

## **Hilliard UMC/Warehouse 839 Child Protection Information**

Hilliard UMC desires to be a safe place for all children and adults who attend any activity or ministry. We will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Each year children are victimized by individuals they know and trust. Incidents of child abuse or neglect cut across every racial, social, economic, and religious boundary, and the church is not immune to these risks.

Our Child Protection Policy reflects Hilliard UMC's commitment to protect children from harm, and it applies to all unpaid and compensated servant workers of Hilliard UMC.

### **SCREENING OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY WORKERS**

Those serving with children or youth must complete the following screening process:

- Be a regular attendee of Hilliard UMC for at least six months
- Complete an application form
- Attend Child Protection Policy Training
- Successfully pass a background check

### **GENERAL POLICIES FOR SUPERVISION OF WORKERS**

1. Caregivers will not engage in any form of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced.
2. Every effort will be made to provide a minimum of two adults working together with each group of children.
3. The windows of classroom doors will remain uncovered to allow a clear view of classroom activities.
4. When possible, children are to be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs. Preschoolers will be escorted to the bathroom, but adults will not enter the bathroom with them.
5. Children younger than sixth grade will be released to parents or guardians at the reception counters or classroom doors. Persons other than the child's parents or guardians must be authorized to pick up the child.
6. Adult caregivers will not consume, or be under the influence of, illegal drugs or alcohol while supervising children. Consumption of alcoholic beverages is not permitted on church property

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

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Because we believe that children are our most important concern, Hilliard UMC has adopted the following guidelines for reporting suspected abuse. Upon observing or suspecting abuse, the caregiver will immediately do the following:

1. Make sure the child's safety and comfort are secured.
2. Make sure the suspected abuser is safely away from the children.
3. Report the abuse or neglect promptly to a pastor and/or the Director of Children's Ministries and/or the Director of Youth Ministries. To preserve confidentiality, it is important to discuss the incident initially only with any or all of these specific staff persons.
4. Whenever an abuse occurrence or accident of any kind takes place, it must be documented in a written report.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HILLIARD UMC PASTORAL STAFF**

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In accordance with the church's position that child abuse and neglect will not be tolerated, the pastoral staff shall do the following:

1. Take all allegations of child abuse and/or neglect seriously.
2. Document all efforts to handle the incident.
3. Contact Franklin County Children Services (614-275-2571) within 24 hours.
4. Notify the parents or guardians.
5. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child or special needs person is secured.
6. If the alleged incident was witnessed or reported by a secondary person (servant worker, other staff member, parent or other child/youth), the pastoral staff making the report to Franklin County Children's Services must respond to the secondary person within one week (7 days) of learning of the concern that a call was made to Franklin County Children's Services.
7. Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family.
8. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a caregiver, that person should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished.
9. Use the text of a prepared public statement to answer the press and to convey news to the congregation. Be careful to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.