

Memphis Annual Conference
of the United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Adopted at Annual Conference 2005

The Safe Sanctuaries proposal did pass at Annual Conference 2005. These polices come to each Congregation with strong recommendation for routine observance. It is also strongly recommended that each congregation adopt it's own Safe Sanctuaries policy. If you are not familiar with the policy requirements and have any contact with children or youth, please go to: [http://www.memphis-umc.org/Library/Documents/Safe Sanctuaries/index.htm](http://www.memphis-umc.org/Library/Documents/Safe_Sanctuaries/index.htm) This material should be kept for future reference. What follows is a brief synopsis of the complete policy of the Annual Conference:

Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Notes

The following information is being offered to provide general information to protect our children and in case you need to report child abuse from any area of your life, i.e., you note that a child your son/daughter plays with has unexplainable bruises or injuries, you repetitively see a child out begging for food at your local grocery, etc.

Reducing the risk of abuse

Following these policies will reduce the risks for our children and youth. However, they also serve to protect our leaders from false accusations of abuse.

Minimum Age: Volunteers and staff must be 4 years older than the age of the persons that they will be working to serve. The youngest a volunteer may be is 14.

Adult/Child ratios - different number for child care at different ages as well as care in residential/camping experiences.

6 Month Rule: All volunteers must have been a member of a congregation for six months before they will be allowed to serve in the areas of children and youth ministries. Persons not meeting this requirement may serve only as an assistant with another qualified adult.

Two-Adult Rule: Two adults are to be utilized in all close-quarter programming with children and youth. This is a minimum that then falls in compliance with the adult/child ratios. Where it is possible to staff two adults in every room, have an additional adult serve as a floater with visual and physical access to all areas. NOT

Rooming: It is preferred that no adult room with any youth or child in a hotel, cabin, tent or other similar situation. If this is necessary because of limited space, an adult may not sleep in the same bed as a youth or child unless they are the parent or guardian of that child.

Transportation: Always have more than one adult or more than one child in a vehicle. Policy instruction: All volunteers and paid staff must go through policy instruction and educational training once a year.

All paid staff (including clergy) will fill out the new "Employment Application" and have a criminal convictions and motor vehicle checks done.

All current and new volunteers will fill out a "Volunteer Form" and have the appropriate checks done according to which age level they work with.

Legal Considerations

Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi law requires volunteers who work with children under the age of eighteen to report any type of suspected child abuse to the proper authorities. Any volunteer who makes such a report in "good faith" is protected by law from any form of liability. But failure to make such a report can give rise to criminal and/or civil liability. You may report in "good faith" anonymously.

Reporting Steps

- 1) If suspected child abuse has occurred, contact the appropriate agency below: (this is as per

the "Legal Considerations" stated above) McCracken County 270-575-7105 or 270-575-7110

2) If immediate danger exists to a child, contact, Police, Sheriff or Highway Patrol immediately and wait for their arrival or follow their instructions.

3) Incidents of child abuse or reasonably suspected cases of abuse, whether allegedly perpetrated by individuals associated with the church or outside of the church shall be reported to the director of the pertinent program director.

4) The pertinent program director will then follow the guidelines set forth in the Safe Sanctuaries policy. All facts and circumstances of an incident shall be documented by the program director with the cooperation of the reporting person. All steps taken in the handling of the incident and/or report shall be documented. The program director shall inform the Senior Minister. An additional report shall be made with one of the three organizations listed in #1. The Senior Minister shall file a report to the church legal counsel, who will notify the liability insurer for the church, if the person being suspected as an abuser possibly did so as a staff or volunteer in behalf of the church. The parents/guardians of the suspected victim shall be notified immediately unless the parents are the alleged perpetrators or it is suspected that the parents are involved. In-depth investigation shall be carried out by the civil authorities rather than by church personnel.

5) The Senior Minister shall be the sole spokesperson for the Church insofar as media inquiries are concerned.

Emotional Considerations

1) Adults are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for child abuse. They should not hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are, or may appear to be, inappropriate.

2) Children are to be believed. Stay calm and reassure the child that everything is going to be okay. Reassure the child that you are concerned about what happened to him/her and that you would like to get some help. Since reporting is required, the child should be told that you have to tell the proper authorities, but that you will not tell anyone else.

3) Persons accused must be treated with dignity and support. Such persons shall be immediately relieved of further responsibilities until the investigation is completed and the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

Confidentially

CONFIDENTIALITY OF ALL PERSONS INVOLVED SHALL BE SAFEGUARDED. What happens after a report is filed? Every report of suspected abuse will be investigated by the appropriate agency.

In cases of extreme physical and sexual abuse, a review team consisting of a physician, a psychologist or psychiatrist, a social worker and a state department of human/child services employee will prepare a report for the local Juvenile Court and Prosecuting Attorney's office.

Why do most child victims of sexual abuse keep the abuse secret? A victim of child sexual abuse is under a great deal of pressure to keep the abuse secret. In many cases of child molestation, the molester has threatened to harm the child or a member of the child's family.

The molester might have told the child that he would not be believed even if the child did tell.

Another common situation is that the molester will tell the child that if the child tells about the abuse, he/she will get into trouble.

The clear message is given to the child that if another person finds out, something bad will happen to the child. This pressure to maintain silence can often be successfully overcome by establishing open communication between children and adults through a proper educational program for children.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FOR MEMPHIS CONFERENCE
(Please print or type)

Name _____ SS# _____ Male () Female ()
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____ How long at present address? _____
 Previous Address _____ How long at this address? _____
 I am () Adult.....Occupation _____
 () Student..... Age _____ Current Grade _____ Birthdate _____
 School _____
 Church _____ How long at this church? _____
 Pastor's Name _____ Phone Number _____
 Emergency Contact Name _____ Phone Number _____

Volunteer Position desired _____
 Present Employer _____ May we inquire of your employer? _____
 Have you ever applied here before? _____ If so, when? _____ Position? _____
 Who referred you? _____

References: (Not immediate family and over the age of 21)			
1.	_____	_____	_____
	Name		Address
()	_____	()	_____
	Business Phone	Home Phone	How long have you known this person? _____
2.	_____	_____	_____
	Name		Address
()	_____	()	_____
	Business Phone	Home Phone	How long have you known this person? _____

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**FORM FOR REFERENCE INQUIRY**

Please complete this form as it relates to this person and his/her characteristics and qualifications to work with children or youth. Return the completed form to:
[Your Church Name and Address]

Applicant's Name:

How long have you known the applicant?

In what capacity?

Does he/she work well with others?

How would you rate him/her in the following areas? Please give explanations.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Do Not Know
Personal Habits					
Character					
Morals					
Compassion for those in need					
Responsible to complete commitments					
Emotional stability					
Christian maturity					
Receives constructive criticism well					
Health					
Other Comments?					

Reference inquiry completed by: _____ Date _____

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FOR MEMPHIS CONFERENCE
(Please print or type)

Name _____ SS# _____ Male () Female ()
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ How long at present address? _____
Previous Address _____ How long at this address? _____
I am () Adult.....Occupation _____
() Student..... Age _____ Current Grade _____ Birthdate _____
School _____
Church _____ How long at this church? _____
Pastor's Name _____ Phone Number _____
Emergency Contact Name _____ Phone Number _____

Employment Desired:

Position desired _____ Salary desired _____
Present Employer _____ May we inquire of your employer? _____
Have you ever applied here before? _____ If so, when? _____ Position? _____
Who referred you? _____

References: (Not immediate family and over the age of 21)		
1.	_____	_____
	Name	Address
()	()	How long have you known this person? _____
Business Phone	Home Phone	
2.	_____	_____
	Name	Address
()	()	How long have you known this person? _____
Business Phone	Home Phone	

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Morals					
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Responsible to complete commitments					
Emotional stability					
Christian maturity					
Receives constructive criticism well					
Health					
Other Comments? _____					

Reference inquiry completed by: _____ Date _____

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are some suggested questions which may be used in an interview.

1. Why are you interested in being associated with (organization)?
2. How would you describe (or identify) yourself?
3. When you read the job description, what appealed to you the most?
4. What specific skills do you bring to this job?
5. With what age group and sex do you prefer to work? Why? Please give examples of your work with this age group.
6. If you are trained are you willing to work with other age groups or sex?
7. What kinds of programs or activities would you be willing to lead, supervise or conduct? If trained would you be willing to conduct other activities?
8. What do you feel are chief indicators of a successful program or activity?
9. Give a specific example of how you overcame a difficulty in job, school or family.
10. Give an example of how you overcame a problem with a youngster other than your own. How were you disciplined as a child? How would/do you discipline?
11. Under what supervision style do you work best?
12. In what types of activities or recreation do you participate?
13. What were your favorite subjects in school?
14. What would you like to tell us that hasn't been covered?
15. What questions do you have about our organization?
16. Other questions as raised re: information given on application form.

One might conclude the interview with one or two hypothetical situations which are typical in your organization and ask the applicant how they would respond in that situation.