

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY
for the protection of our Children and Youth

God has called us to make our ministries safe, protecting our children from abuse and exploitation. God has also called us to create communities of faith where children can be safe and grow strong. Thus, we at Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC), in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, adopt this policy for the prevention of child/youth abuse. Therefore, this Safe Sanctuary Policy is intended to ensure that environment for:

1. Children and youth
2. Staff, leaders, and volunteers
3. Those engaged in ministry through CUMC

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We commit to being in compliance with all aspects of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (63 PA C.S.A. 6301). In the event that the law conflicts with this policy, the law shall control.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Child, children, and youth

These terms shall be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18). These terms also include anyone who is still enrolled in high school, even if they are 18 or older.

Adult

This term shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age and no longer enrolled in high school.

Worker/s

This term shall be defined as any adult— a volunteer or paid person—who has been given the responsibility of ministering to/caring for children and youth.

Child Abuse

This term shall be defined under Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law 23 Pa.C.S.A. 6303 and means *any* of the following:

1. Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child.
2. An act or failure to act by a perpetrator, which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child.
3. A recent act, failure to act, or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child.
4. Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide the essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.
5. A child will not be deemed to be physically or mentally abused based on injuries that result solely from environmental factors that are beyond the control of the parent or person responsible for the child's welfare, such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care.
6. If, upon investigation, the county agency determines that a child has not been provided needed medical or surgical care because of seriously held religious beliefs of the child's parents, guardian, or person responsible for the child's welfare, which beliefs are consistent with those of a bona fide religion, the child will not be deemed to be physically or mentally abused. The county agency shall closely monitor the child and shall seek court-ordered medical intervention when the lack of medical or surgical care threatens the child's life or long-term health. In cases involving religious circumstances, all correspondence with a subject of the report and the records of the Department and the county agency may not reference "child abuse" and shall acknowledge the religious basis for the child's condition, and the family shall be referred for general protective services, under Subchapter C of the CPSL (relating to general protective services), if appropriate.

Worker Information & Screening

At CUMC, workers (both employee and volunteer) who engage in ministry with children and youth must complete all background check screenings and forms required by the state and national law plus a written application that includes information for 2 references (who are *not* family members) and an annual Safe Sanctuary training.

CUMC commits to absorb the cost associated with screenings and clearances, if necessary. Please contact Nikki Young for current procedures (by phone at 215-855-1643 or by email at nikki.young@cumclansdale.org).

All voluntarily disclosed personal information will be maintained in the strictest of confidence. All forms and reference reports will be kept as part of the worker's confidential file in a locked cabinet. Upon completion of the appropriate forms by the worker, staff will submit appropriate documentation to the appropriate authorities. All files will be maintained for three (3) years after service ends.

Procedures for Safe Ministries with Children and Youth

Supervision:

Supervision procedures are designed to reduce the possibility of abuse and to protect staff persons and volunteers from unwarranted accusations. No child will be left unsupervised while attending a children's ministry activity.

Programs and ministries in the church that are licensed or accredited by a licensing or accreditation body, or that have formally adopted supervision procedures, and receive pre-approval from the conference Board of Trustees shall follow their established requirements for the supervision children. All other programs and ministries of the church shall use the following standards for the supervision of children.

1. Before being allowed in this supervisory role, volunteer workers shall have an active relationship with CUMC for *at least six months* or 24 months of good standing at their previous church.
2. Regardless of the group size, a minimum of *two adults* is required to be present at all times during all church-sponsored programs, events, or ministries involving children/youth. However, at a minimum, this may include an adult "roamer," who moves in and out of rooms.
3. All ministry activities should occur in *open view*. Each room or space where ministry activities/events occur must be open to public view
4. At no time will any safe sanctuary approved workers be permitted to *be alone* with a child or youth in an isolated situation (unless there is expressed written permission on file in the church from the child's/youth's legal parent or guardian stating otherwise for specific situations or programs).
5. All workers, including teen workers, are expected to be at least *five years older* than the children/youth they are teaching or supervising. Anyone under the age of 18 will be paired with an adult volunteer/staff person.

Parental Guidelines:

When children/youth are not participating in, or are released from, church-sponsored events, parents are responsible to know where their children are, whom they are with, and what they are doing at all times. All parents of children in sixth grade and under must complete a Children Ministry Arrival and Dismissal Policy form (see **Appendix I**). This form includes the names of three other adults who can pick up a child third grade or younger from ministry activities, if the parents or guardians are not available. No child may be picked up by a sibling under 18 years of age.

Physical Safety:

Staff, leaders, and workers should be conscious of safety concerns when leading and supervising activities and games. Proper equipment and adequate supervision of the activity should always be in place.

Transportation:

Ministry events involving transportation shall require a written consent form signed by the parent or guardian of the child.

Drivers must have a valid driver's license in order to drive on a church-sponsored activity. In addition, volunteers must have auto insurance coverage on the vehicle in use.

Drivers are responsible to see that all children/youth wear seat belts when being transported to and from activities. No more passengers than number of seat belts will be carried in a vehicle for these activities. Buses not equipped with seatbelts are exempt from this rule. Children under thirteen (13) years shall not sit in the front seat of vehicles with air bags. Child safety seat laws will be followed when traveling in a motor vehicle. Children/youth may not travel alone in a vehicle with only one adult unless it is their parent. When multiple vehicles are used for an event, a single worker may drive if all the vehicles travel together. Every effort should be made for all vehicles traveling together in this circumstance to stay within sight of one another. If possible, there should be a cell phone or some other way to communicate.

Overnight Chaperone Procedure & Guidelines:

On overnight retreats/trips, adults will not sleep in the same bed as children/youth at any time. In open space sleeping settings, at least two (2) workers should be present in every room. There should be no permission for boys to enter the room where girls are sleeping and no permission for girls to enter the room where boys are sleeping.

Internet Safety Guidelines:

While communication via Internet, texting, and social networks is common among children/youth and can be an important tool for ministry, we recognize that those forms of communication can also be dangerous if not used properly. Therefore, workers should be aware that any and all direct communications with Christ children/youth may be subject to audit.

Worker Disqualification

Any person who has been convicted, or is currently under investigation of child abuse, will be automatically disqualified as a worker in CUMC activities. At the discretion of the designated church leader in charge, certain other offenses may disqualify a worker from participating in, providing leadership for, or supervising of any activities/programs with children or youth. (See **Appendix II** for a list of offenses until Pennsylvania Title 18.)

Moreover, if an applicant (worker or employee) has been named as the perpetrator in a founded child abuse report within the previous five (5) years, he/she will not be permitted to serve as a volunteer or be hired as an employee.

Abuse Reporting & Response Procedures

Abuse specifically includes verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a child or youth. Sexual abuse involves children and youth in sexual behaviors and/or activities for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready and/or cannot give consent. Those behaviors and/or activities may be violent or non-violent in nature and are an exploitation of a person's vulnerability in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action.

CUMC is committed to handling all issues related to this Safe Sanctuary Policy with appropriate confidentiality and with respect for the privacy of the alleged victim and others involved in the incident.

Any worker (whether clergy or laity, paid or unpaid) involved in CUMC ministries is considered a *mandated reporter*. Reporting of an allegation of abuse is required whenever there is a “reasonable cause to suspect” that abuse has occurred, according to PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 Pa. C.S.S. Chapter 63.

1. Reasonable cause to suspect abuse can occur:
 - a. When any worker personally witnesses an incident or evidence of abuse,
 - b. When an allegation of an event of abuse is made to a worker by a third party, and/or
 - c. When a child or youth discloses abuse to a worker which meets the criteria of the above PA law.
2. The mandated reporter observing the behavior or receiving the allegation/disclosure must immediately file the report with the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Hotline (24/7 service) at 800-932-0313. *A mandated reporter who fails to report or delays reporting may be charged with a misdemeanor or a felony, depending on whether the non-reporting is willful and how serious the abuse is.*
3. Immediately after filing the report, the worker must inform the Senior Pastor or a designated church leader. Subsequently, the District Superintendent will be informed if the incident involves a staff person or volunteer of the church.
4. Within 48 hours, the person filing the report must also complete a Report of Suspected Child Abuse (Form CY-47). (See **Appendix III** or locate a sample in the church office.)
5. The worker making the report has immunity from civil and criminal liability. It is presumed that the report has been made in good faith.
6. In the event of an imminent threat, any worker with knowledge or information about such abuse shall *immediately* contact 911 *and* another adult in order to remove the abused person to a safe place. Safety is the church’s primary concern. In connection herewith, any needed emergency healthcare shall be provided, such as (1) first aid, (2) emergency services and/or (3) transportation to a hospital emergency room. Should it be necessary to remove a person or persons from any activity, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, with utmost respect to both parties, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.
7. Releasing the identity of the worker making the report is *prohibited*. This applies to law enforcement, the child welfare workers, and the church.
8. All workers are to refrain from speaking with or otherwise communicating to any form of media. Should it be deemed necessary, a church representative along with the Eastern PA Conference of the United Methodist Church spokesperson will communicate to the media with regard to any alleged accusation or abuse as defined in this policy.
9. When an allegation or report is made about a particular person, he/she will be required to refrain from programming at CUMC until the incident report is resolved, and guidelines for behavior have been established when necessary.
10. In the event that a member of the clergy becomes aware of suspected abuse as a result of confidential communication which is protected under 42 PA C.S. 5943 (relating to confidential communications to clergy), the conference legal counsel should immediately be consulted.
11. Pastoral responses to victims of abuse, to alleged perpetrators of abuse, and to the media will follow the published policy of the Annual Conference.

APPENDIX I

Children's Ministry Arrival & Dismissal Policy **(All children's ministry events, day & night)**

All children, age infant through 3rd grade must be escorted to their classroom by a parent or other responsible adult and delivered to the teacher or assistant teacher. No child should be left in a classroom without an adult present. *Please do not drop off children more than 5 minutes before a scheduled ministry activity.*

Additionally, all children, age infant through 3rd grade, will not be released to anyone other than a parent or approved adult at the conclusion of each program. You may write down the name of up to three adults (beyond the parents/guardians) who may pick up your child from ministry activities. *It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep this list up to date. If other arrangements for pick up are necessary, the drop off person must give written permission to the teacher, signed and dated by a parent/guardian.* Older siblings cannot be in charge of pick up or drop off for any child age infant through 3rd grade.

Parents/Guardians of children in 4th through 6th grades: should you choose to meet your child(ren) somewhere other than the classroom after any ministry activity, *it is important that you tell your child(ren) where to meet you and that your child(ren) be able to communicate that plan to his or her teacher.* All meeting spots must be inside the building. Teachers will hold any child in class that does not have a plan for dismissal with their parent or guardian.

If a child is not picked up, the child's teacher or a staff member will walk the child to their parent or guardian in the building. However, in consideration of our volunteer leaders, please be sure to collect your children promptly. Thank you for your consideration of our very generous volunteer leaders!

I, _____ (parent/guardian name), have read and understand Christ UMC's pickup policy.

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Names of Child/ren: _____

If child/ren is in third grade or under, please complete:

The following three persons are permitted to pick up my child/ren:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____ from any children's ministry activity at CUMC.

APPENDIX II

Worker Disqualification

If CUMC becomes concerned that anyone may pose an unreasonable risk of harm to others, then the designated church leader may deny, suspend, or terminate the involvement in any church activities/ministries of the person posing the unreasonable risk.

The following list (though not exhaustive) illustrates conduct which poses such an unreasonable risk that persons who have engaged therein may be disqualified from participating in church activities/ministries:

List of Offenses

This list of offenses rules out a person from working with children.

- Named in the central register as the perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse committed within the previous five (5) years.
- Been convicted of a felony offense under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act (P.L. 233, No. 64), committed within the previous five (5) years.
- Been convicted of one or more of the following offenses under Title 18 (related to crimes and offenses) or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state:
 - Chapter 25 Relating to criminal homicide
 - Section 2702 Relating to aggravated assault
 - Section 2709 Relating to harassment and stalking
 - Section 2901 Relating to kidnapping
 - Section 2902 Relating to unlawful restraint
 - Section 3121 Relating to rape
 - Section 3122.1 Relating to statutory sexual assault
 - Section 3123 Relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse
 - Section 3124.1 Relating to sexual assault
 - Section 3125 Relating to sexual aggravated indecent assault
 - Section 3126 Relating to indecent assault
 - Section 3127 Relating to indecent exposure
 - Section 4302 Relating to incest
 - Section 4303 Relating to concealing death of a child
 - Section 4304 Relating to endangering welfare of children
 - Section 4305 Relating to dealing in infant children
 - Section 5902(b) Relating to prostitution and related offenses
 - Section 5903(c) or (d) Relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances
 - Section 6301 Relating to corruption of minors
 - Section 6312 Relating to sexual abuse of children
 - The attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses listed above

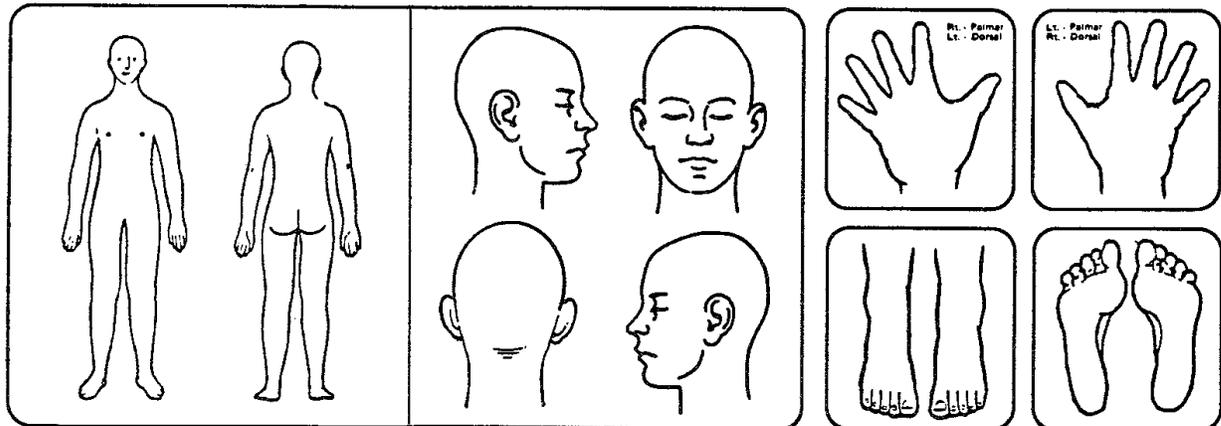
All charges for these crimes or charges or convictions for any other crimes **not listed** above will be reviewed by the designated church leader(s).

APPENDIX III

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE (CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE LAW - TITLE 23 PA CSA CHAPTER 63)

PLEASE REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE. EXCEPT FOR SIGNATURE, PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

1. NAME OF CHILD (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
1A. PRESENT LOCATION IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE			COUNTY	
2. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE MOTHER (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
3. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE FATHER (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)			COUNTY	
4. OTHER PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)		COUNTY		SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
5. ALLEGED PERPETRATOR (Last, First, Initial)		SOC. SEC. NO.	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD
ADDRESS (Street, City, State & Zip Code)		COUNTY		SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
6. FAMILY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (Excluding Above Names)		RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	
NAME (Last, First, Initial)		NAME (Last, First, Initial)		
A.		D.		
B.		E.		
C.		F.		
DESCRIBE INJURIES/CONDITION AND WHY YOU SUSPECT ABUSE/NEGLECT. INCLUDE EVIDENCE OF PRIOR ABUSE TO THIS CHILD, SIBLING OR PERPETRATOR. (PLEASE REFER TO OPPOSITE SIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION). PLEASE NOTE EXACT LOCATION OF THE INJURY(S) ON MODEL BELOW.			COUNTY WHERE ABUSE OCCURRED	DATE OF INCIDENT



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7. ACTIONS TAKEN OR ABOUT TO BE TAKEN BY REPORTER, COUNTY AGENCY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, SCHOOL OFFICIAL, OR OTHERS.			
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTIFICATION OF CORONER	<input type="checkbox"/> X-RAYS	<input type="checkbox"/> PHOTO-GRAPHS	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITAL-IZATION
<input type="checkbox"/> POLICE NOTIFIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAL EXAMINATION	<input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY CUSTODY TAKEN	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify) _____
8. RISK FACTORS, CHILD:			
A. DESCRIBE ANY PHYSICAL, MENTAL OR BEHAVIORAL FACTORS THAT MAY PLACE THE CHILD AT RISK:			<input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN
B. DOES THE CHILD APPEAR TO NEED IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION?			IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
C. LEVEL OF PAIN CHILD EXHIBITS		<input type="checkbox"/> MILD <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE <input type="checkbox"/> SEVERE	PLEASE DESCRIBE:
D. DOES THE CHILD APPEAR TO BE FEARFUL, SUICIDAL OR WITHDRAWN? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:			
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
9. RISK FACTORS, FAMILY:			
A. DESCRIBE ANY CARETAKER/PERPETRATOR CHARACTERISTICS THAT PLACE THE CHILD AT RISK:			<input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN
B. DESCRIBE THE EXTENT OF PERPETRATOR(S) ACCESS TO CHILD:			<input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN
C. IS THERE ANY SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD?		IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
D. DOES THE CARETAKER/PERPETRATOR HAVE A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE OR SEVERE EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:			<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES
E. WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL (HEALTH AND SAFETY) CONDITION OF THE HOME?			
<input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN			
F. WILL CHILD BE AT RISK DUE TO COUNTY AGENCY INVOLVEMENT?			IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
G. ARE THERE WEAPONS IN THE HOME?		IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN:	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> YES			

INSTRUCTIONS TO MANDATED PERSONS: Any persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession come into contact with children shall report or cause a report to be made to ChildLine (800-932-0313) when they have reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of their medical, professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is a victim of child abuse. Within 48 hours after making the oral report, send one copy of this report to the county children and youth agency.

NOTE: If the child has been taken into custody, you must also immediately contact the county children and youth agency where the abuse occurred. Except for confidential communications made to an ordained member of the clergy, the privileged communication between any professional person required to report and the patient or client of that person shall not apply to situations involving child abuse and shall not constitute grounds for failure to report suspected abuse.

REPORTING SOURCE			
SIGNATURE		TITLE OR RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	FACILITY OR ORGANIZATION
ADDRESS		TELEPHONE NUMBER	DATE OF REPORT