



SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Updated January 2015

OUR MISSION

Skyland's mission is to lead people into a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ, to love God with passion, grow together in community and serve the world in love.

OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the members and staff of SUMC do all they can to provide a safe and secure environment for nursery, preschoolers, children, youth, and all persons entrusted to our care. The following policies and procedures are for the protection of our children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family. By establishing these policies and procedures, we demonstrate our commitment to provide a safe environment for our children and youth as they grow in their relationship with God. We believe it is possible to greatly reduce the risk of abuse by following these procedures.

The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our children, youth, workers, employees, volunteers and the entire church body. Careful and confidential documentation is essential to show compliance with policies, to verify information as needed, and to have an accurate record in the case of an incident.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all persons including all paid and unpaid adults, whether lay or clergy who have any direct or indirect contact with children and youth who participate in any activities or events sponsored by SUMC.

SAFE SANCTUARIES IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL

DEFINITIONS

Children – persons from Birth to Grade 6

Youth – persons attending Grades 7 – 12

Adults – persons over 21 years of age*

**While persons are legally considered an adult at age 18, SUMC requires that “adults” be over 21 years of age for this Safe Sanctuaries Policy.*

Primary Leader – One who is an adult staff member and/or adult volunteer who is over a programs. Teachers who assume regular leadership or Sunday school classes, small groups, and the nursery are considered primary leaders. Special considerations for adults 18 - 21 may made in some instances by SUMC staff members

Secondary Leader – One who is under the supervision of the primary leader and will act as an occasional or rotating teacher and substitute. Vacation Bible School (VBS) or special event volunteer group supervisors and assistants are considered secondary leaders. Youth may assist in instances where there is more than 4 years age difference between the youth and their oldest student.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. All staff members and volunteers must fill out a Safe Sanctuary authorization form and successfully complete a background check before beginning any primary or secondary leadership role. All staff members and volunteers must renew their background checks every 2 years.
2. All staff members and volunteers will complete a yearly Safe Sanctuary training on policies and procedures of SUMC.
3. Any person who may pose a threat to children and youth as determined in the sole discretion of the Staff-Parish Committee will be prohibited from working with children and youth.
4. Volunteers (members and regular attendees) must be committed to the mission of SUMC and be active participants in worship services.
5. An adult should never be alone with a child or youth. Acceptable procedures of appropriate adult supervision are as follows:
 - a. Two background checked adults who are unrelated in each class leading in each classroom. If adults cannot be unrelated, for instance a married couple

co-leads a small group, it must be approved by the leadership of each program and the pastor and parents must be made aware.

- b. Three in a group. One background checked adult must be present in each classroom or small group. That adult must not be alone with the youth or children and must have at least two other people present; either two children/youth or one child/youth and second adult. Parents must be made aware.
 - c. All programming must take place in its assigned location(s), with doors unlocked and doors open, unless there is a window in the door.
 - d. A rotating teacher who moves from classroom during programming may be assigned.
6. SUMC follow North Carolina Childcare Law and Rules for teacher to child ratios and class size. They are as follows:

Age	Teacher : Child Ratio	SUMC favored ratio	Maximum Group Size
0-12 months	1 : 5	1 : 5	10
12–24 months	1 : 6	1 : 6	12
2 years old	1 : 10	1 : 8	20
3 years old	1 : 15	1 : 10	25
4 years old	1 : 25	1 : 10	25
School age	1 : 25	1 : 15	25

- a. Children may not leave prior to the ending of an event without prior notice from a parent.
 - b. Children will only be released to persons other than parents if prior contact has occurred between the parents and the staff person in charge.
 - c. SUMC is not responsible for children/youth not signed in to an event.
8. Registration materials for activities in which children are off-campus shall require signed medical release and consent forms in order to participate.
9. All overnight or off-campus events need to have the correct ratio of adults to children/youth and at least one adult of each gender when both sexes are represented. There should never be less than two adults for any overnight trips. For youth and children there will need to be one adult for every 10 children/youth (1:10).
10. All drivers should be 25 years of age or older and follow the church rules for the vehicles. All drivers must have a DMV check and be approved by our auto insurance.

Each person in the vehicle must wear a seat belt and no double-buckling of seat belts will be permitted.

- a. During trips, all vehicles must follow one of the approved adult's supervision rules (two adults or three in a group).
 - b. In the event that a youth drives another youth, there must be prior parental consent.
 - c. In the event that a driver must take a child/youth home and a one-on-one situation occurs, there must be parental consent. (This situation should only occur in extreme circumstance and emergencies.)
 - d. Drivers should always attempt to keep vehicles in a caravan formation.
11. If the participants are old enough to understand, they shall make a verbal covenant of Christian behavior for all trips established by the group leader.
 12. If any paid staff member or volunteer of the church suspects that a policy has been broken, he/she must report the incident as stated in the following section entitled "Reporting An Incident".
 13. To volunteer in the nursery, a youth must be at least in the 6th grade and under the supervision of an adult. A babysitting class is recommended for each youth volunteer.
 14. When background checked staff is required to change diapers, they shall do so in an open area. No volunteer should ever change diapers, unless under the supervision of a primary leader and has been back-ground checked.
 15. To ensure bathroom safety, children need to always go to the bathroom in pairs (2 children, 1 adult.) Also, the restroom door should be left open, even if just slightly.
 16. To ensure internet safety for our children and youth, only first names will be used on any SUMC website. Parents will have to sign a photography consent form before any photo or video is used of their children/youth. (This should be found on the medical release and consent forms.)
 17. Each year, the congregation will be informed of these Safe Sanctuary Policies and any changes made to them. These policies will also be made available on the church website.
 18. In accordance with applicable North Carolina law, we recognize that in certain circumstances, we will be unable to welcome onto our premises certain registered sex offenders. Registered sex offenders must not come to church property without prior communication and permission from both the Senior Pastor and the chairperson of the Committee on Staff-Parish Relations. Registered sex offenders who wish to worship, seek pastoral care, and be a part of our faith community will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In no event may a registered sex offender be on the premises during the hours of operation of our preschool, typically Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

REPORTING AN INCIDENT

If an adult leader or volunteer observes or suspects a violation of Safe Sanctuary policy, these steps must be taken immediately.

Steps to Reporting a Violation

- Remember that you do not have to know for certain if a violation has occurred, but are obligated legally and morally to exercise good judgment, care, concern, and support for young people and their families.
- A reasonably suspected incident should be reported as soon as possible to the Senior Pastor and Staff Parish Committee.
- Maintain confidentiality with the person to whom you are reporting.
- Document in writing all known facts, circumstances, dates and observations regarding the incident and all steps taken on the Report of Suspected Incident (attached).
- Any organization using Skyland UMC facilities should also notify the Senior Pastor and/or Staff Parish Committee as soon as possible about any incident of suspected incident of abuse involving any person affiliated with that organization while using Skyland UMC facilities.
- The confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded to the extent possible under the circumstances.

Steps to Responding to Allegations of a Violation

- A quick, compassionate response to any alleged incident or abuse will be initiated. All allegations will be taken seriously.
- Notify parents/guardians of the person immediately. Ensure the safety of the minor until parents arrive.
- The person suspected should be removed from further contact with the minor until proper investigation has been performed.
- The designated investigator should speak with the accuser, including the parents (unless parent(s) are the accused) with another church official as a witness.
- If there is sufficient reason to believe that a violation occurred, the investigator should immediately notify necessary parties, including the senior pastor, the proper law enforcement and/or social services, as well as church's insurance liaison if applicable based upon the violation.
- Keep record of all steps taken by the church in response to the allegations.

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

(Please print all information.)

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

2. Victim's name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth: _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement (give your detailed summary here): _____

5. Name person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): _____

6. Reported to pastor: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

8. Call to local children and family service agency: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to local law enforcement agency: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Other contacts: _____

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

Signature of Incident Reporter Date

In the event of any accident occurring at SUMC or an off-campus event the following form needs to be completed.

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

(Please print all information.)

Date of accident: _____ Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Describe the accident:

Signature of Accident Reporter

Date

Emergency Action Procedures

Evacuation

In the event of an emergency evacuation from the building (fire, flooding, structural damage, etc.):

Evacuation Plan for Children's Ministry

1. Please first COUNT your children to make sure that you have accounted for everyone in your care.
2. Line up children. Grab your attendance clipboard (if possible).
3. Take the nearest/safest exit from the building.
4. Report to the far end of the gated playground on the south side of campus (Ship playground).
5. Sit your class along the fence and count your children again.
6. Remain in the playground area until you are advised otherwise.

Evacuation Plan for Nursery

In the event of an emergency evacuation from the building:

1. Please first COUNT your children to make sure that you have accounted for everyone in your care.
2. Grab your attendance clipboard (if possible)
3. **Infant Nursery:** Place all infants safely in to rolling cribs and push them to the nearest/safest exit from the building.
Young Child Nursery: Have all children grab on to the traveling rope and take the nearest/safest exit from the building.
4. Report to the far end of the gated playground on the south side of campus (Ship playground).
5. Wait with your class along the fence and count your children again.
6. Remain in the playground area until you are advised otherwise.

Tornado/Severe Weather

Preparation

1. Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information. In any emergency, always listen to the instructions given by local emergency management officials.
2. Be alert to changing weather conditions. Look for approaching storms.
3. Look for the following danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Large hail
- A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
- Loud roar, similar to a freight train.
- If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

During a Tornado

Tornado Plan for Children’s Ministry: If a Tornado Warning is issued, Children’s Ministry leaders and staff are to seek shelter for their classes in the interior hallway of the Children’s Wing. Teachers/leaders need to first perform a head count of their children (use sign-in roster if available) and then line up down the sides of the walls in the hallway, kneeling and covering their heads with their hands for protection.

If children/youth are away from the church campus please utilize the following procedure:

Identifying Shelter Locations

An underground area, such as a basement or storm cellar, provides the best protection from a tornado. If an underground shelter is unavailable, consider the following:

- Seek a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible
- Stay away from doors, windows, and outside walls
- Stay in the center of the room, and avoid corners because they attract debris
- Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor or roof system overhead
- *Avoid* auditoriums, cafeterias and gymnasiums that have flat, wide-span roofs.

Lockdown

Used when there is a threat of violence or serious incident that could jeopardize the safety of students/staff (i.e. intruder, shooting, hostage incident, civil disturbances, etc.)

Children’s Ministry Director:

1. The Children’s Ministry Director or designee will make the following announcement by going to each classroom “We are experiencing an emergency situation and need to lockdown the Children’s Wing immediately. Teacher/Leaders are to close their classroom doors (lock when possible) and enter the interior classroom bathroom with locking door if available, keeping children inside until further notice. If not in a classroom, leaders/children need to return to the nearest classroom or office and remain until advised otherwise. Children’s Director or designee will lock building entrances.

2. Call 911

- Identify the name and address of the church and describe the emergency, state the church is locking down, provide intruder description and weapon(s) if known, and identify the location of any/all children.

3. Leaders/Teachers:

- Clear the hallway and bathrooms by your room moving everyone into the classrooms.
- Lock your doors (if possible), turn off your lights, and shut your blinds and windows.
- Move students and staff away from the doors and windows.
- Have all persons get inside interior classroom bathroom and sit down. Lock bathroom door.
- If a life threatening situation exists, exit immediately to a place of safety.
- Take attendance and be prepared to notify the Children’s Director of missing children or additional children, staff or guests sheltered in your classroom.
- Allow no one outside of the classroom until the Children’s Director or proper authorities (Police, Fire Dept., etc.) gives the “All Clear” signal.

Sources:

<http://firstpresnpb.org/wp-content/uploads/PRESCHOOL-EMERGENCY-RESPONSE-PLAN.pdf>

<https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/tornado/preparedness.html>

<http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>

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