

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Members of Christ Church recognize the need to have formal, written policy and procedures to prevent the abuse of children and youth. The following policy and procedures are intended to protect our children, youth, employees, volunteers and the entire church body. It is our intent that this policy will be fully implemented by June 2014.

POLICY STATEMENT

We will attempt to protect children and youth in our care from emotional, physical and sexual abuse. We will endeavor to follow the outlined procedures in order to provide a condition of SAFE SANCTUARY at the Christ United Methodist Church of Sugar Land, Texas.

Policy Approved By: **Leadership Council, 6/30/14**



CHRIST

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

3300 AUSTIN PARKWAY • SUGAR LAND, TX 77479
PHONE: 281.890.6888 • WWW.CUMCSL.ORG • FACEBOOK.COM/CUMCSL

SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

I. Safe Sanctuary Procedures

1. All adult personnel committed to work with children and youth or have access to children and youth must complete an application form with approval for background investigation. Background checks will be run through the CUMC office and results will be kept confidential.
Form: Texas Annual Conference Consent to Perform a Criminal History/
Background Check
Responsibility: Applicant and Ministry Director
2. Applications for children or youth ministry volunteer work will be reviewed by the Directors of those ministries. The Directors and appropriate Executive Staff will determine suitability of applicants for ministry.
Responsibility: Ministry director and appropriate Executive Staff member(s)
3. The safe sanctuary policy shall be provided to the applicant for review.
Responsibility: Applicant and Ministry Director
4. Every Children's Ministry Worker will need to receive CUMC Children's Ministry training and every Youth Ministry Worker will need to receive CUMC Youth Ministry training. **The content of these trainings will include child abuse awareness and prevention practices.** Completion of the CUMC Children or Youth Ministry training sessions shall be reflected in the signed copies of the Children's Ministry covenant or Youth Ministry covenant forms and kept on file. See forms in appendices: "CUMC Worker Covenant - Children's Ministry" and "CUMC Worker Covenant - Youth Ministry." Before working with children or youth, all must review and sign the appropriate CUMC Worker Covenant. Christ Church Sugar Land reserves the right to create its own on-line training and test resources for CUMC workers in Youth Ministry and CUMC workers in Children's Ministry.
Responsibility: Ministry Director
Form: CUMC Worker Covenant - Children's Ministry
Form: CUMC Worker Covenant - Youth Ministry
5. The CUMC Worker trainings for both Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry are effective until the end of the next calendar year after the trainer's signature date on the CUMC Worker Covenant form. For example, a January 8, 2015 training date would be effective until December 31, 2016. Further involvement beyond that date would require repeated training and a newly signed CUMC Worker Covenant.
6. Applicants not approved to work with children and youth will be verbally informed and encouraged to seek another form of ministry at Christ Church Sugar Land.
Responsibility: Ministry Director and appropriate Executive Staff member(s)
7. Any alleged infraction of this policy will be reviewed immediately by the Ministry Director and appropriate Executive Staff member(s). After review, Workers with children

and youth who are judged to be in violation of minor infractions of this policy will be corrected and may be subject to a time of probation. Those judged to be in violation of any major infraction will be terminated from employment and/or removed from service roles in the Children or Youth Ministry areas. Boundaries of appropriate behavior and misconduct are defined in the Children and Youth areas below, the Children or Youth Ministry Teacher Covenant, the Conference's Safe Sanctuary training, and the "Definition of Abuse" document in the appendix. After review, all infractions resulting in a warning or disciplinary action will be documented in a "Infraction of Safe Sanctuary Policy Form."

Form: Infraction of Safe Sanctuary Policy Form
Responsibility: Ministry Director, appropriate Executive Staff member(s), and the Executive Director of Operations

8. All allegations of abuse against a child or youth while under the care of Christ Church Sugar Land will be investigated following the process outlined in the "Incident Report Form." The Ministry Director and/or other appropriate Executive Staff members shall be informed immediately upon such allegations being made known.
Form: Incident Report of Suspected Child or Youth Abuse
Responsibility: Ministry Director and appropriate Executive Staff member(s)
9. Parents and/or guardians and proper legal authorities will be notified of the investigation as warranted by the situation.
Responsibility: Ministry Director and appropriate Executive Staff member(s)
10. All contacts with the news media will be handled by one person, designated by an Executive Staff member.
11. All records relative to this procedure will be securely retained in the church office.
Responsibility: Business Administrator and appropriate Executive Staff member(s)
12. Every identified **Worker** should have completed the CUMC Safe Sanctuary Training and have signed the CUMC Children's or Youth Ministry Worker Covenant, which is kept on file.
13. The conference online safe sanctuary training and test is required for adult chaperones of all youth events that are run by Conference or District leadership (ex. District summer camp, Ignite mid-winter conference youth retreat etc.). This special training is not required for regular Christ Church Sugar Land Children or Youth programs or events. See appendices "Definitions" page.
Form: Certification of Safe Sanctuary Online Training
Responsibility: Applicant

POLICY FOR WORKERS IN CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS FIFTH GRADE AND BELOW

II. Staffing of the Children's Program

1. Every identified **Worker** should have completed CUMC Safe Sanctuary Training with signed CUMC Worker Covenant on file.
2. There shall be a minimum of two Workers assigned to each class. At least one must be an Adult.
3. There shall always be a Director/Coordinator or his/her designee on duty while classes are in session who shall make random checks of all classrooms.
4. The Director/Coordinator shall make provision for last-minute replacements of a Worker who cannot be present on a given day. Provision may include verbal training with signed CUMC Worker Covenant. If the required number of Workers cannot be obtained, the class must be cancelled or combined with another class in order to achieve compliance with the required number of Workers in a classroom.
5. To ensure that there shall be sufficient substitutes available when the regular Worker cannot attend, the Director/Coordinator, shall develop a program to encourage church members to undergo the mandatory screening process in order to serve as Workers.
6. Any exception to this staffing policy would be at the discretion of the Director of Children's Ministries **and in agreement with the appropriate Executive Staff member.**

III. Worker Conduct

1. Two Workers must be present where children are present and participating in a church program or activity. At least one Worker should be an Adult. Under no circumstances shall a Worker be alone with a child behind a closed door.
2. Private music lessons, counseling, and other situations in which one child is alone with one Adult must be conducted within line of sight of another Adult. It is preferred that the parent of the involved child should stay through the session.
3. Whenever possible, the door to classrooms should be kept open, or, in the case of rooms with Dutch doors, the top half of the door should be kept open. It is acceptable to close the door to the classroom if there is a window to the hallway that allows observation of activities in the room.
4. Classroom doors must never be locked while occupied by Workers and children.
5. If there is to be a change of classroom location (ex: playground), a sign must be posted on the door providing notice of any change of class location.
6. Two Workers must be in all children's classrooms even at drop-off and pick-up times. If one of the Workers has not arrived, parents should not leave their children in the room until the second Worker arrives.

7. With children in kindergarten and younger, a positive identity security system will be used so that the person picking up the child can be positively matched to the child. Children in third grade and older may be released from Sunday School by the Workers without being picked up, with permission of a parent or guardian.
8. Workers shall not allow children in 2nd Grade and below to leave the classroom, program or activity unattended. 3rd-5th Grade children may make short trips to the restrooms in pairs while on campus in a classroom with nearby restroom at Leader's discretion.
9. Workers shall always wear their assigned Children's Ministry nametags while on duty.
10. Touching to comfort or affirm a child in an age-appropriate manner is permitted. We encourage appropriate touch such as hugs, high-fives, and pats on the back, shoulders, arms or head.
11. Children in kindergarten or older shall not sit in the lap of Workers.
12. Workers shall not touch children in genital areas except as necessary to change a diaper or to assist a child in the bathroom as noted below.
13. For classrooms which have attached bathrooms, an Adult or Conference Certified Youth Worker may assist a child in the bathroom, while keeping the door open at all times. If a child is taken to a bathroom outside the classroom, a Worker must check the bathroom before the child enters it to ensure it is safe. The Worker shall not accompany the child into the bathroom unless assistance is needed.
14. Male Workers may assist boys in the bathroom as needed. Female workers may assist boys or girls in the bathroom as needed. Whenever possible, Adult Workers should assist in the restroom rather than Youth.
15. For off-campus trips involving transportation permission forms, workers should not be alone with an unrelated child in a vehicle. It is permissible to transport multiple children in a personal vehicle if necessary. The Director or event supervisor must be aware of all transportation arrangements. In a passenger van, two Workers must be present. For driver and vehicle requirements, see "Driving Rules" under section IV of the Youth Ministry portion of this policy.

IV. Discipline of Children

1. Physical discipline, such as spanking, shall never be permitted and should be reported to the Director/Coordinator if observed. Affirmation and encouragement are always appropriate.
2. The Director/Coordinator shall advise Workers on the best age-appropriate discipline methods. See separate Discipline Policy.
3. The behavior of a child who is a constant disruption to a class, activity or program should be discussed with his or her parents and the Director/Coordinator. In appropriate circumstances, the parents can be asked to attend the class, activity or program to observe or control the problem behavior. If the behavior persists, the child may be removed from the class. A child who is a danger to him/herself or other children shall be removed immediately by the Worker and the parents shall be promptly notified.

V. Continuing Training for Workers

1. The Directors/Coordinators shall encourage and may require Workers to attend continuing education opportunities.
2. The Directors/Coordinators shall communicate the substance of this policy to all Workers, and all Workers must agree to comply with this policy.
3. Mandatory training of Workers shall be provided by the Director/Coordinator on a regular basis for fire and building safety, the statutory requirements for the mandatory reporting of child abuse, the identification of abuse and other operational guidelines.

VI. Communication with Parents

1. Workers should attempt to keep open lines of communication with parents.
2. Parents shall always be permitted to observe in a classroom although the Worker may tell the parent that his or her presence may be disruptive to the children.
3. A written and signed parental consent form shall be obtained for each child who participates in any off-campus activity or program. 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. A current medical consent form signed by a parent or guardian shall also be obtained for each child and shall be carried by the Worker supervising the event.

VII. Reporting of Incidents

1. Any questionable behavior on the part of the leadership, supporting parents or the children being supervised, should be discussed in private with the Director of Children's Ministries.
2. If the behavior in question includes the Director, you should speak in private with the Lead Pastor, or if unavailable, another Executive Staff member.

VIII. Scope of This Policy

1. Any activity involving children on the Christ Church campus or sponsored by Christ Church will follow the CUMC Safe Sanctuary policies. These activities may include (but are not limited to):
 - i) Sunday School and Wee Worship
 - ii) Childcare during church events
 - iii) Vacation Bible School
 - iv) Bible Studies
 - v) Children's Choir
 - vi) Fine Arts Academy Lessons
 - vii) Field Trips
 - viii) Scouting Programs
 - ix) Counseling
2. Workers who have children in the program must agree to follow these procedures with their own children while in the role of **Worker**, regardless of their own household procedures.

POLICIES FOR WORKERS IN PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH SIXTH–TWELFTH GRADERS

I. Qualifications of Workers in Youth Ministry

- 1 . It is required that all Workers in Youth Ministry
 - a. be reviewed and approved by the Director and/or appropriate Executive Staff member. For adults, this entails the criminal background check. See “Permission to Perform a Criminal Background Check” form in appendices.
 - b. receive CUMC Youth Ministry training and provide the signed CUMC Worker Covenant - Youth Ministry form. See appendices.
- 2 . Age Requirements
 - a. **Adults Workers in the youth program must be at least 18 years of age and not currently enrolled in high school. There must be at least one Worker on the leadership team who is at least five years older than the oldest youth participating in the activity.**
 - b. College age young adults may provide leadership support if they have completed the required screening, and trainings cited above in Section I.1.
- 3 . Parents may provide temporary support for an event with the permission of the Director and/or appropriate Executive Staff member.
 - a. However, they must be paired with a Youth Ministry Worker who has completed the required screening and training.
 - b. If parents become regular volunteers, they will have to complete the trainings and requirements of all Workers in Youth Ministry cited above in Section I.1.

II. Worker Conduct

1. The **2 adult rule (with at least one Adult over age 21)** shall be present in any break-out group for discussion purposes. No adults are allowed to meet with a youth during a Christ Church Youth program in a non-public area without other adults present. At times, this may require clear communication between adult Workers about their schedules and locations. Where there may appear to be inadequate adult supervision for a youth class or group, merging classes or groups or relocating the group to a more public or open area may be required.
2. **Physical Contact** - Back rubs, massages, kissing, or similar contacts are not allowed. Side-by- side hugs are suggested instead of full body contact. Touching need not be completely avoided, but is acceptable only in public. Workers must be aware of how it looks and how the person being touched may interpret the contact. Personal displays of affection in youth program settings are to be minimized; between adults or between youth.
3. **Nametags** - Workers shall always wear their assigned nametags while on duty. The nametags will signify by a style or symbol that the Worker is approved under this policy.

4. At no time shall a Youth Worker pursue a dating relationship with a student. Inappropriate or sexually suggestive expressions in person or in communications shall be subject to review and the Youth Worker shall be subject to corrective action deemed appropriate by the Director and the Safe Sanctuary policy.
5. The behavior of Youth Workers toward Youth shall be free of "abuse," both in person and in communications, as the term is understood in the "Definition of Abuse Document." Also, see "CUMC Worker Covenant - Youth Ministry" form regarding social media and other means of communication.

III. Requests for "semi-private" meetings by a youth with the Director or another trained Youth Worker

1. The Director is to be informed beforehand about the meeting and afterward about the start time, end time and topics discussed.
2. Such meetings should be relatively brief and infrequent.
3. Preferred settings of such meetings shall be (in this order):
 - a. Public settings within line of sight of others
 - b. In a room with an open door and within proximity to others
4. If Youth activities at the time prevents Youth Workers' availability for semiprivate discussions, the youth may pursue conversation in a public setting or schedule a meeting with the Director and/or a pastor at a later time.

IV. Driving Rules

1. Only **Workers** or other qualified individuals may drive. All drivers must have background checked for any driving related infractions. The two-adult rule should apply for all rental van transportations with one of the adults being over 25 and the other 18 and above and graduated from high school. The number of persons per vehicle must not exceed the number of seatbelts, and all occupants must wear seatbelts.
2. For Transportation by personal vehicle all drivers must be over 21 years of age and be background checked for any driving related infractions. All drivers must bear proof of personal automobile insurance coverage in the state they reside in.
 - a. There may be only one adult per vehicle when traveling to an event using a personal vehicle.
 - i. If there are more than one Youth-age passengers unless that one passenger is the child of the driver.
 - ii. **If vehicles with only one adult in them are used, it is recommended, when possible, that the vehicle remain in line of sight with at least one other adult driver.**
 - iii. **No driver shall use electronic devices in a distracting or unsafe manner while operating a vehicle.**

V. Overnight and Trip Rules

Written Permission and Medical Consent forms must be completed prior to the trip. The two adult rule must be followed throughout the trip, with any exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian.

The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities and capacities of facilities. A minimum adult to youth ratio of 1:6 or 2:12 is to be maintained in overnights or youth trips.

VI. Reporting of Incidents

Any questionable behavior on the part of the leadership, supporting parents or the youth being supervised, should be discussed in private with the **Director of Youth Ministries**. If the behavior in question includes the Director, you should speak in private with the Lead Pastor.

APPENDICES & FORMS

DEFINITIONS:

Adult: Person aged 18 or older who is not currently enrolled as a high school student

Youth Helper: 6th-12th grader who works with children

Worker: Any person designated to work with children

Conference Online Safe Sanctuary Training & Test: Youth or Children's events that are run by leadership of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church or by the Southwest District of the Texas Conference **are** governed by the Conference Safe Sanctuary Policy, not the local church's safe sanctuary policy. Therefore, participation in such events requires adult chaperones for the events to have performed the Conference training program that is available at <http://www.txcumc.org/safesanctuary>. This training is not required for regular local church Children or Youth Ministry programs or events; it is only required for chaperones of Conference-run or District-run events.

DEFINITION OF ABUSE DOCUMENT

(Excerpt taken from "Safe Sanctuary Texas Annual Conference" policy document)

Definitions of Abuse:

1. **Verbal Abuse:** Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades or threatens any child or youth.
2. **Physical Abuse:** Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical or mental health. In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition 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 physical health of a child or youth.
3. **Sexual Abuse:** Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of same for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) incest, 2) rape, 3) prostitution, 4) romantic involvement with any participant, 5) any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual enrolled as a child or youth in Conference or District sponsored activities, 6) sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content.

Examples are not limited to: displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body, touching another person's body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse. (#6 taken from Resolution #30 Book of Resolutions 2000).

TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**CONSENT TO PERFORM CRIMINAL HISTORY/BACKGROUND CHECK
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FCRA (FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT)**

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Name or Initial _____

Maiden or other name(s) used in any and all other records of birth or records of residence. _____

Address _____ Apartment or # _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

-

**Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____ Social Security Number _____ **Gender _____ Race _____

Drivers License Number _____ State _____ Phone H _____ W _____

E-mail _____ Photo ID? Y _____ N _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone _____

****TO BE USED FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS ONLY AND NOT A PART OF THE PERSONNEL FILE.**

- | References –Name | Phone Number |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |

I, _____, am an applicant for employment / volunteer work with _____ church/division and have been advised that as a part of the application process, the church/division conducts a criminal history background check. I do hereby consent to the church/division use of any information provided during the application process in performing the criminal history check. The church/division has informed me that I have the right to review and challenge any negative information that would adversely impact a decision to offer employment / volunteer work. In addition, I have been informed that I will have a reasonable opportunity to clear up any mistaken information reported within a reasonable time frame established within the sole discretion of the church/division. Under the fair Credit Reporting Act, I have been advised that upon request I will be provided the name, address and telephone number of the reporting agency as well as the nature, substance and source of all information.

The following are my responses to questions about my criminal history (if any).

1. YES NO Have you ever been convicted or plead guilty before a court for any federal, state or municipal criminal offense? (Exclude minor traffic misdemeanors).
If yes, please provide details below.

State: _____ County: _____ Date of Offense: ____ / ____ / ____

Details of conviction: _____

2. YES NO Have you ever received deferred adjudication or similar disposition for any federal, state or municipal offense?
If yes, please provide details below.

State: _____ County: _____ Date of Offense: _____

Details of offense: _____

3. YES NO Have you ever received probation or community supervision for any federal, state or municipal offense? If yes, please provide details below.

State: _____ County: _____ Date of Offense: _____

Details of supervision: _____

4. YES NO Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense in a country outside the jurisdiction of the United States? If yes, please provide details below.

Country: _____ City: _____ Date of Offense: _____

Details of conviction: _____

5. YES NO As of the date of this consent form, do you have any pending charges against you?
If yes, please provide details below.

State: _____ County: _____ Date of Arrest _____

Details of pending charges: _____

THIS SECTION IS TO BE USED TO LIST ALL COUNTIES AND STATES OF RESIDENCE SINCE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION OR AGE 18.

CITY/TOWN	COUNTY	STATE	COUNTRY
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS CONSENT FORM IS TRUE, CORRECT AND COMPLETE. "ALL OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT/ VOLUNTEER ARE CONTINGENT UPON APPLICANT'S SUCESSFUL COMPLETION, AS DETERMINED IN EMPLOYER'S SOLE DISCRETION, OF THIS CRIMINAL HISTORY/BACKGROUND CHECK."

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20 _____

APPLICANT (PRINT NAME) _____

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____

CHURCH _____

CHURCH ADDRESS _____

DISTRICT _____

AUTHORIZED PERSON REQUESTING CHECK:

(PRINT NAME) _____

(SIGNATURE) _____



CUMC WORKER COVENANT - 412 YOUTH MINISTRY

I have been trained in our local church Safe Sanctuary Policy. I understand and agree to the following policies:

- Two Worker Rule _____
- Appropriate Touch _____
- Discipline Procedures _____
- Open Door/Line of Sight Policy _____
- Reporting Suspected Abuse & Incidents _____
- Driving Rules _____
- Overnighting & Trips _____

I recognize that as a Youth Worker, I am representing Jesus Christ to the youth and that my words and actions have the opportunity to shape their future relationship with the Church.

I understand that any inappropriate or suggestive comments, pictures, videos or video- conferencing content will be considered a breach of safe sanctuary policy and be subject to corrective actions mentioned in the safe sanctuary policy. Such forms of communications are inclusive of but not limited to social media, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, FaceTime, Texting, email, blogs, messaging or print media.

I understand that the training I have received is effective until the end of the next calendar year from the trainer signature date below. For example a January 8, 2015 training date would be effective until December 31, 2016.

Further involvement in Youth Ministry beyond that date would require repeated training and a newly signed CUMC Worker Covenant. I also understand that criminal background checks are required annually.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Trainer Name

Trainer Signature

Date

Todd Harris - Director of 412 Youth Ministries
Direct - 281.690.4746
todd@cumcsl.org

INFRACTION OF SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY FORM

Name of Person who acted against Safe Sanctuary policy:

Names and ages of children or youth involved in incident:

Name(s) of witness(es) to incident:

Name of person reporting the incident on this form, and date of reporting:

Date, Time and Location in which incident occurred:

Description of Incident and Safe Sanctuary policy rule(s) infringed:

Corrective Action Taken:

INCIDENT REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD OR YOUTH ABUSE
Christ United Methodist Church – Sugar Land

1. Name of Worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of suspected abuse of child or youth: _____

2. Suspected victim's name: _____

3. Suspected victim's age/date of birth: _____

4. Date/Place of initial conversation with/report from suspected victim: _____

a. Date: _____

b. Place: _____

c. Suspected victim's statement (give a detailed summary here):

5. Name of person (s) accused of abuse: _____

a. Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

6. Reported to Pastor:

a. Date / time: _____

b. Summary: _____

7. Call to suspected victim's parent/guardian:

a. Date / time: _____

b. Spoke with : _____

c. Summary:

8. Call to local children and family service agency :

- a. Agency: _____
- b. Date/Time _____
- c. Spoke with : _____
- d. Summary: _____

9. Call to local law enforcement agency :

- a. Agency: _____
- b. Date/Time _____
- c. Spoke with : _____
- d. Summary: _____

10. Other Contacts:

- a. Agency: _____
- b. Date/Time _____
- c. Spoke with : _____
- d. Summary: _____

Signature of person making the report: _____

Date: _____

Phone Number: _____