



Long's Chapel United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuary Policy

I. Purpose

God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of Jesus Christ in ways that assure the safety of all here at Long's Chapel United Methodist Church (LCUMC).

By doing this work, we will be fulfilling the covenant of baptism pledge we have taken: each person will be "surrounded by steadfast love.... Established in the faith... and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." (Baptismal Covenant II, The United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44).

II. General

This policy is designed to communicate guidelines for LCUMC management action and therefore, LCUMC reserves the right to change, modify, or deviate from this policy as it deems appropriate. LCUMC will abide by all applicable local, State of North Carolina, and Federal laws pertaining to the protection of minors and vulnerable adults. If conflicts arise, this policy is superseded by those laws. LCUMC will follow all North Carolina general statutes and Federal laws concerning registered sex offenders and their participation in activities. Based on North Carolina Laws, sex offenders should follow the regulations set forth in their individual parole and/or probation plans.

III. Definitions

A. Abuse

The intentional maltreatment of an individual. There are five major categories of child abuse: neglect, physical abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, ritual abuse and sexual abuse. Neglect is the failure to give an individual the necessary care they need. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define child maltreatment as any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child. Ritual abuse refers to abusive acts inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized manner.

B. Authorized individual

Person given specific permission with respect to care of children and youth. The authorized individual is the parent, guardian, adult relative known to the supervising adult in the classroom, or youth relative given written permission by the parent or guardian. Additional authorized individuals may be designated in writing by parents or guardians. The person who drops off a child is also considered an authorized individual for child pickup at the end of the session. For

the purpose of this policy, confirmation mentors may be designated as authorized individuals. LCUMC staff members may not serve as the authorized individual unless they are an adult relative of the child or youth.

C. Certified Caregiver

An individual who is certified in CPR and First Aid training.

D. Children

Persons within the age group of birth through attending fifth grade.

E. Continuous Service

Working as a paid staff or volunteer with breaks in service of no more than one year.

F. Paid Staff

Persons employed for pay by LCUMC. This will include but not be limited to pastors, administrative personnel, directors, coordinators, program staff, custodians, and kitchen staff. Paid Staff within the children and youth ministry must be at least five years older than the oldest person they are serving.

G. Two-Adult Rule

The two-adult rule will be followed during all designated group activities for children and youth, regardless of whether it is on or off campus.

With respect to activities involving groups of children and youth, a minimum of two adults (individuals age 18 or above) will be accessible in the specific room or available to that room for administering care. For an adult to qualify as part of the two-adult rule, s/he must be LCUMC approved through either the paid staff process or a routine volunteer who has been approved through the Safe Sanctuary process. If two of the adults are closely related, a third unrelated adult must be present.

Individuals should clearly understand when they are serving as components of the two-adult rule for a particular session.

One of the two adults may deliver this care while serving as a roving monitor. If utilizing a roving monitor, physical and visual access must be available at all times; therefore, when a group located in a room without an uncovered hallway window or door window, the door must be propped open to ensure physical access. Internal doors must remain unlocked while persons are present in the room.

H. Volunteers

Routine volunteers are persons age 18 or above who have formally signed up for ministry delivery assistance and have been approved and trained for service.

Occasional volunteers are persons age 18 or above who provide service on an intermittent basis with or without following all steps for approval. Any use of occasional volunteers must be approved by and supervised by the individuals making up the two-adult rule.

I. Vulnerable Adults

Persons age 18 or above who are currently perceived to be mentally, physically or emotionally susceptible to abuse. Abuse of vulnerable adults may include physical or emotional issues as well as questionable advice (for example, financial). Since individuals may be vulnerable or not as a result of current life experiences, intentional awareness of possible situations is needed and behavior adjusted accordingly.

J. Youth

Persons within the age group of those attending sixth grade through age 17.

K. Youth Volunteer

Youth volunteers are persons under the age of 18 who have formally signed up for ministry delivery assistance. These volunteers support our overall LCUMC vision of increased intergenerational interactions. These individuals have no age requirement with respect to the ministry area they serve, but must have the approval of the adults making up the two-adult rule. All youth volunteers working with children or youth must be at least 5 years older than the age of the group being served by the ministry. It is recommended that youth wishing to assist in the child care area complete a babysitter's course (Red Cross or Safe Sitters) and also the Safe Sanctuary training. Youth must be 16 years old to volunteer in the infant nursery.

IV. Selection, Training and Supervision of Paid Staff and Volunteers

A decision concerning an individual's LCUMC service will be made after analyzing all information and in the best interest of the ministry involved.

A. References

The responsible ministry leader will obtain reference information for three or more church and/or personal references from each routine volunteer and paid staff. If the individual has been actively affiliated with LCUMC for less than six months, at least one reference must be someone not associated with LCUMC.

B. Criminal Background Checks

LCUMC will order a criminal background check before the paid staff or routine volunteer begins work and at least once every five years thereafter. If continuous service has not occurred, a new background check is required. The LCUMC reserves the option to repeat background checks more often at their discretion.

1. Background checks will be ordered and reviewed by the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator or designee. All feedback will be kept confidential and maintained in a locked cabinet.
2. No person who has been convicted of, or pled guilty to, any crimes against children or youth, or other serious crimes against persons (rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.), or against whom such charges are pending, will be allowed to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

Once a background check is complete the person will be added to a list of persons who have an approved background check. This list will be available for other paid staff to utilize during the selection of paid staff and volunteers.

C. Safe Sanctuary Training

All LCUMC paid staff and routine volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults must attend an initial Safe Sanctuary Training Session in person.

Initial training will include review of the Safe Sanctuary policy. Also included will be training on the prevention and recognition of abuse and procedures we follow for behavior, supervision and advance notice of events.

Thereafter, the minimum training will be an annual review that includes information regarding the Safe Sanctuary policy, as well as information on how to identify and report child abuse. Annual renewal may take place online at the discretion of the ministry leader to whom the paid staff or routine volunteer relates.

Records of all training will be maintained by the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator.

D. First Aid and Emergency Assistance

All ministry staff members are required to complete CPR/AED, and First Aid training (to include epinephrine use) within six months of beginning service. There must be at least one certified caregiver on campus at all times while designated events for children and youth are taking place. All paid staff and routine volunteers will be informed of the location of emergency aid kits.

V. General Procedures for LCUMC Programs

A. Behavior

All children, youth, and leaders are expected to behave in a Christ-like manner during all activities sponsored by LCUMC. If discipline issues do arise, leaders should make an effort to resolve the issue with another adult present as a witness. If the negative behavior continues the leaders may contact the authorized individual and may remove the child or youth from the group. If the authorized individual cannot be located, time out within the room may be used. If physical restraint is necessary, contact of the child's or youth's authorized individual is required. No form of verbal abuse or physical discipline is ever to be used.

B. Supervision by an Authorized Individual

Adults with disabilities who require one-on-one supervision are the responsibility of their guardians and must be supervised by their guardians while on campus. Children not currently involved in an event or signed into a classroom are the responsibility of the authorized individual and must be supervised by the authorized individual while on campus. Authorized individuals are encouraged to remain on campus while their children are signed into LCUMC ministries. Authorized individuals who leave campus while their children are signed into classes or events will provide emergency contact information.

C. Signing In and Out

For events designated by Ministry Staff, children will be signed in and out by an authorized individual, preferably a parent or guardian.

D. Permission Forms and Medical Treatment Consent

Children and youth must have a completed permission form in order to participate in off campus activities. A medical treatment consent form is also required. All forms must be signed by a parent/guardian.

E. Medications

Parents/ guardians are encouraged to administer medications when possible. If medications need to be administered by a paid staff or designated volunteer, a permission form must be completed by a parent or guardian. Medications are to be under the control of paid staff.

F. Itineraries

- Basic itineraries for all events will be available and will include leader contact information.

G. Use of Media

Permission must be granted by a parent/guardian for the use of children's or youth's likeness in any publicity including bulletin boards, brochures, videos, online community or website.

H. Age-Based Participation

Children and youth will attend the appropriate grade/age level equivalent to the grade/age level they attend in school or preschool. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the ministry leader with respect to visitors, children and youth with developmental delays, and when a child or youth needs time to adjust and transition to the new class. If a child or youth repeats or defers attendance of a grade in school, that child or youth will also repeat or defer attendance of that grade in Christian education. Promotion generally occurs in late August; children and youth routinely move to the next grade level at that time.

I. Adult/Youth to Participant Ratios

In programs monitored by an outside agency, such as the Child Enrichment Center, mandated ratios will be met or exceeded. For all programs:

1. All activities designated for children and youth will operate on the two-adult rule.
2. The recommended leader to child ratio for designated children's activities is 1:12 in the classroom, and 1:6 on trips or overnights.
3. The recommended leader to youth ratio for designated youth activities is 1:20 in the classroom, 1:15 on day trips and 1:8 on overnight trips.
4. On overnight trips, all chaperones counted in the ratios, must be over the age of twenty-one. There will be one female chaperone per every six (children)/eight (youth) girls and one male chaperone per every six (children)/eight (youth) boys.
5. There will always be at least 2 adults housed with children or youth on an overnight trip. No child or youth shall travel alone in a vehicle with only one adult unless it is an authorized individual; furthermore, unless closely related, an adult and youth will not share a room or bed.

J. Youth Buddy System

Youth will use the buddy system during all designated youth activities. While using the buddy system, the minimum number of youth accompanying each other should be three.

K. Other Organizations

Other organizations that use Church premises for children or youth-oriented activities (for example, Boy or Girl Scouts) will adhere to the intent of the LCUMC Safe Sanctuary policy. This adherence will be indicated by having a responsible person of the other organization receive and return a signed copy of the LCUMC Safe Sanctuary policy document to indicate their understanding of the LCUMC policy.

VI. General Procedures for Vulnerable Adults

A. Age-Based Participation

Adults will be expected to attend appropriate programs based upon their age and abilities. LCUMC will, to the best of its ability, provide programs designed to meet the developmental needs of adults with special needs who regularly attend.

B. Guardian Supervision

Adults with disabilities who require one-on-one supervision are the responsibility of their guardians and must be supervised by their guardians while on campus. When adults do not require one-on-one supervision, guardians are encouraged to remain on campus. Guardians who leave campus will provide emergency contact information.

VII. General Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Abuse

A. Any questionable or inappropriate behavior should be reported immediately to a ministry leader since such conduct may precede abuse, even though the observed act itself does not constitute abuse.

B. All conversations and reports will be documented in writing. Documentation will be maintained by the Church staff member designated as the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator or designee.

C. According to the laws of the State of North Carolina, all persons are mandatory reporters of child abuse. If a person learns of or witnesses an instance of abuse, that person shall immediately report the alleged incident of abuse or suspected abuse to the appropriate county or state authorities. In Haywood County, a report is filed with the Haywood County Department of Social Services by calling 828-452-6620. Reporting alleged abuse to church leaders in no way mitigates the legal obligation of the individual to report abuse.

D. It is the responsibility of those individuals serving as components of the two adult rule who become knowledgeable of a suspected abuse event to:

1. Ensure the situation is in a safe state
2. Communicate the incident information to the church staff member in charge of the activity.
3. Either make a report to the appropriate government authorities or confirm that a report has been made. This final step should be completed after the individual is relieved of all direct care duties.

E. The church staff member will take the following steps at appropriate times within the framework of the incident. At no time will these steps take precedent over the immediate supervision and safety of the participants.

1. Confirm that a safe state has been returned to the situation.
2. Gather information of individuals involved in the incident.
3. Ensure that any adult or youth who is the object of the report is immediately removed from volunteer or paid duty and refrains from any additional volunteer or paid LCUMC activities until the incident is resolved. In any removal of a person from any volunteer or paid staff activities, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.
4. Report information to the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator or designee. Once notified, the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator will take administrative charge of the particular incident, and for all future required actions, will report the alleged incident of abuse or suspected abuse to the Department of Social Services.
5. Either make a report to the appropriate government authorities or confirm that a report has been made.
6. Notify the parents or guardians of a suspected child or youth victim as soon as able.

F. The Senior pastor or his/her designee will be the sole spokesperson for the church for any abuse report communication within or outside the church.

VIII. Counseling

Counseling is confidential in nature. For the protection of all parties, however, sessions will take place in compliance with the two-adult rule.

IX. Policy Availability and Review

A. Availability

This policy shall be posted on the LCUMC web site. In addition, printed copies of the policy will be available in the church information area and in the church office.

Overview information about the Safe Sanctuary policy will be included in the new member inquirer class.

Church staff members will receive a copy of the Long's Chapel Safe Sanctuary Policy as part of the employment packet. Prior to working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, routine volunteers will be offered the Long's Chapel Safe Sanctuary Policy.

B. Review

The LCUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy will be reviewed annually by a committee consisting of the following individuals:

- Pastor of Adult Ministry
- Director of Children's Ministries
- Director of Student Ministries
- The Hangout Director
- Director of the Child Enrichment Center
- Lay Representative of the Children's Ministries Team
- Lay Representative of the Youth Ministries Team
- Lay Representative of Vulnerable Adults Ministries Team
- Executive Director of Operations
- Safe Sanctuary Coordinator

Any variation of the above committee make-up must be approved by the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator.

The Safe Sanctuary Coordinator's signature indicates a concurrence of the review committee to go forward with the policy as presented.

The Safe Sanctuary Policy as recommended by this committee shall receive the concurrence of the Senior Pastor and Church Administrator and then be forwarded to the Church Council for approval.

If any of these concurrences are not received, then the policy issue shall be resolved at the discretion of the Church Council. If no changes are recommended by the review committee, information to that effect shall be shared by the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator at a regularly scheduled Church Council meeting.

This policy is designed to serve as a guideline for management action. The policy is subject to change or modification at the discretion of LCUMC at any time that particular circumstances warrant. LCUMC reserves the right to change, modify, or deviate from this policy as it deems appropriate.

Concurrences/Approvals

Church Administrator & Date

Safe Sanctuary Coordinator

Lead Pastor

Chair, Church Council

Adopted by Church Council on _____

Formulation Date: April 12, 2010
Revised & Adopted: October 17, 2017
Revised & Adopted: 2018