



MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

April 2025

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuary Policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth, as well as all of the workers with children and youth.

In the following document, Staff refers to paid employees of the church.

Background Checks. All paid MUMC staff members must have and pass a criminal background check every three years. Additionally, all adult volunteers working with children and youth must have and pass a criminal background check every three years. If an adult volunteer assists with a child or youth program of the church and does not have a current background check they can only participate if the criteria noted under the "Two Adult Rule" are also met.

Six Months Involvement Rule. All those asked to participate in the Youth/ Children's Ministries will have been involved at the Church for six months or more.

Two Adult Rule. No fewer than two unrelated, non-cohabiting adults who have current background checks on file will be present at all times per room during a church sponsored program, event or ministry involving children or youth. In the case of related adults wishing to lead a class together, adding a third unrelated adult to the class would satisfy the two adult rule. A "roaming adult" may add an extra layer of protection for all involved in the ministry, but is not to replace one of the adults, must be constantly moving, and not occupied with other tasks.

No Volunteers Under the Age of Eighteen. Young people under the age of eighteen can assist a responsible adult in the nursery, Sunday School or Children's Church, but they are not to serve as a substitute for an adult.

Five-Years-Older Rule. Leaders involved in Youth Ministry will be a minimum of five years older than the oldest youth.

Lock-ins and Other Overnight Events. During overnight events youth leaders must include 2 men and 2 women if both girls and boys are attending the overnight. Girls and boys must sleep in separate rooms. The accompanying adults are not to sleep in the same room as the youth.

Windows In All Classroom Doors. Every room set aside for children and youth will have a door with a window in it.

First Aid. All Sunday School, UMYF, VBS activities will have available a person certified to provide first aid. A fully supplied first aid kit will be available in the kitchen, nursery and pre-K rooms on the lower level and in the supply area of Room 203. The Churchery School will provide training to their staff in accordance with State of Connecticut regulations applicable to nursery and preschool programs.

Annual Orientation for Volunteers. An annual orientation will be held for all persons who volunteer in the Children and Youth Ministries to review our fire exit plan and our Safe Sanctuary Policy. An annual review of the policy will be conducted by the Education Committee using the checklist attached. See Exhibit B.

Notice from/to Parents/Guardians. Each year parents/guardians will be asked to complete a Program Registration form for their child. This form will be used to gather pertinent information including name, age, contact information, allergies and any other medical information deemed necessary by the parent, etc. In addition parents/guardians will be asked to advise the Education Committee/teacher(s) if there are other concerns and who, other than the parent/guardian, may pick up their child, along with persons to call in an emergency in the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached. Also included on the form will be a description of the fire exit policy in case of emergency and notice of permission for the child to participate in church events, both to be acknowledged in writing on the form.

Adequate Insurance for the Scope of Our Ministry. Memorial United Methodist Church will participate in the Child Protection Packages offered through the New York Annual Conference. All volunteers working with children and youth will be asked to complete a Background Investigation Consent. See Exhibit A attached. All people who may provide transportation for children or youth will be asked to consent to a Motor Vehicle trace as well. All report forms shall be kept in a locked file in the pastor's office. These background reports will be updated every 3 years.

Transportation Plan.

- No driver under the age of 25 will be used to transport youth; drivers must be covered by adequate insurance.
- Each passenger should have a seat belt and the use of them should always be enforced.
- If only one adult is taking a carload of youth, they should all meet at the church, travel together and return to the church to be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- If possible, there should be a cell phone or some other way to communicate in an emergency.

Child Abuse Prevention Reporting.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 17a-101 specifically names **clergypersons as mandatory reporters** in cases where the alleged abuser is a parent, guardian, member of the victim's household or other responsible person. Information of reportable sexual abuse that comes to a minister, including information obtained in a counseling situation, must be reported.

Churchery School Staff are mandatory reporters.

Church staff and local church volunteers, including, Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, Christian education coordinators, and VBS volunteers have no mandatory duty to report under the above mentioned state statute but may make voluntary reports. **It is the policy of this church to report all incidents of suspected child or physical abuse whether such reports are mandatory or voluntary under Connecticut state law.**

Reporting Procedures. If an incident of child abuse occurs or allegation of an incident is made, it is to be dealt with in the following manner:

- The Staff person, Ministry Team Leader, Volunteer or Helper who observes an alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported is required to **report the incident immediately to the staff person or volunteer in charge of the children's activity.**
- The staff person or volunteer in charge of the children's activity in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed **shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information** such as the name of the alleged victim and his or her address and family information.
- Upon receiving such information, **the staff person or volunteer in charge of the children's activity will call the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. DCF Hotline Number: 800-842-2288.**
- **The Pastor is to be informed immediately before or subsequent to the making of a report.**
- **In instances where the pastor is the alleged perpetrator, the District Superintendent must be contacted, advised and involved.**
- Any person who is the object of the report will be required to **refrain from all children's activities until the incident report is resolved.**
- In the removal of any person from leadership or assisting with a children's activity/ ministry, **care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner**, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.

Administration of Safe Sanctuary Policy. The Church Council, in consultation with the Staff Parish Relations Committee, will assign someone to be responsible to administer the policy. This can be a staff member or a volunteer. A Staff person is accountable to the Staff Parish Relations Committee. A Volunteer is accountable to the Church Council. The policy administrator is responsible to give an annual report to his/her supervisor group and to the Church Council.


Third Revision,
Accepted by Church Council vote on April 14, 2025



Kevin Sweet, Council Chair



Heather Kelsey, Council Secretary



Sungmu Lee, Pastor

Revised October 28, 2014
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(This document was originally prepared and submitted by the Safe Sanctuary Policy Development Committee: Mari Amorosino, Laura Austin, David Gorden, Diane Hornaday, Chair, Julie Notestine, John Perotti and Accepted by Church Council vote on January 9, 2011).