

## **Resolution for Safe Sanctuaries Policy at Broadmoor United Methodist Church**

**(Revised by the Administrative Council 02/21/06)**

*Whereas*, It is the responsibility of the Body of Christ to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the spiritual, physical, social, and emotional development of all children and youth, and

*Whereas*, our desire at Broadmoor United Methodist Church (BUMC) is to fulfill this responsibility and be above reproach in our actions among our peers and the rest of the world, and

*Whereas*, Churches and other religious organizations have come under great scrutiny concerning their conduct and behavior around minors, and

*Whereas*, There are serious moral and legal implications surrounding these concerns, and

*Whereas*, BUMC fully supports The Louisiana Annual Conference's mandate that churches establish and implement a Safe Sanctuaries policy, therefore

*Resolved*, that this Safe Sanctuaries Policy be adopted by the Administrative Council of Broadmoor United Methodist Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

*Resolved*, That this Safe Sanctuaries Policy be in effect no later than six months following its approval at a date set by the Administrative Council.

# Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Broadmoor United Methodist Church

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

February 21, 2006

## Introduction

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church has adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The resolution, adopted in April 1996, says in part:

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a child...welcomes me." (Mathew 18:5) Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God. Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Mathew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that "...children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse."

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong.

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, BUMC adopts this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church.

## Purpose

Broadmoor United Methodist Church's purpose for establishing this Child Abuse Prevention Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth.

## Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that seek to assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and a designated spokesperson will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

## Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children and youth, BUMC is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child 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).

## I. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

1. Children: all minors from birth age to the completion of confirmation or the sixth grade.
2. Youth: minors who have completed confirmation or the sixth grade through graduation from high school.
3. Immediate Family: For purposes of this policy, 'immediate family' shall mean spouses, children, parents, grandparents, and step-relatives in the same relationship.

## II. Recruitment/Screening/Employment Procedures

### Paid Personnel

1. The following methods should be considered for recruiting applicants for employment with children and youth at Broadmoor United Methodist Church: (a) Referrals from BUMC employees or church members; (b) Advertising in the local newspaper and/or The Beacon, (c) Conference Office, (d) United Methodist Church General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and (e) online recruiting sources.
2. All applicants for paid positions with children and youth must complete the following forms: (a) Application For Employment, (b) Applicant's Statement, and (c) Authorization to Disclose Criminal History Records Information. This information will be in the BUMC business office and will be confidential and accessible only on a need to know basis.
3. Applicants who are selected for the screening process will be interviewed by Broadmoor United Methodist Church personnel and will be required to provide a minimum of three references (preferably two work related). Personnel checking references will complete a Reference Checking Form along with any other procedures deemed necessary. The form will be placed in the applicants file along with other background check information.
4. If the applicant is still being considered for employment after the interview, a minimum of three references listed on the application will be called (two work related and one personal).
5. Before a criminal background check is conducted, the applicant's name will be screened through the Louisiana State Police Sex Offender/Child Predator Search Website ([www.lasocpr.lsp.org/socpr](http://www.lasocpr.lsp.org/socpr)), which lists those persons convicted of a sex offense or a criminal offense against a victim who is a minor after July 1, 1997.
6. All applicants being considered for employment with children and youth at Broadmoor United Methodist Church will be subjected to a criminal background check. Although an applicant may be offered a position pending the results of the criminal background check, he/she may not report to work at Broadmoor United Methodist Church until the results are known and deemed acceptable.
7. If it is revealed that an applicant was convicted of child abuse, child molestation, or some other crime against a child, that applicant shall be rejected. If information indicates that charges were filed against an applicant but that there was no conviction, the church should investigate how the issue was resolved. Such investigation shall include at least the following steps: (a) Contact the police department or the prosecuting attorney's office to

discover more of the details, (b) Consult with the Staff/Parish Relations Committee for help in deciding whether this applicant poses too great a risk to the church's children and youth.

### **Volunteer Personnel**

1. Persons who wish to work with children and youth at Broadmoor United Methodist Church on a volunteer basis should complete a Volunteer Questionnaire/Covenant Statement (Attachment A), and other forms required by the particular ministry area to which they are volunteering.
2. Volunteers seeking to work with children and youth at Broadmoor United Methodist Church must have been regularly involved in activities and ministries of the church for at least six months, or recommended by two such persons who are not related to the applicant.
3. Before a criminal background check is conducted, persons who volunteer to work in any capacity with children and youth at Broadmoor United Methodist Church will be screened through the Louisiana State Police Sex Offender/Child Predator Search Website ([www.lasocpr.lsp.org/socpr](http://www.lasocpr.lsp.org/socpr)), which lists those persons convicted of a sex offense, or a criminal offense against a victim who is a minor, after July 1, 1997.
4. Volunteers will be subjected to a criminal background check before being allowed to work with children and youth at Broadmoor United Methodist Church.
5. If it is revealed that a volunteer was convicted of child abuse, child molestation, or some other crime against a child, that volunteer shall be rejected. If information indicates that charges were filed against a volunteer but that there was no conviction, the church should investigate how the issue was resolved. Such investigation shall include at least the following steps: (a) Contact the police department or the prosecuting attorney's office to discover more of the details, (b) Consult with the Staff/Parish Relations Committee for help in deciding whether this volunteer poses too great a risk to the church's children and youth.

### **III. Additional Guidelines for the Safety of Children and Youth**

1. All church sponsored activities that involve children and/or youth will have no fewer than two adults, not of the same immediate family, present at all times. When this is not possible, a hall monitor will be assigned to the affected area of the building during class times. Groups of children and/or youth participating in church sponsored activities shall not be left unattended at any time. With parental consent, youth of the same sex may room together without an adult. In situations where adults room with youth or children in a hotel, cabin, tent or other similar situations, there must be two adults, not of the same immediate family, present. These adults must be the same sex as the children or youth.
2. All workers, both paid and volunteer, must go attend Safe Sanctuaries Training or watch a Safe Sanctuaries Training Video (individual or group) before beginning work with

children and/or youth. Each Ministry Director will cover topics specific to their area including, but not limited to this Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

In addition to the initial training and orientation, all workers must also attend at least one training event relevant to their area or watch a training video each year and be approved by the Ministry area. All *paid* workers with children will be required to complete a certified first aid/CPR training course within one year of beginning service, and update certification as necessary.

3. All persons who work with children must be at least five years older than the maximum age of the children in the area in which they are working. All workers under the age of eighteen must work with and report to an adult, not in his or her immediate family, who shall be at least twenty-one years old. All persons who work with youth must be twenty-one years old or have completed two years of post-secondary education.
4. All classrooms and offices on the BUMC campus where church sponsored meetings involving children and/or youth are conducted shall have unobstructed visibility from outside the location when being used by children and youth. In addition the trustees shall take steps necessary to keep the physical setting current with safety standards and shall conduct periodic safety inspections.
5. Regular communications will be provided to parents about changes in policies, information regarding upcoming activities, adjustments in schedule or location, and any other useful information concerning activities involving children and/or youth. Ministry directors are encouraged to use available methods of communication provided by Broadmoor United Methodist Church and through the ministry office.
6. Broadmoor United Methodist Church shall maintain adequate liability insurance coverage as determined by the Board of Trustees.
7. Broadmoor United Methodist Church shall develop a procedure for responding to an allegation of sexual misconduct or abuse involving a minor. This procedure shall be in effect no later that 1 year following the adoption of this policy.
8. A copy shall be distributed to any outside group allowed to use BUMC facilities with the understanding that they will adhere to the policy.  
**Exclusions: This policy shall not apply to non-church affiliated groups for which the sponsoring or otherwise responsible group has agreed (1) to abide by the general philosophy and rules of this policy; (2) to provide proof of adequate and acceptable insurance as may be required by BUMC; and (3) to defend, indemnify and hold BUMC harmless from and against all claims and liability associated with the use of BUMC facilities and the activities of such non-church-affiliated group.**
9. Anything elsewhere stated in the Safe Sanctuaries Policy to the contrary notwithstanding, the provisions (including, without limitation, volunteer screening requirements) of the policy shall not apply to church functions and activities (a) not primarily intended or designed for children (including worship services, music concerts, etc.), where the attendance of children will be incidental as opposed to the primary focus of the function or activity; or (b) where reasonable notice and advertisement of such functions and activities has communicated that any and all children attending such function or activity should be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult. Such policy provisions shall apply in all respects, however, to the child care services and facilities provided by the church and incidental to the above-described exempted activities.