

Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuary Policy Statement

1.0 Guiding Principles

1.1 Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, St. Andrew's United Methodist Church ("SAUMC") is committed to providing a holy place of safety and security for all Children and Youth who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by SAUMC.

1.2 Policy Purpose

This Policy Statement provides guidelines and procedures for those individuals who are called to work with and support the ministries for Children and Youth (hereinafter "Policy"). It will be the responsibility of SAUMC to annually educate the congregation each September and continually communicate these principles to the congregation. This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Safe Sanctuary Committee appointed by the Church Council. New members to SAUMC will receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy in their new member packet.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 A "Worker" or "Workers" means any of the following individuals who provide services or support for the care and oversight of Children and Youth in a ministry activity or Church Sponsored Event:

- a. Paid staff of SAUMC and SAUMC Preschool
- b. Volunteers who are not compensated for their services

2.2 "Affiliated Workers" means external individuals, such as self-employed consultants or vendors, who provide services or support for the care and oversight of Children and Youth in a ministry activity or Church Sponsored Event.

2.3 "Sr Counselor" means a Worker that is working at a Church Sponsored Activity that has responsibility for the Jr. Counselor.

2.4 "Jr. Counselor" means a Worker that is working at a Church Sponsored Activity that reports up to a Sr. Counselor.

2.5 The term "Parent" or "Parents" means parent or guardian.

2.6 The term "Child" or "Children" refers to any individual age birth through grade 5.

- 2.7 The term “Youth” refers to any individual in grade 6 through age 17.
- 2.8 The term “Church Sponsored Activity” refers to any activity within a ministry conducted under the auspices of and/or endorsed by SAUMC.

3.0 Worker Selection and Screening

- 3.1 SAUMC staff and paid staff of St. Andrew’s Preschool
 - a. All staff will have met all selection and screening requirements as required by SAUMC staff policies.
- 3.2 Affiliated Workers
 - a. Selection will be made by the appropriate SAUMC staff member
 - b. Each Affiliated Worker will receive a copy of the SAUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy.
 - c. Original contracts or letters of service with these individuals will be retained by SAUMC’s Administrative Assistant.
- 3.3 Volunteers
 - a. Volunteers must meet the following requirements:
 - i. Active participation in SAUMC activities for a minimum of three (3) months; and
 - ii. Must be eighteen (18) years or older; and [Exception: A younger teen may assist with a screened adult Worker but may not be alone with an assigned group or individual.]
 - iii. Must be three (3) years older than the participants in an assigned group.
 - b. All individuals interested in volunteering in these ministries must complete the *Application for Volunteer Service*, available through the Director of the specific ministry.
 - c. All volunteer candidates will be trained by the Director of the area or ministry, or his/her designee.
 - d. It is the sole responsibility of the Director of the area or ministry to select volunteers and notify them of events in which their assistance is needed.
 - e. Prior to working with the assigned group, the screened volunteer must have attended the volunteer training.
 - f. Volunteer files will be maintained by the SAUMC Administrative Assistant and be available to each area of ministry.

4.0 Supervision

- 4.1 Workers with the children's ministry will be supervised by the Director of Children's Ministry, or his/her appointed designee.
- 4.2 Workers with the Saint Andrew's Preschool and Nursery will be supervised by the Director of the Saint Andrew's Preschool.
- 4.3 Workers with the youth ministry will be supervised by the Director of Youth Ministry or his/her appointed designee.
- 4.4 The supervising Directors have the authority to determine that services and talents of a particular Worker may be directed to another ministry of SAUMC.

5.0 Worker Training

- 5.1 All Workers must attend an annual orientation conducted by the Director of the area or ministry which will be held in September of each year. Topics will include, but are not necessarily limited to:
 - a. The Church mission statement
 - b. Discussion of this *SAUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy*
 - c. Discussion of conduct guidelines
 - d. Procedures for various activities and events
- 5.2 Other training(s) may be conducted throughout the year as decided by the Director of the area or ministry. Additional training may be required pursuant to applicable state laws and regulations.
- 5.3 New members will be informed of the Safe Sanctuary Policy through the new member packet. Training will be provided to new members working in Children and Youth ministries on an as needed basis.

6.0 Safety

- 6.1 Facility
 - a. Fire prevention
 - i. Electrical equipment must be turned off when not in use.
 - ii. Electrical equipment will be checked quarterly to ensure that there is no fire hazard.
 - iii. Smoke alarms must be tested bi-annually.
 - iv. Fire extinguishers will be checked annually to ensure proper charge.
 - b. Fire emergency
 - i. Workers must be familiar with all emergency exit procedures. Emergency exits will be clearly marked.
 - ii. Upon the first indication of smoke or fire, fire alarms are to be activated.
 - iii. Workers must stay with their assigned groups and guide them to a designated safe location, walking quickly in single file to as far away from the building as possible or as directed by the safety professionals.

- c. Power failure
 - i. Workers and their assigned groups are to remain where they are.
- 6.2 Physical emergency
- a. First aid
 - i. First aid supplies must be clearly marked and Workers must know of their location.
 - ii. Basic first aid training will be available to Workers on an annual basis. Workers of areas or events may be required to attend additional training as determined by the Director of the area or ministry.
 - b. CPR training will be made available to Workers on an annual basis. Leaders and other Workers of areas or events will be encouraged to attend as determined by the Director of the area or ministry.

7.0 Injury Procedures

- a. Any suspected head or back injury, broken bones, excessive bleeding or obvious and severe injury will be handled by calling 911 and getting immediate assistance from appropriate church staff.
- b. Parent must be called immediately, but only after 911 has been called.
- c. The injured Child or Youth will not be moved and one Worker will stay with the injured individual.
- d. One Worker will wait for medical emergency assistance to arrive and will direct them to the location of the individual.
- e. The injury must be reported to the Director of the area of ministry and to the Administrative Assistant.
- f. If the Parent cannot be located or will not be able to reach the medical facility in a timely manner (such as during an offsite or overnight event), one Worker must accompany the Child or Youth to the location of medical care.

7.1 Video and photography

Video and photography may be used to document ministry events and activities. Only screened Workers may use photographic or video material which will only be used for SAUMC purposes. In the event that photos or videos are to be used for SAUMC publicity, Parents shall be given the opportunity to authorize use through signing the *Permission of Photographic and Video Release Form* Available from SAUMC's Administrative Assistant.

7.2 Vehicles

The following guidelines apply to drivers of SAUMC and personal vehicles:

- a. Drivers of Children and Youth to activities or events must:

- i. Have had a full driving privilege license for five (5) years
 - ii. Have proof of auto insurance.
- b. All Parents must provide written consent for their Child to ride with another adult.
- c. Two unrelated Workers must be in each vehicle. If multiple vehicles are used and remain in sight of each other, then only one Worker will be required in each vehicle.
- d. The number of passengers in any vehicle may not exceed the number of available seat belts. All occupants must wear seat belts, unless required by law to be in appropriate child safety restraints.
- e. All luggage and equipment must be secured.
- f. Workers traveling with Children and Youth will ensure that cell phones or other methods to communicate are available in the event of an emergency.

8.0 Confidentiality

Workers must maintain confidentiality and privacy relating to information received from their respective area or ministry. However, Workers should speak with a member of clergy or the Director of an area or ministry if a Youth reveals information that could be a safety concern. .

9.0 Guidelines for Working with Children (Nursery through Grade 5)

9.1 Conduct

- a. Two (2) or more Workers will be in the room at all times
- b. Doors
 - i. Room doors with glass panels may be closed but the glass may not be covered.
 - ii. Room doors without glass panels must remain open during the activity or event.
 - iv. Door may not be locked during the activity or event.
 - v. Under no circumstances will a Child be alone behind closed doors with one adult.
- c. All Children should be signed in on a registration log. For Children registered in the 0-2 nursery, the Worker should take a pager from the wall pager system after signing in the Child(ren). One adult is to register and pick up the Child(ren). If another adult is picking up the Child(ren), this must be communicated in writing by the adult registering the Child(ren) to the Worker in that area or ministry.
- d. The adult(s) specified in item "c" above will ensure that the Worker or adult assigned to the area or ministry is present before leaving the Child(ren).

- e. The adult(s) specified in item “c” above will pick up their Child(ren) immediately upon the conclusion of the area ministry or church sponsored event.
- f. Care will be taken by Workers so that Children are not left unattended.
- g. When a Child is taken to a restroom outside of the classroom or activity site, a Worker must first check the bathroom before the Child is permitted to enter to ensure it is safe.
- h. Workers who are ill are not permitted to work in the area or ministry.

9.2 Physical boundaries

- a. Touching to comfort or affirm a Child in an age-appropriate manner is permitted.
- b. Children and Youth in first grade or older will not sit in the lap of Workers.

9.3 Discipline

SAUMC desires to foster a sense of both fun and learning in the children’s and youth’s ministry. Workers should work, play and communicate with Children and Youth in a cooperative manner. At times, discipline may be necessary to maintain order and respect for Workers within the classrooms and within SAUMC. In these cases, Workers will take the following steps:

- a. Verbally redirect the Child to a more appropriate behavior.
- b. If the Child continues to act out, the Child will be given “Time Out,” allowing the Child to return to the group when the Child is ready to act in a cooperative manner.
- c. If a Child’s uncooperative behavior persists, the Worker will contact the adult who registered the Child(ren) for the area or ministry or the adult who is named to pick up the Child(ren) from the area or ministry to provide help and guidance to the Child(ren).

9.4 Parent/Guardian communication

- a. Parents are welcome to observe any activity/event provided that the presence of the Parent is not disruptive to the Child or activity/event.

9.5 SIDS prevention guidelines

- a. Healthy infants should always sleep on their backs unless otherwise specified in writing by the Parent.
- b. Keep cribs free of toys, stuffed animals, and extra bedding.
- c. Upon written request from a Parent to a Worker, a light blanket may be placed over the infant and tucked in along the sides

and foot of the crib mattress. The blanket ***should not*** come up higher than the infant's chest.

- d. Sleep only one (1) infant per crib.
- e. Keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- f. Visually check on sleeping infants often.
- g. Alcohol and tobacco use are prohibited around infants and Children.

9.6 General operations

- a. Workers should be in the assigned location fifteen (15) minutes before the start time of a church service or Church Sponsored Event.
- b. Workers who are ill will not work in the Nursery or Preschool.
- c. Workers are to follow the diapering procedures posted in the Nursery and Preschool classrooms.

9.7 Medical procedures

- a. SAUMC will provide materials and measures for dealing with bodily fluids and other urgent medical needs.
- b. All Workers in the Nursery and the SAUMC Preschool will receive training/guidelines regarding the spread of infections and diseases.

10.0 Supervision of Children During Onsite Events

During onsite Church Sponsored Events, a minimum of two unrelated adults shall be present to supervise Children during the event. Adults working with Children in this capacity shall abide by the guidelines specified in Section 9.0 of this document.

11.0 Guidelines for Working with Youth

11.1 Ages of Workers

Youth workers must be 3 years older than the oldest participating youth.

11.2 Conduct

- a. There will be at least one adult over the age of 21 present during any SAUMC activity or Church Sponsored Event.
- b. The ratio of adult to Youth must be appropriate for the event and will be determined by the Director of Youth Ministry.
- c. Meetings requested by Youth, Parent(s) and/or Workers, including those at offsite locations, between one adult and one Youth will always be conducted in a high visibility area or with an open door.
- d. Meals between one adult and one Youth must be in a public location.

- e. Workers shall not drive with one Youth to any location or event unless Parental permission has been granted. Permission forms will be on file in the Youth Room at SAUMC.
 - f. Workers shall model respectful behavior with Youth at all times, and dress appropriate to the activity.
 - g. Workers shall use appropriate language at all times.
 - h. Workers shall not engage in inappropriate conversation/communication with Youth through social networking (e.g., Facebook, Skype, Twitter, text messaging, etc.).
- 11.3 Physical boundaries
- a. No inappropriate physical touching of Youth by a Worker is permitted.
 - i. Touching is an appropriate and necessary way to display God's love to others if done in an unthreatening manner. Appropriate touching may include: putting an arm around a shoulder; patting a back or hugging to greet; and comforting to encourage a Youth.
 - ii. Inappropriate touching may include: kissing or coaxing a Youth to engage in kissing another Youth or Worker; extended tickling, wrestling or prolonged contact; touching a Youth in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
 - b. Workers shall not date Youth.
 - c. At times, a Youth may need a hug for comfort.
- 11.4 Training required
- a. Some events, such as SAUMC Vacation Bible School, involve Workers from other churches. The Director of the area ministry should provide these Workers with a copy of the Guidelines for Youth section of this *Safe Sanctuary Policy*. The Director of Youth Ministry may choose to train all Worker participants prior to this event on these provisions.
 - b. Training will be provided on use of equipment, including tools and other equipment, appropriate to an event. Adequate training is required to ensure appropriate adult supervision at the activity.
- 11.5 Discipline
- a. Physical discipline is forbidden. A Worker should always seek another Worker to witness the discipline and at no time should the discipline take place with one Worker alone with one Youth in a closed room. All discipline should be done with an open door or within a high visibility area, preferably with the same gender Worker and Youth. If the issue is larger than one person and could have consequences for the entire group, Workers will meet to decide on an agreed upon discipline. Jr. counselors (Workers) must bring the problem to a Sr. counselor (Worker) before any action is taken. Any

disciplinary actions should be reported to the Director of Youth Ministry so that they can follow up on the situation and report anything necessary to their Parents.

- b. The Director of Youth Ministry will provide age-appropriate options.
- c. If a Youth exhibits inappropriate behavior, the Worker will contact the Director of Youth Ministry for help and guidance to the Youth. The Director will then inform the Parent(s) regarding the behavioral issue. Together, the Director, the Parent, and the Youth will agree to a plan that will encourage more cooperative behavior.
- d. In the event that a Youth participant from another church persists in inappropriate behavior, the Director of Youth Ministry should be contacted. The Director, and or clergy, will contact the appropriate church official of the participating church and together they will determine the appropriate action.

11.6 Counseling

- a. A Worker may provide counseling to a Youth who has requested to talk with the Worker. If the Worker feels unqualified to counsel the Youth, the Director of Youth Ministry should be contacted for assistance.
- b. All counseling sessions will be with an open door and/or within a high visibility area.
- c. Should the Youth request a private closed-door conference, the Worker or Director must first notify the Director or clergy respectively, prior to the meeting. There must be two unrelated adult counselors in the room or one Sr Counselor and one Jr.Counselor. The counselors must be of the same gender as the Youth requesting the conference.
- d. At no time will there be one Youth and one Worker in a closed room at the same time.

11.7 Parent/Guardian Communication

- a. Every attempt should be made to provide advance notice and information about ministry activities no later than thirty (30) days in advance.
- b. The beginning and ending times of activities will be communicated clearly to Youth and Parents.
- c. The Director of Youth Ministry will conduct, at minimum, one education meeting with Parents of Youth each year, include the commitment of the church to prevent abuse and to provide a safe, holy ministry for their Youth.
- d. Parent contact information for all participating Youth is required to be available at all times. This applies to visiting Youth, as well.

11.8 Offsite Events

- a. There will always be an adult over the age of 21 at an offsite Church Sponsored Event.
- b. For guidelines on travel, see the Section titled “Vehicles,” guidelines, above.
- c. The Director of Youth Ministries will determine the appropriate ratio of Workers to Youth, based on the type of offsite event.
- d. Youth are required to utilize the buddy system for going to restrooms or other areas away from the group. A Worker is responsible for knowing where they are and following up on their return.

11.9 Overnight Events

- a. There will always be an adult over the age of 25 at an overnight Church Sponsored Event.
- b. No Workers will be allowed to sleep in the same room with Youth. In the event of a Parent and Child or Parent and Youth, an exception is permissible. Supervising adults will be assigned to rooms that will surround the Youth rooms as much as possible.
- c. In a hotel or dormitory setting, living assignments will be made based on gender and age appropriate considerations. When possible, information regarding housing facilities should be known in advance of arrival.
- d. In a camp setting that has large sleeping quarters, Youth will share a room with same gender adults. There must be more than one unrelated adult in the room. At no time should an adult be left alone with one Youth in a room.
- e. For guidelines on travel, see “Vehicles” guidelines, included in this Policy.
- f. All Youth participants must sign a simple *Code of Conduct* to participate in an overnight Church Sponsored Event. The Director may choose to include Workers and Youth in the development of the Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct may include guidelines on appropriate language, dress, behavior, and other specific guidelines.
- g. Workers will determine and communicate to the Youth where Workers will be located during lights-out as well as during other activities.
- h. Permission/medical forms will be kept on file and taken to each offsite event.

12.0 Guidelines for Reporting Suspected Abuse

When an allegation of abuse is made, North Carolina state law regarding reporting incidents of actual or suspected abuse will be followed. In addition, the pastor and lay leaders of SAUMC will be prepared to respond to the victim and his/her family, the church’s insurance company, the

annual conference and if necessary, the abuser. The pastor of SAUMC will be the designated media spokesperson. A written record of the steps taken by SAUMC in response to the allegations of abuse will be maintained in the church office.

13.0 Administration

13.1 Purpose

The information herein contained in this Policy was written in response to the United Methodist Conference request for establishment of local safe sanctuary policy statements, as stated in the Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church, 2004, pp. 201-203 and Resolution 6, adopted by the NC Annual UMC Conference, June 2005.

13.2 Authors

The Safe Sanctuary Policy Development Committee appointed by Pastor Randy Maynard in July 2010, authored this Policy.

13.3 Authorization

The SAUMC Administrative Council will approve this document and the members of the Safe Sanctuary Policy Committee will conduct an annual review of its content. In addition, members of the Safe Sanctuary Policy Committee will monitor compliance of the duties stated herein.

13.4 Effective Day of this Policy: September 12, 2010