

C. Rooming in dorm (cabin) setting:

1. At least two adults of same gender assigned to each room.
2. Adults shall never share bed with youth or child other than own son/daughter.
3. No adult shall be alone in a room with child.
4. No adult in restroom at same time as a child.

E. Rooming in a hotel setting:

1. No motels are acceptable for youth or children outings. Rooms must be open to the interior of the building. Select rooms on a single hallway when possible.
2. Youth shall be roomed separately from adults, with adult room between every two or three youth rooms. Adults should monitor hallways, and in case of room checks, two adults of same gender should perform them.
3. No children under 5th grade shall stay overnight on a church event.

F. Transportation

All drivers to and from programmed events must be screened and have appropriate insurance. All drivers of minors must be over 22 years of age. It is recommended that two authority figures be in vehicle, or two vehicles must be teamed together whenever traveling.

Church staff or leaders cannot be expected to transport youth or children to and from home. If a need arises, parent must initiate request in each instance and it is up to the discretion of the authority figure to accept or decline the parent's request. If accepted, another authority figure should ride along if possible. If authority figure agrees to transport, the authority figure shall give a reasonable approximate time of arrival to parent and immediately follow through with transport.

G. Release Forms

For each trip away from the church, children and youth shall have signed permission slip and liability release form unless parent of child or youth is present. These forms shall be retained by the appropriate staff person for a period of one year.

Guidelines for Acceptable Behavior and Acceptable Discipline

Before an outing or retreat, children, parents, and authority figures shall sign a covenant outlining guidelines and actions taken if guidelines are violated.

Suggested guidelines for dealing with escalated violations of covenant, (as appropriate for each outing):

1. Warning for first infraction, unless major;
 2. Child or youth may be escorted by adult authority figure;
 3. Child or youth may have to call home for conference with parent;
 4. Child or youth maybe sent home at parent's expense;
 5. Child or youth may not be allowed on next outing.
- No physical punishment shall ever be acceptable.

Reporting Abuse

State law requires anyone who reasonably suspects a child is being abused to report the case to 1-877-237-0004. It is not enough to report to pastor or staff. Each individual is expected by law to report directly to the authorities.

Implementation and Oversight

The Staff Parish Relations shall have responsibility to ensure that this policy is implemented and followed.

Complete Policy Available

A complete Task Force Report is available in the church office (901-476-9694) or online at www.covingtonfumc.com.

First United Methodist Church Covington, TN

“Leading Others to Christ,
Learning to Be Disciples,
Loving through Service.”

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY



Adopted by Administrative Council
May 27, 2008

STANDARDS OF SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY



THE CHURCH, ABOVE ALL OTHER INSTITUTIONS, IS CALLED TO WELCOME AND NURTURE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE LOVE OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. OUR GOAL IS TO MAINTAIN A SAFE, SECURE, LOVING PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO GROW, AND WHERE THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM MAY ADMINISTER TO THEIR NEEDS IN RESPONSIBLE WAYS.

“FOR WHOEVER CAUSES ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE TO SIN, IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR A MILLSTONE TO BE TIED TO HIS NECK AND CAST INTO THE SEA.”
—THE LORD JESUS

Criteria for Primary Leaders, Authority Figures, and Assistants

Age standards :

PRIMARY LEADER – The primary authority figure, paid or non-paid, of any given youth and children’s activity, including but not limited to, Sunday School Teachers, Vacation Bible School Teachers, UMYF counselors, Wednesday Night Teachers. Primary leader must be a minimum of 22 years of age to work with youth (grades 6th and above); a minimum of 18 years of age to work with children (infant – 5th grade); subject to six month rule (see B. Below) and undergo background check.

AUTHORITY FIGURE—Paid or non-paid adults (over the age of 18) who lend aid to and act at the direction of the Primary Leader, working with youth or children, including but not limited to, Sunday School Teachers, Vacation Bible School Teachers, UMYF counselors, Wednesday Night Teachers. Authority Figure must be: A minimum of four years older than the oldest participants and in the judgment of the primary leader, be competent to assist in the activity. Subject to a six month rule (see paragraph B below). Exceptions may be made on an individual basis only with Staff-Parish approval.

ASSISTANTS – paid or non-paid person under age of 18 who lend aid to and act at the direction of the Primary Leader, working with youth or children. Assistants must be: A minimum of 12 years of age and 4 years older than the oldest participants; and in the judgment of the primary leader, be competent to assist in the activity.

B. Six Month Rule

First United Methodist Church employs a six-month rule requiring any person seeking to serve as Primary Leader or Authority Figure with youth or children to be an active member in good standing of the local church for a minimum of six months. Persons not meeting this minimum requirement may serve only as an assistant.

Exception: A person who is hired as staff to be primary leader of children and/or youth may be exempt, however must undergo screening procedures.

C. Policy Instruction

The church shall ensure that annual training focused on child protection is available to and received by those working with children and youth. Attendance at this training is required of all paid staff members, primary leaders, and authority figures who work with children and/or youth. Documentation of attendance shall be kept by Pastor, with a copy kept by Staff-Parish Chair.

D. Screening

All staff are required to undergo background checks. All new staff will undergo the following screening: application, interview, disclosure form, reference check, background check, and drug screening. These records shall be kept by pastor and seen only by pastor and staff-parish chair. After employment term has ended, files shall be sealed and dated and remain on file in pastor’s office.

Guidelines

A. Two Authority Figure Rule

When possible, a minimum of two non-related adults in each class area shall be utilized with children or youth. When impossible to do so, an additional authority figure shall serve as a floater with visual and physical access to all areas. If possible, authority figures of both genders should be present when children of both genders are present, and the floater can be counted as such.

Authority Figures of both genders are mandatory for trips away from the church if children of both genders are present. No adult should be alone with a single child (other than his/her own) in area with no visual access to outside.

B. Adult/child ratios

All ratios must be understood in light of first having two Authority Figures present at all times.

Infants - 1:4

Toddlers - 1:6

K-6th (and youth camping/overnight) - 1:7

7th -12th - 1:12

