



COLLIERVILLE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Safe Sanctuary Policy

“Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them,
“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me
welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” Mark 9:36-37

“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would
be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in
the depth of the sea.” Matthew 18:6

Mission Statement

The congregation of Collierville United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and adults who participate in the ministries and activities sponsored by our church and other community activities hosted by our church. The following guidelines reflect our congregation’s commitment to preserving this church as a safe and sacred place for all who enter its doors so all can experience the love of God through relationship with others.

Definitions

The following definitions will ensure clarity of intent as well as consistency in the interpretation of and adherence to this policy.

Adult means any person 18 years of age or older.

Appropriate means conduct that one would reasonably assume would be acceptable and permissible by the child's parent or guardian.

Child and *Children* refer to a person under 18 years of age.

Child Abuse is categorized in five forms

- Physical abuse is abuse in which a person deliberately causes bodily harm (including, but not limited to hitting, burning, shaking, kicking, choking, and fracturing bones) to a child.
- Emotional abuse is abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty.
- Neglect is abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence (including, but not limited to withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and affection).
- Sexual abuse is abuse in which sexual contact occurs between a child and an adult or an older, more powerful youth occurs (including, but not limited to fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of a child through or exposure to pornography).
- Ritual abuse is abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare.

Church means the local congregation.

Constituent means any adult who attends worship and/or who is consistently active in other areas of the life of the local congregation names, but who has not placed her or his membership with the local congregation.

Leader means anyone directly responsible for supervising and overseeing the specific church-related function, event, or activity.

Member means any adult who has placed her or his membership with the local congregation.

Parent or *Guardian* means any parent, stepparent, foster parent, grandparent, or appointed guardian who has the general responsibility for the health, education, or welfare of a child or an adult with special needs.

Sexual Contact means the intentional touching of the intimate parts or the clothing covering the immediate area of the intimate parts of a child, a youth, or an adult.

Sexual Exploitation means allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child or an adult with special needs to engage in prostitution or depiction or actual or suggestive sexual contact by means of photographing, filming, creating electronic or computer-generated images, or any other form.

Volunteer means any person not receiving a salary, wages, or other compensation for providing any services, care, guidance, assistance, or supervision for any child or any adult with special needs within a church-related function, event, or activity.

Building Requirements

All offices of staff members who work with children and youth will have a viewing window. Doors to all offices and classrooms used in ministry with children and youth will have a viewing window.

Revisions

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) in consultation with the Board of Trustees shall review this policy on an annual basis. Individuals or groups within the church who are proposing specific revisions should submit them in writing to the Chair of the committee named above.

If this committee recommends changes, the changes should be approved by the SPRC and forwarded to the Administrative Board for consideration.

Editorial changes may be approved by the committees to update references or clarify materials.

Implementation

This policy shall be effective October 1, 2010 for all church-related activities, events, and functions including activities hosted by the church. Ongoing training will be provided by designated staff and the committee chair as needed for new volunteers and staff members.

Requirement and Standards of Staff/Volunteers

Documentation requirements for each identified group are named in the table below. Individual work areas within Collierville United Methodist Church (i.e. Preschool, Youth Ministries, etc.) may have additional requirements which will be named during the application and training process.

Group	Training Required	Background Check Req'd	Volunteer Application	Copy of Policy and Signed Covenant	Copy of Policy With Signed Agreement
Church Staff	Yes	Yes (as of 5/1/03)	No	Yes	N/A
Preschool Staff	Yes	Yes (as of 1/15/01)	No	Yes	N/A
Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Programs • Youth • Sunday School (age 2-HS) • Recreation • Childcare 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
All Overnight Volunteers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outside Groups* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scouts • Sport Teams • Other facility events 	No	No	No	N/A	Yes

*** Outside groups may provide an existing policy to keep on file, or designated leaders need to sign a copy of our policy.**

- All church and preschool staff will be interviewed and a completed background check received prior to that person assuming the position.
- Volunteers and church/preschool staff who work in any position of authority with children and youth, must be at least four years older than the oldest person they are supervising, and, if under 18 years of age, supervised by a trained adult. In addition, the primary or lead volunteer in all areas of children's and youth ministries will be at least 21 years of age.
- To begin a direct leadership role, volunteers working with children (birth to 18) must be a member or constituent of CUMC for six months or provide a letter of recommendation

from a pastor for their most recent church affiliation. However, such individuals may begin the application, training, and background check process at any time during that six-month period.

- Adult:Child ratios are as follows:

Infants (non-handicapped and not walking)	1:4
Toddlers (non-handicapped and walking)	1:6
2 years of age	1:7
3 years of age	1:9
4 years of age	1:13
5 years of age and above	1:16
- Overnight Adult:Child ratios are as follows

Grades 1-3	1:8
Grades 4-8	1:10
Grades 9-12	1:12
- All programs of CUMC are to utilize two adults in any programming with children and youth. In the event that an adult volunteer/staff member cannot avoid being alone with a child, that adult shall seek an open area and visibility by another adult on the premises.
- In classrooms where there is not a viewing window to the public corridor or area outside the classroom, the door must remain open when in use.
- Parents are required to sign-in their children, according to the church nursery policies.
- Parents must sign in and out their children for all classes and activities from two years of age through 3rd grade.
- Staff/Volunteers will not use physical force except in self-defense or for the protection of the children or youth. It is against CUMC policy to use corporal punishment.
- Staff/Volunteers shall wear nametags or other identification at all times when working with children/youth.
- No one who may represent a potential threat of committing abuse or violating this policy shall serve in any church ministry involving children, youth, and/or adults with special needs. This will be determined by the program director of the ministry in question or the designee of the sponsoring agency, and the senior minister.
- No one shall serve in any church ministry involving children, youth, and/or adults with special needs if he/she is known to have been previously convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to any crime involving sexual abuse. This includes, but is not limited to, crimes involving pedophilic behavior (molestation of a pre-adolescent child), incest, rape, murder, kidnapping, pornography, and the physical abuse of children, youth, or adults with special needs.
- No one shall serve in any church ministry involving children, youth, and/or adults with special needs if he/she has had a verdict or judgment rendered against him/her in any civil action arising out of any personal act or conduct related to sexual abuse of a child, youth, or an adult with special needs. This qualifying rule shall apply no matter how long ago the civil verdict or judgment was rendered.
- No one shall serve in any church ministry involving children, youth, and/or adults with special needs if he/she has acknowledged or admitted that he/she has participated as a perpetrator in any previous act of sexual abuse or a child, a youth, or an adult with special needs. This qualifying rule shall apply no matter how long ago the abuse was committed or whether a civil or criminal verdict or judgment was rendered.
- Outside groups will be asked to sign a statement acknowledging their awareness of and willingness to comply with Collierville United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuary Policy.

Screening Process

Responsibility

- A member of the pastoral team and the Church Business Administrator will be responsible for screening all paid staff employees.
- The Director of Children's Ministries, assisted by a member of the pastoral team, will be responsible for screening all Sunday School and Children's Programs volunteers.
- The Nursery Coordinator, assisted by a member of the pastoral team, will be responsible for screening all nursery staff volunteers.
- The Director of Youth Ministries, assisted by a member of the pastoral team will be responsible for screening all volunteers – both adults and youth – who will be part of Youth ministries.
- The Preschool Director, assisted by a designated representative from the Staff-Parish Relations committee, will be responsible for screening all preschool teachers and substitutes.
- The Minister of Music and Worship, assisted by a member of the pastoral team, will be responsible for screening all volunteers.
- The Recreation Coordinator, assisted by a member of the pastoral team, will be responsible for screening all volunteers.
- Outside groups will not be screened by CUMC and such groups will hold responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy while using our facility.

Procedures

- The persons noted above will be responsible for receiving, reviewing, confirming, and processing all employment or volunteer applications.
- References will be requested of applicants for employment or volunteer service; screeners noted in the section above are responsible for contacting references provided by the applicant.
- A background check will be made for all employment applicants; the screener noted in the section above will be the recipient of that report.
- Interview questions asked of applicants for employment or volunteer service may vary depending on the interviewee and the responsibilities of the ministry or staff position in question. The results of the interview are to be kept confidential and only discussed with those persons needing this information.
- The volunteer application will be signed by the recipient and maintained in secure files along with the signed volunteer covenant.
- The documents shall be updated and secured by the screeners noted above.
- Program team members will not have access to the details of the background check reports. This information will be limited to the necessary office support team, and the appointed pastors as needed. Program team members will have access to a database that informs them who has passed their background check, and who has not. This is the only information program team members will receive.

Training Requirements

Any training required for a position or ministry responsibility will be provided to the staff person or volunteer at no cost to her/him. Training will be required and provided in the following manner:

Staff Member, not relating to children/youth ministries

- Initial training, including covenant agreement, upon employment (covenant agreement to be kept in employee file)
- Training updates as needed or at annual review

Staff Member, relating to children/youth ministries

- Initial training, including covenant agreement, upon employment (covenant agreement to be kept in employee file)
- Training updates as needed or at annual review
- Yearly CPR/First Aid certification (certification to be kept in employee file)

Volunteers, relating to children/youth ministries (including workers who are Youth)

- Annual training/review (covenant agreement to be kept by director of children's ministries or youth ministries)

New Members and Visitors

- Inclusion in visitor/new member information of a fact sheet regarding policies, training, and suggestions to help keep their child(ren) safe at our church (for example: go with your children to the restroom when the halls would otherwise be empty, ask your child/youth to wait indoors for you when you are to pick them up, etc.)

Full Congregation of Collierville UMC

- Invitation to join annual training for the purposes of becoming aware of policies and procedures and of being better prepared to live out our covenant of care

Reporting of and Response to Abuse/Alleged Abuse

Incidents of abuse or reasonably suspected cases of abuse against children, youth, or adults with special needs are to be reported to the director of the pertinent program immediately, but in no event later than 24 hours following the report or complaint. The pertinent program director will then:

- Notify the parents of the victim and take any necessary steps to assure the child's safety until his/her parents arrive
- Treat the accused abuser with dignity, but immediately remove him/her from further involvement with children or youth
- Contact the appropriate state agency (Department of Human Services and/or Children's Services)
- Inform a member of the Pastoral Team
- Document, in writing to be provided to the member of the Pastoral Team, all steps taken in the handling of the incident and/or report including, but not limited to the date and time of the event; the identity of the alleged victim, the identity of the alleged abuser, the facts and allegations relating to the event, where the alleged abuse occurred, whether there were any witnesses to the alleged abuse (and, if so, name, address, phone number) and any additional information that appears to be relevant.

The Senior Pastor shall report any reasonably suspected incident of abuse to the church legal counsel. The church legal counsel will notify the liability insurer for the church. The Senior Pastor or person designated by the Senior Pastor shall be the sole spokesperson for the Church in-so-far as media inquiries are concerned. The Conference Director of Communications will be consulted for the purpose of writing a proper statement regarding the circumstances under investigation.

The decision as to whether an internal investigation is necessary shall be made on a case-by-case basis. When appropriate, an in-depth investigation shall be carried out by the civil authorities rather than by church personnel. However, circumstances may warrant an internal investigation by the Church in addition to or in lieu of an investigation conducted by external authorities.

The confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded to the extent possible during the investigation.

Appendix A

Collierville United Methodist Church
Application for Volunteer Work with Children and/or Youth

Full Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Present Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Date of Birth _____

Please indicate the area of service or specific job for which you wish to volunteer

Please indicate the date you would be available to begin _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime? _____ Yes _____ No

If you answered yes to the above, please explain _____

Do you have a current driver's license? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please provide your State & driver's license number _____

Signature

Date

Safe Sanctuary Class Leader/Facilitator

Training Date

As a part of our concern for all of our staff volunteers, the church wants to be sensitive and caring to any of you who may have been victims of abuse. Please contact one of the pastors if we can help you. Of course, all such contacts will be handled in a confidential manner. Your acknowledgement of being a victim would not in itself prevent you from serving as a volunteer in ministry to children, youth, or adults with special needs.

Appendix B
Collierville United Methodist Church

Participation Covenant Statement
For Staff and Volunteers of CUMC, working with Children and Youth

As a Christian, I am an integral part of the Body of Christ, gifted for service, and have been called to work, in the name and by the power of Christ, in my church and in my community. I believe that my work as a staff member/lay worker at Collierville United Methodist Church is a response to that call. Because I am a part of a community of believers, the Body of Christ, I am responsible to and for others. These relationships are a trust given to me by God and God's Word requires that those who have been given this trust prove themselves faithful in their care and work, that we live in such a way to show ourselves worthy of the calling we have received from God. (1 Corinthians 4:2, Ephesians 4:1)

Collierville United Methodist Church is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all children, youth, and adults who participate in any program or event included in the life of this congregation. As a staff member/lay worker, striving to be faithful to the trust given to me, I agree to:

- Observe and abide by all church policies regarding the work of ministry with children and youth
- Observe the "two adult rule" at all times
- Abide by the six-month rule of membership before beginning a volunteer position or assignment
- Participate in training, education, and update events provided by the church related to my volunteer position/assignment
- Promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to the appropriate person(s)
- Inform a minister of this congregation if I have ever been convicted of child abuse

I have read this Participation Covenant and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print Full Name

Collierville United Methodist Church
Statement of Agreement for Outside Groups in Relationship with CUMC

As a representative of _____, I am aware of and have read the attached Safe Sanctuary Policy held by Collierville United Methodist Church. Because our organization works with children, youth, and/or adults with special needs and because we meet on or in Collierville United Methodist Church facilities, we agree to adhere to this statement of policy in *at least* these three actions:

1. We will educate the adult leaders of our organization about the prevalence, forms, signs, and indicators of child abuse and we will train the adult leaders of our organization in the prevention of child abuse.
2. We will provide documentation that explains when and how such education and training is accomplished.
3. We will observe the “two-adult rule” outlined in this policy statement during all of our activities while on or in Collierville United Methodist Church facilities.

Signed _____ Date _____

Position held with organization named above _____

Reference Contact Form

Record of Contact with a Reference or Church Identified by an Applicant For Youth or Children's Work

Name of Applicant: _____

Reference of Church contacted: _____

Date and Time of Contact: _____

Method of Contact (circle one: telephone, letter, conversation, e-mail)

Summary of conversation (summarize the reference's or minister's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for youth or children's work)

Signature: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Church History and Prior Children/Youth Work

Name of church of which you are a member: _____

List other churches and locations which you have attended regularly during the past five years:

List all previous church work involving children/youth (list each church's name and address, type of work performed, and dates.) _____

List all previous non-church work involving children/youth (list each organization's name and address, type of work performed, and dates) _____

List any gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you for children or youth work: _____

Personal References (not former employers or relatives)

Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

COLLIERVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VOLUNTEER NOTICE AND AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK

NOTICE

This is to inform you that Collierville United Methodist Church ("CUMC") may obtain information about you and/or your history related to potential criminal activity. The report from authorized sources may include, among other information, arrest, conviction, and driving record information. CUMC may additionally obtain information concerning your background, character, employment, education and military experience. Information obtained by CUMC will be used only for the purposes of assessing your suitability to become a volunteer.

AUTHORIZATION

I hereby authorize and instruct CUMC to procure a report on me, including criminal background history, which I understand may include, among other information, arrest, conviction, and driving record information. I also authorize and instruct CUMC to verify my Social Security number and to investigate my background and character in any manner they see fit to evaluate my potential as a volunteer, including obtaining information from employers, educational institutions, military agencies, and other sources. If I become a volunteer for CUMC, I authorize CUMC to repeat these investigations at any time for as long as I remain a volunteer. I authorize and instruct any individual, corporation, and public or private entity having knowledge about me to furnish CUMC any and all information they may have regarding me. I unconditionally release and hold harmless CUMC and its officers, agents, and employees, and any person furnishing information to them pursuant to this authorization, from any liability, claims, charges, costs, or causes of action which I or my heirs, executors, or assigns may have as a result of the delivery, disclosure, non-disclosure, or omission of any information. I additionally agree to indemnify CUMC and its officers, agents and employees for any and all attorney fees, court costs, and other expenses resulting from investigating my background, gathering information concerning me, or verifying personal information about me. I understand the information obtained by CUMC pursuant to this authorization is confidential and will be protected as much as reasonably possible. Furthermore, I understand that CUMC holds the right to deny my participation as a volunteer at CUMC. A photocopy of this authorization may be accepted in lieu of the original.

Date _____ Applicant's Signature _____

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PLEASE PRINT:

Complete Legal Name: _____ Gender: M _____ F _____

If name changed (through marriage or otherwise), former name

Date of Birth _____ Social Security Number _____

Drivers License Number _____ State _____ Expires: _____

Residences (Past 7 years):

(Current) City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ County _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ County _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ County _____