

University Presbyterian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." (Matt. 19:14)

University Presbyterian Church has established the following policy in an attempt to minimize the risks of abuse and other injury with respect to the children and youth participating in the church's programs, and in an attempt to protect church staff and volunteers participating in the church's programs.

A. Definitions

1. "Adult" as used herein shall mean any person who is at least 18 years old and has graduated from high school.
2. "Child" or "Youth" as used herein shall mean any individual who is 18 years or younger and has not graduated from high school.
3. "Church" as used herein shall mean University Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
4. "Campus" as used herein shall mean the property owned by the church and vehicles used in transporting children and youth to and from church-sponsored events.
5. "Policy" as used herein shall mean the University Presbyterian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy.

B. Screening and Training - The church will provide screening of all paid church staff members and adult volunteers working with children and/or youth. This includes but is not limited to Sunday School teachers, youth advisors (for Kirk Club, middle school, and high school), Confirmation mentors, overnight trip chaperones, and Vacation Bible School volunteers. This screening will help make the church aware of potential issues prior to any activities with children and youth. The church will provide training on an annual basis to educate church staff members and all volunteers with children and youth. Upon the hiring by the church of new staff and the approval by church staff and session of certain volunteers working with children and youth, the screening will be accomplished as follows:

1. The church will perform a background check on all paid church staff members and all adult volunteers who work with children and/or youth.
2. The background check will be accomplished every three years for so long as a person works as a paid church staff member or volunteers with children or youth.
3. The background checks will be conducted by church staff.
4. A background check showing any violation will warrant further consideration by the staff.
5. Every three years all adults working with children/youth must sign off on the safe sanctuary policy and complete a background check. The church shall provide a copy of the policy and shall conduct training on the policy annually to all paid church staff members and all volunteers who work with children and youth.

C. Adult Supervision - The church's requirements for adult supervision on and off-campus have the goal of providing a safe physical environment for children and youth. The church will permit volunteers to assist in appropriate situations once the following policies are met:

1. The following ratios of adults:children/youth are suggested for church events. Activities will be planned with those ratios as the target, although leaders are permitted to use discretion as to whether an activity could involve fewer adults. All ratio decisions must take into account the fact that a minimum of two adults is always required.

Ages 0-1 - 1:3

Age 2 - 1:4

Pre-K (ages 3-5) - 1:5

Kindergarten - 12th grade - 1:6

2. Each room set aside for children and youth on campus shall have a door with a window in it or a half door. The top half of all half doors shall remain open. Doors without a window or top half, shall remain open when in use. Sleeping arrangements in designated areas will be determined by church staff and overnight adult chaperones with consideration for privacy needs, as well as the goal of building group cohesion, all while affirming the range of gender identity. The doors of bathrooms used for children requiring adult supervision shall remain open.

3. At least two non-related adult workers shall be present at all activities involving children or youth. At no time will only one worker be allowed to be alone with a child or youth. The only exceptions to the two-adult rule would be situations in which the adult and child or youth are in a public place or other persons are in and out of the area or room. In such cases, classroom doors shall remain open. The policy is not intended to restrict appropriate pastoral counseling and caregiving. The following, however, do not violate this policy:

- a. On-campus and during the church school hour on Sunday mornings, if a designated adult supervisor moves in and out of the classrooms and monitors the hallways;
- b. One-on-one interactions between a child and adult conducted in a public space with the prior knowledge of a paid church staff member and/or the prior consent of the parent/guardian of the child;
- c. When an emergency or other situation (for example, bathroom breaks, calming a distraught child, or a sick child) requires one adult to be alone with children or youth and another adult is notified immediately before and after that time period; and
- d. Carpooling to and from church events with the consent of the parent/guardian of the child/youth obtained in each instance. The parent/guardian must be notified upon departure and arrival.
- e. Diaper changes, if not being performed by a child's parent/guardian, shall be performed by paid church staff members only or by another authorized church volunteer.
- f. In settings where the premises are governed by other organizations, such as Montreat, Appalachia Service Project, Massanetta Springs, and events or retreats organized by the Presbytery of New Hope, etc. the policies of those organizations as agreed to by the participants shall govern.

D. Social Media, Texting, and Email

1. University Presbyterian will adhere to its own Web policy concerning church social media accounts. <http://upcch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/UPC-Web-Policy.pdf>
2. Any and all communication between a child/youth and an adult must include two adults, with one preferably being the staff person for youth or children's ministry. One-on-one communication between a child/youth and adult volunteer regarding matters not related to church business is permissible with prior consent from parent/guardian of the child/youth. (i.e. coordinating babysitting, yardwork, pet sitting, etc.)
3. Adults will not initiate contact with children or youth on any social media platform. If a child or youth initiates contact, the adult will discern the level of contact they wish to maintain with the youth prior to responding to the request. One-on-one messaging is prohibited.
4. Adults who are connected to youth on social media must agree to refrain from posting any inappropriate content.
5. On their personal social media pages/accounts, adults will not tag or otherwise identify children/youth in photos posted online of church related activities/events.

E. Reporting - All reports of suspected abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, verbal) of children or youth associated with the church shall be made promptly and shall be made directly to the staff person for youth or children's ministry or to one of the church's pastors. Paid staff and volunteers will adhere to the requirements of North Carolina law for reporting suspected abuse. In accordance with the requirements of the law, and as far as practicable, such reports shall be treated as confidential.

1. In the event of a report concerning a paid church staff member, the staff person for youth or children's ministry or pastor to whom the report was made shall confer with the head of staff, and may request the assistance of another church staff member with regard to any necessary steps to be taken concerning further investigation, further reporting, or interim or final disposition.
2. In the event of a report concerning a volunteer, the staff person for youth or children's ministry, or pastor to whom the report was made shall confer with the head of staff and the chair of the children's and/or youth committee(s), and may request the assistance of another church staff member with regard to any necessary steps to be taken concerning further investigation, further reporting, or interim or final disposition.
3. All incidents involving illness or injury of any kind to any child or youth during a church sponsored event shall be reported to the parent/guardian of the child or youth, and also to the staff person for youth or children's ministry.
4. In the event of a conflict between this policy and any liability insurance policy of the church, the requirements of the liability insurance policy shall govern.