

Mulberry Street United Methodist Church
Children and Youth Ministry
SAFE SANCTUARY GUIDELINES

Adopted: October 18, 2006 by the Children's Council

Updated & Approved: November 24, 2008 and August 22, 2011 by the
Church Council

These guidelines apply to all activities involving, children, youth, and vulnerable adults at Mulberry Street United Methodist Church.

Definitions:

“Child” or “Children” or “Youth” or “Minor” means any person(s) under the age of 20.

“Children’s Activities” means any activity or program in which persons under the age of 20 are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.

“Volunteer” means a person 25 years of age or older who assists in conducting activities.

“Vulnerable adult” means any person 18 years of age or older identified by a caregiver, staff person in charge, or him/herself as an individual unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation due to diagnosed physical, mental, or emotional capacities.

Volunteer Leadership and Staff Position screening:

Adults in leadership positions within the children’s ministry department must be at least 18 years of age and within the youth department must be at least 25 years of age. In addition, the adult must be an active participant of Mulberry Street United Methodist Church for no less than 6 months.

Background checks will be conducted at the expense of Mulberry Street United Methodist Church. A national criminal background check is required for:

- Adults in leadership positions within the children and youth ministry department
- Adults involved in overnight activities with minors

- Adults counseling minors
- Adults involved in one-on-one mentorship of minors
- All nursery staff (considered a leadership position)
- Children and youth department drivers (DMV check also required)

All volunteers in leadership/staff positions required to submit to background checks will be screened every three years.

Adults applying for a leadership position within the Children and Youth Ministry departments are required to submit to the Director of Children and Family Ministries or Youth Ministries a completed volunteer application including three non-related references before they are considered for the position.

All volunteers must be approved by the Director of Children and Family Ministries or Youth Ministries prior to participation in any children and youth ministry department sponsored event.

Adults are allowed to volunteer in the children and youth ministry departments without going through the screening process. However, if they are to be placed in a leadership position (Examples include but are not limited to: Sunday School teacher, small group leader, a leader in any classroom setting, etc.) they must comply with the screening process required for adult volunteers in leadership positions.

Adults who are volunteering in the children and youth ministry departments who have not gone through the screening process will be supervised by an adult who has been approved by the Director of Children and Family Ministries or Youth Ministries and has complied with the screening process for adults in leadership positions.

All forms, reference reports and background checks required for adult leaders will be kept as part of the applicant's confidential file. All forms will be kept in a locked file cabinet on church premise. An applicant may have access to his/her file with the exception of the reference reports. All required applications and forms must be completed.

Supervision for children and youth ministry programs:

The Two Adult rule:

It is the goal of Mulberry Street United Methodist that children have the opportunity to grow in the faith and be nurtured in a safe and loving ministry environment. Therefore, we require that a minimum of two adult workers be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during children's and youth department-sponsored activities. Of the adults supervising an event, at least one of the adults present will have completed the requirements for adults in leadership positions.

We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult, other than the child's parent(s) or guardian, on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless it is a counseling or mentoring session.

Adult volunteers/staff will not be isolated with a minor regardless of gender. This includes but is not limited to being out of plain view in a locked room, bathroom, or in a motor vehicle.

In the emergency instance that only one adult teacher is in attendance during the classroom session or an event, doors to the classroom should remain open when there is no visibility from the outside corridor.

Restroom Procedure:

Children five years old and younger should utilize a classroom restroom, if one is available. If a classroom restroom is not available, an adult should escort a pair of children to the hallway restroom. They should always go in a pair, never taking a child to the restroom alone. The adult should check the restroom first to make sure that it is empty; then allow the children inside. The adult should then remain outside the restroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

If a child requires assistance, the adult leader should prop open the restroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

For the protection of all minors, adult leaders and volunteers should never be alone in a restroom with the children they are supervising and never be in a closed restroom stall with a child.

Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the restroom prior to each class.

Child/Staff Ratio:

All retreats and over-night events and classrooms require a gender inclusive adult ratio of 1 adult to 6 children (1:6) or 1 adult to 8 youth (1:8).

Pick-Up/Drop-off Procedure:

Children should be dropped-off and picked-up from children and youth ministry sponsored programs at the designated time.

Parent/Guardian or other adult authorized by parent/guardian must personally deliver the child/children they are responsible for under the age of 12 to the adult leaders in charge of the children and youth ministry event or program they are attending.

Parents must make the leader aware of their child's presence by speaking to the adult leader in the room.

When parents pick-up their child/children from an event or program, they must make the leader aware that they are removing the child/children from the care of the leader.

Parent/Guardian of children five years old and younger must sign their children in when they come and out when they leave using the sign-in/out sheets located by the classroom doors.

For events requiring children to leave the premises of the church, a "Consent to Medical Treatment" form should be filled out and signed by both a parent/guardian and a witness. A new form must be completed every school year. Forms will be kept on file in the office of the Director of Children and Family Ministries or Director of Youth Ministries.

Adult volunteers and Adults in leadership positions within the Children and Youth ministry departments will not be responsible for children left unattended by the parent/guardian in the hallways, classroom or other areas of the church building/premises.

Incident/Accident Procedures:

1. For minor injuries, leaders will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First-Aid, the parent/guardian will immediately be notified in addition to the adult leader's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, 911 will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an "Incident Report" will be completed and signed by the parent or guardian and the Director of Children and Family Ministries or other appropriate staff person.
4. Children are never to be left unattended while help is being retrieved.

Transportation:

General Safety Rules:

- Driver must be 25 years of age or older and have a valid driver's license that has not been suspended or revoked for any reason.
- Drivers must have up-to-date insurance coverage on their vehicles. A valid proof of insurance certificate must be on file prior to departure for event with Mulberry Street United Methodist Church.
- Drivers must have an up-to-date "Volunteer Driver Information Form" on file at Mulberry Street United Methodist Church.
- Drivers must obey all state driving laws
- Emergency Kits provided by Mulberry Street United Methodist Church must be in vehicles for every retreat
- It is recommended that vehicles operate with head lights on at all times.
- All drivers and passengers must wear a seat belt at all times during transit.
- All passengers must remain seated at all times during transit
- All children must obey the driver and other volunteers.
- All luggage and equipment must be properly stored

- During rest stops and restroom breaks children must be supervised by an adult leader at all times

Accident Procedures:

- Drivers should not leave the scene before the police arrive.
- Call 911 or send an adult to do so.
- If there are injuries:
 - a. Remove uninjured passengers to a safe location and secure supervision
 - b. Assess the injured and administer First-Aid as appropriate until emergency personnel arrive.
 - c. If the injured party is taken to the hospital, find out the name of the hospital.
 - d. If a minor is injured, when possible, send an adult volunteer to the hospital with the child/children.
 - e. Only the designated staff person or volunteer will contact parents of injured passengers—except in the event that a hospital needs to contact the parents regarding the treatment of the child.
- Whether or not injuries occur:
 - a. Exchange appropriate information as required by your insurance agent and state law.
 - b. Get the names, address and phone numbers of any witnesses present.
 - c. Get the name and badge number of the assisting police officer
 - d. Do not speak fault or blame to anyone, on or off the record
 - e. Upon returning to Mulberry Street United Methodist Church, the driver involved in the accident should complete an “Incident Report”. In the event that the driver is unable to complete the report due to injury or death, the report should be completed by the Director of Children and Family Ministries with the assistance of the passengers or witnesses involved in the accident.

Procedures for responding to allegations of, or suspected Child Abuse:

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways which include but are not limited to:

- Physical Abuse: any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns and biting

- Emotional Abuse: emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing
 - Sexual Abuse: any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest and pornography
 - Neglect: depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter and medical care
- Sexual Harassment: any behavior or comment which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's participation in church activities, creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning or worship environment.

Children and Youth Ministry leaders may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under their care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Mulberry Street UMC becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Director of Children and Family Ministries, Director of Youth Ministries, and the Senior Pastor for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Mulberry Street UMC, or during a church sponsored program or activity, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The leader alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
4. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
5. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by the state or local authorities.
6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children.
7. The Senior Pastor, or his/her designee, is the only person/s authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements should be directed to the Senior Pastor.

Training on Safe Sanctuary Guidelines:

Training on all child safety guidelines will be given annually during a regularly scheduled Children and Youth Ministry Departments staff/volunteer meeting. All children and youth ministry department leaders and staff are required to be aware of the guidelines and sign a “Child Safety Guidelines” form stating that awareness.

I _____ have received a copy of the Child Safety Guidelines.

signature

date