

General Commission on United Methodist Men

SEXUAL ETHICS/SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

The following is a Policy created by the General Commission on United Methodist Men and approved on August 23,2008.

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The language is very intentional and all language should be retained unedited.

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How to use:

1. Make copies openly available at all times.
2. Re –affirm on an annual basis.
3. Make the policy available to all United Methodist Men conference organizations for adaptation.
4. To use this policy for training.
5. The use of the Safe Sanctuary part of this policy to plan events.

The General Commission on United Methodist Men affirms *The 2004 Book of Resolutions*, Sexual Abuse within the Ministerial Relationship and Sexual Harassment within the Church, which states that sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. In accordance with *The 2004 Book of Discipline*, 161F, all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. As the promise of Galatians 3:26-29 states, all are one in Christ, we support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation, or gender.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role and exploitation of those who are vulnerable. Similarly, gender or sexual harassment are usually understood as exploitations of power relationships rather than as exclusively sexual or gender issues.

As leaders in the church the General Commission on United Methodist Men extend the ministerial relationship ethical requirements of the *Book of Discipline* to the members and staff of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Any sexual behavior with a minor is not only immoral and inappropriate it is also illegal. Any allegation of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment with a minor requires mandatory reporting to Child Protective Services or law enforcement. The Church will cooperate fully with any investigation by Child Protective Services or law enforcement. (see Safe Sanctuary provisions of this policy)

Sexual and gender harassment, sexual abuse and misconduct of a sexual nature within the life of the Church interfere with its moral mission. The General Commission on United Methodist Men prohibits and will not tolerate these behaviors, which are sinful, demeaning, abusive and wrong. The General Commission on United Methodist Men commits itself to fair and expedient investigation of any complaint of sexual and gender harassment, sexual abuse or misconduct of a sexual nature within its ministries and to take action deemed appropriate and in compliance with the latest *Book of Discipline*. Further, The General Commission on United Methodist Men bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free of these sins and encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ.

Some instances of harassment can be resolved informally by conversation between the parties or facilitated mediation. In all other instances, the conduct must be reported immediately to the General Secretary of United Methodist Men or a member of the Sexual Ethics / Safe Sanctuary committee of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

A Sexual Ethics / Safe Sanctuary Committee shall be formed by The General Commission on United Methodist Men to investigate any reports of violations or suspected violations of this policy. The committee shall consist of The General Secretary of the Commission on United Methodist Men, and at least Three other members of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

A. PURPOSE

The General Commission on United Methodist Men is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all individuals who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the General Commission on United Methodist Men. The following procedures reflect our commitment to preserving the ministries of the General Commission on United Methodist Men and the Church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

B. DEFINITIONS:

The definition of sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker or volunteer. (*2004 Book of Resolutions*, p.151)

The definition of gender harassment is behavior that is harassing in nature against a woman because she is a woman or against a man because he is a man.

The definition of sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance or demand, verbal, visual or physical that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment also includes inappropriate sexually based behavior that renders the workplace atmosphere intimidating, hostile or offensive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender (Paragraph 161 I, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*).

The definition of a complaint or allegation of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or sexual abuse is any communication, either written or verbal.

C. REPORTING

When anyone believes that he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or sexual abuse involving a member or employee of The General Commission on United Methodist Men, he or she should report the allegation to the a member of the Sexual Ethics / Safe Sanctuary committee immediately. In addition, any person who has reason to believe that sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or sexual abuse by a member or employee of

The General Commission on United Methodist Men has occurred or is occurring should promptly report the facts supporting their belief to a member of the Sexual Ethics / Safe Sanctuary Committee.

D. RESPONSE

A Sexual Ethics / Safe Sanctuary Committee person receiving notification, either written or spoken, shall immediately report the complaint to the General Commission on United Methodist Men Sexual Ethics / Safe Sanctuary committee.

The person accused of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or sexual abuse shall be informed that there is an allegation, advised of the process of this policy, and instructed to maintain confidentiality, not to retaliate, and have NO contact with the complainant.

All Staff who are aware of the problem will:

- Keep the matter confidential and only discuss it with those who have a “need to know”
- Treat each allegation seriously with respect for the privacy of all involved persons
- Cooperate fully with all investigating personnel.

E. INVESTIGATION AND ACTION

The General Secretary or person designated by the General Secretary will make certain that all information relating to the allegation is documented in writing, including dates and times.

The Sexual Ethics / Safe sanctuary committee will promptly investigate the allegation(s) and take appropriate remedial action.

The General Commission on United Methodist Men cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality, it will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality by disclosing information about the complaint only on a “need to know” basis and as necessary to promote God’s call for justice, reconciliation and healing.

NON-RETALIATION

This procedure prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports allegations of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct or assists in investigating charges.

Anyone found to engage in any retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action which may include termination as a volunteer or employee of The General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures

The General Commission on United Methodist Men

Introduction

OUR CALLING AND OUR MANDATE IS TO ENSURE SAFE SANCTUARY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Throughout the gospels, Jesus provides teachings on providing a peaceable kingdom for all of God's people, including our most precious gifts, our children and youth (Matthew 5:9, Luke 18:15-17). The peaceable kingdom begins with sanctuary.

Scriptures provide examples of how sanctuary is to be a community of protective nurture and harmony (Psalms 20:1-2, 27:4-5). As Christians, we are called to create a safe sanctuary in our churches. They must be holy, safe, and protective communities for all of God's children, regardless of age or ability. The purpose of this policy is to address the safety of our children and youth at events sponsored by the General Commission on United Methodist Men. The General Commission on United Methodist Men recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy with procedures in place (1) to help prevent the opportunity for the occurrence and/or the appearance of abuse of children and youth and (2) to help protect workers from false accusations and/or suspicions.

The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our preschoolers, children, youth, workers, employees, volunteers and the entire church body. Careful and confidential documentation is essential to show compliance with policies, to verify information as needed, and to have an accurate record in the case of an incident.

Scope of Policy

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all persons including all paid and unpaid adults, whether lay or clergy who have any direct or indirect contact with children and youth who participate in any activities or events sponsored by the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Supervision

An adult is anyone 18 years of age or older.

Youth cannot be in charge of, nor left alone with children and youth.

To achieve compliance with the Safe Sanctuary policy it may be necessary to combine groups; recruit, train, and reference additional volunteers; or cancel an event.

Recognizing that there is safety in numbers, children and youth will be instructed to use the “buddy system.” (Consisting of 3 persons) It is also strongly encouraged that there be present at least one adult who is trained and certified in First Aid and CPR.

Observation of activities in rooms is essential, whether it is done by windows, open doors, glass doors, electronic technology, etc.

Supervision for Nursery/childcare

- There shall be a minimum of two (2) adults per room or within line of sight.
- Whenever possible State Childcare Minimum Standards shall be followed, particularly in relation to the number of adults to child ratio.

Supervision of children and youth

- The “2 Adult Rule” shall be observed (2 adults per classroom, 2 adults within line of sight.)
- Any one-to-one mentoring or consulting shall be conducted in sight of another adult.
- Understanding that there is safety in numbers, one adult can be in contact with multiple youth (6th-12th grade) so long as they are in line of sight of other adults.

Overnight Accommodations

At events that require overnight accommodations:

- When staying in a hotel, adults shall sleep in separate rooms from children/youth; or if necessary for children/youth to share a room with an adult, adults shall sleep in separate beds from children/youth so long as any one adult shall not be alone with any one child/youth.
- Recognizing accommodations may be restrictive in some cases one adult is adequate, so long as any one adult shall **NOT** be alone with any one-child/youth.
- Parent accommodations are permissible when staying in rooms with their own children.
- Transportation to and from a G.C.U.M.M. event shall consist of 2 adults if one vehicle or one adult is allowed if multiple vehicles are traveling together to and from the event.

Definitions of Abuse

1. Verbal Abuse- Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades or threatens any child or youth.
2. Physical Abuse – Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person’s physical or mental health. In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual’s caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual’s age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to physical health of a child or youth.
3. Sexual Abuse – Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of same for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) incest, 2) rape, 3) prostitution, 4) romantic involvement with any participant, 5) any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual enrolled as a child or youth in sponsored activities of this church, 6) sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content, 7) viewing of adult or child pornography. Examples are not limited to: displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one’s own or another person’s body, touching another person’s body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse. (#6 taken from Resolution #30 *Book of Resolutions 2000*).

Screening for Adults

Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children and youth. Screening calls for a careful gathering and review of information in search of those who can provide safe and caring supervision in a safe environment.

1. Prior to employment or acceptance as a paid or unpaid adult worker/volunteer, the event leader in charge of an event or program shall direct each prospective applicant to complete the application/consent form. By signing the form, the applicant gives permission to the General Commission on United Methodist Men (G.C.U.M.M.) to contact references and perform the necessary investigation to complete the review of the application.
2. This General Commission on United Methodist Men is responsible for contacting at least two references and screening. This screening shall be done through the company selected by the General Commission on United Methodist Men. All persons shall be screened annually.
3. Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children and youth:
Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful
Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc
Persons having a Criminal History of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.
Persons having a Criminal History of a drug related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to participate in the event.

4. If any of the reports raise questions about fitness of the applicant, the General commission on United Methodist Men will disapprove the application. The General Commission on United Methodist Men reserves the right to turn away any persons for service.
5. If the applicant (paid or unpaid) is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children or youth, the applicant will not be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children or youth shall disqualify any applicant.
6. Results of screens shall be kept confidential. The determination of whether a particular crime is serious enough to result in the G.C.U.M.M. giving a negative recommendation shall be made by the G.C.U.M.M. in its sole discretion. Without in any way limiting those crimes which the G.C.U.M.M. may determine to be serious, the G.C.U.M.M. offers the following examples as guidelines:

Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children and youth:

- *Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful*
 - *Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc*
 - *Persons having a Criminal History of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.*
 - *Persons having a Criminal History of a drug related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to participate in the event.*
7. The General Commission on United Methodist Men reserves the right to turn away any persons for service.

Training

The General Commission on United Methodist Men shall develop and implement training and orientation procedures for all persons (including youth assistants) who work with children and youth. Training shall include this policy, and appropriate discipline, appropriate physical and emotional boundaries, and leader misconduct as described in this policy. No person shall, after this policy becomes effective, have any direct or indirect contact with children and/or youth until they have completed this training program. We recommend that at the beginning of each event a review of this policy be conducted.

The guidelines of these policies and procedures create a status of Safe Sanctuary Certification with the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Adults thus certified are entrusted with the title “General Commission on United Methodist Men Certified Safe Sanctuary Worker with Children and Youth”. All files of the certification process shall be confidential and maintained in a locked file cabinet in the General Commission on United Methodist Men office.

Reporting of Incidents

1. When an adult leader of an event or activity suspects that abuse or any suspected violation of the Penal Code is taking or has taken place, he or she shall call the appropriate local law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Child Protective Service. The adult leader shall contact the administrator or event leader immediately, and cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.
2. Address any needs the child or youth may have, medical or otherwise. Report to the parent(s) and/or legal guardians(s).
3. The person suspected of abuse (respondent) shall, for the safety and well being of the children or youth, be removed with dignity from further contact with the children and youth until an appropriate investigation has taken place. The matter shall remain confidential. If the adult event leader is the respondent, then the report should be made to that person's supervisor.
4. Following the report of an incident, the adult event leader, or supervisor in charge shall document the report.
5. All such conversations shall be documented. Careful and confidential documentation is essential. The documentation should include the following:
 - a. The name of the adult leader observing or receiving the disclosure of abuse, including the date, time and place and any action taken by this person.
 - b. The alleged victim's name, age, and date of birth.
 - c. Any statement made by the alleged victim.
 - d. Name of the respondent, the date, time and place of any conversation or any statement made by the respondent.
 - e. Any action taken, i.e. suspension of the respondent.
 - f. Date and time of call to the appropriate agency, name of worker spoken to, content of that conversation and case number assigned.
 - g. Date and time of call to law enforcement agency, name of officer spoken to and content of that conversation.
 - h. Date and time of any other contacts made regarding this incident.
8. Notify the General Secretary on The United Methodist Men.
9. It shall be the goal to provide supportive care to both the victim and the respondent and to restore such persons to wholeness. Supportive care can include the procedures of the criminal justice system, provisions of the current *Book of Discipline*, appropriate counseling referrals and continued pastoral visitation.
10. Confirmed reports of proven incidents of abuse shall be retained in a confidential file for future screening purposes.

Media Response

The General Secretary of the United Methodist Men shall be informed of all investigations or allegations of abuse. If investigations or allegations of abuse should come to the attention of the media, a response shall come from a designated spokesperson or a spokesperson in the G.C.U.M.M. Office. Refer all inquires to the spokesperson. **Do not give out any information, simply state that all inquiries will be answered by our spokesperson.**

Appropriate Discipline

Children and youth should be made aware that appropriate behavior is expected at all events. Gentle reminders are always necessary when dealing with children and youth. When these reminders don't work, then discipline needs to move to the next step. In cases where behavior has to be addressed, designated event adults should handle it. In no case is physical discipline an appropriate measure to deal with problems. A reasonable response might include a period of "time out" for the child or youth. This should be done with necessary supervision keeping safe sanctuary guidelines in mind.

Keeping parents involved is important. They need to be kept up to date on their child's behavior. For serious offenses, the appropriate response will be to send the child or youth home immediately. Parents and the leaders will help make proper arrangements.

Appropriate Physical and Emotional Boundaries

Physical boundaries are most important in dealing with children and youth. Persons working with children and youth have to understand and respect those boundaries. Obviously these boundaries change as children grow older. A young child sitting in the lap of a caregiver is most appropriate, whereas an older child or youth sitting in an adult's lap would not be acceptable. Hugs and kisses from a toddler to an adult are entirely different than the same from a youth.

Emotional boundaries are also important. As a child grows older it is important for the adult to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships. It is important for those working with children and youth to not step outside of those lines and allow the younger person to become too attached to them. It is important for the older person to be careful where conversations might lead and to steer clear of inappropriate talk. When an adult recognizes that there might be an issue with these boundaries, great space should be allowed to come between them and the child or youth in question. If that does not solve the problem, then the event leadership should address the issue.

Leader Misconduct

It is a privilege to work with youth. Great responsibility is required. Those who violate this policy shall immediately be removed from contact with children and youth and appropriate authorities shall be notified immediately.

Spiritual Boundaries for Safe Sanctuary

As we seek to lead young people in the development of their faith story, it is essential that we guide them and do not manipulate their emotions. This is especially true at longer youth/children's events. The attendees may be exhausted by longer and more active days than they are accustomed to and thereby more susceptible to emotional manipulation. It is therefore necessary that, as we present the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the opportunity to follow Jesus in a life-long journey, we present the invitation with "no-strings-attached." We must allow each person involved to make their own decisions without stigma, coercion, or pressure in any form. As we do this faithfully, we will see more fruitful commitments in the lives of all our participants.

SUMMARY

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APPLICATION PROCESS

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All adults shall complete an application/consent form. By signing the form, the applicant gives
permission to have references checked and background screening completed by the appropriate authority.2. The application will be processed with all references checked and background screening completed by
The G.C.U.M.M..3. All applicants must attend Safe Sanctuary training. |
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REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If an adult worker/volunteer observes or suspects a violation of the Safe Sanctuary policy, these steps
must be taken immediately.<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Address any immediate needs the child or youth may have.B. Report concerns to event coordinator.C. Cooperate with leadership and authorities throughout the crisis. |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. If an adult suspects that abuse or any suspected violation of the Penal Code is taking or has taken place, he or she shall call and report the abuse to the appropriate local law enforcement agency and/or The Department of Child Protective Services. |

Recommended Resource: *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church* by Joy Thornburg Melton (Discipleship Resources, ISBN 0881772208)