing a check on behavior and as witnesses in the event of accusations.
4. Adults are not to share beds with youth.
5. Any night shift watches and checks on overnight trips shall be conducted by at least two adults.

# Procedures for Reporting Alleged Abuse

## During Church Related Activities

Should a person in charge suspect abuse, or a child/youth report abuse by any member of the church staff, volunteer, or employed staff, or by any person present at a church-sponsored meeting or activity, the following procedures shall apply for reporting the alleged abuse:

All staff and volunteers serving with children at Due West UMC are considered to be mandated reporters. A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused must report the situation to the proper authority immediately (no later than 24 hours of the time the abuse is suspected) and is subject to criminal penalty upon failing to do so.

1. The mandated reporter contacts DFACS (Dept. of Family and Child Services) to report the incident. (Cobb County DFACS 770-528-5000)
2. The mandated reporter should also contact the adult in charge (Employed Staff or Supervisory Volunteer) and document the incident in writing. If at all possible, the attached form, "Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse", should be used. Documentation shall be signed and dated.
3. The Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastor shall be notified as soon as possible. If a pastor is the accused party, notify the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) or the District Superintendent.
4. Once an accusation occurs, the Senior Pastor or SPRC Chairperson shall notify the following:
  - Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services
  - District Superintendent
  - Chairperson of the DWUMC Trustees, who shall notify the Church insurance carrier
5. The Senior Pastor or SPRC Chairperson may also notify the following persons:
  - Attorney
  - Pastoral Care Consultant

## **Non-Church Related Activities**

If an adult in a supervisory position suspects, or a child/youth reports abuse occurring away from church-sponsored functions, the following procedures shall apply:

1. The adult in charge (Employed Staff or Supervisory Volunteer) shall document the incident in writing. Documentation shall be signed and dated.
2. The Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastor should be notified as soon as possible.
3. The Senior Pastor shall notify the Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services.

## **Response to Abuse**

### **Principles**

If allegations of abuse are made, our response will be guided by the following principles:

1. All allegations will be taken seriously.
2. Respect for privacy and confidentiality will be maintained.
3. Victims include the abused, the family of the abused, the peers of the abused, the family of the accused, and the congregation.
4. The needs of the victims will be given high priority.
5. Full cooperation will be given to civil authorities.
6. Only the Senior Pastor, or other individual appointed by the Senior Pastor, shall be the church's spokesperson with the media.

## **Dealing with Persons Accused of Abuse**

### **Employed Staff**

Should a DWUMC employee be accused of physically or sexually abusing a child, whether or not in connection with a church activity, that employee shall immediately be reassigned to a position that does not have any supervisory authority over children or youth, and shall not return to a supervisory position until such time as the Senior Pastor and Chairperson of the SPRC deem appropriate. The decision to return an employee accused of physically or sexually abusing a child to a supervisory position may be made in conjunction with DWUMC's legal counsel and/or insurance carrier.

In addition to reassigning the employee, DWUMC reserves the right to suspend the employee, with or without pay and benefits, depending on the circumstances.

### **Volunteers**

Should a DWUMC volunteer be accused of physically or sexually abusing a child, whether or not in connection with a church activity, that volunteer shall immediately be suspended from working on any DWUMC activities that involve children or youth. The volunteer shall not be allowed to work on any DWUMC activities involving children or youth until such time as the Senior Pastor deems appropriate. The decision to return a volunteer to activities involving children or youth may be made in conjunction with DWUMC's legal counsel and/or insurance carrier.

# Bullying Prevention Policy

## Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is a pattern of behavior in which a person is “exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons.” Negative action is when a person intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through written, verbal, or electronic expression or in other ways. The intent is to make fun of, embarrass, or exclude others. There is an imbalance of strength and the child who is exposed to the negative actions has difficulty defending him/herself and is somewhat helpless against the student or students who harass.

The following are examples of bullying behaviors.

1. Saying hurtful and unpleasant things
2. Making fun of others
3. Using mean and hurtful nicknames
4. Completely overlooking someone
5. Deliberately excluding someone from a group of friends
6. Attempting or threatening to inflict injury on another person
7. Spreading false rumors
8. Sending mean notes, texts, etc.
9. Using any type of social media to make fun of, embarrass, or exclude others
10. Trying to get other students to dislike another person
11. Damaging a student’s property

## General Statement of Policy

- 1) Due West UMC has a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying. This policy applies not only to children and youth who directly engage in an act of bullying, but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another person’s act of bullying.
- 2) No employed staff or volunteer shall permit, condone or tolerate bullying. They must be prepared to intervene quickly and decidedly in bullying situations and in situations where there is only a suspicion that bullying is taking place.
- 3) Students, parents, staff and volunteers are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying.
- 4) All complaints of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- 5) This policy applies to all children/youth who are on church grounds and all children/youth who are participating in a church sponsored off-campus trip or event.

### **Reporting Procedure:**

- 1) Any person who believes that he or she has been the victim of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct what may constitute bullying shall report alleged acts immediately.
- 2) Reports are made by completing the Due West UMC Bullying Report Form.
- 3) Reports should be made to the staff member in charge of the ministry area when the alleged bullying took place.

### **Church Action:**

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, the appropriate church staff shall:

- 1) Talk with any volunteers who were present to determine the validity of the complaint
- 2) Meet with the Senior Pastor to discuss situation and determine consequences
- 3) Contact parents of both parties to inform them of the alleged incident
- 4) Forms will stay on file with Children's Director/Student Director until children/students involved complete high school.

#### When Teasing is Okay

We live in a society where teasing is part of our culture. Teasing, however, should not cause pain or hurt to another. Teasing is considered playful and okay when...

- It is done by someone you have a relationship with.
- It is used as a way of fitting in or when talking with friends and everyone involved is getting an equal piece of the "teasing pie". One person does not get more than their fair share of the teasing. A group does not gang up on one person.
- Comments are not making fun of someone's disabilities, ethnicity, faith, or characteristics that are out of the person's control.
- Comments made are not meant to harm in any way and if when asked, the person would stop making them.
- It is a one-time behavior, not repeated over and over again.

Resources – Bullying at School by Dan Olweus (Blackwell Publishing Co, 1993), "Understanding Playful vs. Hurtful Teasing and Bullying Behavior" pamphlet (Cobb County School system), and interview with Lisa Jackson, principal of Pine Mountain Middle School.

## Educating the Congregation

It is recommended that the following educational opportunities be provided for the congregation of DWUMC:

1. The general congregation should be made aware that DWUMC has a Policy on Reducing the Risk of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse in the Church, a.k.a. Safe Sanctuaries and that we ensure that our Employed Staff and Supervisory Volunteers are fully trained in order to reduce the risk of abuse during any church-related activities.
2. The general congregation should be made aware that DWUMC has added a Bullying Prevention Policy and ensure that our Employed Staff and Supervisory Volunteers are trained to reduce the risk of any bullying behavior during any church-related activities.
3. We will be open to sharing our Policies with any member of our Congregation.
4. We will make every reasonable effort to allow concerned members of our Congregation to attend a Safe Sanctuaries training session, which includes the Bullying Prevention outline.
5. We will encourage classes and presentations that focus on sexuality education and safety to groups of parents within our Congregation.
6. We will encourage age-appropriate classes and presentations that focus on sexuality education and safety to our children and youth.

# Appendix of Training Resources and Forms

## Reference and Forms

1. Resources for DWUMC Education and Training
2. Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse
3. Bullying Report Form
4. Action Report Form
5. DWUMC Training Session and Policy Receipt Certification

# Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

1. Name of worker (Employee / Volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Child's/youth's name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Child's/youth's age/date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date and Place of initial conversation with/report from child/youth: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Child's/Youth's statement (give detailed account, use additional sheets as necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of person accused of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Relationship of accused to child/youth (DWUMC Employee, DWUMC Volunteer, family member, other): \_\_\_\_\_

8. Incident reported to Senior Pastor/Chair of SPRC (date/time): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Summary of conversation with Senior Pastor/Chair of SPRC: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse (Cont.)

10. Date/Time of call to child's/youth's parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Person spoken to: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Date/Time of call to GA Department of Family and Children's Services  
(770-528-5015) \_\_\_\_\_

14. Person spoken to: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Other contacts (Name, Date and Time); Use additional sheets as necessary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Making Report

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Making Report

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Report

# Due West UMC Bullying Report Form

*Confidential: The church takes your safety seriously. It is VERY important that you provide the church with as much information as possible. If you do not share all the information about this matter, the church will have a difficult time making the situation better.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Bystander or Reporter)

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person(s) who you believe harassed/intimidated/threatened or bullied you or is being bullied:

\_\_\_\_\_

What happened or is happening? (Be very specific) What was said?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When did this happen? (time and date)

\_\_\_\_\_

What event were you attending when it happened?

\_\_\_\_\_

Where did this happen? (example: Sunday School classroom, Youth Center)

\_\_\_\_\_

How long has this been happening? How many times?

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of witnesses (List first and last names if you know both)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was your response to this situation?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who have you shared this situation with? (example: parents, friends, teacher )

\_\_\_\_\_

How has this incident affected you at church?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Were you physically harmed during this situation? (If yes, how?)

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Is there anything else we need to know regarding this situation?

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What would you like for an adult to do to help you? (Example: listen, talk to the student(s) involved, watch out for behavior, mediation, etc.)

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Who are you giving this form to?

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Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# TO BE COMPLETED BY CHURCH STAFF MEMBER

## Action Report

Name of person receiving form \_\_\_\_\_  
Date form received \_\_\_\_\_

Names of volunteers who were present and a summary of what they reported about the incident

- 1) Name \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- 3) Name \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- 5) Name \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6) Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Met with the Senior Pastor, \_\_\_\_\_, to discuss situation and determine consequences.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Decision made

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Contact parents of both parties to inform them of the alleged incident

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of contact \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of contact \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

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Action taken

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This form is to stay on file with Children Director/Youth Director until children/students involved complete high school.



