

St. Paul's United Methodist Church Child Protection Guidelines

Reporting Procedures *To Be Posted in Church Office At All Times*

Indiana law requires a person to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as St. Paul's United Methodist Church, to the appropriate individual in charge. A person who fails to do so can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor or, in extreme circumstances, may be subject to civil liability for money damages. Therefore, all employees and volunteers at St. Paul's United Methodist Church must adhere to the following procedures:

1. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or violation of the Child Protection Guidelines of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the pastor, or in the absence of the pastor, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, an employee or volunteer will also immediately make a report to the local child protection service (765-932-2392) or law enforcement agency (765-932-3907).
2. **This process is to be kept strictly confidential.** Discussing allegations of child abuse with others than those designated may result in a lawsuit for defamation of character.

Physical signs of molestation may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal disease

Behavioral signs of molestation may include:

- nightmares
- anxiety when approaching the church building or nursery or preschool area (beyond normal separation anxiety)
- nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior
- withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs of molestation may include statements such as:

- "I don't like _____."
- "_____ does things to me when we are alone."
- "I don't like to be alone with _____."
- "_____ fooled around with me."

3. Reports will be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report and a brief synopsis of the report. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness.
4. All church employees and volunteers working with minor children will receive training regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.