

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
303 NORTH MAIN STREET  
GRAHAM, NC 27253

# Safe Sanctuary

## Policies & Procedures

### Purpose

First United Methodist Church adopts the following policy and procedures to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth and to protect the integrity of the supervising adults.

### Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith, we pledge to conduct God's ministry in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children and youth as well as the supervising adults. We covenant to:



1. Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of paid and volunteer workers.
2. Implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events.
3. Train our workers with children and youth regarding policies and methods
4. Implement a clearly defined procedure for reporting suspected incidents of abuse, conforming to the requirements of state law.

## **Workers with Children & Youth**

1. **Minimum Age:** The primary or lead worker in all areas of children's ministries will be at least 21 years of age. All primary and lead workers for youth (age 10 to 18) must be at least 25 years of age.
2. **Six Month Rule:** Volunteers must have been an active participant at FUMC for six months before they are eligible to serve in a supervisory role of children and youth ministries (attendance is recorded by the senior minister). Persons not meeting this requirement may serve as assistants with another adult.
3. **Volunteer Application:** All volunteers 18 years of age and older who have regular and direct contact with children and youth shall be required to fill out a volunteer application which will include an authorization for requesting a criminal records check by an approved investigative agency. This information will be kept confidential and maintained by the Director of Children and Discipleship Ministries. Persons who are deemed a threat to children and youth based on a criminal background check, application response, or reference feedback should not volunteer services, be employed, or be accepted as a volunteer or paid worker in any church sponsored program for children/youth.
4. **Covenant of Participation:** All children and youth workers are requested to sign a written Covenant of Participation which will signify that all provisions of the safe sanctuary policy are understood.
5. **Safe Sanctuary Training:** All staff and volunteers who work with children/youth shall receive training on the Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures. This training shall include the instructional video at this link: [https://www.churchmutual.com/dsp/dsp\\_srVideo.cfm?id=4177](https://www.churchmutual.com/dsp/dsp_srVideo.cfm?id=4177).  
**Training is not complete until staff and volunteers have certified in writing that they fully understand the Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures and have watched the instructional video.** Any volunteer who declines or fails to complete this training will not be allowed to work with our children and/or youth until the training is completed. Training shall be

repeated yearly.

6. **First Aid/CPR**: All paid program staff of FUMC will be strongly encouraged to obtain and maintain First Aid/CPR certification. Certification shall be from the American Red Cross or similar organization. Volunteers who routinely work with children/youth are strongly encouraged to obtain and maintain First Aid/CPR certification. FUMC shall ensure that this training is made available.

### **Program Procedures**

1. **Supervision**: No child under the age of 18 should be on church property at any time without adult supervision. This applies whether the child is on the property for scheduled supervised activities or for any other reason.
  
2. **Two-Adult Rule**:
  - a. **In Person**: Two adults shall be present at all times during any event involving children or youth. It is preferred, but not required, that the adults be unrelated. When only one adult is present, the door must be open or the room must have a window that allows full view of the entire room.
  
  - b. **Social Media**: When emailing, texting, tweeting, or Facebook messaging a minor, adults and youth shall adhere to the “two adult present” Safe Sanctuaries standard by copying another adult (ideally a parent or guardian) on the message, or post it in a public venue or social media platform (ie. Facebook wall as opposed to a private message). When this proves difficult, prior approval from the minor’s parent or guardian should be given and communication should be limited to church ministry/informational purposes only and only between the hours of 9AM-9PM. Platforms promising discrete conversations and secrecy (i.e. SnapChat and others) are to be avoided.

3. **Designated Roamers**: Random visits to classrooms and nurseries will be made by designated roamers such as the ushers, the Sunday School Superintendent, Nursery Coordinator, and Director of Children and Discipleship Ministries.
4. **Permission Forms & Medical Releases**: A signed parental permission slip is required for all events held off site. Adult leaders attending the off site event are responsible for seeing that all children less than 18 years of age have the appropriate completed forms. Necessary health and insurance information are to be filed in the church office prior to a group attending an off-site event, along with a list of all children and adults attending. The copies of all forms must be taken with the group to the event.
5. **Lodging**: On overnight trips, it is preferred that children/youth have separate bedrooms from adults. All males must share a room, and all females must share another room. In the event that youth and adults have to share the same room, there must be a minimum of 3 persons present. No children/youth shall ever share a bed with an unrelated adult without parent permission. In a situation where two unrelated children/youth have to share a bed, sleeping bags must be used so that they are not under the same cover.
6. **Bathroom Procedures**: When an adult is helping a child use the bathroom, the bathroom doors shall be propped open.

### **Abuse Incident Reporting Procedures**

#### **The volunteer or worker will:**

1. Insure the privacy and safety of the alleged victim.
2. Treat the accused individual with dignity and honor.
3. Immediately remove the accuse individual from further involvement with children and youth.
4. Notify the Pastor as soon as possible. If the Pastor is not available notification should be made to the Staff-Parish Committee Chair, Administrative council Chair, and the Lay Leader, unless they are directly involved.

5. Complete a report form for each abusive incident. These forms can be found on the table outside of the Director of Children and Discipleship Ministries' office.
6. Cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by the law enforcement personnel.

**Upon notification, the Pastor will:**

1. Notify the parents of the alleged victim
2. Notify each of the following:
  - a. The proper law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the location of the alleged incident; i.e., city, county, etc.
  - b. The North Carolina Department of Social Services in the county where the alleged incident occurred (in Alamance County use 336 229-2908 8-5 M-F), or the Prevent Child Abuse of NC hotline at 1 800 354-KIDS (5437) or 919 733-2580. (These state hotlines lines can be used 24/7.
  - c. Our District Superintendent.
  - d. Our church's insurance company (Church Mutual).
  - e. Our church's attorney (to be determined).
3. Serve as the news media liaison for the local church.
4. Keep a written record of each step taken including times and dates.
5. Prepare a brief, carefully worded statement to the congregation, telling the truth, but withholding the names of the alleged victim and the accused.
6. Cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement personnel.

**When the Pastor is Accused:**

1. Insure the privacy and safety of the alleged victim.
2. Treat the accused individual with dignity and honor.
3. Immediately remove the accused individual from further involvement with children and youth.
4. Notify each of the following:
  - a. The Staff-Parish Committee Chairperson who shall immediately contact the District Superintendent.
  - b. The proper law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the

- location of the alleged incident (see reporting procedures above).
5. The District Superintendent will represent the Local church in response to the allegation.

### **Behavioral Guidelines for Children, Youth and Adult Leaders**

A more comprehensive document concerning behavioral guidelines is available in the Church office.

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- Adopted 8/11/03 by the Administrative Council
  - Revised July 18, 2005
  - Revised August 1, 2006 by FUMC Child Safety Committee
  - Revised April 19, 2007 by FUMC Child Safety Committee and approved by Administrative Council
  - Revised August 20, 2015 by the Administrative Council
  - Revised July 10, 2017 by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee and approved by the Administrative Council on July 21, 2017.