

Safe Sanctuary Policy
Christian Endeavor United Methodist Church, Newark, Ohio
October 2015

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Matthew 19-14

Purpose

We commit to provide a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults at Christian Endeavor United Methodist Church (CE) as they grow in their relationship with God. Also, this policy will protect both paid and volunteer staff from potential false allegations of neglect or abuse and protect the church as a whole.

Our Covenant

In an effort to provide a safe community, CE, requires all church employees and registered volunteers who come into contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to commit themselves to the Safe Sanctuary Policy for the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults who participate in the CE activities.

- ❖ We pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner consistent with the teachings of Christ.
- ❖ We will guard our thoughts and tongues, will refrain from behaviors which corrupt our witness for Christ.
- ❖ Our actions and choices will reflect prudence, purity of heart and an earnest love for the will of God.
- ❖ We will provide education for our staff and volunteers on Safe Sanctuary procedures.
- ❖ We will implement procedures in our ministries to protect those who are vulnerable.
- ❖ We will inform parents of our policies and procedures.
- ❖ We will clearly define procedures for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the law of the State of Ohio.

Definitions

Adults: Persons age eighteen or over.

Youth: Persons attending Grades 7-12

Child: Persons birth through Grade 6.

Vulnerable Adult: An individual, age 18 or over, who, because of age, developmental disability, mental illness, or physical handicap requires supervision or personal care and lacks personal and social skills required to live independently.

Staff: Any paid member identified through selection or appointment holding responsibility or authority within CE and/or the District or West Ohio Conference.

Volunteer: Any unpaid person who donates his/her time, skills, and efforts in an activity which a child, youth, or vulnerable adult participates.

Registered Volunteer: A person that has been specifically identified by CE Staff as a volunteer that is required to submit an application and complete a background check.

General Procedures

Staff and volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will receive a copy of CE Safe Sanctuary Policy.

Parents or Guardians of children, youth and vulnerable adults may pick up a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy in each classroom. This policy will also be made available for download at www.christianendeavorumc.org.

The Safe Sanctuary Policy will be placed in new member packets and available for pick-up in the church office.

A committee of four people will review the CE Safe Sanctuary Policy and Implementation Manual every two years. The committee will consist of:

- Lay Representative of Staff Parish Relations

- Lay Representative of Youth Ministries

- Staff Representative of Children/Family Ministry (responsible for initiating review)

Safe Sanctuary Training will be conducted every February by the Director of Family Ministry and/or Director of Youth and Young Adult ministries/or the lead pastor. Additional training will be made available as necessary. A record of attendance will be kept.

All church staff and volunteers who have contact with children will complete yearly Safe Sanctuary Training.

All adults serving with children, youth, and /or vulnerable adults shall sign a statement acknowledging that they have reviewed the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures. The statement will also acknowledge that they agree to adhere to said policy. They also agree to participate in a training program regarding the prevention of child abuse and ways of dealing with suspected child abuse or molestation. This will be a part of Safe Sanctuary Training.

The paid staff and volunteers will be encouraged to be first-aid and CPR certified by the American Red Cross yearly. At least one training per year will be hosted by CE.

The paid staff and volunteers will be provided with yearly training on:

- State Laws regarding child abuse

Recognizing signs of:

Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Neglect abuse, Sexual abuse, Ritual abuse,
Self-inflicted abuse and Suicidal thinking and actions

Serving with Kids and Youth Screening Procedures

Any adult who is interested in serving in a position with children/youth and/or vulnerable adults that has been identified as requiring registration will complete and return a servant registration packet, which will be reviewed by the staff person in that ministry area.

All staff and volunteers working with children/youth/vulnerable adults must complete a background check every three years. The background check will be conducted through the CE unless the staff/volunteer provides a verified statement/copy from another entity showing a background check was successfully completed within the three years.

Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will indicate the need for further review by two staff people, one being the lead pastor. They will determine whether this person seeking to serve as a volunteer with children, youth, and vulnerable adults is eligible to do so. The lead pastor and staff person may establish additional guidelines for a person of concern to follow for a period of time. Until such time as the determination is complete, this person shall not serve as a volunteer.

Supervision

Except as provided below, at least two trained unrelated adults (18 years of age or older) who have been part of the congregation at least 6 months shall be present at all times during any function, program, and /or activity sponsored by CE involving children, youth, and or vulnerable including but not limited to childcare. ** An exception to being a part of the congregation for 6 months may be made for outside groups who are permitted to use CE for their activities

There must be a span of at least 3 years between the age of the children/youth and the volunteer /staff members.

All classrooms will have an unblocked window in the door.

The classroom door will remain open if one adult needs to leave the room for a brief moment.

CE staff and volunteers must always avoid the appearance of impropriety. They must take precautions to avoid being alone with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Individual counseling should be conducted in an environment that provides visibility to at least one other adult.

Children younger than six years of age should be assisted in the restroom by an adult as needed. Elementary school age children should be escorted to the restroom by an adult. Adults escorting elementary school age children to the restroom should first check to make sure the restroom is safe and then wait outside the restroom for the child(ren).

All children or youth participating in overnight activities will have the written consent of a parent or guardian. Overnight mixed-gender activities will be supervised by at least two males and two females.

For overnight trips, there will be two adults for each gender that is going. There should be separate rooms for the adults and the children and youth. If that is not possible, the adults sleep in a different part of the room from the children and/or youth.

Staff and volunteers will release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or other authorized persons.

Staff and volunteers will use positive reinforcement, positive redirection and parent conferences to discipline children and youth. No inappropriate language or corporal punishment will be permitted under any circumstances, including but not limited to spanking, hitting, grabbing, or shaking.

Reporting Physical Injury and/or Alleged or Suspected Sexual Abuse

Reporting Physical Injury

Every serious incident that results in physical injury will be reported to the pastor and a written report will be submitted to the pastor as soon as practicable following the injury, including but not limited to:

- Identities of both the staff/volunteer and the affected child or youth
- Date, time, location
- Nature of the injury
- Name, complete address and telephone of the person making the report
- Steps taken to take care of the injury, including names of caretakers
- Notification of parents/guardian
- NOTE: This report should be descriptive in nature and describe the facts that are known.

Reporting Alleged or Suspected Sexual Abuse

Every incident of alleged or suspected abuse and/or neglect of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult will be immediately reported to each of the following:

- Paid staff in charge
- Lead pastor
- County Children's Services Agency and/or Police or Sheriff Department
- NOTE: This reporting is done by the person having first knowledge of the suspected abuse/neglect

Every person having knowledge of any incident of alleged or suspected child abuse will submit a written report to the senior pastor as soon as practicable following the incident. This report must include but is not limited to:

- Identities of staff/volunteer or other individual(s) and the affected child, youth, or vulnerable adult
- Date, time, location
- Nature of the abuse
- Name, complete address and telephone number of the person making the report
- Specific details presented or observances of the incident.

- This information is to be kept in a secure location. The person reporting must acknowledge the need for strict confidentiality.

The pastor or the pastor's designee will immediately report any incident of alleged or suspected abuse to the parent(s) or guardian of the child youth or vulnerable adult involved, the CE insurer, Leadership Chair, and, as appropriate, the Staff Parish Relations representative. Otherwise, this information is kept in strict confidence.

Any incident of alleged or suspected child or youth abuse involving a pastor will also be reported immediately to the District Superintendent.

Communications with the media concerning any incident of alleged or suspected abuse must be made only by a CE designated spokesperson

A person accused of any incident of alleged or suspected child abuse will not be permitted to volunteer at any child or youth activity until the incident has been fully investigated and a determination has been made by the CE lead pastor and staff person in that ministry area that no actual abuse occurred.

Anyone verified having committed actual abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult will not be permitted to supervise or have interaction with children, youth, or vulnerable adults from that point forward. A covenantal relationship must be arranged if he or she wants to return to the church. A covenant may be designed to allow them to return to worship, with appropriate parameters and behavior monitoring as determined by CE lead pastor and leadership chair.

The Christian Endeavor United Methodist Church is committed to following the Safe Sanctuary Policy and procedures in order to provide the best environment for all God's people to thrive and grow. This is simply one more way to take seriously the words of covenant we share each time we baptize a child, youth, or adult. "We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness that they may grow in their trust of God."

This policy is to be effective as of October 1, 2015.

Revisions: