

WHAT IS SAFE SANCTUARIES?

In 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted the resolution, Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church. This resolution, reaffirmed at every General Conference since then, became the impetus for annual conferences and congregations to develop and implement abuse risk reduction policies. The General Board of Discipleship has identified *Safe Sanctuaries* as Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth.



QUESTIONS?

A full copy of Aldersgate United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuary Policy is available in the church office.

Every group that uses the church is responsible to uphold the full policy and procedure within the church and on all church owned properties.

Please contact the Pastor with any questions or concerns.
Telephone: 717-436-6750

SAFE SANCTUARIES

BROCHURE FOR CHURCH EVENTS AND USAGE



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WHY IS SAFE SANCTUARIES IMPORTANT?

Heeding Christ's call to all people to love and serve one another (John 13:15,34); to serve those most vulnerable in his name, even the "least of these" (Matthew 25:40); and to welcome children and youth in Christ's name (Matthew 18:5), the Aldersgate United Methodist Church has developed this *Safe Sanctuaries* policy with accompanying procedures to reduce the risks of abuse to children, youth and vulnerable adults in the ministries of the church. This *Safe Sanctuaries* policy comes out of the guiding covenant of the Susquehanna Conference, "...acknowledging that it is by God's grace that we live together in covenant agreement", and focuses on the following covenant agreements:

- We covenant together as a church to diligently seek God's will as we endeavor to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and,
- We covenant to do no harm by words or actions.

HOW TO BE COMPLIANT WITH SAFE SANCTUARIES

1. **Two-Adult Rule** – Minimum supervisory standards will include the "Two-Adult Rule" The Two-Adult Rule requires that no matter the size of the group, two unrelated adults (defined as two (2) adults not residing in the same household) shall be present with participants at all times. These adults shall have completed the screening process. One of the two adults may be a "roamer" who moves in and out of the rooms.
2. **Five-Years-Older Rule** – Every adult responsible for supervision shall be at least 18 years of age and at least five (5) years older than the oldest child or youth event participant.
3. **No child or youth or vulnerable adult will be left unsupervised**
 - In the event that child care/supervision services are not provided by the church for a church-sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.) the parent or legal guardian shall be fully responsible for their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) during the event.
 - Should the parent or legal guardian arrange for their own child care/supervision of their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) for the church-sponsored ministry event to occur within the event facility, said child care/youth/vulnerable adult supervision shall be in compliance with the *Safe Sanctuaries* policies and procedures.
 - If parents/legal guardians refuse to comply with *Safe Sanctuaries* policies and procedures they and their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) will be asked to leave the event.
4. **All activities should occur in open view.** Each room or space where activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults occur shall have visibility from an interior hallway or a connecting room by means of a window, a door with an uncovered window, or an open door.
5. **For outdoor programs** or programs which occur in non-traditional settings that makes supervision challenging, the staff person or volunteer in charge of the event shall take extra appropriate measures to make sure that the setting is free of obvious safety hazards and suits the event and that the children, youth, or vulnerable adult are properly supervised.
6. **Bathroom Needs.** When possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs, but should a child require assistance, the outer bathroom door will remain open while a *Safe Sanctuaries* certified volunteer assists the child, with an additional volunteer being present.
7. **Staff/Leader Supervision** – the following **minimum ratios** will be maintained for **on-site activities** (in addition to the Two-Adult Rule – see #1, above) (for mixed ages use the youngest age ratio):
 - a. Nursery through children two (2) years old – 1:4 (one adult to every four children)
 - b. Children 3-4-years-old activities – 1:6 (one adult to every six children)
 - c. Kindergarten-grade 6 – 1:8 (one adult to every eight children)
 - d. Youth 7-12 grade – 1: 10 (one adult to every ten youth).
 - e. Special Needs – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons).

Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.
8. **Media** – Written permission must be obtained from a parent/legal guardian prior to posting photos of children, youth, or vulnerable adult on a website or in other public locations, and names will not be included. This permission may be obtained as part of the Event Registration forms (see 7a., above).
9. **If a participant requests to speak privately with an adult**, the adult will ensure that the adult and the participant are visible to others while talking, even though they may not be heard.