

**Atlantic United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuary Policy
Children and Youth**

INTRODUCTION

Our Covenant as God's people at Atlantic United Methodist Church (AUMC) leads us to treat all persons –visitors, congregants, volunteers, and staff--who come through our doors with human dignity and respect. We are committed to providing a safe place to worship, pray, study, witness, minister, be in fellowship, meet, work, conduct business and simply have fun. We are especially committed to helping assure the physical safety, emotional well-being, and spiritual health of the children and youth who attend AUMC. We are also committed to supporting our staff and volunteers who interact with children and youth.

PURPOSE

Our purpose in establishing this Safe Sanctuary Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of children and youth, to mitigate risk where abuse can occur and to help ensure volunteers, staff, and clergy who interact with children and youth are protected against unfounded accusations.

STATEMENT OF COVENANT

The Atlantic United Methodist Church pledges to conduct all activities involving children and youth in ways to help assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children and youth. We will be prudent in the selection and recruitment of staff; we will implement appropriate operational procedures in all activities and events; and we will educate our staff and volunteers regarding the implementation of appropriate policies and procedures. We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of the State of Maryland law. We will support our staff and volunteers where accusation(s) are determined to be unfounded.

Definitions

The SAFE TEAM will be comprised of representatives from the Trustees, Children and Youth Ministries and the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the Pastor. The SAFE TEAM will perform an annual review of this policy and ensure the implementation of the policy.

A designated member of the Safe team will annually work to:

- Ensure criminal background clearances are made for all paid staff and volunteers
- Ensure background checks and confidential documentation are scanned into the church's record keeping system and then shredded.

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since that time) will be reviewed. The decision about this person being accepted as a Safe Sanctuary Partner will be made by the AUMC Safe team.

Records

Safe team records relative to paid staff and volunteers shall be scanned into the church's confidential database system and then shredded.

Training

New paid staff and volunteers that will be working with children and youth shall receive orientation training in the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, in "First Aid" and "CPR". Training will be repeated on an annual basis to all staff and volunteers whose responsibilities include interaction with children and youth. Paid staff and volunteers shall complete and sign a covenant statement acknowledging training and their understanding of the requirements and reporting procedures.

Fire Drills

The Safe team representative shall work to ensure fire drills are performed at least annually.

PROCEDURES FOR THE SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITHIN THE CHURCH

Purpose of Procedures

To provide protection to children and youth from the risk of abuse, and to provide the staff person or volunteer protection from unfounded accusations concerning the abuse of children and youth.

Interpersonal Boundaries

All paid staff and volunteers shall be provided information on "Appropriate Interpersonal Boundaries." These boundaries are to be maintained between adults, children and youth so that they may experience relationships that are healthy physically and spiritually. Adults must role model respectful and nurturing behaviors that do not interfere with another person's privacy. Examples include appropriate: dress, language, and demonstrations of affection.

The Two Adult- Rule

The Safe Sanctuary Policy of AUMC satisfies the "two adult rule" by appointing the second adult as a "roamer" that moves in and out of locations with groups of youth and children. All rooms used for children and youth activities have windows that provide visual contact from public areas. These windows are to be left uncovered so that the roamer can easily view what is going on in the room.

Age of Staff or Volunteers

AUMC will assure that children and youth of the church are under the supervision of a staff person or volunteer that is a least 18 years of age. A teen helper may work with young children

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pictures on the church website. No identifying information regarding the child shall be including on the Internet.

Use of Bathrooms

During AUMC activities the procedure for use of bathrooms by children and youth will include: children under five will be escorted to the bathroom. A buddy system for children will be practiced.

Inspection of Facilities

The trustees will conduct an annual review of all AUMC facilities accommodating children and youth, including but not limited to Sunday School rooms and doors, age and activity appropriate equipment, first aid kits and fire extinguishers, and 911 postings by all phones.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY AND PROCEDURES

AUMC will provide an annual orientation for paid staff, volunteers and parents regarding Safe Sanctuary procedures and requirements. This orientation should take place at the beginning of the school year and the start of the new Sunday School season. All volunteers must have access to and read the Safe Sanctuaries policy and sign the Participation Covenant as an assurance of compliance.

If an accident occurs with the Sunday School or Youth program, it should be documented in writing and reported to the parents as well as to the Pastor. A review of the accident should be completed with the approved parties, including a representative of the Trustees, to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence. The responsible adult supervising the activity should take charge of the event and the follow-up activities and review.

Serious incidents including those involving fighting, alcohol, drug use or stealing should be reported to the Pastor and documented in writing.

Windows next to classroom doors should be remain uncovered by decorations. If a room does not have a door with a window or a window next to it, the door should remain open at all times.

At no times shall a child be left unattended by a supervising adult while in AUMC building or in proximity if on a field trip. A single youth or child shall not be in a staff member or volunteer's home without another non-relative adult unless the event has been arranged by the parents outside of the program and activities of the church. A children's play-date after school would be an example.

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- Within 24 hours the Pastor shall gather the “SAFE TEAM” to review the allegation and shall remain involved through resolution of the allegation.
- The SAFE TEAM will assure that the proper authorities have been notified.
- The SAFE TEAM will assure that the alleged abuser has been removed from contact with the child or youth.
- The SAFE TEAM shall maintain the strictest confidentiality to protect the alleged child or youth victim as well as the members of the Team.
- The SAFE TEAM shall complete the Report of the Suspected Incident of Child Abuse as a record of the actions taken.
- The Pastor shall contact the District Superintendent who will report the alleged incident to the Conference as required by Pen-Del Conference.
- The SAFE TEAM will gather as much information about the incident as possible without interfering with the official investigation of the incident.
- Only the AUMC Pastor, or an officially appointed designee, will be the official spokesperson for providing information either internally to the church, or externally to the media.

Safe Sanctuary Policy approved by AUMC Administrative Council this 29th Day of August, 2017.

Approved by:

Patricia S. Frucio

Pastor

9/24/2017

Date

John B. White

Administrative Council Chair

9-24-2017

Date