

**MUMC SAFE CHURCH POLICY**  
**Adopted February 20, 2001, amended December 19, 2006, revised June 28,**  
**2011**  
**Updated August 18, 2015**

**Introduction**

The Church Council of Minnetonka United Methodist Church adopted this Safe Church Policy to help create church programming that is as spiritually, physically, emotionally and sexually safe as possible for all participants. The document will remain on file in the Church Office and can be revised at any time by the Minnetonka United Methodist Church Council.

**I. Application**

**A. Application Form**

All individuals who are working either as a volunteer or in a compensated position, (herein referred to as "Applicant") with children or youth must complete an Application for Children/Youth Worker.

**B. References**

Two references shall be submitted from a church, the work place, a school, a volunteer organization, or other non-relative. References may be checked by phone or by mail.

**C. Record**

A confidential written record will be kept for each Applicant, including any reference contacted. A representative of the Safe Church Task Force will notify the Applicant if there are any concerns. If the individual is a staff member or potential staff member, this notification will be handled by the Lead Pastor. A list of approved Applicants will be available from the Director of Children's, Youth and Family Ministries.

**D. Criminal Background Check**

MUMC reserves the right to do criminal background checks on any Applicant and will conduct background check on all staff personnel prior to employment.

**II. Education Process**

All Applicants must complete the MUMC safe church training provided by the Staff Parish Relations Committee. In addition to the initial training, it is recommended that all individuals working with children or youth take refresher training every three years. Youth will be asked to participate in the training annually.

Staff Parish Relationship Committee shall approve, annually, a current training presentation template that outlines the minimum content to be offered in each Safe Church Training Session. This template is for purposes of training the trainer on the necessary

content to be conveyed to Children/Youth Worker Applicants. The trainer may use this template or his or her own plan so long as the minimum content is conveyed.

### **III. Working with Children and Youth**

#### **A. Supervision**

Supervision is defined as 2 volunteers or one volunteer and a staff person or one staff person if approved by the Pastor.

##### **1. Number of Supervisors**

Church activities for children and youth (in the nursery through high school) should have at least two supervisors present for each activity or event. Two supervisors should be present before and after the event.

Additional non-adult supervisors/helpers may also be present so long as they meet minimum age requirements and have attended Safe Church Training and remain in good standing on the Approved Children/Youth Worker Volunteers List.

##### **2. Age Requirements**

For first two supervisors:

For the nursery through grade 3, first supervisor must be at least 21 years old with second supervisor at least 14 years old. For grades 4 through 6, first supervisor must be at least 21 years old and the second supervisor must be at least 17 years old. For grades 7 through 12, both supervisors must be at least 22 years old. Exceptions may be made with Pastor's approval.

For additional supervisors after the first two:

For the nursery through toddlers, additional supervisors must be at least 12 years old. For Kindergarten through grade 3, additional supervisors must be at least 14 years old. For grades 4 through 6, additional supervisors must be at least 16 years old. For grades 7 through 12, additional supervisors must be at least 18 years old, a high school graduate and specifically approved for this role by the Pastor or Director of Children's, Youth and Family Ministries.

3. **Gender Requirements**  
There must be both male and female supervisor's present at all overnight co-ed activities.
4. **Length of Association Requirements**  
Volunteers assigned to work with Children and Youth must be generally known to responsible church leaders for a minimum of six months unless otherwise specifically approved, on an exception basis, for the assignment at the discretion of the Pastor or Director of Children's, Youth and Family Ministries.
5. **Other:**  
Ideally, both supervisors should not be from the same family.

**B. Use of a church nursery identification procedure**

Procedures shall exist for the church nursery to clearly identify the child and the child's parent or guardian.

**C. Restroom guidelines**

**1. Infant, Toddler and Preschool (to 5 years)**

a) When taking children to the restroom, keep the door ajar while the child uses the bathroom. Remain outside where you can hear but not see the child.

b) If the child requests a teacher's help in the bathroom, try to teach the child how to help himself/herself as much as possible. (Use a hand-over-hand method. This technique enables you to place your hands over the child's hands in helping with fastening clothes, wiping skin, etc.). Spend as little time in the bathroom as possible.

**2. Elementary & Youth**

With children and youth, supervisors shall be present in restrooms only in emergency situations.

**D. One-on-one Meetings**

One-on-one meetings between adults, children or youth need to occur in an area visible to other(s) who are also safe church certified and in the vicinity of the meeting when it takes place. If this area is behind a closed door, then the door must contain a window and the door must remain unlocked during the meeting. The adult having the one-on-one meeting must inform at least one other safe church certified adult before the meeting takes place. The only exception to this rule is a one-on-one meeting between a parent and his or her own child.

**E. Safety Measures for Individuals**

If there is a family issue that requires certain safety measures, parents/guardians need to notify appropriate supervisors.

#### **IV. Transportation**

##### **A. Registration**

A permission slip must be obtained from parents of children/youth under the age of 18 being transported either from the church to a church sponsored activity offsite or from the offsite activity back to the church.

Permission slips must be updated annually.

##### **B. Safety**

Children and youth must wear seatbelts, except when in buses without seatbelts. Child safety seats will be used in compliance with State of Minnesota laws.

##### **C. Drivers**

Any person transporting children/youth under the age of 18 either from the church to a church sponsored event or from the church sponsored event to the church must have a valid driver's license and be 22 years or older. If there are more than 10 children/youth with the driver in a vehicle, a second supervisor (as defined in Section III.A.2 above) is required in the vehicle to provide adequate supervision.

#### **V. Medical Forms**

Children, youth and adults will complete medical emergency forms. The form permits the leader to authorize medical care for the minor if the parents are unavailable in an emergency. The forms also authorize medical care for an adult in the case the adult is unable to personally authorize care. Statements must be updated annually or if health or insurance information changes.

Two medical emergency statements will be kept in a master file. One copy of the medical emergency statement must remain on file in the church office. The original must be carried to offsite events and be readily available when needed.

#### **VI. Policy Implementation Procedures**

Staff Parish Relations Committee is the committee with operational oversight for implementing the Safe Church Policy. This includes updates to policy, oversight of Children/Youth Worker application & approval processes, training content and follow-through on training, and record-keeping.

The Safe Church Policy will be administered by all supervisors. All individuals working with children and youth will receive copies of the policy to read and acknowledge their understanding.

If the policy-procedures are not followed, issues may be documented by the observer and brought to the attention of the Staff Parish Relations committee representative.

Staff Parish Relations Committee is responsible for record-keeping duties which are routinely delegated to the Pastor and will include the following items locked in a Master File in a secure location in the Church Office:

- Safe Church Policy
- Database of Volunteer Applications (which should include the original application and any references listed, any reference-checking information, date of last Safe Church Training attended)
- Records on any reports/allegations, investigations, and decisions
- Template Presentation for Safe Church Training
- Annual audit statement recording compliance with Policy

In addition to record-keeping which has been delegated to the Pastor, the Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee shall keep a separate, confidential and secure set of records concerning any reports/allegations, investigations and decisions concerning any Staff.

Staff Parish Relations Committee will audit compliance at least once annually and make a record of its annual findings in the Master File and note the summary of its findings in its Minutes.

**VII. Policy and Policy Implementation Amendments**

Amendments to the Safe Church Policy may be recommended at any time. Amendments must be approved by the MUMC Church Council.

Revised August 18, 2015