

**SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY
FOR
PROTECTED PERSONS
OF THE
FIRST UNITED METHODIST
MILLVILLE, NJ**

Updated December 2013

Safe Sanctuary Policy of FUMC Millville, NJ

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Introduction

Jesus said in Matthew 18:5-6, "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea". In the United Methodist Church's Book of Discipline, the Social Principles state that "children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse" (para.162C).

To help protect children, youth and vulnerable adults, First United Methodist Church approved the following Safe Sanctuary Policy to begin on Jan 1, 2012. This policy allows us to reaffirm the statement we make as a congregation at each Baptism to live according to "the example of Christ" so that children and youth in our care will be "surrounded by steadfast love, established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." (Baptismal Covenant III, United Methodist Hymnal, p.48).

It is important that all FUMC workers and helpers understand and implement these guidelines to help Protected Persons involved in our programs and activities. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines for Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgment to be signed by those people working with Protected Persons.

Purpose

These procedures are designed to help prevent the opportunity for abuse or the appearance of abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults by:

1. Providing a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assisting FUMC in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee and/or exert control over the activities of Protected Persons.
3. Satisfying the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff, volunteers and helpers.
4. Providing a system to respond to alleged victims of abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reducing the possibility of false accusations of abuse made against paid staff, volunteers and helpers.

Definitions

The following terms used herein are defined as follows:

1. Paid Staff: Any pastor, minister, preacher, cleric or employee who is paid.
2. Volunteer: Any unpaid person entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons for programs and activities of FUMC.
3. Helper: Someone not entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons who occasionally works with paid staff or a volunteer at regularly scheduled programs or activities (Sunday school, nursery, VBS, etc.) of FUMC. A parent or guardian's written approval is required if their minor is used as a helper.
4. Floater is a screened adult staff member or volunteer who randomly checks locations where activities for Protected Persons are taking place if the ratio of worker to Protected Person is not possible for an activity.
5. Children/Youth: Persons up to and including age 11 will be considered children; persons ages 12 to 18 years old or the summer following high school graduation will be considered youth.
6. Minor: Any preschooler, child, or youth under the age of eighteen (18) or mentally challenged individual whose mental capability is that of a minor.
7. Adult: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday will be considered an adult regardless of the grade level if the person is a student.

8. Emotional Abuse: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.
9. Physical Abuse: Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical or mental health which includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual's caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to the physical health of a Protected Person.
10. Sexual Abuse: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationship, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of a minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
11. Protected Persons shall mean all children, all youth and all vulnerable adults participating in programs or activities of FUMC.
12. Workers shall mean all ministers, staff, employees, program directors, and volunteers entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons who participate in programs or activities of FUMC.
13. Vulnerable Adult shall mean an adult who requires special care and supervision because of a mental or physical condition or disability.

Paid Staff Application Process

The following screening procedures will be used by the Pastor, SPR committee or their designee for the hiring of paid staff who are entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons or who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over Protected Persons.

1. Employment Application: Any paid staff who will work with Protected Persons must complete the Employment Application and the release statement must be signed by the individual completing the application to qualify for service.

Our Employment Application will include the following information:

1. Current and previous address, phone number and social security number.
2. Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles and reasons for leaving.

3. Driver's License Info and Date of Birth
 4. Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned.
 5. Personal references, with contact information, from previous employers and organizations that serve Protected Persons.
 6. Pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law)
 7. Criminal history information.
 8. Personal testimony.
2. The Pastor, SPR committee or their designee will review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or an unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
 3. Conduct interviews with qualified applicants. If detrimental information is uncovered, but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired as an employee, the Pastor or SPR Committee will document the reasons, on a case by case basis, for overriding any detrimental information.
 4. Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire if they would hire them again and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes.

Volunteer Application Process

The following screening procedures will be used by the person in charge of a ministry and SPR committee or their designee for volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons or who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over Protected Persons.

1. Volunteer Application: Any volunteers who will work with Protected Persons must complete the Volunteer Application and the release statement must be signed by the individual completing the application to qualify for service.

Our Volunteer Application will include the following information:

1. Current address, phone number and social security number.
 2. Current employment information.
 3. Driver's License Info and Date of Birth
 4. Volunteer experience.
 5. Criminal history information.
 6. Personal testimony
2. The person in charge of a ministry and SPR committee will review all statements made in the application.
 3. Six-Month Rule: All volunteers should be a church member or active congregational participant for at least six months and have reviewed and signed the Safe Sanctuary Policy.

Additional Requirements for Paid Staff and Volunteers

The following screening procedures will be used by the Pastor, person in charge of a ministry and SPR committee or their designee for paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons or who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over Protected Persons:

1. Applicants will certify in writing that statements provided in the application are true and complete and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes FUMC to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.
2. Criminal Background Check: FUMC will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons. All criminal background checks will be updated every five years. The Greater NJ Annual Conference approved service (Trak-1) should be used for background checks as described in Appendix A and on the GNJAC website (www.gnjumc.org). This service returns the following:
 - Social Security Check: Helps to verify that the name and social security number match.
 - Broad Screen Criminal and Sex Offender Search : Accesses criminal conviction, sexual offender registry, US Secret Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, etc. across the United States. (Includes available counties in all 50 states plus Washington, D.C.
 - Motor Vehicle Report: provides driving history currently on file with the DMV. (Required only for those transporting Protected Persons.)

Helper Application Process

An authorized Helper in a program or activity for Protected Persons must:

1. Be recommended by screened staff or volunteer members.
2. Be approved by the person in charge of the ministry for which the helper is assisting.
3. Only help in programs or activities where screened staff or volunteer members are present for the care and supervision of Protected Persons.
4. If a minor, have written approval from their parent or guardian to be a helper.
5. Sign the Safe Sanctuary Acknowledgment Form.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview and criminal background check for any paid staff, volunteer or helper will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be archived in a secure location and access to it will be restricted to the Senior Pastor and Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) or their designee.

Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, First United Methodist Church:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained workers present at events involving Protected Persons. (Suggested ratio is one adult for every seven children or one adult for every ten youth participating in an activity or event.)
2. Will use a “floater” to monitor facilities during programs or activities involving Protected Persons where suggested ratio is not possible.
3. Will follow the “Five Year Rule”, workers must be an adult or if not an adult, be at least five years older than the youth that they are supervising.
4. Will utilize sign-in and sign out sheets for children under the age of seven, and only release them to a parent or guardian.
5. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical release form and emergency contacts before taking Protected Persons on trips and should provide information regarding the trip to a parent or guardian.
6. Should use two paid staff or volunteers when transporting Protected Persons in vehicles.
7. Will inform workers to follow the “Two Adult Rule” in all ministries involving Protected Persons whenever possible, i.e., at least two adults (preferably unrelated adults) should be present at all times during activities involving Protected Persons. The number of workers will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity and age of Protected Persons involved.
8. Will require that young children, under the age of seven, be accompanied to the restroom by workers or their authorized helpers who will wait outside the facility to escort the child(ren) back to the activity. The escort should be the same gender as the minor.
9. Will encourage Protected Persons to use a “buddy system” whenever they go on trips off the FUMC’s property.
10. Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.
11. Will advise Protected Persons that certain conditions and situations, by law, must be reported to the proper authorities.
12. Will keep doors open or provide windows in all classroom and office doors.

Worker Behavioral Guidelines

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. While leading or participating in a function for Protected Persons, workers may not be consuming or under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.
2. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, firearms or anything that is prohibited by law to Protected Persons.
3. To the extent possible, FUMC events that are coeducational will have both male and female chaperones.
4. At least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers should be in a room when Protected Persons are present unless approved by parent or guardian of Protected Persons. When arriving or during an event or activity doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily. Speaking to Protected Persons one-on-one should be done in public settings where workers are in sight of other people.
5. Avoid all inappropriate touching with Protected Persons. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the worker. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, the worker should inform the Protected Person that such touching is inappropriate.
6. Never engage in physical discipline of Protected Persons. Workers shall not abuse Protected Persons in any way, including, but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
7. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a Protected Person and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the Protected Person to another individual with supervisory authority.
8. If one-on-one pastoral care, mentoring or counseling of a Protected Person is necessary, it should be documented and have the approval of the Senior Pastor, Youth Director or the parent or guardian of the Protected Person involved.
9. Anyone who observes abuse of a Protected Person will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of FUMC for handling.
10. Mandatory training of Workers shall be provided on a regular basis for Safe Sanctuary, fire and building safety, the identification of abuse and other operational guidelines.

Worker Disqualifications

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over Protected Persons who has been convicted of the offenses in the two areas outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication:

1. Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful.
2. DUI's, or DWI's within the last five years will disqualify a person as a driver.

In addition, the following may preclude a member from working in a Protected Person's ministry area:

- Criminal offenses.
- Violent offenses, not listed in item one above.
- More than 4 points on a Motor Vehicle record if serving as a driver.

The ability to serve as a volunteer, worker or paid staff for anyone with a history of the three areas shown above will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. In all such cases, the ultimate goal will be the best interests, safety and well-being of the Protected Persons.

Outside Organizations

When someone uses the church facilities for a special event (such as weddings or baby showers) they will be made aware of what areas are free to use and what areas are off-limits. They will also be made aware that children and youth must be adequately supervised at all times.

When an outside group uses the church facilities on a regular basis (such as the Boy Scouts, AA, Weight Watchers, etc.), they must have a responsible member who acknowledges that their organization is familiar with and will abide by the FUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy or will provide a copy of their Safe Sanctuary Policy to the FUMC Board of Trustees for review and approval.

Since more than one outside organization could be using the church facilities at the same time, a responsible member from each group will be notified which other groups are meeting at that time. Organizational leaders will be notified via email or by phone when calendar schedules are approved each year and a copy of the monthly calendar will be posted in the hallway.

All Outside Organizations are responsible for their own insurance with adequate limits regarding liability issues in the context of child abuse claims, allegations, and lawsuits. A copy of the insurance policy of the Outside Group will be provided to the FUMC Board of Trustees.

Off Grounds Activities

A written and signed parental consent form shall be obtained for each minor who participates in any off-campus activity or program as a part of a FUMC ministry. The consent form shall cover specific events. A parent or legal guardian must sign the consent form for each event. The consent form shall identify the organization/class or group involved, the place of the activity, a description of the activity, the method of transportation and the name of the Worker supervising the event, program or activity. Protected Persons will not be taken on overnight trips without completion of medical information and consent of parent or legal guardian.

Sleeping Arrangements On Overnight Trips

Youth groups may have an occasion to go on a trip that requires sleeping in public accommodations, such as hotels or dormitories on college campuses. The following are the minimum common standards that should be adhered to, while recognizing that adult chaperones may alter these guidelines or add additional policies as the particular arrangements warrant.

1. Adults should only sleep in the same room as youth who are unrelated to them if two or more youth are present.
2. Parents may choose to have their youth sleep in a room with an adult chaperone that is not related to them by signing a waiver for such a request.
3. In a hotel setting it is recommended that an adult room is between two youth rooms.

Interpersonal Boundaries in Relationships

Trips provide a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. They also can nurture positive relationships among the youth and adult leaders. Adults will provide good leadership by modeling appropriate behaviors, to include:

1. No profane language.
2. No practical jokes that would be harmful.
3. No permission for the boys to enter the room where the girls are sleeping or for the girls to enter the room where the boys are sleeping.
4. No permission for two youth or one youth and one adult to separate themselves from the group.
5. No inappropriate touching creating the perception that the personal space and privacy of the individual is being violated.

It is recognized that circumstances, such as a mission trips where sleeping arrangements are not chosen by our church, may dictate a departure from the recommended policies. Adults involved in planning trips involving overnight accommodations should ensure that the policies are followed in spirit, if not to the letter.

Response to Allegations of Abuse

First United Methodist Church will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse. When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. An appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. If abuse is of a child is observed, immediately remove the child or from the situation and contact DYFS Hotline (1-877-652-2873)
2. If abuse is of a vulnerable adult is observed, immediately remove the vulnerable adult from the situation and contact Adult Protective Services at 856-453-2223.
3. The pastor or their designee will notify police for accusations involving physical or sexual abuse.
4. Report the incident immediately to the staff person responsible for sponsoring the activity (the staff member shall contact the Senior Pastor who will contact the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent)
5. Pastor will notify the Bishop, District Superintendent and the Conference Youth and Young Adult Coordinator.
6. Report the matter to the insurance carrier for FUMC.
7. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
8. FUMC may suspend the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
9. The pastor of FUMC or their designee, (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the governing body of the church and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendation of actions.
10. A designated official of FUMC will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for action.
11. A designated official of FUMC will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
12. During the investigation, an official of FUMC shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.

13. A designated official of FUMC (and legal counselor other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
14. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of FUMC.
15. Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.
16. Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need should arise, subject to the approval of the Senior Pastor and FUMC's attorney.

Sexual Offender Ministry

FUMC may allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become a member of the congregation, but must adhere to specific guidelines.

1. A known sexual offender cannot participate in any of the Protected Persons programs in any way.
2. A known sexual offender can only participate in a predetermined service each week.
3. A known sexual offender must report in and be assigned to an escort who will accompany him or her at all times.
4. The identity of the sexual offender will be disclosed only to the Senior Pastor and SPR Chairperson or their designee.

Training and Education

Training is a requirement for all staff and volunteers working with Protected Persons. An initial educational component of the Safe Sanctuaries programs and policies is required prior to any worker having direct supervision of children, youth and vulnerable adults with documentation to include signatures reflecting receipt of policies by participants to be kept in the records of FUMC. Training and education for new applicants as well as refresher training for existing workers will be coordinated and performed by the Senior Pastor or the Senior Pastor's designee on an annual basis or when a new staff member is hired or volunteer is invited to serve.

Training and Educating Workers

1. Review the FUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy, signs of abuse and any written procedures developed in accordance with the policy.
2. Offer Training in CPR, AED (defibrillator), and First Aid.
3. Review causes and consequences of abuse.

4. Have workers sign Acknowledgment Form that they reviewed, understand and will abide by the FUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy.

5. Document who has completed training and can be entrusted with the care and supervision of Protected Persons who participate in programs or activities of FUMC.

Educating the Congregation

1. Send a letter to the congregation explaining the development of the policy and its importance for the welfare of the FUMC community.

2. Prepare articles for the church website highlighting our Safe Sanctuary theme, the issue of abuse and ways to prevent abuse.

3. Inform Congregation of Safe Sanctuary policy in Sunday bulletin.

4. Have a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy in the church office and on the FUMC website.

5. Copies of the Safe Sanctuary Policy of First United Methodist Church of Millville NJ are available to parents or guardians of Protected Persons upon request.

Educating Children

1. Designate one Sunday annually in September or October after getting written approval from parents or guardians, to educate their children or youth (using age-appropriate materials) during Sunday school on the topic of physical safety and abuse.

Electronic Ministry

Any Electronic Ministry or communication at FUMC will be conducted so that all adults, children, and youth, as well as our equipment are protected from harm.

Web Page Policies

1. In the public area of the website, children and youth will never be identified by last name. If parents requests that their children not be included in the public area at all, that request will be honored immediately upon being reported to the Webmaster.

2. Personal information, such as would appear in the membership directory, will only be accessible in the members-only area.

3. Some areas of the web page will only be accessible to registered members of the FUMC website. All areas will be accessible to website administrators.

4. Photos are often included on the website to publicize and commemorate our church's activities. Photos will never intentionally be used in a way that embarrasses or harms anyone. If a photo inadvertently harms or embarrasses the person in the photo, it will be removed immediately. No reason or justification will be required or expected.

Internet Use and Safety on Church Computers, Phones, and E-Mail

FUMC is blessed to have abundant electronic resources to assist us in our ministry and administration. None of this equipment may ever be used for any activity that is inconsistent with those purposes. Users may occasionally use the computers for personal use as approved by the Senior Pastor, but the equipment will never be used in a manner that is illegal, harmful, immoral, disrespectful to others, or damaging to the equipment.

1. Any email sent from FUMC's computers or through FUMC's email addresses should be free from any language or content that is racist, sexist, disrespectful, or intolerant to any human being.
2. The FUMC email system shall not be used for mass forwards or advertisements (other than publicizing our ministries).
3. No one other than staff will download anything onto a church computer. If a need to download something is identified, it must be referred to staff and/or the church's computer consultants. The use of church computers for web browsing (other than in direct connection with ministry use) will be discouraged.

WiFi Internet Access

1. To restrict access to the FUMC's WiFi network, the website administrator will issue passwords to authorized users only and change passwords periodically.

Photos or Videos Taken on Church Grounds or Trips

1. Photos or videos taken of Protected Persons or anyone else may be published in the FUMC newsletter or on the FUMC website only after written approval of that person if an adult or their parent or guardian if a Protected Person.
2. No photos or videos in the FUMC newsletter or website will post a person's name without written approval of that person if an adult or their parent or guardian if a Protected Person.

Use of Social Networking Sites such as MySpace and Facebook

1. Social Networking can be an asset to our ministry, primarily to youth, but must be used in a way consistent with the teachings of Christ. Any social networking account associated with FUMC will be closely monitored by adults. These accounts will never be used to harass, insult, bully, denigrate, or

otherwise hurt another person. Likewise, anyone who is networked with FUMC will be "unfriended" if they engage in such activities.

2. Instant messaging and text messaging between adults and children or teens is discouraged, except in regard to specific church ministries.

The Safe Sanctuary Policy shall be reviewed by the SPRC (and/or a subcommittee selected by the SPRC) every calendar year for applicability and conformity with United Methodist principles, Conference policy, appropriate guidelines, and with State law.

Acknowledgment of Safe Sanctuary Policy For Protected Persons

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with Protected Persons. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment as a paid employee or volunteer member. First United Methodist Church reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with the First United Methodist Church or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the First United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuary Policy for Protected Persons. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of the First United Methodist Church.

Organization / Ministry Name

Print Name

Signature

Date