



## **Manchester United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Procedures (Updated 5/1/18)**

Our Safe Sanctuary practices help ensure the safety of minors and vulnerable adults as well as our staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers are required to become Safe Sanctuary Certified by Manchester UMC or the Missouri Annual Conference by providing relevant personal information, undergoing a criminal background screening, and passing child safety training before they can serve with minors or vulnerable adults. Safe Sanctuary information is stored in a secure system available only to authorized church staff.

### **A. Safe Sanctuary Certification Eligibility**

To be Safe Sanctuary Certified, a person must have been involved with one or more ministries (e.g. attending worship, part of a small group, serving on a team, etc.) of Manchester United Methodist Church within the last six months.

If a person has not been involved with at least one ministry at Manchester United Methodist Church within the last six months, then they may choose from the following two options in lieu of this requirement:

- a. Provide a referral from the Pastor, Children's Ministry Director or Youth Director of their most previous church indicating their support of that person being permitted to serve with minors or vulnerable adults. This referral should be provided using Manchester UMC's referral form, or
- b. Provide a referral from a staff member or current ministry leader of Manchester UMC indicating their support of that person being permitted to serve with minors or vulnerable adults. This referral should be provided using Manchester UMC's referral form.

**Anyone with a conviction related to any form of abuse, neglect or sexual misconduct, will not be eligible to serve with minors or vulnerable adults in any capacity.**

Individuals who apply for and are denied Safe Sanctuary Certification through the Missouri Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church will not be eligible to work with children or youth.

### **B. Safe Sanctuary Certification Process**

Any person wishing to become Safe Sanctuary Certified by Manchester UMC must complete the following four steps in addition to any others required by the Safe Sanctuary Administrator:

- Step 1: Complete the online VOLUNTEER APPLICATION at [www.manchesterumc.org/safesanctuary](http://www.manchesterumc.org/safesanctuary).
- Step 2: Submit and pass a BACKGROUND SCREENING
- Step 3: Complete and pass our ONLINE CHILD SAFETY TRAINING
- Step 4: Read and agree to abide by our SAFE SANCTUARY POLICIES

Two personal references (who are unrelated to you and each other) must be provided as part of your volunteer application. Both references will be contacted by the Safe Sanctuary Administrator, or their designate, for information about your character, demeanor and any insights related to your working with minors and vulnerable adults.

Once you have successfully completed the above steps (and any questions or concerns have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Safe Sanctuary Administrator), you will be contacted by a ministry leader to explore serving opportunities and to discuss relevant policies and procedures for the ministry you have chosen.

Prior to serving, you will have your picture taken and receive a Safe Sanctuary Name Badge. Please wear this badge whenever you are serving with minors or vulnerable adults.

Safe Sanctuary Certification must be renewed every three years to continue serving with minors or vulnerable adults. After initial certification, all VENDORS must go through the Safe Sanctuary Certification process annually.

### **C. Refusing and Revoking Safe Sanctuary Certifications**

If a ministry leader or staff member becomes aware of a person's behavior that in his/her opinion could endanger the current or future well-being or safety of minors or vulnerable adults at Manchester UMC, the ministry leader will immediately notify the Safe Sanctuary Administrator. The Safe Sanctuary Administrator and the Pastor of Faith Formation will consult to decide if the person should be allowed to serve (or continue serving) with minors or vulnerable adults.

The Safe Sanctuary Administrator and/or Pastor of Faith Formation may refuse or revoke a person's Safe Sanctuary Certification at any time. Such an action will be communicated in writing to the person along with the reason for refusal or revocation and a copy of the letter will be kept with their safe sanctuary records.

### **D. Procedures for Working with Minors and Vulnerable Adults at Manchester United Methodist Church**

1. Two unrelated adults, who are Safe Sanctuary Certified, must be present at all times (within sight and sound) when working with minors and vulnerable adults.
2. For church-sponsored programs involving youth (6<sup>th</sup> grade and older), the two Safe Sanctuary Certified adults must be at least 4 years older than the oldest youth participating in the program.
3. When married spouses or related adults are serving together in the same space with minors or vulnerable adults, a third Safe Sanctuary Certified leader must be present at all times (within sight and sound).

4. When in a space with attached restroom, a Safe Sanctuary Certified adult may enter the room to assist a child (5<sup>th</sup> grade or younger) as needed, but the door to the restroom must remain slightly open. This procedure also applies to the detached restroom in the nursery area when working with toddlers.
5. When in a space without an attached restroom, a child (5<sup>th</sup> grade or younger) or vulnerable adult may use the restroom after a Safe Sanctuary Certified adult has ensured that the restroom is unoccupied by any adults. The adult will wait outside the restroom door, which must remain slightly open, and prevent any other adults from entering the restroom.

Children (5<sup>th</sup> grade or younger) should be directed to use multi-stall restrooms unless none are available. Adult leaders should only allow as many children (5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger) to use the restroom at the same time as there are stalls in the restroom (e.g. 3 stalls = 3 children at a time).

6. Youth (6<sup>th</sup> grade and older) are granted permission to use the restroom on their own. No more than 2 youth can leave at the same time to use the restroom unsupervised. This 2-person limit does not apply to camps or mission trips.
7. A parent, guardian or youth (6<sup>th</sup> grade and older) must check in children (5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger) for all children's church-sponsored programs. Children (5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger) will only be released at dismissal to a parent, guardian, youth (6<sup>th</sup> grade and older) or an adult previously approved by the parent/guardian according to Children's Ministry Procedures.
8. Once a youth has checked in with an adult ministry leader at the start of the youth program or event, they are then under the care and supervision of the adult ministry leaders. At the scheduled end time, or shortly thereafter, all youth will be released from the program to locate their parents, guardians, ride home or to drive home. Verbal authorization from a parent or guardian must be provided to an adult ministry leader before a youth may leave early. If a youth program concludes before its scheduled end time, Church staff and volunteers will continue to provide care and supervision until the scheduled end time. Church staff and volunteers are not responsible for youth once the program has ended unless alternate arrangements have been made in advance.
9. When transportation is provided as an official part of a church-sponsored program, two non-related, Safe Sanctuary Certified adults must be present (within sight and sound) in each vehicle in which minors or vulnerable adults are present.
  - a. A signed parental/guardian consent form must be completed for each minor or vulnerable adult prior to the event.
10. Safe Sanctuary Certified leaders should seek permission of a parents before having contact with minors or vulnerable adults outside of church-sponsored programming. Conversations that occur immediately before, during and immediately after church-sponsored programs are allowed.

11. For all church-sponsored programs involving overnight events where minors or vulnerable adults are participants:
  - a. Two unrelated Safe Sanctuary Certified adults must be present at all times (within sight and sound).
  - b. If participants are male and female, then two unrelated male and two unrelated female Safe Sanctuary Certified adults must be present at all times (within sight and sound).
  - c. Males and females may not share the same sleeping quarters and should have access to separate bathroom facilities. If separate sleeping quarters are not available, opposite genders will sleep on opposite sides of the room with at least two unrelated Safe Sanctuary Certified adults sleeping in the middle.
  - d. In a hotel or dormitory setting, same-gendered minors or vulnerable adults will be assigned to rooms together; adults will be assigned to separate rooms. When visiting or checking the rooms of minors or vulnerable adults, two unrelated Safe Sanctuary Certified adults of the same gender as the room occupants must be present.
  - e. Letters “a” to “d” apply to self-identified genders of individuals with parental/guardian consent. Accommodations are also available for those who identify as non-binary.
12. Groups that utilize church facilities, but are not a ministry of the church, are not bound to this Safe Sanctuary policy and Manchester UMC assumes no liability for anything related to the outside group.
13. Adults from outside groups that will provide church-sponsored programming to minors or vulnerable adults must complete our Safe Sanctuary training. Those adults completing Safe Sanctuary training will receive a Vendor badge that must be worn at all times when around minors and vulnerable adults.

#### **E. Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Abuse**

1. If you witness abuse taking place, call 9-1-1 immediately.
2. Any person with the responsibility for the care of children is a mandated reporter. Missouri law states that if such caregiver has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Division of Family and Social Services (DSS). The 24 hour toll-free hotline number is 1-800-392-3738.
3. Any allegations of abuse or neglect occurring during a church-sponsored activity, event or program, must be reported immediately to the staff member or ministry leader (if no staff is present) responsible for the activity, event or program. Staff members and/or ministry leaders will then notify the Pastor of Faith Formation immediately. The person making the allegation should complete and sign a “Incident Report” form. Forms shall be acquired from and returned to the ministry leader.

## **F. Terms & Definitions:**

### **Abuse**

#### *Child abuse –*

Physical or mental injury, sexual abuse of a child or youth by an adult or adolescent caregiver responsible for the child's or youth's welfare.

#### *Emotional abuse -*

Abuse which results in impaired psychological growth and development, including belittling, rejection, constant unequal treatment, verbal assaults, excessive demands on a child's or youth's performance and isolation from normal social activities.

#### *Neglect –*

Failure or inattention on the part of the caregiver to provide for a child's or youth's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision.

#### *Physical abuse –*

Non-accidental abuse which results in physical injury, including but not limited to bruises, burns, cuts, welts, fractures and internal injuries.

#### *Sexual abuse/misconduct –*

Includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child or youth and an adult, or between a child and a youth, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult or youth, or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child or youth and an adult or between a child and a youth is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child or youth.

### **Adult**

Any person age 18 or older. (If an 18 year is attending a youth program or event as a participant and is not serving as an approved youth helper, then they shall be treated as a minor for purposes of Safe Sanctuary requirements).

### **Children**

Any person 5<sup>th</sup> grade or younger.

### **Church-sponsored ministry**

A program that is led or coordinated by Manchester United Methodist Church.

### **Guest**

Any youth or adult present during church-sponsored programs who does not qualify as a youth helper or an adult leader.

### **Informal contact**

Any contact between leaders and children or youth not connected to a church-sponsored ministry.

**Leader**

A Safe Sanctuary Certified adult.

**Minor**

Any person age 17 or younger. (If an 18 year is attending a youth program or event and is not serving as a youth helper, then they shall be treated as a minor for purposes of Safe Sanctuary requirements).

**Safe Sanctuary Certified**

An adult who has successfully completed the required steps for Safe Sanctuary Certification and is currently approved to work with minors and vulnerable adults by Manchester UMC.

**Vulnerable Adult**

Any person 18 or older who is not able to protect themselves fully from exploitation or give consent to sexual activity due to intellectual or physical impairments or other incapacities.

**Youth**

Any person in 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Youth Helper**

Any youth assisting in a ministry of Manchester UMC.

**Effective Date:**

This document is six pages in length and is effective 5/1/2018 until otherwise replaced. This version supersedes all previous versions.

**Contacts:**

**Safe Sanctuary Administrator:** Sally Cleveland – [sally.cleveland@manchesterumc.org](mailto:sally.cleveland@manchesterumc.org)

**Pastor of Faith Formation:** Rev. Jim Peich – [jim.peich@manchesterumc.org](mailto:jim.peich@manchesterumc.org)