

East Marion United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedure

1. After adoption of the Safe Sanctuary Policy by the Church Council, all new attendees and/or members will be required to wait six months before they can be a child/youth worker in any capacity.
2. All child/youth workers: a) will review and sign the participation covenant statement, b) agree to a background check, if needed, c) attend an initial training session and yearly reviews, d) adhere to all safe sanctuary policies.
3. Every room that is used for activities and teaching of children and youth will have the door left open at all times. An adult (roamer) will be assigned to move between child/youth classrooms at random times during meeting or teaching time.
4. Counseling sessions will be conducted with the door open. Preferably others will be nearby but not necessarily within easy listening distance.
5. Other than in emergency situations, no one under the age of eighteen will be in charge of a youth/child group.
6. At least one adult present at every church activity involving children/youth should be trained in basic first aid and CPR. A first aid kit will be assessable during all meeting/teaching times.
7. Parents/guardians will be supplied with complete details regarding any events in which their children will be participating. Written permission will be obtained for any event that will be overnight and/or not held on church property. A proper amount of notice will be given to parents/guardians. Adequate adult supervision will be provided for all activities. Child/youth groups will not be left unattended.
8. A congregational education meeting will be held during the first quarter of the year following adoption of this policy. This will include general information related to all types of child abuse, how to recognize the sign/symptoms of abuse and information on the church's policy as well as state and local reporting requirements. A session with children providing them with general age appropriate information will also be given. After the initial meetings, others will be held as needed.
9. Discipline for children and youth involved in activities will not involve any type of corporal punishment. Discipline will include "time out" and loss of privileges. Parents/guardians will be notified of any disciplinary actions taken.
10. All records and files related to Safe Sanctuary will be maintained with other church policies. Access will be limited to church officers, i.e. Administrative Council Head, Secretary, Treasurer, lay leader, and Pastor.
11. In the event of a case of alleged child abuse, all local and state laws will be followed. North Carolina law requires all citizens to report known or suspected abuse cases. A form will be provided in the Safe Sanctuary package. Reports will be made to local DSS and one of the church officers. *Always remember the victim is our first concern!*
12. Report of abuse will be given not only to DSS officials and local officials, but also to denominational officials. The Administrative Council Head will be in charge of this as well as dealing with the media if necessary.
13. A meeting of the full church body will be held following an allegation of abuse. The absolute truth must be told. It must be remembered that the name of the victim(s) should never be released to anyone other than approved authorities. The name of the accused should not be released until necessary. The church must be assured that the proper steps, the victim's safety and the continuation of the church's ministry have been followed. Representatives of the conference, such as the District Superintendent, should be present at the meeting.
14. The church will refer the victim and family, as needed, to professional Christian counseling.
15. The family of the accused will also need support and counseling, but this may be better obtained from another church source. Premature forgiveness to the abuser should never be given. Pressure should never be brought on the victim to forgive.

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16. Prayer and genuine support from the church family should always be available and given
17. New church members will be given a copy of this policy. A copy of the policy will be posted on the bulletin board and made a part of the church records.
18. This entire policy will be reviewed annually with changes made as needed. Administrative Council will be the governing body of changes.
19. The church will maintain adequate insurance to cover any legal problems which may arise from child abuse allegations.