

First Methodist Church

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

446 E. Camden Ave.
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PART ONE: SCREENING & SELECTION

- Background checks, application forms, participant covenant forms, reference checks.

PART TWO: SUPERVISION & PROCEDURES

- Day-to-day operating procedures, including Two-Adult Rule, 5-Years-Older Rule, and open classroom doors or windows on doors.

PART THREE: NON-CHURCH GROUPS & PROGRAMS

- Defining church & non-church groups & programs.

PART FOUR: TRAINING & EDUCATION

- Training and education for staff & volunteers, for adult members of the congregation, and for the children.

PART FIVE: REPORTING

- Procedures for reporting allegations of abuse.

PART SIX: RESPONDING

- Procedures for responding to allegations of abuse.

Note - A vulnerable adult is any adult with diminished physical, mental or emotional capacity.

PART ONE: SCREENING AND SELECTION

Employees of FMC:

- Complete Background check once every three years, employee application & interview process.
- Complete Safe Sanctuaries training.
- Complete employee Covenant Form.

Volunteers- those working with children under 18 or vulnerable adults, will be required to: •

Complete Background check every three years, volunteer application & interview process.

- Complete Safe Sanctuaries training.
- Complete volunteer Covenant Form.
- Must be regular attendees of the congregation for 6 months before being allowed to supervise children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- A motor vehicle report will be done for anyone transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

The Pastor, SPRC Chair and ministry supervisor will review all screening documents.

PART TWO: SUPERVISION & PROCEDURE – Our policy explicitly forbids situations where one adult is alone with one child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

- Two-Adult Rule – Two SS (Safe Sanctuaries) people, 18 years or older, who are not married to each other, must be on-site at all times during any **program** for children, youth & vulnerable adults.
- First Aid/CPR Training - A trained person must be available during all activities with children, youth & vulnerable adults.
- Appropriate supervision and equipment for each setting and activity is expected as some settings or activities will require more supervision or expertise than others.
- Parents will be notified directly about ministry events and activities, so they are aware of all events.
- Overnight retreats, missions, etc. – Two SS trained females & two SS trained male adults, and at least one person who is First aid/CPR trained, at a minimum, will be present for all overnights.
- Church computer use and internet activities.
 - All church computers shall be password protected.
 - Computers shall be monitored when in use by children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
 - Computers shall be used only for ministry related purposes.
 - Appropriate blocks will be installed on computers for specific internet sites.
- **Transportation – for children, youth & vulnerable adults**
 - Driver must be 21 years of age, have proof of insurance & valid state driver's license.
 - At no time may a driver be alone with an unrelated child unless the child's parent has provided written permission for transportation.

- A motor vehicle report will be done for anyone transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- **Five-Years-Older Rule** - All staff & volunteers supervising an event involving children, youth & vulnerable adults must be at least five years older than the children being supervised.
- **Attendance Log** - All children, youth & vulnerable adults participating in church activities must be signed in and out by a parent or guardian.
- **Diaper Changing Procedure**- Staff & volunteers may change diapers only with another adult present. Diaper changes will be recorded in a log detailing the time, child's name and the caregiver who changed the diaper. At the end of the event, the parent or guardian is given that information.
- **Bathroom Procedure** -
 - If a child needs to use the bathroom, they will be escorted by two adults who will remain outside the door while the child uses the bathroom. If the child requests assistance, the adult may enter and assist but must leave the bathroom door ajar, remaining in sight of the other adult.
 - If the child is leaving the group to use the bathroom and an additional adult is needed, a roaming adult may accompany the child, youth, or vulnerable adult and the supervising adult to the bathroom.
- **Open Door Counseling** -
 - During any counseling session with children, the door of the room used shall remain open for the entire session. The session shall occur when another adult is within eyesight.
- **Parental Consent Forms** - Parental consent forms will be obtained for all activities both on and off church property.
- **Windows on classroom and office doors** - All classroom and office doors shall have windows allowing visibility.

PART THREE: NON-CHURCH GROUPS & PROGRAMS

- Church operated groups & programs are groups & programs in which the church has control over starting and stopping the program, hiring and/or firing the employees, and management of day-to-day operations. The decisions to operate a program should be included in the meeting minutes of Church Counsel or The Board of Trustees.
- Non-church groups, which are not under the control of the church, must use a screening process that includes screening forms, background checks, interviews, and reference checks.
- Non-church groups must annually provide their certificate of insurance with adequate liability insurance and Worker's Compensation with the church and annual conference listed as additional insured.
- Non-church groups must fill out & submit a building usage agreement that has been signed & approved by the Board of Trustees.

PART FOUR: TRAINING & EDUCATION

- FMC staff and volunteers will be trained yearly in the current Safe Sanctuaries Policy dictated by our Conference.
- All members of the congregation will be provided with a copy of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy.
- The Safe Sanctuaries Policy will be posted on the FMC website.
- One Sunday a year will be dedicated to educating our children, using age- appropriate materials, on the topic of physical safety and abuse.

PART FIVE: REPORTING

State law requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected must report it immediately to the Department of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP). Failure to do so may result in criminal prosecution. If suspected abuse is observed by or reported to a staff member or volunteer, the following course of action must be followed.

- IMMEDIATELY call 911 in cases when a child, youth, or vulnerable adult's life is in danger.
- Retain a copy of the incident report form.
- Contact DCPP Hotline(1-877-652-2873).
- Report the incident immediately to the necessary staff, Pastor and/or District Superintendent.

PART SIX: RESPONDING

- Create a written record of all steps taken in response to an allegation of abuse.
- An immediate response to an alleged incident of child abuse is crucial. All allegations will be taken seriously. If an investigation is opened, staff & volunteers will fully cooperate with the investigating agencies.
- Anyone who is the subject of an allegation will be removed from any activities with children, youth or vulnerable adults until the investigation has been completed.
- If necessary, the Pastor is the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media.
- The Pastor will ensure counseling for parties involved.

This Safe Sanctuaries Policy will be reviewed & amended annually by Staff, Pastor, and the Board of Trustees. If any changes are made, the Safe Sanctuaries Policy will be resubmitted to the GNJ Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator for recertification. All reports are kept in a locked, secure location.