

Des Moines United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuary Policy

Adopted by Church Council May 17, 1999

Updated Sept. 14, 2011

The 1996 General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. The mandate written includes recommendations for all local churches to follow in order to pursue a safe sanctuary. The Des Moines United Methodist Church has responded with the following policy:

1. All staff members, workers with children and youth are screened, including a written application, personal interview, and State Patrol check. If necessary we will also include a FBI check. State Patrol checks are run every two years.
2. We will provide an orientation and a packet for all workers with youth and children that describe our “Safe Sanctuaries” policy. This packet includes the policy, the Washington State Laws on reporting abuse, and other educational materials. All workers will be expected to sign and return a form stating that they have read the material. The packet will be available in our library for church members.
3. Reporting procedure is according with Washington State Laws as written in RCW Section 26.44.030 on Child Abuse and Neglect. Reporting needs to be done within 48 hours to CPS/DSHS. A written report needs to be filled out by the persons reporting the incident and shared with the Pastor, Youth Director, Childcare Coordinator, and Education Director. The SPPR committee will be notified if we consider this necessary.
4. We seek to provide leaders with current CPR Training and First Aid Cards.
5. We seek to provide two leaders in all classrooms. On occasion when one leader is alone in the classroom, the following steps will be taken.
 - The door will be left open and the window blinds left open.
 - The Director of the program and Hall Monitor will be notified.
6. All children’s classrooms have windows in the door or half doors open for monitoring during class time.
7. The Children’s Director, Youth Director, and Children’s church School Coordinators seek to monitor the halls and classrooms during Sunday Morning class time.

8. An adult will supervise volunteer youth leaders.
9. All activities outside the church building will include the following procedures:
 - Permission slips will be signed by the parents/guardian and, if necessary, by the child/youth.
 - Adult/child or youth ratio should be in line the current Annual Conference Policy.
 - Any adult driving a personal vehicle will show a valid drivers license and proof of insurance. Anyone with traffic tickets will be evaluated before given permission to drive.
10. Nursery ratio of child/adult is based on the current state laws for childcare. The two adult procedures apply.
11. Parents are responsible for their children's safety when they are at the church. (Outside the Sunday school or church program for children.)
12. Parents are responsible for their youth before and after designated times for Youth Group or other youth activities.
13. Youth leadership will be at least 4 years older than the age group they teach or lead.
14. Only persons who have been attending our church for at least six months will be asked to be lead teachers in children and youth classes.
15. Counseling sessions and one on one youth meetings will take place with an open door or in visible areas such as the Library or public place.
16. Youth Sleepovers:
 - Sleepovers will always have at least two adults and follow any guidelines our Annual Conference puts in place for ratio of adult to youth safety, etc.
 - Junior and Senior groups will each have their own sleeping rooms.
 - **Sleeping accommodations will be set up so all youth are physically safe and emotionally comfortable.**
17. Photo release forms need to be obtained from parents before posting, publishing or sharing photos of children or youth.