



First United Methodist Church

Safe Environment Policy for Children and Youth

Safe Environment for Children and Youth

First United Methodist Church seeks to create a safe environment for all children and youth involved in our programs. In order to insure their safety, we have developed the following list of policies and procedures designed to prevent risk or injury through accident or abuse. Jesus made the importance of children clear in His ministry. In Matthew 19:13-14, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs". The care of children is a sacred trust bestowed upon us by God and we must go the extra mile to prevent any possibility of abuse.

Policies

All paid personnel working with and or in the vicinity of children/youth will have a full background check run. The results of these checks will be kept on file in the church office. Access to files will be restricted to maintain confidentiality. Personnel will have access to their file and may obtain copies on request.

All volunteer personnel who lead a program on a regular basis with children/youth must have been a member of FUMC for at least 6 months. Volunteers who have been a member less than 6 months may serve as helpers. All regular volunteers will submit an application and authorization for a background check. Volunteers serving on overnight trips must have a background check completed.

All paid and volunteer personnel will be at least four years older than the age group with which they are working. An adult must supervise anyone under the age of 18 at all times.

Glass will be installed in the door to all classrooms, or the door will remain open.

First Aid/CPR training will be required for all program staff. Documentation of training will be kept in their file in the church office.

When an adult escorts a child to the restroom, the door will remain open.

Parents will receive advance notice and full information about all events their children will be participating in. An annual signed, emergency treatment form will be required for all off-site events. Parents will provide written permission for each individual off-site event.

No child/youth will be released to anyone other than the person who dropped the child off unless previously arranged by parent and satisfactory identification has been displayed.

First UMC will adhere to the following discipline plan:

1. Children/Youth will receive two verbal reprimands for misbehavior.
2. No language will be allowed that makes the child feel unworthy, unloved, or not cared for.
3. After two verbal warnings the child/youth will be removed from the class or activity until they seem ready to re-enter the activity.

Our fire safety plan will include an annual fire drill . At any time if the fire alarm goes off, all persons will be immediately evacuated from the building. They will return only after the Director of that activity has determined it is safe.

In determining if programs will be cancelled, we will err on the side of caution. If the schools are closed, all child/youth programs will be cancelled.

Our maximum child/youth to adult ratio will be:

Age 0-1	1 to 6
Age 1-2	1 to 8
Age 3-5	1 to 10
Kind—5th	1 to 15
6th—8th	1 to 20
9th—12th	1 to 20

(minimum of 2 adults for every program)

Procedures for Reporting

First United Methodist Church will respond to all alleged or suspected incidences of child/youth abuse in an effort to protect the child/youth and any individual involved in the incident. It is not the policy of the church to prove whether the alleged or suspected abuse has or has not occurred, as this is the responsibility of the proper legal authorities.

Upon suspecting or learning of an allegation of abuse, persons should:

Report the situation immediately to the person who is in charge of the event or activity.

The person in charge of the event or activity will immediately suspend and remove the individual from the duties involving the child/youth pending external and internal investigation.

The person in charge of the event/activity will immediately inform the staff person related to that area of ministry or the Senior Pastor if that staff person is not available.