



**Manchester United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuary Procedures
(Revised 8/1/2019)**

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 over the past six months.

If a person has not been involved with at least one ministry at Manchester United Methodist Church over the past 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.

B. Safe Sanctuary Eligibility Limitations

- a. Any person under allegation or conviction related to any form of abuse, neglect or sexual misconduct, is not eligible to serve with minors or vulnerable adults in any capacity.
- b. Any person who is a registered sex offender is not eligible to serve with minors or vulnerable adults in any capacity.
- c. Any person currently under investigation for a formal Safe Sanctuary complaint is not eligible to serve with minors or vulnerable adults in any capacity until the investigation is completed.
- d. Any person who is denied Safe Sanctuary Certification through the Missouri Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is not eligible to work with children or youth.

C. Safe Sanctuary Certification Process

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

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

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

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

Prior to serving, the applicant will have their picture taken and receive a Safe Sanctuary Name Badge. All Safe Sanctuary Certified adults should wear their Safe Sanctuary Name Badge whenever serving with minors or vulnerable adults.

Safe Sanctuary Certification must be renewed every three years in order to continue serving with minors or vulnerable adults.

After initial certification, all VENDORS must go through the Safe Sanctuary Certification process annually.

D. Refusing and Revoking Safe Sanctuary Certifications

If a ministry leader or staff member becomes aware of a 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 Executive Pastor of Ministry and Leadership 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 Executive Pastor of Ministry and Leadership 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. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator for the Missouri Annual Conference and a copy shall be kept with the person's safe sanctuary records.

E. 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 (6th grade and older), the two Safe Sanctuary Certified adults must be at least 22 years old and at least 4 years older than the oldest youth participating in the program.
3. When married spouses or other 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 an attached restroom, a Safe Sanctuary Certified adult may enter the room to assist a child (2nd grade or younger or a child with special needs) if necessary, 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 (5th 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 (5th grade or younger) should be directed to use multi-stall restrooms unless none are available. Adult leaders should only allow as many children (5th 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 (6th 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. Minors and vulnerable adults may use the restrooms that correspond with their gender identity with the consent of their parent/guardian. For example, a minor who identifies as a male may use the men's restroom and a minor who identifies as a female may use the female restroom with consent of their parent/guardian. The minor or vulnerable adult should be allowed to choose the option that feels most comfortable to them with consent of their parent/guardian. Accommodations, such as using a single stall restroom, should also be made for any minors or vulnerable adults who identify as non-binary.
8. A parent, guardian or youth (6th grade and older) must check in children (5th grade and younger) for all church-sponsored programs where the church is providing care and supervision of the child. Children (5th grade and younger) will only be released at dismissal to a parent, guardian, youth (6th grade and older) or an adult previously approved by the parent/guardian according to Children's Ministry Procedures.
9. 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 after the scheduled end time unless alternate arrangements have been made in advance.

10. When transportation is provided as an official part of a church-sponsored program, two nonrelated, 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 travel.
11. To help prevent any type of “grooming” behavior, Safe Sanctuary Certified adults must obtain permission from a parent/guardian before communicating or meeting with a non-related minor or vulnerable adult outside of church-sponsored activities if the parent/guardian is not present or included. Such contacts include, but are not limited to, text messages, email, social media, phone calls, giving gifts and in person meetings without a parent/guardian present or included.

Communications and meetings that occur without the presence, inclusion or permission of the parent/guardian must be reported and logged. These requirements do not apply to:

- a. Brief incidental encounters that occur in public places (e.g. grocery store, library, mall, etc.).
- b. Communications on official Youth Ministry social media platforms and messaging apps if they are visible to the entire group.
- c. Gifts provided by the church to a minor.
- d. Meetings or communications between Safe Sanctuary Certified adults ages 18 to 20 and minors in grades 11 and 12 due to their closeness in age.

Safe Sanctuary Certified adults will report such contacts within 72 hours to the staff member responsible for providing oversight to their ministry. The report should include the date, time, location, names of those present/participating and brief description of the meeting or communication. The staff member will keep all reports in a log. The log must be available for review by the staff person’s supervisor, the Safe Sanctuary Administrator or Senior Management upon request.

Staff will document such contacts within 72 hours in a log. The log should include the date, time, location, names of those present/participating and brief description of the meeting or communication. The log must be available for review by the staff person’s supervisor, the Safe Sanctuary Administrator or Senior Management upon request.

Meetings and communications between the Director of Youth Ministry and youth grades 6 to 12 for purposes of providing program information, spiritual support, encouragement and counsel are permitted, but must be documented in a log as described above. Any meetings must occur in a public space (e.g. coffee shop, restaurant, library, etc.) or in the Youth Center where both parties are easily visible by others who may be present.

12. 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. 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 present in the room.
 - c. 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 must be present.
 - d. 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.
13. Groups that rent/utilize church facilities/space, 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. If an outside group chooses to utilize Manchester UMC volunteers for their activity they must follow this Safe Sanctuary policy.
14. 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.

F. 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 Executive Pastor of Ministry and Leadership immediately. The person making the allegation should complete and submit a signed “Incident Report” form. Forms shall be acquired from and returned to the ministry leader and a copy provided to the Safe Sanctuary Administrator, Executive Pastor of Ministry and Leadership and Executive Pastor of Operations and Generosity.

G. Limited Access Agreements

Background:

Manchester UMC is committed to being open to all who wish to participate in the life of this church. We are also committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment. In certain situations, clearly defined restrictions are necessary to help safeguard families, minors, vulnerable adults and others who participate in the programs and activities of Manchester UMC. These restrictions will be defined in a Limited Access Agreement. The following section establishes the protocol for such restrictions.

Required Uses:

A Limited Access Agreement must be established in the following situations:

1. With any person known to currently be on a Sex Offender Registry
2. With any person currently under investigation for a formal Safe Sanctuary complaint

Potential Uses:

With approval from the Leadership Board, a Limited Access Agreement may be established in the following situations:

1. With any person under allegation or conviction of violent or sexual criminal behavior.
2. With any person whose threatening, violent, inappropriate or disruptive behavior has been determined by Senior Management to pose a risk of harm to the church, clergy, staff, congregation or other participants.

Not Intended Uses:

1. Not intended for situations when any lesser form of confrontation or accountability would likely suffice. (Note: Persons on the Sex Offender Registry and persons under investigation for a formal Safe Sanctuary complaint must have a Limited Access Agreement).
2. Not intended to substitute for pastoral support and care for those who desire help.
3. Not intended to curb awkward or socially challenging behavior, unless the behavior is threatening, violent, inappropriate or disruptive enough to interfere with the participation of others.
4. Not intended to address discomfort due to differences, appearances or interpersonal conflict.

Process:

1. A pastor or staff member notifies the Director of Safe Sanctuary that a Limited Access Agreement may be needed because the person is a registered sex offender, under investigation for a formal Safe Sanctuary complaint or one of the other permitted reasons described in this policy. The Director of Safe Sanctuary reviews the situation to confirm if it falls within the permitted reasons described in this policy.
2. The Director of Safe Sanctuary, in consultation with the Executive Pastor of Ministry and Leadership, drafts the Limited Access Agreement to fit the circumstance. The Executive Pastor of Operations and Generosity reviews the Limited Access Agreement with legal counsel.
3. The Limited Access Agreement must be signed by the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor of Ministry and Leadership, Executive Pastor of Operations and Generosity and the Leadership Board Chair before it is discussed with the person being limited.

4. When possible, the Limited Access Agreement should be delivered and discussed in-person with a staff member and pastor present. They should convey the seriousness of the matter while also explaining our desire to provide for the care and wellbeing of all parties. Pastors/staff should never have this conversation alone. During this conversation, the person being limited should sign their Limited Access Agreement acknowledging they have received the document and agree to its terms.
5. When an in-person meeting is not possible, the Limited Access Agreement will be sent through email (if available) and certified USPS letter. The person being limited will be advised that they must sign and return the document before they will be permitted to attend future church programs and activities or be present on church property.
6. If a person refuses to sign and agree to their Limited Access Agreement, they will be advised that this must occur before they may attend future Manchester UMC programs and activities or be present on church property.
7. If a person being limited feels their Limited Access Agreement is inconsistent with this policy, they may request a meeting with the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor of Ministry and Leadership and Staff Relations Chair. This person may be present on church property for the purpose of attending this meeting. After the meeting, the group will review the situation with the Leadership Board. Following this review, the group will issue a written decision and copy the person being limited. This decision will be final.
8. Whenever possible, Limited Access Agreements should include a timeline and/or a path to dissolving the Agreement. In situations involving persons on the Sex Offender Registry, the Limited Access Agreement will remain in place as long as the person remains on the Sex Offender Registry. However, the terms of the Limited Access Agreement may be updated as necessary.
9. Signed Limited Access Agreements will remain on file with Director of Safe Sanctuary.
10. Once a Limited Access Agreement has been delivered to the person being limited, copies will be distributed by the Director of Safe Sanctuary to Church Senior Staff members along with the Director of Preschool, Director of Children and Families, Director of Youth Ministry, Director of Children's Choirs, Director of Missions, Staff Parish Chair, Trustees Chair, Police Coordinator, Head Usher and Head Greeter.
11. In providing for the safety and security needs of the church, a Limited Access Agreement is not considered confidential, but should only be shared with careful discretion.

H. 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 old 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 5th 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 6th grade through 12th grade.

Youth Helper

Any youth assisting in a ministry of Manchester UMC.

Effective Date:

This document is nine pages in length and is effective 8/1/2019 until otherwise replaced. This version supersedes all previous versions. It is the responsibility of all Safe Sanctuary Certified adults to read and comply with these revised Safe Sanctuary procedures.

Contacts:

Please direct any questions, comments or concerns related to our Safe Sanctuary procedures to:

Safe Sanctuary Administrator: Sally Cleveland – sally.cleveland@manchesterumc.org

Executive Pastor of Ministry & Leadership: Rev. Jim Peich – jim.peich@manchesterumc.org