

BLACK RIVER FALLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

“Let the children come to me! Don’t try to stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God. I promise you that you cannot get into God’s kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does.” Mark 10:13-16 CEV

BRF UMC adopts the following policies and procedures to provide a safe and secure environment within the church and for any event that is connected with the ministries and operations of our church. While the primary reason for this policy is to prevent child abuse and neglect of children and youth, it has been adopted to protect all who enter our doors. “Child” and “youth” shall be deemed synonymous and shall be defined as any person less than eighteen (18) years of age for the purpose of these procedures. “Adult” shall be defined as any person who is eighteen (18) years or older and out of high school.

Section 1: General Activity Safety

Permission Medical Release Form:

A general **Permission/Medical Release Form** (Appendix A) will be used to cover youth activities that are away from the church grounds, but do not require vehicle transport (i.e. excursions on foot to a nearby park), or that take place on church grounds, but involve minimal risk (i.e. water balloon fights or games played in the dark). This form will be completed by all youth involved in youth activities. This form will be renewed by all youth every year in September. Parents will be responsible for making sure the form is updated if changes occur. The form will be kept in a confidential, secured file and will be taken to all covered activities.

No child age infant through 5th Grade will self-administer his/her medication when participating in a church activity or event. The parent of the child will personally deliver needed, time-related medication (diabetic, antibiotic, etc.) to the adult leader in charge of event with written permission to administer. All youth in grades 6th-12th will be responsible for their own self-administered medication with written parental permission given to the adult leader in charge of the event.

Activities off the premises of BRF UMC which require transportation or those occurring on the premises involving an overnight stay will require an additional and specific **Event Release Form** (Appendix B) to be signed by parent or legal guardian. Authorized adult activity leaders will take both forms to the activities. All information on the forms will be kept confidential.

Two-Adult:

At least two (2) adults (at least 18 years of age and at least four years older than the oldest participant) will be required to be present at all activities involving minors in the church building. Although it is preferred that both adults be in the designated activity room, it is permissible for one adult to roam between rooms if more than one area of the church is used. The second adult is not to be counted if in the building, but involved in an unrelated meeting or activity. **In addition**, activities which take place away from the church require a ratio of 2 adults per 14 youth for senior high students and 2 adults per 10 youth for middle school students or younger.

Transportation:

At least two unrelated adults (over 23 years old) will be required to be present in each car/van when transporting youth except in the case of an emergency or with written parental permission. No child will ride in a car one to one with an adult other than his or her parent in the course of any BRF UMC sponsored activity. All drivers will be at least 23 years of age.

First Aid/CPR:

Every effort will be made to have at least one adult at every church activity be certified in basic first aid and CPR. The church will maintain 6 first aid kits. These kits are located in the kitchen beside the phone, in the nursery, in the church office, in the Children's Ministry Office/Supply room, in the Senior High Youth room, and in the Junior High Youth room. A first aid kit will be taken on any church activity off premises. All paid employees in leadership roles are required to take first aid and CPR training. Training will be offered annually.

Organization and Community Groups using the BRF UMC Building:

All community groups and individuals using space within the BRF UMC building to work with minors must become acquainted with the Safe Sanctuaries Policy on an annual basis. All community groups and individuals using the BRF UMC building must adhere to the Safe Sanctuaries Policy. Non-compliance with the policy may be grounds for termination of a building-use contract.

Section 2: Meeting and Activity Guidelines**Disruptive Behavior:**

BRF UMC is committed to providing activities in which the participation, leaders, co-participants from other organizations, and property will be treated with respect and in a safe manner. Any person who violates the spirit of this commitment by inappropriate conduct, significant and willful disruption of activities, willful damage to property, verbal or physical assault on another, other illegal activity or offensive disrespect to another will be asked to leave the activity in custody of her or his parent or guardian or if warranted, in the custody of the police. An adult witnessing or receiving a report of the incident will complete an **Incident Complaint Report** (Appendix C).

Discipline.

BRF UMC views corrective action for appropriate behaviors of minors to be within the responsibilities and rights of any adult authorized to provide supervision for any activity sponsored through BRF UMC. To this end, the church endorses the use of verbal correction (without abusive content), removal of offending individuals from the activity, distraction from inappropriate behaviors via engagements in constructive participation. Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited.

If you must use physical restraint on a child or youth because that individual is an imminent danger to the health and/or safety of another person or him or herself, take the minimum steps necessary to carry out the restraint. If possible, remove the person to another environment. Be sure there is another adult with you and the individual being restrained. If removal from the room is not possible, take reasonable precautions to remove the rest of the group or class by whatever measures are safe, reasonable and appropriate. Report any such action to the staff person in charge of the program or directly to a pastor as soon as possible.

Overnight Activities:

For the safety of our youth, it is not permissible for one adult to share the same sleeping space (i.e. camp cabin, tent, retreat bedroom, motel room or designated sleeping area in a church building) with minors. Sleeping spaces without adults must be readily accessible for adult supervision as needed. No connecting spaces (i.e. common bathrooms) that are not readily available for supervision will be permitted between minors of disparate ages or opposite sex. Whenever possible, minors at overnight activities should be assigned sleeping space with minors approximately the same age. Under no circumstances will minors share sleeping space with an adult of the opposite sex. On Co-ed Overnight Activities it is required that a male and female leader be present.

Under no circumstances will minors of opposite sex be permitted shared sleeping space in an overnight activity. Church lock-ins will have designated and segregated sleeping spaces. Adults observing or receiving a reliable report of such an incident will notify the key adult leader and lead pastor and will complete an Incident/Complaint Report (Appendix C). Minors who violate this policy will be asked to account for their behavior and will be removed from the remainder of the event. Any subsequent violation will require a session with the family, pastor, and youth leader.

Sign in:

Participants for Nursery and YAS (Youth After School) are required to sign-in on sign-in sheets for all activities. Any required authorizations and emergency contact information for a parent or guardian (not already on file) must be supplied at this time as well.

Section 3: Child Abuse Prevention:**Screening of Adults:**

All adults who regularly interact with minors, including staff and volunteers, must have a completed background check through the Wisconsin Department of Law Enforcement if s/he has always lived within the state of Wisconsin. For those who have lived out-of-state, a national background check through a company determined by the Staff/Parish Committee of BRF UMC must be completed. Background checks will be made each year by a member of the clergy appointed to BRF UMC, who will maintain the confidentiality of the findings and provide secured, confidential storage for documentation. Volunteers must be active at BRF UMC for a minimum of six months prior to working with children and/or youth. Background screening may also include contact with previous church affiliations.

Volunteers will be required to fill out the **Volunteer Application** (Appendix D) and the Background Release Form (Appendix E) each year they wish to serve in programming which includes minors.

Training and Expectations of Adult Leaders:

All paid employees and volunteers shall be provided with a copy of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures and shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt and review of the material. The signed acknowledgement shall be obtained from new employees or volunteers prior to commencement of their new duties. A training session to review the policies and procedures will be conducted annually. Paid employees and volunteers in leadership roles will be required to participate in the annual training. All other volunteers will be strongly encouraged to participate in the annual training.

Adults will use language, behavior, and attitudes that are consistent with the Christian Faith and the vision of BRF UMC.

Non-compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policy and procedures by paid staff will result in action taken by the Staff-Parish Committee which may include dismissal from youth programming. Non-compliance with Safe Sanctuaries policy and procedures by volunteers will be handled by the pastor.

Counseling of Minors:

Individual consultation between adults and minors must be done within the two-deep framework. In situations that require personal conference, this should be conducted in the church office with at least one other approved leader present in the area (though not necessarily in the office). Individual contact on outings must be done in view of another adult. Individual contact outside the church building must occur only in public places and with the prior consent of the minor and parent or guardian.

Unknown Persons of Premises:

If during a regularly scheduled program for children or youth, an unknown person enters the program area (including but not limited to the entire building/property) certain responses should be followed:

When an adult identifies a person who is either unknown to him or her, or not clearly identified, the adult should:

1. Approach the individual with care and concern inquiring about their needs.
2. After the individual has states his/her concern/needs, escort him/her to the program leader or pastor to help the individual.
3. If the person states no specific need or reason for being in the building or on the premises, escort him/her to the program leader or pastor who will then escort the individual to a common space for further assistance as needed.
4. If threatening or violent language/actions are witnessed, ask the person to leave the building/premises immediately. If the person refuses to leave; contact the police immediately.

Any person who is not with the program should not be allowed to wander around the area when children/youth are present. S/he should be supervised at all times until s/he leaves the premises. Designated waiting areas for adults not participating in the program should be provided. If possible, this area should be visible to the program leader for monitoring purposes.

Reporting of Violations of Abuse, Harassment, and Misconduct:

It is the policy of BRF UMC that any violation, suspicion or allegation of abuse, harassment, and/or misconduct must be reported to the Pastor, who will document the issue and inform the SPRC immediately. Law of the State of Wisconsin and the United States of America require, in certain circumstances that reports also be made to appropriate authorities. All provisions of such laws will be complied with.

Any person believing he/she has been a victim may proceed as provided by the policies and procedures set forth by the Wisconsin Conference Yearbook and Journal. The provisions of BRF UMC Safe Sanctuaries policy will not be used to avoid or limit the right of any person who believes that she/he is a victim of abuse, harassment, and/or misconduct. BRF UMC's policy and procedures will not be used to thwart or limit those rights and remedies under civil or criminal law.

Persons believing they are victims and persons accused of abuse, harassment, and/or misconduct will be subject to the procedures as set forth in this document.

The initial report will be made to the Pastor, unless he or she is the accused, and to the chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee or designated appointee.

Such allegations of abuse, harassment, and/or misconduct will be documented in writing. The pastor, if report is made to the pastor, will notify the chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee immediately. The chairperson will form a subcommittee consisting of the chair or appointee, two members of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and the pastor (if not the accused). The subcommittee will provide for the pastoral care of the accuser (and his/her family), as well as for the alleged perpetrator, and make a determination within 30 days whether the allegation constitutes abuse, harassment, and/or misconduct. During the investigation the alleged perpetrator will not be allowed to work or volunteer in the activity that gave rise to the allegation.

If a determination is made that abuse, harassment and/or misconduct has occurred, then the chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee will consult and report as set forth by the policies of the Wisconsin Conference.

Sanctions upon a finding of abuse, harassment, and/or misconduct, pursuant to this policy, can include discharge of employment or termination of volunteer status.

APPENDIX A
BLACK RIVER FALLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
PERMISSION/MEDICAL RELEASE FORM FOR YOUTH PROGRAM – 12th GRADE AND YOUNGER

Participant: _____ Family Email: _____

Date: _____

This form is to ensure informed parental consent for activities that are sponsored by BRF United Methodist Church. This form is valid for one year after the date filled out for activities onsite or not requiring transportation. For any off-site, overnight activities or any activity requiring transportation an additional Event Release Form (Appendix B) will be required. It also provides consent for treatment of minors who become ill or injured during the course of activities. We will make every effort to contact the person(s) named below. **Please sign and date both sides!**

Emergency Contact Information

Name: _____

Relationship to participant: _____

Home phone: _____ Other phone: _____

Address: _____

Second Contact Name: _____

Relationship to participant: _____

Phone: _____ Other phone: _____

Insurance Information:

Name of Insurance Company: _____

Full name of insured cardholder: _____

Birth date of insured cardholder: _____

Policy ID number: _____

Customer Service phone number on back of card: _____

***Please have a copy of your health insurance card on file at BRF UMC.**

I, the undersigned parent or guardian, do hereby give my permission for my child, _____, to participate in the above named activity or activities. In order for my child to receive necessary medical treatment from medical staff and/or physicians in a medical clinic or hospital in case of illness or injury, I hereby authorize the activity leader to obtain and consent to medical treatment for such illness or injury during the above specified activity or activities. I hereby release, discharge and hold harmless on behalf of myself and my child, Black River Falls United Methodist Church and its designated leadership, agents and employees from any and all debts, claims, demands or costs, including attorney fees, all causes of action or suits of any kind which may arise or be occasioned as result of my child's participation in this activity, there is the possibility of illness or injury and that my child and I are assuming the risk for such illness or injury by her/his participation. I realize that I am ultimately responsible for paying any medical bills.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Health History:

Date of birth: _____

Allergies/special health concerns/dietary needs: _____

Medication(s) you can **NOT** take: _____

Medication(s) being taken: _____

Any medical history that needs to be noted: _____

Black River Falls UMC Program Participant Behavior Covenant:**(*To be signed by children, youth and adult participants.)**

As representatives of Christ and the Church, we, the participants in the Black River Falls United Methodist Church Youth Program, take seriously our responsibility to care for one another. This covenant represents our affirmation of our concern for the well-being of the total community. We covenant with each other to insure the safety of all, to make our time together meaningful, and to care for the facility which we share. In addition to our general concern for our community, we agree specifically to:

- Leave vehicles parked and unoccupied.
- Remain on the program site unless having been given permission to leave.
- Attend all activities including meals
- On overnight activities, observe scheduled curfew by being in rooms, quiet and not disturbing others. Never enter the room of someone of the other gender.
- Not use or possess tobacco products, illegal drugs, alcohol or drugs of any kind.
- Not bring animals, weapons, illegal substances, explosives, fireworks, alcohol, or dangerous materials.
- Respect the person, property and equipment of others.
- Respect people regardless of race, religion, age, ethnicity, religion, gender, physical differences, and orientation.
- We will use language, behavior, and attitudes which are consistent with the Christian faith.

I agree to follow all of the above rules because I want to represent Jesus in a positive manner at all times.

Participant Signature_____
Parent/Guardian Signature_____
Date

APPENDIX B
BLACK RIVER FALLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
EVENT RELEASE FORM

Participant Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Event Name: _____

Event Date and Time: _____

- I have a current Permission/Medical Release form on file at the church. The contact and medical information on that form is still accurate.
- I (parent/guardian) give permission for my son/daughter to participate in the event listed above. I understand that I will be contacted in case of medical and/or behavioral problems and, in extreme circumstances, may be asked to pick up my child.
- If my child/ren becomes ill or injured during the course of the above named event, I (parent/guardian) give permission for the adult leaders providing supervision of this event to seek medical treatment as deemed appropriate.

Permission to Transport Youth with One Adult in the vehicle:

I, the undersigned parent or guardian, do hereby give permission for my child,
_____, to be transported to and/or from this event by
_____.

Special Circumstances (ex: I will pick up my son/daughter early, I give permission for another parent to pick up my son/daughter, I have an alternate phone number for the evening, etc.):

Signed: _____
(signature of parent/guardian)

Date: _____

APPENDIX C
INCIDENT/COMPLAINT REPORT FORM
BLACK RIVER FALLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BLACK RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN
(Please Print All Information Clearly)

Date of Incident: _____ Time of incident: _____

Name(s) of minor(s) involved: _____

Age(s): _____

Name and Address of Parent or Guardian: _____

Description of incident: (include location, names of all involved or who witnessed the incident, any evidence of injuries or property damage, how resolved)

Witnesses:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Person completing report (print): _____ Phone: _____

Signed: _____ Phone: _____

The Incident/Complaint Form should be completed anytime an adult observes or receives a report of inappropriate conduct including:

- Possession or use of illegal substances, the use of controlled substances, or underage use of alcohol on the grounds of BRF UMC or at a BRF UMC sponsored or sanctioned activity.
- Significant and willful disruption of activities, willful damage to property, verbal, sexual or physical assault, or offensive disrespect to another.

- Non-segregated sleeping space for minors of opposite sex during an overnight activity.

If unsure if this form should be completed, check with the pastor(s).

When complete, turn Incident/Complaint Form in to the pastor(s). If grievance is against the pastor(s), turn in to the chairperson of Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent.

PRIMARY SCREENING FORM FOR INDIVIDUALS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND/OR YOUTH WORK

(Street) (City) (State) (Zipcode)

APPENDIX E
BLACK RIVER FALLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
100 N 4TH STREET
BLACK RIVER FALLS, WI 54615

REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AND AUTHORIZATION

I hereby allow Black River Falls United Methodist Church to receive any information pertaining to any criminal activity from the Sheriff of Jackson County's files, or any other criminal files which may be maintained on me whether local, state, or national. I hereby release anyone from any and all liability from such disclosure.

(PLEASE PRINT)

(Person Allowing Investigation)

(Signature)

(Maiden Name)

(All Aliases)

(Date of Birth)

(Place of Birth)

(Social Security Number)

(Date)

RECORDS SENT TO:

Black River Falls United Methodist Church
Staff-Parish Relations Committee
100 N 4th Street
Black River Falls, WI 54615

(Signature of Requesting Person)