

Safe Sanctuaries Policy
Winterville United Methodist Church
Winterville, Georgia

Approved by Administrative Council: _____

Submitted to Charge Conference: _____

Introduction

In April 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child and vulnerable adult abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:*

Jesus said, "whoever welcomes a child...welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God. Jesus also said, "It any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 8:6).

Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to children, youth, and vulnerable adults as well as one another. In keeping with these principles, Winterville United Methodist Church believes that the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults is imperative. We must do all we can to nurture and protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy is intended to provide a guide for that protection, as well as the protection of our adult workers, staff, volunteers, and the church. This policy is enacted to insure that the parents, members, volunteers, and staff of Winterville United Methodist Church have a clear understanding of what the policies and procedures are regarding the safety of all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

The leadership of Winterville United Methodist Church requests the cooperation of all in our church, as they must abide by the guidelines of this policy.

Definitions

For the intent of this policy and its interpretation at Winterville United Methodist Church (WUMC):

- Child—any person from infancy to 5th grade
- Youth—any person between 6th grade and 18 years old
- Vulnerable Adult*-- any person over the age of 18 who may be more at risk for abuse because of mental, physical, or psychological challenges and is unable to make responsible legal decisions about his or her own welfare; also includes the elderly, which is defined as 65 years and older.
- Primary Worker—the primary leader(s) of youth and children's activities
- Secondary Worker—persons who assist the primary worker and act at the direction of the primary worker.
- Floater—a person with the role of being actively present and available to assist in different classrooms, activities, etc. as needed

Who is Covered by this Policy

This policy applies to and must be adhered to by all staff, volunteers, youth volunteers, and church groups both on and off the church campus. Groups who use the church facilities for meetings or other activities must also adhere to this policy.

Supervision and Maintenance of the Policy

The Administrative Council, or its designated representative, shall maintain all documentation necessary for implementing and monitoring this policy. This policy governs all activities sponsored by WUMC that involve children and youth under the age of 18 or any individual considered to be a vulnerable adult.

The church staff and volunteers who supervise children, youth, and vulnerable adults are charged with enforcing the policy and procedures herein. Any violation of this policy can result in immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment to another area of work at the discretion of SPPR (for paid staff) or the Administrative Council (volunteers).

Anyone who suspects this policy is not being enforced should bring it to the attention of the Administrative Council Chair, who serves as the Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, and will then take appropriate corrective action and/or escalate as needed.

Any changes to this policy must be in writing and approved by the SPPR Committee and the Trustees before being submitted for final approval by the Administrative Council.

The Safe Sanctuaries Policy should be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis, or sooner as needs arise.

Specific Policies and Procedures

I. Requirements for Workers

- a. Primary Workers: (*the primary leader(s) of youth and children's activities*) To work with youth (ages 6th grade and above) primary workers must be a minimum of 21 years of age and at least 5 years older than the oldest youth with whom they will be working; To volunteer with children (infant through 5th grade) the primary worker must be at least 18 years of age. In addition all Primary workers must:
 - i. Attend bi-annual Safe Sanctuaries training
 - ii. Obtain CPR and First Aid certification
- b. Secondary Workers: (*persons who assist the primary worker and act at the direction of the primary worker*) Whether working with youth or children, secondary workers must be :
 - i. At least 5 years older than the children or youth with whom they are working (example: a 15 year old may, with Primary Worker supervision,

assist with children 10 years old and younger; i.e. Youth volunteering with Faith Kidz)

- ii. In the judgment of the WUMC staff member, competent to assist in the activity
- iii. Attend bi-annual Safe Sanctuaries training, which may be conducted by a qualified Primary Worker in the interim between formal Conference Safe Sanctuaries training sessions.

- c. Floaters: (a person with the role of being actively present and available to assist in different classrooms, activities, etc. as needed) floaters must meet the same requirements as Primary Workers

II. Requirements for Volunteers

- a. Any person wishing to work with youth, children, or vulnerable adults must have been an active member or consistent and active visitor of the church for a minimum of 6 consecutive months before being allowed to volunteer. This requirement may be waived by the Pastor or Administrative Council when needed (see Exceptions Procedure below).
- b. After a 6 month welcome period, new volunteers may begin in the capacity of Secondary Worker until the appropriate Safe Sanctuaries training(s) have occurred.

III. Background Checks

- a. Any Primary Worker involved in activities with children, youth, or vulnerable adults must submit to national and state criminal background checks every five (5) years.
- b. A history of sex crimes or violent felonies will automatically disqualify a candidate from working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. All other histories will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Administrative Council. Any individual who is disqualified as a volunteer will be counseled and encouraged to find another area in which to serve.

IV. Required Trainings

- a. All Primary workers and paid staff must be certified in CPR and First Aid.
- b. Secondary Workers and volunteers are encouraged to obtain CPR and First Aid certifications, but are not required to do so until such a time as they become Primary Workers

V. Classroom Procedures

- a. Two Worker Rule
 - i. In all classrooms and group activities involving children or youth, there must be at least one Primary Worker and one Secondary Worker when children or youth are present. The same applies with visits or activities with vulnerable adults. This procedure is for the protection of everyone.
 - ii. Married couples only count as one unit, thus requiring another qualified worker to be present to meet the recommended two-worker rule.

- b. Classroom Doors
 - i. Classroom doors must remain open at all times. The bottom section of a Dutch door may be closed, but the top section must remain open at all times.
 - ii. Classroom doors with windows may be closed so long as the window is clear of any decorations and the entire classroom is fully visible.
- c. Open Door Counseling
 - i. Any one-on-one counseling sessions with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult should be done with an open door if possible. If the nature of the counseling requires a closed door, a second adult should be notified and instructed to remain close by but not necessarily within hearing distance.
 - ii. Those in the room should sit in an arrangement such that they are visible through the door or window.
- d. First Aid
 - i. All classrooms, nursery rooms, kitchen, and common areas should be equipped with First Aid Kits
 - ii. All paid staff and Primary Workers must be certified in CPR and First Aid. It is advised that all volunteers participate in First Aid certification, when available.

VI. Faith Kidz

- a. Primary workers should arrive no less than 15 minutes before the beginning of any meeting to ensure children are not alone or unsupervised. In addition:
 - i. The Faith Kidz must follow the two-worker rule and open door policies outlined above.
 - ii. To ensure the safety of our children, parents/guardians will be asked to complete "Faith Kidz Info Sheets" for their child(ren) effective May 8, 2013.
 - 1. The Children's Director is responsible for maintaining copies of each sheet in a secure location within the Faith Kidz room and obtaining copies for each new child.
 - iii. On Wednesday nights Faith Kidz will release at 7:30pm. To ensure children are supervised at all times, parents MUST come up to the Faith Kidz room to pick up their child(ren).
 - iv. Adult Primary or Secondary workers must escort children to the bathroom, knocking on the door to be sure the bathroom is empty before a child enters. The adult should stand outside the bathroom and wait for the child.

1. If a child requires assistance in the bathroom, the adult must leave the bathroom door open and assist.
2. No child is permitted to go to the bathroom unsupervised or with any volunteer under the age of 18. This includes youth volunteers in any capacity.
- v. Faith Kidz will not be released without a parent/guardian present
- vi. Faith Kidz not picked up by 7:45 will be taken to the fellowship hall to wait/reunite with their parent
- vii. Volunteers will be required to wear "VOLUNTEER" badges during all Faith Kidz activities
- viii. Youth volunteers who have attended Safe Sanctuaries training may volunteer with the Faith Kidz if, and only if:
 1. The youth volunteer is at least 5+ years older than the children he/she is helping
 2. ALL volunteers must wear "VOLUNTEER" badge at all times during Faith Kidz meeting time, including dinner
 3. The youth volunteer MUST personally advise the Youth Director that they have chosen to volunteer with Faith Kidz instead of attending Youth activities
 4. MUST stay with the Faith Kidz group the entire meeting time (5:30-7:30)
 5. MUST be actively engaged in Faith Kidz activities, helping, leading, etc.
 6. Youth volunteers shall NEVER take children to the bathroom
 7. Youth volunteers MUST never be the only non-Faith Kid present; a Primary Worker must be present with the volunteer at all times
- ix. Faith Kidz Primary or Secondary Workers may ask youth volunteers to leave at any time, for any reason

VII. Youth Fellowship

- a. Primary workers should arrive no less than 15 minutes before the beginning of any meeting to ensure youth are not alone or unsupervised. In addition:
 - i. WUMYF must follow the two-worker rule and open door policies outlined above.
 - ii. Youth parents will be asked to complete "Youth Info Sheets" for each youth member within the group.
 - 1. The Youth Director is responsible for maintaining copies of each sheet in a secure location within the Youth room and obtaining copies for each new youth.
 - iii. Youth are not permitted to drive or ride with other youth, except immediate family members, to or from church functions.
 - iv. During youth events, "couples" should be seated apart during lessons
 - v. Youth members must never be left alone or unsupervised for games or lessons

VIII. Procedures of Off-site Activities

- a. Permission Slips:
 - i. Any off-site activities with children or youth require a permission slip (sample at back) with, at minimum, the participant's name, emergency contact information, and any allergies or medical considerations as well as parent/guardian signature which serves as consent for the child or youth to participate in the off-site activity.
 - ii. The Primary Worker associated with the off-site activity is responsible for maintaining copies of signed permissions slips for the duration of the activity or trip
- b. Transportation:
 - i. Church-approved volunteers may provide transportation to and from WUMC activities held away from the church. Drivers must be a minimum of 21 years old with valid insurance.
 - ii. If there is only one vehicle, there must be two adults present. The non-driving adult must be 18 years or older.
 - iii. Youth are not permitted to ride in a vehicle driven by another youth except in cases of immediate family members, such as siblings.
 - iv. Seat belts must be worn at all times.
 - v. Youth "couples" may not be seated together in the same row (side by side) during transportation via the church bus; they may, however be seated one in front of the other.
- c. Sleeping Arrangements
 - i. On church-sponsored overnight trips, motel-style room settings should be avoided. Bunk-style housing is always preferred.

- ii. If motel-style housing must be used, adults must never share a room with youth or children.
- iii. In bunk-type housing, at least two adults should be present in each room.
- iv. Adults should shower and dress privately when possible.

IX. Social and other Media

- a. The church may operate a public Facebook page to showcase church missions, activities, and events.
- b. Any church-specific groups relating to children (i.e. Faith Kidz parent group or youth) must be closed (non-public) groups that require the group administrator's approval for adding new members.
- c. Individual photographs of children should not be posted on social media except by their own parents; group photographs may be posted with parent/guardian permission only in church-related groups.
- d. In classrooms, no photographs with individual children or youth names should be posted
- e. Photos of children and youth may not be published knowingly by the church, except with a parent/guardian's express written consent

Reporting Requirements

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to ensure that any suspected incident of abuse is treated seriously and preserves the privacy of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult making the allegations and the alleged abuser.

Definitions

For the intents of this policy:

Physical Abuse shall be any injury to any child, youth, or vulnerable adult by a parent or caretakers, which results in bruises, welts, fractures, burns, cuts, or internal injuries.

Sexual Abuse shall mean any sexual activity with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult which includes direct physical contact or sharing of sexually explicit media.

Neglect shall mean the failure of a parent or caretaker to provide an individual with adequate supervision, food, clothing, housing, or medical care.

Procedure

All reports of suspected abuse must be taken seriously. Whenever abuse is suspected, a report must be made within 24 hours to the Pastor and Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, who adhere to the following procedure:

1. The Pastor and Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, along with the reporter of suspected abuse, will complete the Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse Form in the appendix.
2. Assist in determining whether an incident qualifies as abuse by making a confidential inquiry to Child Help USA at 800-422-4453.
3. Contact the local Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) for Clarke County at 706-227-7000.
4. If the alleged abuse has taken place on church grounds or the alleged abuser is a church member or staff, the worker shall be removed from duty until the investigation is complete. The Pastor or Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator must make the incident known to the District Superintendent within 24 hours.

In addition, all accidents or injuries that occur on church property or during church events must be documented and reported, regardless of severity, according to the following procedure:

1. Tend to the injured person immediately, rendering First Aid as appropriate and, if necessary calling 911
2. Once the injured person is tended to:
 - a. Immediately notify parent/guardian or emergency contact of accident/injury and action(s) taken
 - b. Within 24 hours of incident, complete a detailed Accident Reporting Form (to be located outside the church office in the administrative wing) and
 - c. Provide the accident report to the Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, who will then make copies as appropriate and provide one copy to the appropriate parent/guardian and keep one copy on file within the church office

All reports and records with respect to each event shall be kept confidential except as may be required by law or court order.

Church members shall refrain from discussing any information of allegations of incidents with anyone, including media. The Administrative Council will appoint a "Media Spokesperson" to address requests for information from the media concerning any incidents.

Reporting Incidents of Inappropriate Behavior

If an incident occurs where an individual displays inappropriate behavior which does not rise to the level of contacting DFCS, an Incident Report should be completed to document the behavior. The report should be given to the Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, who will contact the person in question to discuss the details of the report. An alternate behavior, warning, or counseling

should be offered. Results of the conversation should be recorded and kept with the Incident Report on file. In the event that a second incident with the same individual occurs, the worker should be dismissed from service.

Exceptions Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline conditions and processes which govern exceptions to the policies and procedures herein.

Exceptions may be requested for single-time or limited-duration events. Ongoing programs must request exceptions through the Administrative Council.

Exceptions Process

Exception requests must be submitted in writing to the Administrative Council and include the following information:

1. Requestor Name
2. Work Area/Group
3. Name, date, duration, purpose of event
4. Names of all adults planning to attend
5. Expected number of children or youth participating in the event

Additional Documents

The attached appendices are also included as part of WUMC's Safe Sanctuaries Policy and must be utilized appropriately as indicated above.

- Appendix A: Indicators of Child Abuse
- Appendix B: Indicators of Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse
- Appendix C: Volunteer Information Sheet
- Appendix D: Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse
- Appendix E: Accident Reporting Form
- Appendix F: Faith Kidz Info Sheet
- Appendix G: Youth Info Sheet
- Appendix H: Youth Volunteer Agreement for Faith Kidz

Indicators of Child Abuse

The list below refers to frequent patterns of behaviors that may indicate child abuse. If any type of abuse is suspect, you are required by law [OCGA 19-7-5(c)(1)] to complete Appendix D: "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" within 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse:

- Hostile and aggressive behavior towards others
- Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
- Destructive behavior towards self, others, and/or property
- Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse:

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Threatens or attempts suicide
- Speech and/or eating disorders
- Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
- Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

Possible Signs of Neglect:

- Failure to thrive
- Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
- Beggars or steals food; chronic hunger
- Depression
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor hygiene

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse:

- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage
- Depression; cries for no apparent reason
- Promiscuous behavior
- Runs away from home and refuses to return
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, or extreme fatigue

Indicators of Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse

The list below refers to frequent patterns of behaviors that may indicate child abuse. If any type of abuse is suspect, you are required by to complete Appendix D: "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" within 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse:

- Fractures and dislocations
- Burns
- Injuries to head, scalp, or face
- Bruises on upper arms, wrists, ankles, thighs

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse:

- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pain, itching, bleeding, or bruising in/around genitals

Possible Signs of Psychological Abuse:

- Low self-esteem
- Overly anxious or withdrawn
- Extreme changes in mood
- Depression
- Suicidal behavior
- Confusion or disorientation
- Caregiver will not allow elder alone with visitors

Possible Signs of Financial Exploitation:

- Home furnishings disappear
- No food in house
- Complaints of things disappearing
- Can't find things
- Checkbook missing or does not balance

Possible Signs of Neglect:

- Poor personal hygiene
- Signs of overmedication or undermedication
- Misuse of medications
- Incontinent elder dressing in soiled clothing
- Left alone or deprived of stimulation and affection
- Malnutrition

Volunteer Information Sheet

In compliance with the WUMC Safe Sanctuaries Policy, all volunteers must complete this form before becoming involved in a volunteer capacity.

<u>Name:</u>	
<u>Address:</u>	
<u>Phones:</u>	
<u>Email:</u>	

<u>In what areas would you like to volunteer?</u>

<u>List any additional training/talents:</u>

<u>Please answer the following:</u>		
1. Do you have First Aid training	[] yes	[] no
2. If requested, will you submit to a criminal background check?	[] yes	[] no
3. Are you interested in serving on any church committees?	[] yes	[] no

By signing below you acknowledge that you have read and agree to the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of the Winterville United Methodist Church. You further agree that, in any volunteer or other capacity relating to church-related activities, both on and off-campus, you will uphold the policies and procedures stated therein.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse

In compliance with the policies and procedures outlined within the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of the Winterville United Methodist Church all incidents of suspected abuse must be reported within 24 hours.

Please describe the event(s) prompting this report:

Reported by: _____

Date: _____

Procedure:

- [] Complete this form with the assistance of the Pastor and Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator.
- [] Contact Child Help USA at 800-422-4453 to determine whether this qualifies as abuse.
- [] Contact Clarke County DFCS at 706-227-7000 if necessary based the outcome of Step 2.
- [] If the above alleged incident occurred on church grounds, contact the District Superintendent within 24 hours of completing this report.
- [] Maintain a copy of this report and refrain from discussing any of the information related to this report.

Accident/Incident Reporting Form

In compliance with the policies and procedures outlined within the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of the Winterville United Methodist Church all accidents and/or incidents must be reported within 24 hours.

Accident: shall refer to any and all slips, falls, cuts, etc. regardless of severity where any type of injury has occurred on church property or during church events.

Incidents: shall refer to any instance where an individual displays inappropriate behavior which does not rise to the level of contacting DFCS, but should be addressed by providing an alternate behavior, warning, or counseling.

Please describe the event(s) prompting this report:

Multiple horizontal lines for describing the event(s) prompting the report.

Reported by: _____

Date: _____

INTERNAL USE ONLY

For Incidents List Corrective Action:

Multiple horizontal lines for listing corrective actions for incidents.

Youth Info Sheet

To better serve our youth and maintain compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, parents/guardians of each youth participating in Winterville United Methodist Youth Fellowship must complete this form.

<u>Youth's Name:</u>	
<u>Date of Birth:</u>	
<u>Address:</u>	
<u>Parent/Guardian Name:</u>	
<u>Parent/Guardian Phone:</u>	
<u>Parent/Guardian Email:</u>	

<u>Allergies/Medical Considerations:</u>

<u>My child may be released to the following:</u>

<p><u>Social Media Release:</u></p> <p>[] Winterville UMC has my permission to use group photos of my child in church-related publications or posts in social or other media types</p> <p>[] NO, Winterville UMC may not use photos of my child in social or other media</p>

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Youth Volunteer Agreement for Faith Kidz

Youth members are encouraged to serve our church in a variety of ways as they grow in their faith. If a youth member chooses to volunteer at any Faith Kidz event under the direction and supervision of the Faith Kidz director and adult leaders/ volunteers, he or she must read and agree to the information below.

Youth volunteers who have attended Safe Sanctuaries training may volunteer with the Faith Kidz if, and only if:

1. The youth volunteer is at least 5+ years older than the children he/she is helping
2. ALL volunteers must wear "VOLUNTEER" badge at all times during Faith Kidz meeting time, including dinner
3. The youth volunteer MUST personally advise the Youth Director that they have chosen to volunteer with Faith Kidz instead of attending Youth activities
4. MUST stay with the Faith Kidz group the entire meeting time (5:30-7:30)
5. MUST be actively engaged in Faith Kidz activities, helping, leading, etc.
6. Youth volunteers shall NEVER take children to the bathroom
7. Youth volunteers MUST never be the only non-Faith Kid present; a Primary Worker must be present with the volunteer at all times

Faith Kidz Primary or Secondary Workers may ask youth volunteers to leave at any time, for any reason.

Youth Volunteer's Name:	
Youth Volunteer's Age:	
Parent's Name:	
Parent's Phone:	
Parent's Email:	

By signing below you agree that you have read and accept the conditions outlined above.

Youth Volunteer Signature: _____