



Clemmons
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Safe Sanctuary

Children, Youth, Volunteers and Staff Protection Policy

Revised Version: Updated July 2021

Overview

Clemmons United Methodist Church is committed to maintaining a safe environment for every child and young person involved in our program ministries and is further committed to insuring that our adult staff and volunteers are protected from unfounded accusations of abuse and neglect.

In response to an environment of growing concern over the safety and welfare of young people, the 1996 General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of any type of abuse of children and youth in the church, including neglect and physical, emotional, sexual, or ritual abuse.

The congregation of Clemmons United Methodist Church affirms the right of children and youth to be protected from allegations of abuse and neglect. Our congregation believes that parents and workers prefer a church with an established, caring prevention program as opposed to a church with no policy in this area of vital concern.

In December of 1993, the National Child Protection Act established levels of reasonable care, which will be legally required of institutions caring for children and youth. The law encourages states to require that all childcare providers be qualified by references, employment history and if necessary, criminal background checks.

We, at Clemmons United Methodist Church, conclude that a well-balanced, proactive prevention policy is a necessity for any institution entrusted with the care of children and youth. The policy applies to all those who work with children and/or youth CUMC sponsored programs both on and off campus.

Clemmons UMC's Children, Youth, Volunteers and Staff Protection Policy include the following:

- Statement of Intent
- Working Definitions to be Applied to this Document
- Guidelines of Children/Youth/Volunteers
- Selected Forms

At Clemmons United Methodist Church, we take seriously our moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and youth, as well as to support those who work with them, as we seek to proclaim our faith and follow the ministry of Jesus Christ in our world.

Statement of Intent

The Leadership Board, staff and members of Clemmons United Methodist Church are committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children and youth are protected from abuse and neglect. Our goals are to protect children and youth in church programs, to educate volunteers and care givers concerning abuse issues, and to protect staff and volunteers, as well as the church as a whole, from potential allegations of abuse and neglect.

Implementation includes:

- Selection of staff, teachers, caregivers and others involved in activities with children and youth
- Orientation of these individuals
- Supervision of these individuals
- Reporting of incidents of child abuse or neglect
- Responding to incidents or allegations of abuse or neglect
- Monitoring the policy and procedures to insure compliance

We recognize that children and youth are entrusted to the care of adults in church programs and activities, both on and off the campus; and that they will be free to participate in these programs and activities without intimidation, coercion, or abuse of any type. This general policy is applicable to all persons whether compensated staff or volunteers, who conduct programs and activities, run by Clemmons United Methodist Church.

Working Definitions to be applied to this Document

- **Child Abuse:** A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Child abuse includes non-accidental-
 1. **Physical Abuse:** Examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that result or could result in serious physical injury.
 2. **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual behavior imposed on a child.
 3. **Emotional Abuse:** Any expression of attitudes or behaviors towards a child that create serious emotional or psychological damage.
- **Child Neglect:** Any serious disregard for a child's supervision, care, or discipline.
- **Child:** Any person in the fifth grade and below. Generally, this includes those persons from birth through eleven years of age.
- **Youth:** Any persons in the sixth through twelfth grades. Generally, those persons from eleven through eighteen years of age.
- **Adult:** Any persons nineteen years old or older.
To be considered:
 1. A "lead adult" in ministry with children, a person must be nineteen years of age or older.
 2. A "lead adult" in ministry with youth, a person must be twenty-one years of age or older.
- **Staff:** Any person who is employed by Clemmons UMC, Clemmons United Methodist Preschool or Clemmons United Methodist Afterschool and Summer Care.

Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers Who Direct or Control Children or Youth

1. Volunteer Screening Procedures

- a. Prior to consideration for a position, any candidate who may be working with children or youth will be asked to complete and return a Covenant Statement, Volunteer Application and Background Check form.
- b. A criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to any applicant.
- c. Following the background check, should CUMC have sufficient reason to believe that an applicant poses a threat to children or youth, and/or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person, then such applicant will be immediately removed from consideration for a ministry position in this work area.
- d. If the background check is clear of any concerns, the Covenant and Application will be carefully reviewed by the youth minister, children's minister or other ministry leader in the area that the applicant will be working
- e. If the applicant appears to be appropriate for the ministry work, then an interview will be set up with the youth minister, children's minister or other ministry leader in the area that the applicant will be working

2. Staff Screening Procedures

- a. All persons applying for a staff position with children or youth will submit an Application for Employment.
- b. In addition, a criminal background check will be performed through an appropriate agency.
- c. Should CUMC have sufficient reason to believe that an applicant poses a threat to children or youth and/or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person, then the applicant will be immediately removed from consideration for employment with CUMC.

3. Waiting Period

No volunteer worker will be considered for any lead ministry position involving contact with children or youth until the candidate has been a member of CUMC, an active participant in church life, or is personally known to the ministry leader for at least six months and has met the screening criteria above.

4. Supervision

- a. At least two adults (over 18) shall be present during children/youth activities, including events that require vehicle travel and program events off-campus. Exceptions are permitted only with the approval of the parent and the ministry leader or in emergency situations.
- b. During services/Sunday school/events, two adults will need to be present in each classroom. If two adults are not present in each classroom, then the door to the room will be left open. If the classroom has a Dutch door, then only the bottom position may be closed. A floater must be available to roam in order to monitor activity inside and outside the room(s) where the service/event is held in order to satisfy this requirement.
- c. Volunteer workers are not to release any children birth through fifth grade to find their parents within the building. Preschool and elementary aged children must remain in their classroom or with their supervising adult(s) until a parent or guardian picks them up.
- d. Volunteer workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized on the Family Information Form.

5. Disciplinary Problems

Volunteers are asked to use positive methods of dealing with negative behavior. Techniques to be used include:

- Redirect the child to another activity or another seat
- Praise the child for appropriate behavior, ignoring the inappropriate behavior
- Provide alternatives where the child can express his/her frustration in a positive way

- Remove the child from the group to another area where the child may engage in an activity directly supervised by a volunteer
- If a volunteer at any time begins to feel frustrated with a child, a floater or supervisor needs to be called and the child will be removed from the room.

Any disciplinary problems should be reported to the volunteer workers' coordinator/supervisor. Volunteers are not to spank, hit, grab, shake or otherwise physically discipline any child. Volunteers should never subject any child to any humiliating or frightening disciplinary techniques as means of discipline.

6. Injuries or Illness

- a. A suitable approved substitute, who meets the criteria set forth above, should be used to take the place of volunteers who are ill or unable to serve at their appointed time. If it is not possible to find such a substitute, then only substitutes whom the relevant ministry leader personally knows for at least six months or who can give proof of having had an approved background check can be used.
- b. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of any injury to a volunteer or participant should take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person. If the injury is minor, the parent or guardian should be notified of the injury when picking up the injured person. If the injury requires medical attention, then the parent or guardian of the injured person should be notified along with the volunteer's coordinator/supervisor as soon as is practical. Proper emergency attention should be provided to the injured person, possibly including summoning an ambulance in the interim.

7. Notice of Injury, Abuse or Molestation

- a. A written incident/notice of non-minor injury report should be prepared by volunteers whenever a non-minor injury occurs during a ministry function/event. This incident report needs to be forwarded to the volunteer's coordinator/supervisor and related staff person.

- b. Volunteers who become aware of non-minor injury, any abuse or molestation, or any allegation of abuse or molestation connected with any ministry activity at CUMC should immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader of such matter. The coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader should immediately inform the CUMC Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor.
- c. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of any non-minor injury, or any abuse or molestation, or any allegation of abuse or molestation connected with any ministry activity at CUMC should immediately inform the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor and should complete a "Notice of Injury" form.
- d. Any ministry leader at CUMC who becomes aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant should ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is immediately informed of the said abuse or molestation. The Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor should promptly contact the church attorney to provide a written opinion before any report of abuse or molestation is made to law enforcement authorities, If practical, such opinion by the attorney should be obtained within 24 hours of the time that the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor first is made aware of the abuse or molestation.
- e. Upon notice of abuse or molestation to the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor, the church's insurance carrier should be promptly notified, as well as any District or Conference agencies that need to be notified of such allegations according to the Book of Discipline.
- f. Confidentiality of all persons involved should be scrupulously safeguarded throughout the above process.

8. Violation of Policy or Procedures

- a. Volunteers should promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedure.
- b. Any coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader at CUMC, who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures should take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all volunteers; and should remove volunteers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if volunteers pose a possible threat to others.

9. Internal Investigation

- a. Any employee of CUMC who is the subject of an investigation should be removed from his or her position with pay, pending completion of the investigation. If the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, then he or she shall be terminated in accordance with CUMC employment practices.
- b. Any volunteer worker who is subject of an investigation should be removed from his or position pending completion of the investigation.
- c. Any person who is found guilty of alleged abuse or molestation should be removed from work with children or youth. CUMC should consult with its attorney for advice if termination of employment is indicated.

10. Spokesperson for CUMC

The Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor or his or her designee should be the spokesperson following notice of allegations of any abuse or molestation in connection with activities of the ministry. This person will be the only person authorized to convey information on behalf of CUMC concerning the situation, so as to avoid compromising the ongoing investigation and to convey only such information as is deemed necessary under the circumstances.

11. Annual Employee/Volunteer Worker Review

- a. The above policy and procedures should be conveyed for review annually to all volunteer workers, employees, coordinators, supervisors and pastors to whom it applies.
- b. All employees of CUMC should complete a brief renewal of application each year.
- c. All volunteer workers associated with CUMC who will be working in any capacity with children or youth at CUMC should complete a yearly update of information.

- d. In the event any employee renewal application and/or volunteer yearly information update suggests or indicate that any employee or volunteer worker has become unsuitable for working with children or youth, he or she should be immediately removed from his or her current position and should not be considered for other positions involving working with children or youth.

12. Policy/Procedure Revision

This policy and procedure will be regularly reviewed and revised with CUMC's attorney and can be modified accordingly by action of the Leadership Board in accordance with the Book of Discipline and in compliance with employment practices set forth from the time to time in CUMC's employee handbook. Any such modifications should be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modifications.

13. Training of Staff and Volunteers Serving with CUMC Children and Youth

Annual training in the following areas is recommended for all staff and volunteers:

- New Safe Sanctuaries Policies
- CPR/First Aid
- Looking for Signs of Abuses and How to Report Signs of Abuse

14. Procedures for Adults Leading Small Groups or Bible Studies for Children or Youth on CUMC's campus:

- Small groups generally take place at CUMC, and if there are fewer than 2 adult leaders present, the door will remain open and a floater will pass by periodically to check each group.
- For classrooms with no window in the door, the door will remain at least half way open.
- Bible Studies: Bible Studies that take place at CUMC will be lead by either older youth or adults.
- When a team of adults are not present, the study will be asked to move to a higher traffic area of church for better visibility.

Procedures for Transportation of Children and Youth

1. Children and youth shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the written permission of their parents or guardians.
2. No youth or child below the age of thirteen shall travel in the front seat.
3. It is recommended that when a youth aged 13 or older travels in the front seat, the youth should be the same gender as the adult driver.
4. It is preferred that there be at least two adults in a vehicle transporting children or youth. However, no unrelated adult driver is to transport any youth or child alone without the written permission of the parents or guardians involved. If possible, there will always be more than one youth or child in the vehicle.
5. All riders and drivers must wear seatbelts.
6. Vehicles should be driven with headlights on for safety.
7. Drivers should refrain from using cell phones while driving unless necessary to communicate with others regarding the church-sponsored trip.
8. Drivers must be at least twenty-one years of age and not older than seventy years of age. As a general rule, the driver must be comfortable with the vehicle he/she will drive. All drivers must go through the required training to drive a church vehicle.
9. There shall be no use of tobacco products, nicotine containing products, or alcohol by anyone in the vehicle.

Procedures for Overnight Trips with Children or Youth

1. The lodging situation on overnight trips will be assessed on each trip to determine the best sleeping arrangements for those in attendance.
2. No unrelated adult shall share a bed with a child or youth.
3. The group leader will strive to have all of the rooms together in a block when possible.
4. Wherever practical, one unrelated adult should not spend the night alone with one child or youth. An exception would include sickness or emergency.

5. As a part of the participant covenant, parents or guardians will agree to pick up their children or youth in the case of inappropriate behavior.

Recommended Cyber Safety for Children, Youth and Adults

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Some incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. There is no such thing as privacy in cyberspace. Consider anything and everything on the internet as public information.

1. Written parental permission for children, youth and vulnerable adults is required for:
 - a. The posting of photos on any websites or social media sites hosted/owned by Clemmons UMC, its Children's Ministries, Preschool, Afterschool, Summer Care, and Youth Ministries
 - b. Emailing, Messaging, Texting, Calling or the sending of data to a child, youth or vulnerable adult by computer, cell phone and any other such device
 - c. The sharing of any full name or contact information
2. Easily identifiable information is not to be posted online.
3. All communications are to be conducted in a professional manner and communications with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults should be limited. All communications with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults should be saved for the purpose of an electronic paper trail.
4. When communicating through text messaging, a parent or guardian should be included in the communication for all children birth through fifth grade and for youth (sixth through twelfth grade) written parental permission must be given prior to communicating through text message.
5. If made uneasy about any topic addressed in an email or any email in general, a blind carbon copy should be sent to the parent/guardian or another trusted adult. Privacy is to be honored, but not secrecy.
6. If abuse is divulged electronically, standard reporting procedures as outlined in this policy should be followed.
7. The following procedures should be followed for the safety of sharing photos electronically.
 - a. Refrain from using names and never post a last name when posting photos or identifiable information.
 - b. Photos should be checked for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure the photos uphold the mission/ministry. Nametags should not be distinguishable.
8. The following safety measures are in place for social networking sites:
 - a. Privacy limits are required to be set to limit who can see the profile. Restrict who can be a friend. Passwords to accounts will not be divulged.

- b. Use of higher level security features should be used when offered by the network.
- c. Do not post anything on the site you would not want on your resumes or printed in the church newsletter or bulletin. Remove and/or do not post any inappropriate comments, photos, etc.
- d. All CUMC youth and children are encouraged to follow these same guidelines.

Policy Regarding Registered Sex Offenders in Response to the Jessica Lundsford Act of North Carolina, Effective 12/01/2008

We, as the church, invite all people to be a part of the worshipping community of faith. However, we must weigh the duty to protect the children and youth of the church with the right of all people to experience God's redeeming love through worship. In furtherance of our Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures and in compliance with North Carolina law, a registered sex offender who wishes to be part of a church community should expect to have conditions placed on his/her participation.

1. A registered sex offender should identify himself/herself as a registered sex offender to one of the pastors. A registered sex offender who wishes to be part of our church community shall read and sign a Church Participation Covenant Statement. This document will also be signed by the pastor(s) and the Chairperson of the Church Council and be kept on file at the Church.
2. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) shall be permitted to work/volunteer with minors in any church sponsored activity. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.17(a)(2008).
3. A registered sex offender shall not be in attendance at any church event where children or youth are the primary audience. These events include, but are not limited to, United Methodist Youth Fellowship activities, Vacation Bible School, children's choir activities, preschool activities, and scouting activities.
4. If a registered sex offender does attend such an event, he/she will be told to leave and a report will be made to law enforcement.
5. A registered sex offender shall not be within 300 feet of any location on the church property intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors. **N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-208.18(a) (2)(2008)**. This includes, but is not limited to, the nursery, preschool and afterschool classrooms, children's Sunday School classrooms, and playground. **N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208(a) (2008)**.

6. While on church property, a registered sex offender must be accompanied at all time by an unrelated, same-gender adult covenant partner provided by the church.
7. The pastors shall have discretion to impose additional restrictions on a registered sex offender's activities, as the circumstances dictate.