

Safe Sanctuary Policies

Basic Overview

Before volunteering or working with minors or vulnerable adults in a leadership role, all individuals must pass a background check and register to attend Safe Sanctuary training.

- Background checks are run every 2 years for staff and 3 years for volunteers.
- Volunteers and staff will agree to the terms of the FUMC Safe Sanctuary Covenant and attend an additional Safe Sanctuary training after one year of service and as needed thereafter.
- There will be at least two background-checked, trained, unrelated adults (“Safe Sanctuary adults”) at events for minors when parents/guardians are not expected to be present.
- Written parent/guardian permission must be given for any minor to participate in events and programs at FUMC if parents or guardians are not present for the event. Such permission will be renewed annually for minors who regularly participate in FUMC programs.
- Background checks are administered and seen only by the Business Manager. If a background check raises any concern, the Business Manager will report it to a pastor, who will decide the appropriate course of action for the situation.
- The Business Manager maintains forms and references for volunteers and staff in personnel files in a secured location on-site at the church.
- Throughout this document, ‘child’ means a minor who is in fifth grade or younger and ‘teen’ means a minor who is in middle school or high school.

First Aid/CPR/AED

First Aid/CPR/AED certification is encouraged for Safe Sanctuary adults. First Aiders are encouraged to record administration of First Aid on the First Aid logs located in First Aid kits.

Supervision

At all times, at least two unrelated Safe Sanctuary adults will be present when leading one or more minors if parents/guardians are not present.

- One-on-one situations between adults and unrelated minors are prohibited, except as allowed by Colorado state law concerning licensed counseling professionals acting with parent/guardian consent in their role as counselors.
- Safe Sanctuary adults will ensure adequate supervision of minors by maintaining open sight lines into the room or area (except in the event of a Lockdown; see “Emergency Procedures” section below); maintaining a minimum two-adult presence until all minors

are with their parents/guardians, or are cleared to leave in the case of teens who can provide their own transportation; and supervising guest presenters or observers.

- Parent/guardian permission will be given for minors to be released to other adults or family members.
- Encourage children to buddy with same- or near-age peers when moving between rooms in the church or outside.
- Encourage teens to buddy with same- or near-age peers, with the limitation that teens in romantic relationships are not adequate buddies for each other.

Age-specific Volunteer Guidelines

These are the guidelines for adults volunteering with children and youth:

- Have a current background check with the church.
- Take Safe Sanctuary training, including refresher classes as needed.
- Agree to abide by the FUMC Safe Sanctuary Covenant.
- There will be at least five years between the adult volunteer and the oldest minors in the group the volunteer is acting as a Safe Sanctuary adult for.

The following additional guideline is for adults 18-21 volunteering with children and youth:

- Hold a high school diploma or equivalent.

Teens under age 18 or who have not yet graduated from high school do not count as adults for meeting Safe Sanctuary ratios, the two-adult rule, First Aid or disciplinary requirements.

Drivers

- Be at least 25 years old to drive a church vehicle.
- Have a current background check with the church and submit a copy of driver's license.
- Take Safe Sanctuary training, including refresher classes as needed.
- Agree to abide by the FUMC Safe Sanctuary Covenant.
- Ensure that the vehicle is in good operating condition.
- Ensure that all passengers and drivers wear seat belts when the vehicle is operating.
- Follow Federal and State laws and accommodate road conditions to ensure safe operation of the vehicle.
- For trips involving minors, FUMC prefers that there be at least two Safe Sanctuary approved and trained adults in each vehicle that transports unrelated minors and adults during church events.
- Parent/guardian permission is required for minors to ride with other licensed drivers.
- First United Methodist Church does not have access to child car seats and therefore asks that parents or guardians transport children 2nd grade or younger.

Safety on Overnight Events

- There will be female and male Safe Sanctuary adults, including one First Aider, present overnight when there are male and female participants.
- There will be separate sleeping quarters for males and females, unless minor attendees have a parent/guardian present, in which case they may divide into family groups. A lone minor may not share sleeping quarters with an unrelated adult, and minors of opposite genders may not share sleeping quarters without direct parent/guardian supervision. Large spaces such as gyms in which males and females sleep on opposite sides of the room are acceptable when more than one room is not available to the group.

General Safety

- First United Methodist Church prohibits the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, marijuana, tobacco products, and other controlled substances on church property or while participating in a youth or children's activity sponsored by the church.
- Firearms, knives, explosives and other weapons are prohibited with the following exceptions: knives and other utensils used for preparing food; scissors or other appropriate implements used in crafts; tools used in building and crafting projects; small pocket knives or scissors with less than a 3-inch blade may be carried by adults or by teens with appropriate training. In all of the exceptions listed above, the following apply: Infants and toddlers (through age 2) are not allowed access to sharp implements. Children in preschool through 2nd grade are allowed to use scissors and other appropriate implements for craft projects. Upper elementary children (3rd-5th grades) are allowed to use knives, scissors and tools with close adult supervision and proper training. Teens (middle school and senior high) are allowed to use knives, scissors and tools with adult supervision and proper training. Knives, scissors or tools that are being used in an unsafe manner will be confiscated.

Physical contact between adults and non-related minors:

- Physical contact as a form of coercion, intimidation, punishment or for sexual purposes is prohibited.
- Inappropriate touch - between the minor's shoulders and knees, kissing, hitting, or that makes the minor uncomfortable - is also prohibited.
- Safe Sanctuary adults who work with infants and toddlers have a responsibility to attend promptly and appropriately to the physical needs of the children in their care. These physical needs include diapering and toileting assistance, cradling and rocking children who are tired or in need of comfort, and other such caregiving activities.
- Appropriate touch such as a high five or brief hug to offer encouragement or support, or that is part of a group game or activity, so long as it abides by the guidelines above, is permissible.

- Physical contact that occurs in a crisis to prevent injury or harm, such as preventing a fall or blocking hits or kicks, will be as brief as possible to ensure the safety of all present and must be documented immediately. Further steps are outlined in the 'Misconduct by Minors' section below.
- Any staff member or volunteer who notices impairment in judgment, alertness, or physical ability in her- or himself or another adult will report that observation to a supervisor immediately to ensure the safety of minors and adults.

Electronic Communication

- Use of any means of electronic communication (phone, email, social media, for example) to establish direct contact between an adult volunteer or staff member and a non-related child is prohibited.
- The purpose of direct electronic communication between staff, volunteers and teens is to facilitate youth group activities and tasks such as providing employment references and letters of recommendation. Use of any means of electronic communication to establish direct contact between an adult staff member or volunteer and a non-related teen must have parent/guardian consent and approval. Communications between adults and teens are open to review at any time by the staff member's or volunteer's supervisor and/or the teen's parent/guardian.

Emergency Procedures

In alignment with local law enforcement and fire department procedures, First United Methodist Church follows the "I Love U Guys" Foundation's Standard Response Protocols for businesses (source: <http://iloveuguy.org/>).

- Safe Sanctuary adults will be familiar with the locations of exits and weather shelter areas, and will know how to lock room doors.
- Fire: Safe Sanctuary adults will escort minors out of the building as a group through the nearest safe exit and take the group to the front lawn of Truscott Elementary School. Parents and guardians may reunite with minors there.
- Tornado Warning: Safe Sanctuary adults will escort minors to weather shelter locations in the building. Once the warning has been lifted, the group may return to their activity or release minors to their parents/guardians.
- Lockout: In the event of suspicious activity in the vicinity of the church, Safe Sanctuary adults will bring minors inside if they are outside, ensure that external doors are locked, notify parents/guardians of Lockout, and continue with planned indoor activities. Once the threat has been resolved, external doors may be unlocked and parents/guardians may reunite with minors.
- Lockdown: In the event of suspicious activity inside the building, Safe Sanctuary adults will bring all minors into rooms, lock doors, turn off lights, and have all occupants sit

silently out of view of the door window. Once staff or emergency responders have personally delivered the all-clear, minors may be reunited with their parents/guardians.

Misconduct by Minors

Misbehaviors such as harming or threatening to harm others, bullying, and persistent or extreme noncompliance or disruption present serious risk to the safety and well-being of others. Safe Sanctuary adults may work to correct such behaviors using the following process:

- First, the adult will direct the minor to discontinue misconduct in a way that does not draw attention to the minor.
- If the minor persists in the misbehavior, the adult will direct the minor to sit out of the activity for a while to redirect or calm down.
- If the misbehavior persists or is extreme, the adult will bring the behavior to the attention of the supervising staff member, who will bring the parent/guardian into conversation and develop a plan for helping the minor improve. Continued misbehavior may result in the minor being barred from church activities, especially if the minor's behavior threatens the safety or well-being of others, or if the disruption is persistent or extreme enough that it is interfering with the group's ability to follow through on activities.

In the event a minor's actions pose a threat of physical harm to him- or herself or others, adults shall act quickly to protect other minors and themselves:

- If possible, adults shall remove other minors from the room if a child or teen is threatening or attempting to physically harm self or others.
- If moving the group to safety is not practical, an adult may prevent injury to self, the minor, or others; even if such action results in physical contact with the offending minor. Contact will be as brief as possible and conducted solely for the purpose of preventing harm.
- Notify a staff person of the incident immediately. The staff person will notify the police or other appropriate authorities and the senior pastor as soon as possible.
- The parent/guardian will be informed of the incident immediately.
- Adults will document the incident immediately.

Misconduct by Adults

Safe Sanctuary adults will maintain the standard of conduct outlined in this policy and will encourage others to do as well when working or volunteering for FUMC. Misconduct by an adult is defined as requesting or initiating inappropriate contact with a minor, whether physical, sexual or through electronic or other form of communication; use of inappropriate language such as belittling, bullying, shaming or profanity; being under the influence of an illegal drug, alcohol, marijuana, or other controlled substance; or failing to uphold FUMC's Safe Sanctuary policy, particularly in regard to adequate supervision of minors.

- Inappropriate contact and being under the influence are serious breaches that will result in the adult's immediate removal from the minor(s); reporting the incident to the Senior Pastor or designee immediately, who will take appropriate action; notification of affected minors' parents/guardians; and documentation of all witnesses' statements, including security camera footage of the incident if such exists. If the allegations are found to be credible, the incident will be referred to the Staff Parish Relations Committee (if the offending adult is a staff member) or to the Senior Pastor (if the offending adult is a volunteer) to determine the appropriate course of action.
- Use of inappropriate language and failure to uphold Safe Sanctuary policy will be handled in the same manner as inappropriate contact.
- If the pastor is the adult accused of misconduct, the District Superintendent will fulfill the duties assigned to the Senior Pastor in the above sections.

Maintaining Building Security

- Only personnel approved by the FUMC Business Manager may issue keys (key cards, access codes) to staff and volunteers. Other volunteers and staff may not share keys, key cards or access codes.
- All exterior doors must remain locked unless a scheduled event requires that they be unlocked for attendees. During a scheduled event, the minimum number of doors shall be unlocked, and staff and volunteers overseeing the event will ensure that all doors are locked again before leaving the building.

Outside Groups Using the Church Building

FUMC welcomes many nonprofit organizations to use our building for meetings and events. Such outside groups are encouraged to have a safety policy of their own or to abide by FUMC's Safe Sanctuary policy.