



St John's UMC



# Why We Need Safe Sanctuary

## 1. Biblical Mandate

Mark 9:36-37

<sup>36</sup>Then Jesus had a child stand near him. He put his arm around the child and said, <sup>37</sup>“When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me. And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me.”

Matt. 18:6

<sup>6</sup>It will be terrible for people who cause even one of my little followers to sin. Those people would be better off thrown into the deepest part of the ocean with a heavy stone tied around their necks!

## 2. Conference Mandate (1996)

A mandate from the 1996 General Conference. Delegates to this conference approved a resolution that called upon each UM congregation to accept the challenge of writing and implementing a child protection policy.

## 3. Open hearts, open doors

But we also need such a policy because the church is one institution that behaves in a relatively trusting manner. We open our doors to everyone, as we should, but sometimes that puts children and ministries at risk.



## Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuaries Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our commitment to the physical safety, emotional health, and spiritual growth of all who come under our care.

## Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of who come under our care. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of both staff persons and volunteers. We will implement prudent operational procedures in all activities, ministries and events. We will provide education regarding our policies and recognizing the signs of abuse. We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law, and we will respond immediately and compassionately to any reported or suspected abuse, again following the requirements of state law and the policies of The Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. The procedures for fulfilling this covenant can be found in the accompanying document called "Safe Sanctuaries Policy of St. John's United Methodist Church."

## Conclusion

In all of our ministries, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that every child of God will be "...surrounded by steadfast love, ...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Baptismal Covenant II," United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44).



# Purpose

**Protect children**

**Protect volunteers**

**Protect the ministry**

So the purpose of being a Safe Sanctuary is three-fold. We want to protect children from a faith shattering experience like abuse, as well as, protect our church members from erroneous litigation that could damage our ministry in the community.

So...having a written policy fulfills our Biblical mandate, our conference mandate, and it's like putting a sign in our front yard that says, "This house protected by ADT." It proves that the church is serious about providing a safe place for minors and vulnerable adults.



# Definitions

1. ***Child/minor***

A child/minor is anyone under the age of 18.

2. ***Employee***

An employee is anyone you pay.

3. ***Volunteer***

A volunteer is anyone not paid but serves in any position involving the care, custody, or supervision of minors.

4. ***Child abuse***

Child abuse is harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare.

5. ***Sexual abuse*** next slide



# Sexual Abuse

any touching of the sexual or intimate parts of a child or any other conduct done for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desire of either party through physical force or a threat, express or implied, that places a child in fear of immediate death or of physical injury by a person 18 years old or older against another who is less than 16 years old, or by a person four or more years older than the victim.



# Statistics

3 million reported cases a year

8,219 a day

342 per hour

> 8 per minute

> 1 every 15 seconds

Source: National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect



# Rates

By age 18

- 1 in every 3 girls,
- 1 in every 7 boys

is sexually abused.

Source: National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect



POLICY  
GUIDELINES  
Children/Youth



## Categorization of Personnel

--All persons who volunteer with children/teens through the ministries/activities of St. John's United Methodist Church (SJUMC) should fall into one of the following categories. All paid staff persons should be at the Level 1 Category

- A. **Level 1 personnel** –Level 1 personnel at SJUMC include but are not limited to: Senior Pastor, Minister of Christian Formation, Youth Ministry Coordinator, Children's Ministry Coordinator, Family Ministry Coordinator, Nursery Staff, Music Ministry Staff, Office/Support Staff, etc.
- Persons at this level are required to:
  - Attend, at least annually, risk reduction policy training.
  - Undergo a criminal background and reference check.
  - If a volunteer, must have been actively involved in the congregation or ministry for a minimum of six months.
- Access to information obtained from a background check shall be limited to those directly involved in the decision making or supervisory process.
- Clergy at this level should be rechecked at appointment changes and additionally every 3 years. All other persons at this level should be rechecked every 3 years.
- B. **Level 2 personnel** –Every volunteer who regularly supervises or works around children or youth at SJUMC should be at least at level 2. This includes but is not limited to: Sunday School Teachers, Youth Counselors, etc.
- Persons at this level are required to:
  - Attend, at least annually, risk reduction policy training.
  - Undergo a criminal background check.
  - Be an active participant in the life of the congregation or ministry for at least six months prior to volunteering.
  -



•**Categorization of Personnel continued.....**

•C. **Level 3 personnel** – These are volunteers that are used only in emergency or occasional situations. (For Example: Vacation Bible School Volunteers, etc.) Level 3 personnel have been made aware of the risk reduction policy; agree in writing to abide by the policy and to “work” only when level 1 or 2 personnel are present and supervising.

•II. **Adequate Adult Supervision**--All ministries/activities sponsored by SJUMC shall provide for adequate responsible adult supervision of teens and children.

•A. The term adequate responsible adult supervision is subject to a variety of legal definitions. The minimal standards listed below should not be considered legal advice nor comprehensive of what constitutes “adequate responsible adult supervision.” For our purposes here, an adult must be at least 18 years of age, keeping in mind that some circumstances may be subject to a different legal definition.

•B. All classes, studies, workshops, fellowship/recreation opportunities, one on one counseling sessions, private meetings or mentoring, etc. with youth or children shall be conducted in a public space or in a space easily observable by others at all times. Thus:



# Minimum Age

Youth *Leaders*:

at least 18 yrs. old

> 5 years older

Children's *Leaders*:

at least 18 yrs. old



# Minimum Age

Youth and Children's *Helpers*:

at least 12 yrs old.

>5 yrs older



# SJUMC Guidelines Ratios: Adult to Children/Youth

- Birth through 4 yrs. 1 : 4
- 5 yrs. through 12 yrs. 1 : 8
- 13 yrs. through 17yrs. 1 : 10
- In cases of children/youth with disabilities, determinations should be made on an individual basis to ensure that adequate adult supervision is maintained at all times



# Two Adult Rule

- 2 non-related leaders in a room
- One must be 21 yrs. or older
- Use floater if needed

For your safety, there should always be 2 non-related adults in a room. Husband-wife teams are encouraged to teach together but they only count as one adult. When it is not possible to place two non-related adults in a room, as in some of our smaller churches, a floater is used to “wander” the hallway and provide assistance as needed.



# 6 Month Rule

It is expected that volunteers demonstrate an active relationship in good standing with your local congregation for at least 6 months before being allowed to work closely with children. Some churches allow for 6 months of attendance. Others require 6 months of full membership.



# Doors and Windows

Every classroom should have a window in the door.

If there is not a window doors should remain open while children/youth are present



# Sign in – Sign out Procedures

- Each Sunday School classroom has a clip board that parents are to sign in and sign out there children.
- Never let children leave the room without an parent or guardian present.



# Potty Policy

- Diapering – open, visible area
- Supervised Independence – let them ask
- Let children have complete privacy – unless an emergency; get parents if needed
- Check the bathroom first!



# Youth Ministry Guidelines And Policy



# Overnight

- Never share a bed with a child
- Never be alone in a room with a child
- Adults must be of the same gender as the students they are chaperoning.
- Unrelated male/female adult leadership for coed overnight activities.
- Non-overnight, coed gatherings, the presence of unrelated male/female adults is strongly recommended.



# Hotel Settings

- Adults should never be in a room with just one child.
- Doors should open to a hallway
- Adjoining rooms are best with same sex and age.



# Cabin Setting

2 adults in a large room with multiple bunk beds

if possible adult take area apart from youth in large room.



# Church- Rented Vehicles

- Must be 25 years old to 70 years old
- Driver must have Proper insurance
- 2 adult rule
- Keep passenger records on board
- When operating a rental vehicle the driver should:
  - have completed van driver training
  - be pre-approved by the church's insurer
  - not be otherwise disqualified from driving (i.e., under medication, extremely tired, under the influence of mind altering substances etc.)



# Personal Vehicles

- Adult must be 25yrs or older
- 2 adult rule exception: Caravan
- NO Youth driving other youth
- Youth driving themselves only to church or directly to activity i.e. bowling alley, movie cinema etc...



# The Obvious

- **Never** counsel the opposite sex behind closed doors.
- **Never** visit children and youth home alone
- **Watch** your dress, language, ATF activities
- **Photography**—Pictures of church events may be posted around the church facilities. However, a signed waiver must be on file to post pictures of church members or guests on the internet.
- **Medication**—SJUMC is committed to providing for the health and safety of all participants in its ministries, programs and events. However, **SJUMC will not administer medication of any kind.**



SJUMC will be diligent in  
**Recruiting & Screening** by  
using these tools with all adults who are part of  
SJUMC Ministries.

For Staff **AND** Volunteers :

- Application process
- Criminal background check
- Safe Sanctuary training



# Reporting Rubric

- Secure safety of victim
- Report to immediate Senior Pastor or Director of Ministry for Children and Youth.
- Pray and set a guard over your lips





Senior Pastor Jay Hogewood  
(225) 772-3550  
[pastorjay@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:pastorjay@stjohnsbr.org)

Lorri McGuire  
Director of Ministries for Children & Youth  
[lorrymcguire@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:lorrymcguire@stjohnsbr.org)

