

participating in church-operated activities. A team approach may be employed for the "buddy system". Specific guidelines will be developed and customized for each individual by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. These guidelines will include, but not be limited to attendance, movement, volunteering, and personal interaction.

SAFE Decisions

Communication and Advance Notice

Parents/Guardians should always be kept abreast of the programs their children or youth are involved in, and be given advance notice and information regarding any activity which deviates from the traditional classroom instruction offered at the church during Sunday school, UMYF, Vacation Bible School, or other regular activities at the church. Permission forms with medical information should accompany children/youth for any activity involving travel or extreme sports activity (skiing, etc.). A "Safe Sanctuary" training for the parents of children and youth, shall be provided annually.

Travel

Any teaching or educational experience that requires travel from the church or overnight travel must have the approval of the Pastor and Discipleship Chairperson and written permission of the parent or guardian. Appropriate medical/insurance forms should be completed and copy on file.

Sign In / Out

Any programs/activities involving children up through 5th grade shall have a sign in/sign out sheet where parent(s)/guardian(s) sign when they drop off/pick up their children. This serves as a written agreement of the transfer of responsibility from the church to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in regards to their child(ren) and vice versa. Should an activity involve picking up children at school then the sign in process can be omitted in light of a signed permission slip for that program. Sign in/sign out sheets should include the child(ren)'s name, parent/guardian signature, time in, and time out.

Any programs/activities involving youth between the grades of 6th and 12th must have a sign in/sign out sheet. In addition to showing the church's period of responsibility, it also serves as a record of who was present, and at what time, should any questions or concerns be brought up at a later date. Sign in/sign out sheets should include the youth's name, his/her signature, time in and time out.

Supervision Times

Every church-wide event should advertise whether or not childcare will be provided. Each event will have a scheduled beginning and ending time. During this time, Safe Sanctuary approved adults are responsible for the care of children and youth. However, outside of these times, the child's parent or guardian is primarily responsible for the well-being of his or her child.

SAFE Place

Transportation

No youth may transport other youth to any off-grounds church-sponsored event. The local church policy specifies the insurance guidelines regarding adults using their personal vehicles. The Trustees will have specific guidelines for drivers of the church van, in agreement with their insurance policy, and will do DMV checks on anyone permitted to drive the church van/bus. (Please be aware of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration guidelines for operating 15 passenger vans more safely.)

Appropriate Equipment

Equipment shall be examined for safety and appropriateness by church trustees on an annual basis. Leaders shall examine for safety the area used for events prior to beginning an event. This includes, but is not limited to, the nursery, classrooms, youth room and play grounds.

Visibility and Open Door Counseling

Every room that is used for activities and teaching of children and youth should have a window in the door, or a half door, that gives visibility to all areas of that room. The window must be left uncovered. If there is no window, the door must be left open at all times.

Pastoral counseling is expected to be confidential in nature, but it is for the protection of both parties that such sessions take place where other people are nearby even though not within hearing distance. The pastor's study should have a small glass window in it.

Computers

Church computers are to be used by authorized and approved staff and members. Training for appropriate computer use shall be offered.

"Safe Zones"

There are certain places in the church which are designated as "safe zones" by signage. These are places where only children, Safe Sanctuary approved volunteers, and guardians are allowed

Response

Any suspected or reported case of neglect or abuse should be reported immediately to the pastor who then reports allegation immediately to Burke County Dept. of Social Services and Discipleship Chairperson. In the event that the pastor is implicated, the district superintendent must be notified first along with Burke County Dept. of Social Services and the Discipleship Chairperson.

The pastor and/or the Discipleship Chairperson must immediately have an incident report filled out with all available details. In no event shall any of the above fail to report suspected abuse or neglect to the proper law enforcement or social service agency as required by NC law.

The Senior Pastor of First UMC, the Staff-Parish Relations Chair, and the Church Council Chair are the only individuals authorized to make statements to representatives of the media.

All requests for statements should be directed to the Senior Pastor.

First United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuary Policy And Procedures

Adopted November 5, 2005
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Safe Sanctuary Policy

Introduction

In keeping with the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in April, 1996 and the biblical teachings and the traditions and beliefs of the United Methodist Church, we the congregation of **First United Methodist Church of Valdese** adopt the following policy and procedures so as to provide a safe sanctuary for children and youth

Purpose

First United Methodist Church of Valdese hereafter known as “the church” adopts the following policy 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 the church. While the primary

reason for this policy is to prevent abuse and neglect of children and youth, it has been adopted to protect all who come onto church grounds or participate in church-operated activities.



Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith, the church pledges to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children, youth and adults as well as all children, youth and adult workers. We as a congregation pledge our utmost to protect all who enter our doors by adopting the following procedures. The procedures are designed to prevent any type of child, youth or adult abuse, neglect or exploitation as defined by the General Statutes of North Carolina. These may be found in Chapters 7, 7A, 7B and 14 of the NC Criminal Law and procedure. Nothing in this policy or procedure is designed to hinder or prevent the investigation of suspected, reported or confirmed violations of any NC criminal law.

SAFE Personnel

Rule of Two

Regardless of the number of children or youth involved in any church related ministry or mission there will always be two adults present. This may include the presence of an additional adult who moves in and out of rooms. At least one adult must be safe sanctuary trained.

Age Limit

Adult leaders (supervisors) shall be at least 18 years of age. This does not prohibit adults who are less than five years older than the youth or children in an activity from participating as “helpers” for the activity. This rule does require that the “rule of two” be met. All youth and children’s activities are supervised by adults who are present for all aspects of the activity.

Recruiting, Screening, Implementing

All adult leaders supervising children/youth shall have a complete criminal background check from local and when appropriate state and national law enforcement agencies. This background check shall include criminal, DMV, and sexual offender checks. The Pastor / Staff Relations committee shall have stipulations in place for background checks. The Pastor and the Pastor Parish Relations Chair shall review all background checks together. Persons who have a break in service of one or more years shall submit to screening procedures. The church reserves the option to repeat background checks of persons who have had 3 or more years of service.

Training

All paid or volunteer leaders working with children/youth must be trained in the safe sanctuary policy and procedures prior to leading. Thereafter, all leaders should be re-trained yearly.

This training shall include, but not be limited to: viewing the Safe Sanctuary Video, Signing a Safe Sanctuary Covenant, Receiving CPR and First aid certification, and attending district and conference Safe Sanctuary training events. The training will be coordinated by the SPR Committee.

First Aid

It is preferred that at least one adult present at every church activity be certified in basic first aid and CPR.

Leaders and Helpers

Persons shall demonstrate an active relationship with The church for at least 3 months before being allowed to be in a volunteer role in children’s and youth ministry. In the case of new staff hires, references deemed adequate by the hiring supervisor will replace the 3 month waiting period. Helpers may assist in children and youth ministries as long as the rule of two is met and the individual has consulted with the Pastor and Director of Student ministries. Non-church groups (i.e. such as Scouts, et al.) and facility users/renters/lessees shall maintain their own personnel files and their own policy regarding care for children and youth. The church reserves the right to obtain an explanation of the non-church groups’ record-keeping process and upon written request of the Senior Pastor, to be given copies of

documents applicable to programs conducted at the church.

Safe Sanctuary Approval

Should a Safe Sanctuary approved adult act inappropriately toward children or youth, or be found in violation of Safe Sanctuary policies, the Staff Parish Relations committee has the right to investigate and review the incident in question and take action as the committee sees fit. The action could include the revocation of Safe Sanctuary approval from the person.

SAFE Relationships

Restroom

Any child/youth needing assistance in the restroom shall be accompanied by a parent or guardian. When this is not possible at least two children should be taken at the same time. The door to the restroom should be kept open or ajar with as much privacy as possible being provided for the child/youth.

Lodging

No adult can share a bed with a youth/child. No one adult should possess the only key to a hotel/motel room. This is in order to prevent an adult from having the capability of locking out the rest of the group from that room. When at all possible reserve adjacent rooms, and if available adjoining rooms.

Each room is to be strictly boys or girls. Girls are NEVER to be in a boy’s room and vice versa. At the beginning of a retreat the leader will designate one room (which is occupied by at least one adult) to be the “community room”. This is the only room in which boys and girls can socialize together at permitted times.

Clothing

Clothing for all shall be modest and appropriate for a Christian event. Bathing suits for females shall be modest one-piece or tankini styles.

Touch

We as a Christian community believe that youth and children, as relational beings, need touch. However, there are safe and appropriate guidelines for touch between adults and children. A good rule of thumb in regards to touch is to refrain from contact anywhere where a bathing suit would be (for females this would include from below the shoulders to the knees. With males from the waist down to the knees). Good examples of safe touch are side hugs, hand shakes, and pats on the back (between the shoulder blades). Touch shall always be of a positive manner. Touch shall NEVER be used to threaten or control a youth or child’s actions unless those actions are threatening to himself and/or others.

Inclusiveness

For individuals who participate in any church-operated activities and are registered with the North Carolina Sex Offender and Public Protection Registry, there will a “buddy system”. A “buddy” will be a trained, approved Safe Sanctuary volunteer who will be assigned by the pastor to accompany a registered sex offender while on church property and/or