

## GLOBAL MINISTRIES' CHILD SAFETY POLICY

### I. Purpose of the Policy

The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church (“Global Ministries”) takes its responsibility to protect and nurture Children seriously. A central tenet of the Christian faith is the inherent value and worth of all Children. Children are least able to protect themselves and are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. It is therefore Global Ministries’ goal to create safe, positive, and nurturing environments for children to thrive. It is never acceptable for any Child to experience abuse or neglect of any kind. Global Ministries expects its Staff, Volunteers, and partners to always conduct themselves with the utmost integrity and professionalism. It is the expectation of our community that we will hold each other accountable and not ignore violations of this policy.

The standards set forth in this policy should inform the employment standards and expectations of Global Ministries Staff and partners who work in varying contexts around the world with Children. Global Ministries recognizes that it is practically impossible to represent the local differences in labor laws and cultural customs in a global policy. Global Ministries operates under the ethical standard that it will not knowingly violate any applicable labor and/or employment law. Where it is not possible for a local entity to apply a standard or procedure set forth in this policy due to a local law or cultural norm, the responsible area executive must consult with Global Ministries’ Child Safety Office to work out a suitable restatement of the standards and procedures for Staff and Volunteers in that specific location.

Global Ministries recognizes that no policy by itself prevents abuse or harm. Vigilance on the part of all Staff can assist in preventing abuse. Global Ministries has formed this policy to focus and aid in that effort.

### II. Application

This policy applies to all Global Ministries Staff, Volunteers and partners (as described in Section IX below).

### III. Definitions

- a. **Child:** A Child is any individual under the age of 18, irrespective of local country definitions of when a Child reaches adulthood.<sup>1</sup>
- b. **Child Safety Office:** The Child Safety Office is staffed by Global Ministries’ Human Resources Department and coordinates its efforts with the General Secretary and General Counsel of Global Ministries.
- c. **Director of Child Safety:** The Human Resources Director for Global Ministries is the Director of the Child Safety Office. The Director of Child Safety is responsible for supervising the investigation and response to suspected and confirmed violations of this policy. The Director of

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of child is from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines to implement Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual exploitation and Abuse by UN and non-UN Personnel, March 2013.

Child Safety will consult with the General Secretary, General Counsel and other Senior Leadership Team members, as needed, regarding investigation protocols and final recommendations/actions.

- d. **Staff:** All Global Ministries' employees, including but not limited to, staff in and outside the state of Georgia, missionaries, Global Mission Fellows, Church and Community Workers, Mission Advocates and anyone else who receives regular compensation from Global Ministries who is not an independent contractor.

e. **Types of Abuse**

- i. **Emotional Abuse:** A pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a Child's spirit or attacks the Child's self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling. This can also include spiritual abuse where there is a misuse of power, authority or trust by any person in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether within an organization, institution, church or family), through controlling, coercing, manipulating, or dominating a child's spiritual development.
- ii. **Neglect:** The failure to provide a Child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and well-being.
- iii. **Physical Abuse:** Violent non-accidental contact which results in injury. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, biting, or shaking. Injuries include bruises, fractures, cuts, and burns.
- iv. **Sexual Abuse:** Any form of sexual activity with a Child, whether at a Church, home, daycare or any other setting. The abuser may be an adult, or another Child.

- f. **Volunteer:** an individual who is not compensated for his or her time spent helping with a Global Ministries' program, mission or event.

IV. **Screening**

All Staff and Volunteers who, in the course of Global Ministries' operations or activities are likely to have contact with Children, must have a criminal background check before working as a Global Ministries Staff member or Volunteer. The background check should be conducted through a reputable third-party vendor. When possible, Global Ministries should also check the state's (or equivalent for the location) sex offender registry in which Global Ministries Staff or Volunteer currently resides. In addition, such Staff and Volunteers must also provide the name and contact information for at least three references. Ideally, two of the references are professional and one is personal. Global Ministries must keep a record in a secure location of the background check results and documentation of the references provided and contacted. Accordingly, adults may not supervise Children "on the spot" without being directed to do so by the director/manager of the program/organization in an emergency and without being properly screened (background check and references being completed) and trained according to appropriate child safety standards, our policies and our expectations of them as childcare providers.

V. **Mandatory Training**

Any Global Ministries Staff or Volunteer who is likely to have contact with Children must take (online or in person) every three years a child protection training program that covers current issues of child protection and includes:

- The definition and recognition of Child Abuse, including Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse.

- This Global Ministries policy and guidance on Child Abuse and the reasons for having them.
- Appropriate behavior for employees and volunteers who are in contact with Children in their capacity as Global Ministries Staff or Volunteer.
- Incident reporting responsibilities and procedures.
- Definition of appropriate interpersonal boundaries.

After the mandatory training, Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers must sign a certification confirming they took the mandatory training and have reviewed and will abide by this policy.

## **VI. Supervision of Children**

### **A. General Rules**

- All activities involving Children must be supervised by at least one screened and trained adult.
- When reasonably feasible, each room set aside for Children should have a door with a window or a window through which the Child/Children can be seen from the outside. Adults cannot be in a room alone with a child with the door closed so that they are outside the view of others or in a secluded area or hidden from view.
- Any individual counseling sessions that need to be done with a Child should be done with the door open and at a time when other adults are nearby.
- The “Two Person Rule” is defined as having at least two unrelated adults in any classroom or setting (with the exception of individual counseling sessions discussed above) one of which must be a screened Global Ministries Staff or Volunteer.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers will not swear or use offensive language.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers will not have sexually oriented discussions with or in the presence of Children.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers will not use tobacco or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of Children.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or internet pornography, in the presence of Children.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers shall not abuse Children in any way including, but not limited to, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect or engaging in inappropriate or unacceptable behavior as defined above in this policy.
- The locations where childcare is provided and/or where programs for Children are held should be regularly monitored by Global Ministries’ Staff. Such Staff should watch for any signs that a Child is uncomfortable with the adult providing care.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers should be knowledgeable in how to notify medical and other emergency personnel in case of an accident or medical emergency.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers, and other youth or children, should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault Children.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers shall not engage in inappropriate verbal interactions with Children, which includes shaming, belittling, humiliating, name callings, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate a child, cursing or making derogatory remarks about a Child.

### **B. Age Guidelines**

- No Volunteer or Staff working with Children should be under 18 years of age (unless a youth is working with an adult who is at least five years older than the youth) and all Volunteers and Staff must be at least five years older than the oldest Child they are supervising. For example,

if Children in the group are 17 years old, Staff members and Volunteers must be at least 22 years of age or older.

**C. Open Door Policy/Full Information About Events**

- Parents, Volunteers and Staff of Global Ministries will be permitted, as reasonableness dictates, to visit and observe all programs and classrooms at any time.
- Parents and legal guardians must be given full information about events in which their Children will be participating and must give their permission for all aspects of the program.

**D. Social Media Rules**

- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers working with Children are prohibited from emailing, texting or sending private messages, including photographs and videos, through social media to an individual child whom they interact with at a ministry, program or event.
- Any communications sent through social media must be sent to a group rather than to individuals, or messages should be communicated through parents or guardians.
- All communications with Children and parents/guardians must comply with this policy and not include any abusive, inappropriate or harmful language, photographs, videos or other content.
- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers working with Children should not send “friend” requests through social media to Children whom they interact with at a ministry, program or event.

**E. Photographs and Videos**

- Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers engaged in ministry with Children should not post or publish photos or videos of such Children without the express written consent of the Child’s parent or legal guardian.

**F. Travel**

- When having a Global Ministries sponsored event, which includes travel with Children and/or overnight lodging, protocol for Staff and attendees must be reviewed by Global Ministries’ Child Safety Office and General Counsel.

**VII. Reporting**

Global Ministries takes seriously all reports of child abuse and implements a survivor-centered approach to all allegations, which means that the needs and wishes of survivors guide our response, that survivors are treated with dignity and respect, and the rights of survivors to privacy and support are prioritized.

All suspected violations of this policy must be reported immediately by calling the Child Safety Office hotline at 1-888-230-2157 or reporting the violations online at [www.alertline.com](http://www.alertline.com). In addition, the leader of the site, church or other Global Ministries’ location should be immediately informed.

Once abuse or neglect is reported, the following should be followed:

- a. Immediately, yet with dignity, the accused should be removed from further involvement with Children. Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the Child is secured, the accused should be informed that the abuse or neglect was reported.

- b. Notify the parents/guardians of the Child and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety and well being of the Child. An exception to this rule is if notifying the parents/guardians would put the Child in further danger.
- c. A written report should be kept of the steps taken by Global Ministries in response to the reported abuse. The report should be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. It should be kept in a secure place. It should be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed.
- d. Any contact with the media should be handled through Global Ministries' Child Safety Office.

All Global Ministries Staff and Volunteers who interact with Children must be familiar with and follow the mandatory reporting laws for the jurisdiction in which they work. If assistance is needed with determining such requirements, the Child Safety Office can assist.

### **VIII. Confidentiality**

To protect all parties from further harm through exposure and to preserve the integrity of the process, Global Ministries expects that a “need to know” position will be strictly adhered to throughout the reporting and investigative process once a violation of this policy is reported. No other members of the senior leadership team are to be involved in the investigative process other than those necessary to conduct investigations or reach final determinations regarding action to be taken as a result of the investigation. It is presumed the parents or legal guardians of the victim are part of the “need to know” group unless they are themselves involved in the abuse or pose a threat.

While every attempt is made to keep issues related to reports of violations of the child safety policy confidential, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as details will need to be discussed with witnesses in the course of the investigation, the person against whom the report is made will need to be told of the report and when applicable persons in a position of authority (for example Law Enforcement and/or a clergy person's conference/Bishop) will need to be informed.

### **IX. Partners**

Global Ministries will ensure adequate safeguarding measures are in place to protect Children as part of its due diligence when considering new and existing partners. As part of this process, Global Ministries will require its partners who work with Children when either using funds provided by or through Global Ministries to either adopt this policy or have its own policy, which substantially complies with and contains the core tenants set forth in such policy. In addition, failure by a partner to take preventative measures to protect Children from neglect and abuse, to investigate and report allegations in a timely manner or to take corrective actions when neglect and abuse have occurred, will constitute grounds to terminate any agreement with the partner and/or take any other corrective actions deemed necessary by Global Ministries. Global Ministries will work collaboratively with partners to build capacity to achieve these safeguarding measures and support partners where possible and necessary. Global Ministries may also require substantial compliance with this policy, incorporate this policy as an attachment to any written agreement or otherwise develop a summary of the policy's requirements in its written agreements with vendors or independent contractors if they are likely to interact with Children in providing services to Global Ministries.