

Final

## **Glen Mar United Methodist Church**

### **Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures**

Effective April 5, 2016, this policy amends and updates the Glen Mar United Methodist Church Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and procedures.

#### **Introduction, Purpose, Scope, and Administration**

Glen Mar United Methodist Church (the Church) is a spiritual community committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children, youth and vulnerable adults who participate in ministries sponsored by the church. Children and youths are minors under 18 years of age. Vulnerable adults are 18 years or older with diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities. This policy is intended to provide guidelines and best practices for promoting and maintaining a caring, safe, and secure environment in all aspects of church life while assuring all individuals that Glen Mar UMC is acting responsibly to protect them and their loved ones. It is a statement of the value Glen Mar UMC community places on maximizing the safety, protection, and security of vulnerable individuals among us.

The goal of this policy is to provide an environment that is safe and secure and a safe sanctuary for participants in all Church and community outreach ministries, programs, events, and activities wherever they occur. It further seeks to minimize the possibility for physical and sexual abuse of children, youths, and vulnerable adults. Abuse is defined as any sexual contact, indecent exposure, or communication for immoral purposes, as well as physical abuses such as corporal punishment or physical assault. The law recognizes that no minor can consent to sexual contact or physical abuse because of their age and vulnerability. The Church affirms this position and will not tolerate any abuse. This policy does not preclude the reporting of suspected abuse occurring outside of the parameters of this policy, and it applies to all groups, activities, and ministries sponsored by the church, as well as groups using Glen Mar UMC facilities who serve children, youths, and vulnerable adults.

Key aspects of this policy include screening of staff and unpaid servants who work with children, youths, and vulnerable adults; communication of the policy and the requirement for staff and unpaid servants to understand, honor, and promote this policy; training all staff and unpaid servants working with vulnerable individuals, and/or reviewing for reciprocity similar training received elsewhere; and, a process for responding to allegations of breaches and/or reporting. This policy additionally functions to safeguard staff and unpaid servants from false allegations against them and to minimize Church risks and legal liabilities for those working and volunteering here.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

The Minister for Operations is the staff person with responsibility for administration of this policy. Authority to communicate the importance and to assure the safety and security of our children, youths and vulnerable adults to the best of the church's ability is delegated by the Board of Trustees and the Staff Parish Relations Committee of Glen Mar UMC. The Minister for Operations may delegate some monitoring functions, but retains the responsibility for policy compliance by staff, unpaid servants, and outside groups, where applicable. Ministry leaders and staff are responsible for ensuring that the unpaid servants involved in activities, events, groups, classes, trips, and/or other aspects of their ministries are trained prior to participation with children, youths, and vulnerable adults. Ministry leaders and staff will report to the Minister for Operations.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SPRC.

## **Responsibilities, Procedures and Practices**

An individual who is new to Glen Mar must serve with a person who is established and experienced in the program for six months before being allowed to work in a leadership role with children, youths, or vulnerable adults. Adults in a leadership role from other churches or outside unpaid servants must have lived in the area, and be locally known to references, for over six months.

Reinforcing the importance of this aspect of care, security, and safety at Glen Mar, staff and unpaid adult servants (18+ years old) are required to complete the following *prior to participating* with children, youths, and vulnerable adults:

- Covenant for Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Workers form+
- Training program at Glen Mar UMC, called "A Safe Sanctuary"\*
- Laity Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire
- Permission for Background Check form
- Submission of three personal reference forms from individuals who know them well and who are not involved with the programs they may wish to serve

Note: All of these forms are available each time "A Safe Sanctuary" training is offered.

+ The covenant is only available at training, but the other forms are available on Glen Mar's website, as well as in the appendix to this document.

An approved training outline called "A Safe Sanctuary" is provided by the Staff Parish Relations Committee and it is based upon: *Youth Protection Training* established by the *Boy Scouts of America* and *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church* by Joy Thornburg Melton (Discipleship Resources, ISBN: 0-88177-220-8). It may be modified from time to time for language, relevance, and age appropriateness.

With parental permission, youths (ages 13 through 17) may serve as assistants in ministry along with trained adults, but must also complete the steps above. It is important for each to remember s/he is a leader by example and that appropriate boundaries of leadership are to be maintained.

Every two years, each staff member and unpaid servant who wishes to continue in ministry with children, youths, and vulnerable adults will need to renew eligibility.

\*On an exception basis, provision of written record of comparable abuse prevention training, such as for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, teachers, or health personnel may be accepted.

### Renewal

During the second year, individual contacts are made with those coming due for renewal by designated Church staff. It is the responsibility of the individual to follow through and to complete the renewal process in a timely manner. There are two options available:

- Completion of a regular training class with a trainer and all aforementioned required paperwork at Glen Mar, or
- Completion of online training and provision of the Laity Sexual Misconduct questionnaire to the Minister for Operations.

Renewal is good for two years.

### Future Years of Service

During the 4<sup>th</sup> year, individuals wishing to continue service with children, youths, and vulnerable adults will be contacted to come to Glen Mar for completion of a regular training class with a trainer and resubmission of a complete set of aforementioned required forms after signing in for training: covenant, laity sexual misconduct form, three personal reference forms from individuals who know them well and who are not involved with the programs they may wish to serve, and permission for background check.

In summary, after initial trainer-led “A Safe Sanctuary” program training and completion of forms, one renewal can be completed online (specific requirements above), then the following training will be in person again. At minimum, every 4 years of service result in face-to-face training with all new forms including covenant, laity sexual misconduct questionnaire, three references, and permission for background check.

## **Dissemination of Information About the Policy and Training**

### **Communication**

The importance of the Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its diligent application at Glen Mar UMC cannot be overstated. Because of this, Glen Mar UMC makes an intentional effort to inform and disseminate information about the policy to all members of the Glen Mar community and to

the groups using our facility. All program and ministry team leaders are enlisted to promote this communication widely so that there is no mistake - Glen Mar UMC takes serving as staff or unpaid servants with children, youths, and vulnerable adults seriously.

### **Training**

Training will be provided to each and every eligible Glen Mar UMC unpaid servant and staff person who will teach, work with, counsel, supervise, chaperone, lead or direct any member, visitor or ministry participant under the age of 18, or vulnerable adult.

Training will be offered at least 12 times per year so that interested individuals may participate and start the process prior to beginning their service. At that time staff members and unpaid servants sign in with the trainer and complete the training and the Conference Laity Sexual Misconduct questionnaire, covenant, and permission for background check. Three references are also required. This will allow them to work as an assistant with a fully compliant lead worker until such time as all forms may be returned complete and references and/or backgrounds checked. On the rare occasion and only when extreme situations dictate, will an exception be made to this policy.

Along with the training participation list, the forms and the information on them will be reviewed for completeness and compliance. Since these forms have personally identifiable information on them, the church is committed to limiting access and maintaining files in locked storage. The Minister for Operations or designee will secure these records, and only s/he, the Lead Pastor, SPRC, and staff member(s) with a "need to know" will be able to review confidential information. A motor vehicle record review may be conducted for unpaid servants who anticipate providing transportation for children, youths, or vulnerable adults.

Background checks review federal and public records, state by state throughout the United States. No person who is convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, any activity in which abuse, exploitation, or neglect of children, youths, or vulnerable adults will be permitted to work with programs including these groups in any capacity. Should concerns be raised about an individual seeking to serve these groups by a staff member, another unpaid servant, and/or a reference, the Minister for Operations will make a personal contact to ascertain the nature of the concern. In such cases, a recommendation by the Minister for Operations will be provided to the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) for final determination of suitability as a worker with children, youths, and vulnerable adults. SPRC reserves the right to disqualify applicants who have been convicted of other violent offenses or have been convicted of behaviors which indicate that the applicant is ill-suited to work with children, youths, and vulnerable adults. Examples may be drug related convictions, DUI/DWI convictions in the last 5 years, or other convictions for offenses such as rape, murder, assault, domestic violence, theft, etc.

A registry of unpaid servants who are complete and compliant will be developed and made available to ministry leaders in a Safe Sanctuaries folder on the common drive of the computer network at Glen Mar. It is the responsibility of the ministry team leaders to ensure that every adult and youth serving with children, youths, and or vulnerable adults in their area has completed the required screening and

training as described above. Documentation of conformance to the policy for unpaid servants and/or assistants serving in a ministry area may be required from these ministry leaders, along with their own compliance date.

**Retraining is required every two years to continue service with children, youths and vulnerable adults. Background checks may be conducted every 5 years if the individual serves consecutive years, or after each “break” in service greater than two years.**

### **Trainer Credentials and Continuing Education**

Trainers will be recruited from the congregation, and mainly will be comprised of individuals who have served as Stephen Ministers and those skilled in the vocational areas of counseling, teaching, healthcare, social work, risk management and/or law enforcement. Those who are called to this ministry must commit to all aspects of the policy. They will be expected to attend periodic refresher courses and continuing education as determined during the annual policy review by SPRC. Initially, trainers are trained by a certified/trained staff member, and then may train other trainers. All trainers use the same training outline so that persons trained receive the same approved content.

## **Implementation**

### **Two Adult Rule**

Two adults, who are at least 5 years older than children or youth under their care, must be present for all ministry activities involving children, youths, or vulnerable adults. In the rare circumstance when two adults cannot be present at the meeting, activity, event, etc. then the adult in charge will ask a parent or another responsible adult to help supervise the activity. Such an emergency support person should have training in “A Safe Sanctuary”, even if it is not current. Should another adult not be located, and if it is not practical to apply the Open Door Rule (see next paragraph), then the meeting, activity, event, etc. must be cancelled or rescheduled to a date where the “two adult rule” is in effect.

### **Open Door/Open Space Rule**

In the normal operation of the ministries of the church there are occasions where an adult will need to assist or to meet individually or counsel with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. One such example is the mentoring an adult Friend in Faith provides for a youth in the confirmation process. If meetings take place in an office or room with a door, the door must be left open. Parental permission should be obtained. In addition to a general written youth permission form, specific verbal permission should be obtained from the parent whenever the youth will be meeting in one to one sessions. Wherever possible, interactions between individuals and children, youths, and vulnerable adults must take place in an open, visible space. Meetings must be scheduled at a time during normal business hours. Individual counseling may take place with doors closed in a room with a window or window opening in the door.

Offsite meetings should take place in open, public locations. When activities offsite are in private homes, the two adult rule should be maintained and continual attentiveness applied.

### **Visible Presence**

Supervising adult and/or staff presence will be available to support teachers, mentors, and chaperones as well as to deter any potentially adverse situations for children, youths, and vulnerable adults. Such presence during an activity supplements its adult support, and may augment coverage to permit continuation of an activity where lack of two adults may temporarily occur.

### **Respect of Privacy**

Adults must respect the privacy of children, youths, and vulnerable adults in situations such as using the bathrooms, changing clothes, showering, etc. However, their support outside the door is important. Only a grave health or safety concern would warrant intrusion by an adult.

With regard to infants, toddlers, and young children unable to use the bathroom or change clothes by themselves, adults must exercise discretion in assisting them. Two adults should be in the area, or an open space/door policy applies.

Adults' privacy must also be respected in similar situations. Personal hygiene tasks should be done separately and away from children, youths, and vulnerable adults.

### **Overnight Activities**

These procedures cover activities which require an overnight stay and are sponsored and/or supervised by Glen Mar UMC and affiliates. This includes but is not limited to camping, lock-ins, hotels/motels, other churches, and overnight stays in a personal dwelling.

All overnight or off-church property activities require the prior permission of the Minister for Operations. Sufficient leadership is provided to ensure no adult is ever alone with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. All procedures of the policy are to be honored, and for small children state licensing ratios must be maintained.

Adults are prohibited from sleeping in the same bed with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. The only exception may be a supervising parent with his/her own child who is of the same sex.

Males and females will not share the same sleeping facility, whether children, youths, vulnerable adults, or adults.

Exceptions might be: a large room that can be properly divided to ensure separation of the sexes; dormitory accommodations which require adults in the same sleeping area provided there are at least two adults and four children, youths, and/or vulnerable adults of the same sex; and, married couples who may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.

## Transportation

These procedures are for providing transportation for children, youths, and vulnerable adults to and from activities sponsored and/or supervised by Glen Mar UMC and affiliates. These procedures relate to transportation provided by the church, parents of attendees, and staff or unpaid servant leaders.

Written permission is required in advance of an off-site activity or road trip for children, youths, and vulnerable adults. Unless otherwise approved by the Minister for Operations and the parents/custodians, all transportation will begin and terminate at the church property.

Insurance requirements must be met, including a **prohibition on use of 15 passenger vans** and motorcycles, scooters, or mopeds.

**Drivers must be 25 years of age or older** and be subject to a motor vehicles records check.

Automobile safety procedures must be followed: vehicles must be properly licensed, insured, inspected and in good working order; all passengers must wear restraints as are age appropriate; operators will drive within posted speed limits, and obey all traffic laws. Failure to conform to these procedures may disqualify individuals from driving for church related activities. A current list of fully compliant and background-screened persons is maintained for use by program staff. The “two adult rule” should apply when a driver is responsible for transporting any child, youth, or vulnerable adult who is not a family member; however, when this is impractical the solo adult driver must be screened.

## Constructive Discipline

**Physical punishment, verbal abuse, or inappropriate language will not be permitted under any circumstances.**

Discipline used in working with children, youths, and vulnerable adults should reflect Glen Mar’s values and be constructive, affirming that each of us is created in God’s image. Appropriate boundaries are maintained by leader communication that while unpaid servants, including youthful assistants, are interested in helping in formational activities for children, youths, and vulnerable adults, they are not peers. Constructive discipline is progressive. It applies whether the inappropriate behavior occurs at the church or anywhere in the world on a mission trip.

*If a child, youth or vulnerable adult is behaving inappropriately, the responsible adult will specifically say what s/he is doing that is not acceptable, and state the expected behavior.* Behavior incidents are to be reported to the staff member in charge or the unpaid servant leader.

Should non-compliant behavior continue, and the person misbehaving is a child, the child will be guided to another activity. If disruption continues, the adult in charge will notify the child’s parents and request that the child be removed from the activity.

Should non-compliant behavior continue, and the person behaving inappropriately is a youth or vulnerable adult, s/he will be asked to leave the activity and parents or vulnerable adult's caregiver will be notified to come for pick up, removing him/her from the site and activity.

In a case of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult being unresponsive to the adult in charge and thereby being removed from the activity or mission, an incident report will be completed by the adult in charge.

### **Adults as Healthy Models**

Adults exercising responsibility for children, youths, and vulnerable adults must not use illegal drugs or alcohol. If smoking is permitted, the adult must remove him/herself a minimum of 50 feet away from all activities and children, youths, and vulnerable adults and such removal must not disrupt the two adult minimum or the ratios for supervision. Ideally, adults will not smoke in the presence of children, youths, and vulnerable adults.

## **Incidence or Suspicion of Incidence Report**

### **Reporting**

In handling incidents of alleged abuse, the well-being of the alleged victim is paramount and whatever the victim says is to be taken very seriously. Any suspicious activity, observed abuse, or victim allegations that are brought to the attention of a church staff member or unpaid servant in the course of their responsibilities must be reported verbally to the program manager in charge right away. Do not ignore any reported incident of abuse. However, until an incident is required to be reported to authorities outside of the church, the rights of the alleged abuser must be respected. **Confidentiality is critical** in the early stages of an incident if we are to be Christ-like in our handling of the situation.

County, state and federal law will always supersede church policy.

An immediate risk of violence or suicide should be treated as an emergency, and 9-1-1 should be contacted.

Once a ministry team leader receives a verbal report of suspected or observed abuse, the following reporting process begins, depending on the employment and ministry status of the accused individual. **The person against whom an allegation is made should never be confronted before the safety of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult affected is secure.** Do not interview or coach responses from the victim. After the verbal report is made, write down all that is said by the victim and witnesses, if any, and any personal observations that are made. A written incident report is required within 24 hours and must be provided to the Minister for Operations for the confidential file of the investigation. This is a standardized incident reporting form which gathers essential information, and it may be found on the Glen Mar website, My Glen Mar tab, Safe Sanctuaries, and in the appendix. Identities of the alleged victim and the alleged abuser will be not be revealed except as necessary by law.

- Allegations against unpaid servants
  - The unpaid servant will be immediately relieved of duties and replaced by the appropriate ministry team leader until allegations are investigated.
  - The ministry team leader shall, in turn, report the incident to the Minister for Operations.
  - The Minister for Operations shall report the incident to the Lead Pastor or designee and together they will determine if the incident is reportable to Child Services or police, and whether the District Superintendent is to be notified.
- Allegations against staff members
  - For any employee, other than the Lead Pastor, the report shall be made to the Chairperson of the SPRC, the Lead Pastor and Minister for Operations. If the Minister for Operations is the accused, then the Lead Pastor should be advised.
  - Baltimore-Washington Conference policy as stated in the Manual on Policies and Procedures applies.
  - The District Superintendent shall be notified.
- Allegations against any pastor
  - The Minister for Operations shall report to **the District Superintendent**.

### **Code of Maryland Regulations and Mandated Reporters**

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) defines child abuse and child neglect as:

- Physical injury *not necessarily visible* of a child under circumstances that indicated that a child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed
- The failure to give proper care and attention to a child including leaving a child unattended where the child's health or welfare is harmed or a child is placed in substantial risk of harm
- An act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation whether physical injuries are sustained or not
- Identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function
- Finding credible evidence that has not been satisfactorily refuted that physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse occurred

You are a mandated reporter if you are one of the following: a health practitioner, educator, human service worker, and/or police officer. This does not require proof that abuse or neglect has occurred before reporting. Incidents are to be reported as soon as they are suspected. Waiting for proof may involve grave risk to the child and impede services to the family. Proof may be long in coming, as witnesses to child abuse are rare, and the child's testimony may be disbelieved or inadmissible.

As a mandated reporter, failure to report may result in professional sanctions by licensing boards. Anyone who makes a "good faith" report is immune from civil liability and criminal penalty.

According to Section 5-704(b), if you are mandated to report, an oral and written report must be made to the local department of social services (or in abuse cases, to the local law enforcement department and the local States Attorney) not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, treatment or other circumstances that lead you to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect.

After a report is made to Child Protective Services, the local department must make a thorough investigation to protect the welfare of the child or children, including: the nature, extent and cause of the neglect or abuse; the identity of the individual(s) responsible for the neglect or abuse; and the name, age and condition of every other child in care, in addition to any other pertinent information.

### **Responding to Allegations of Abuse**

If it is determined that an allegation has a factual basis, then the following steps shall be taken:

- **The Lead Pastor will report to the appropriate legal authorities as required by the laws of the State of Maryland** and will request the Minister for Operations to notify the church insurance company and any legal advisors. Such report will include:
  - The name, address, age and sex of the alleged victim;
  - The name and address of the alleged victim's parents or other person responsible for his/her care;
  - The nature and extent of the alleged abuse or neglect;
  - Any evidence of previously known or suspected abuse or neglect of the alleged victim or their siblings;
  - The name, address and relationship, if known, of the person who is alleged to have perpetrated the abuse or neglect;
  - Any witness statements with name, address, and relationship to the alleged victim;
  - A copy of the alleged abuser's statement of the incident, application and covenant, and where applicable, last staff evaluation; and
  - Any other information known to the person making the report that would be helpful to the investigation of the alleged abuse.
- A response team shall be formed by the Minister for Operations and will be assigned to take any further actions that are required.
- The response team shall be made up of the Lead Pastor, Minister for Operations, SPRC Chair, Church Council Chair, and a mental health professional. The Lead Pastor may make appropriate substitutions if circumstances require.
- The response team shall appoint a single person as spokesperson for any media contact and shall determine the appropriate means for communicating with the congregation.
- The response team will:
  - Inform the staff member or unpaid servant of the allegation and discuss it with them
  - In cases of staff allegation, suspend the individual with pay for up to 60 days while a confidential investigation is conducted

- Consult with legal counsel for the church for advice regarding compliance with reporting laws and file the necessary report within the appropriate time frame required by the State of Maryland
- Together with the state agency official, meet with the child's parents or caregivers and, in their presence and with their permission, with the child. The purpose for this meeting is to learn more fully the nature of the allegations, including when and where the alleged incident/behavior took place. If given permission, the child should be reassured that they have done nothing wrong and that they were right in reporting the incident/behavior. The intention is to seek the truth while protecting the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. If the nature of the allegation is such that physical injury may have occurred, immediate examination by a qualified physician is requested.
- Cooperate in investigations conducted by the Department of Child Protective Services and/or the insurance company
- Provide ongoing spiritual and counseling support for the victim and his/her family
- Consider the spiritual needs of the alleged abuser and seek assistance from the District Superintendent and Conference personnel in providing the proper counseling and response for the alleged abuser and his/her family
- Assure exclusion of the alleged perpetrators of the abuse discreetly from all activities involving children, youths, and vulnerable adults until the incident report is resolved
- If an investigation yields a guilty result, advise ALL ministry leads
- If an investigation yields indeterminate or not guilty results, assist with the work of restoration and reconciliation

**Notification Contacts:**

**Child Protective Services**

In Howard County, reports should be made to:

Maryland Department of Human Resources  
 Child Protective Services  
 7121 Columbia Gateway Drive  
 Columbia, MD 21046  
 410-872-4203  
 410-313-2929 (after hours)  
 410-872-4231 (fax)

**Insurance:** Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company

**Law Enforcement:** In accordance with local law as instructed by Child Protective Services and legal counsel.

**Legal Representative:** As provided by insurance company and/or legal representative for the church if not the same.

### **Post Incident Reporting Procedure**

Glen Mar United Methodist Church acknowledges that there are many victims who may be affected by an incident of, or suspicion of, child abuse or neglect. In addition to victims and alleged abusers, we are mindful that the following persons will require the proper response, care, counseling and support following any such event:

- Family members of the affected child, youth, or vulnerable adult
- Peers of the child, youth or vulnerable adult
- Peers of the child's, youth's, or vulnerable adult's parents
- Remaining workers with children, youth, or vulnerable adult programs
- Congregation as a community of faith
- Family of the alleged abuser

We believe that failure to address the issues of suffering, anger, fear, and grief that occur within the Church after an alleged incident of abuse can have extended and unnecessary consequences for everyone. We will not hide or shrink away from our responsibility to promptly and appropriately address any incident of abuse, and that as a congregation we are committed to the prevention of and termination of behaviors which contribute to the cycle of abuse. The following are steps we will take to assure that the congregation and those affected may be restored to a feeling of well-being and justice.

**First:** Truth telling is the most important component in post-loss recovery. Our communications will be honest, measured, and respectful of all parties involved. Written communication will be factual and will work to dispel rumor and innuendo and to assure the congregation of the efforts to secure the safety of the alleged victim and to resume the functions of the ministries and programs.

**Second:** Lead Pastor will host a planned congregational meeting so that members can attend to learn about the church's response to the allegation of abuse. The meeting will be led by appropriate clergy, lay leaders and the District Superintendent. A non-member counselor will be available to address attendee questions and feelings.

**Third:** The SPRC will convene a task force to determine how Glen Mar UMC will adjust its ongoing ministries to appropriately acknowledge and recover from the incident. Ways to promote healing, justice, education, and restored worship will be sought and implemented as needed.

**Fourth:** The SPRC, or designated sub-committee, will review the current policy on child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection and work closely with the task force and clergy to modify any procedures and policies based upon incident outcomes and thereby exercise every effort to prevent further incidents of abuse.

### **Appendix**

Laity Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire

Authorization for Background/License Check

Reference Form

Incident Reporting Form

Effective **April 5, 2016**, this amended and updated policy supersedes all previous versions of the Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Policies of Glen Mar United Methodist Church.