

# Franklin United Church: Safe Church Policy

Franklin United Church desires to provide a safe and loving environment in which children and youth may grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. This safe church policy has been implemented to minimize the risk of abuse and ensure the safety and nurture of all who participate in the church's ministry.

## Recruiting Ministry Volunteers

- A. Church Participation:** All volunteers must be church members in good standing or adherents in harmony with the doctrines and principles of the church as outlined in the Apostle's Creed. Such persons should be regular attendees for at least six months.
- B. Volunteer Personnel Form:** The volunteer personnel form must be completed for all positions involving ministry to individuals at all age levels. The form requests personal, spiritual, and health-related information. This form is a critical screening step in the process of protecting both the church and those in its care from legal action if a case of abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved.
- C. Reference Check Record:** Three personal references are requested on the volunteer personnel form. These references should exclude relatives and include at least one reference from outside the church. Each reference should be contacted by phone or in writing and asked to affirm the appointment of the volunteer. A record should be kept of the person making the phone call or written contract, the date of the call/contact and a summary of the reference's comments.
- D. Committee/Council Approval:** All volunteers must receive approval from the Christian Education Committee and the Church Council. If the Committee or Council knows of any reasons why a person would not be suitable for a volunteer position, final approval or denial of the appointment will be made only after further investigation.

## Staffing and Supervising Guidelines

- A. Two-Adult Rule:** A minimum of two adults should be present in any location or at any function except in the event of an emergency. This arrangement may require that grade levels be combined. We may need to use one adult and one teen helper.
- B. Open Doors:** If there is only one adult teacher in a classroom and the door does not have a glass window, it should be left slightly open.
- C. Family Protection:** It is recommended that immediate family members do not work together in the same classroom. For those choosing to minister together, it is advised that, when possible, a third, unrelated volunteer be placed in the classroom.
- D. Teacher/Student Ratio:** Adequate staffing is needed to provide optimal care. The recommended ratios are:
  - One caregiver for every three infants (birth to twelve months)
  - One caregiver for every four toddlers or preschoolers
  - One caregiver for every eight to ten elementary-age children

**E. Disciplinary Problems:** In the event of any disruption or child leaving the premises, the child's parent will be contacted immediately.

**F. Emergencies:** In the event of any emergency, the child's parents will be contacted immediately

### **Proper Displays of Affection**

The following types of touch must be avoided:

- Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
- Extended hugging or tickling, or prolonged physical contact of any kind.
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (exception: properly assisting a child in the restroom).
- Carrying an older child or sitting him/her on your lap.
- Being alone with a child.
- Giving a gull contact body hug.

### **When an Allegation Occurs**

In the case of an allegation, Franklin United Church will follow these guidelines:

- Immediately record the facts of the incident (i.e. persons present, phone calls, correspondence, etc.)
- Document all of the church's efforts at handling the incident.
- Report the incident immediately to the church's lawyer, contact the proper civil authorities. Don't attempt an in-depth investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.
- Take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support helps to prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed, and remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority.
- Treat the accused the dignity and support. If the accused is a church worker, that person should be temporarily relieved of his/her duties until the investigation is finished.