

# Safe Sanctuary Policy



**Centenary United Methodist Church**  
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*our hearts, our minds,  
and our doors are always open.*

## **Centenary United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy**

**Purpose:** Our purpose for establishing this *Safe Sanctuary Policy* is threefold:

1. We seek to demonstrate our commitment to the physical safety, emotional well-being, and spiritual growth of our children and vulnerable adults.<sup>1</sup> To this end, Centenary United Methodist Church is registered with the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office under "Megan's Law."
2. We seek to protect our staff—both paid and volunteer—from potential wrongful allegations of abuse.
3. We seek to limit the extent of legal liability of our church.

### **I. Policy Regarding Centenary United Methodist Church (CUMC) Staff Screening**

**Policy:** To openly welcome new employed staff or volunteers working with children—regardless of race, culture or special needs—who desire to perform a ministry with the local church.

**Purpose:** To provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

**Procedure:**

1. Applicants for paid staff positions will be interviewed, must provide appropriate references, and will undergo a criminal background check.<sup>2</sup>
2. Persons volunteering to work with children and youth will be interviewed, asked to provide references, and may be asked to undergo a criminal background check.
3. Before beginning the first year of service, each paid or volunteer children's teacher, child care worker or youth worker will be asked to attend an orientation session.
4. All applicants will be asked to sign a statement indicating s/he agrees to abide by the CUMC *Safe Sanctuary Policy*.
5. All applications or reports will remain confidential and will be reviewed only by the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Director of Children's Ministries, and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
6. Anyone convicted of a felony, or who has an outstanding charge of any "barrier crime," will not be permitted to work with children or youth at CUMC.

### **II. Policy Regarding References**

**Policy:** Any paid staff or volunteers working with children or youth will be asked to provide three (3) references.

**Purpose:** To determine that no known reason exists for denying this person the opportunity to serve as a children's or youth worker.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this Safe Sanctuary Policy, children are defined as individuals between 0 and 18 years of age. Vulnerable adults are defined as persons over 18 years of age with diagnosed diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities.

<sup>2</sup> Staff working at the Centenary Early Learning Center (Child Care Center & Nursery School) will follow the procedures outlined by *Chapter 122 Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers* published by the Office of Licensing, Youth and Family Services.

**Procedure:**

1. The applicant will provide three (3) references.
2. Documentation will be made showing that the references were checked and found to be satisfactory. Referees will be contacted either in writing or by telephone.
3. All documentation will be made confidential and will be reviewed only by the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Director of Children's Ministries or the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

**III. Policy Regarding Six (6) Month Rule**

**Policy:** CUMC will not use anyone as a volunteer for children or youth ministry unless they have been an active participant at CUMC for a period of 6 months, and a member of a local church for no less than 6 months.

**Purpose:** To ensure stability and consistency with the church's beliefs and principles, and protection to the children being served.

**Procedure:**

1. Become a participant at CUMC and hold membership in a local church for at least 6 months.
2. New workers may be assigned a mentor who will be available to assist the new worker's understanding of procedures and policies, especially the Safe Sanctuary Policy.
3. The mentor should have experience in the same area of church ministry as the mentee, but does not need to work along side of or be in sight of the new worker at all times.

**IV. Policy on Staff Training**

**Policy:** All paid and volunteer children's and youth workers will participate in professional training, beginning with their first year of service.

**Purpose:** To explain the CUMC *Safe Sanctuary Policy*, church and individual liability, indicators of child abuse, reporting and responding procedures.

**Procedure:**

1. Training may be conducted in separate sessions, or may be part of regularly-scheduled training for staff.
2. Additional awareness about the CUMC *Safe Sanctuary Policy* will be made available for all church members so that our church body may be a part of a conscientious effort to secure and maintain a safe environment for all children, youth and staff.

**V. Two Adult Rule**

**Procedure:**

1. Adults are persons 18 years of age or older. Two adults (whom we suggest are not related) should be on site at all times during any church-sponsored program, event or ministry involving children or youth. (This will include our nursery, Sunday School classes, music programs, youth programs, and any other programs where children or youth are present.)
2. If we are unable to adhere to the Two Adult Rule, at no time should anyone under the age of 18 be left alone to care for children or youth.

3. An exception to the Two Adult Rule may be made when transporting children or youth during a church-sponsored event, as outlined in VII. Policy on Transportation below.

## **VI. Minimum Age**

**Policy:** CUMC provides the following minimum age standards for all Supervisory personnel (employed or volunteer) and all Assistants. For the purposes of this policy, Supervisors are the primary leaders of children's and youth activities. Assistants are persons who lend aid to the Supervisors and act at the direction of the Supervisors, including volunteers.

**Purpose:** The following standards for Supervisors are designed to separate Supervisors from the group they are serving by age or enough years to reinforce recognition of the Supervisor's role.

**Procedure:**

1. To work with children (infant to 5<sup>th</sup> grade), the Supervisor must be a minimum of 18 years of age.
2. To work with youth (grades 6 and above), a Supervisor must be a minimum of 21 years of age.
3. Whether working with children or youth, Assistants must be
  - (a) A minimum of 12 years of age; and,
  - (b) In the judgment of a CUMC staff member, competent to assist in the activity.

## **VII. Policy on Transportation**

**Procedure:**

4. All drivers transporting children or youth for church-sponsored activities must be over the age of 21.
5. All drivers transporting children or youth for church-sponsored activities must complete and submit the Drive Information Form at least a week prior to the event.
6. All drivers transporting children or youth for church-sponsored activities must submit copies of their current driver's license, vehicle registration, and Proof of Insurance card.
7. At no time may an adult driver be alone with an unrelated child or youth unless the parent of the child/youth has provided written permission for transportation.

## **VIII. Parental Consent for Transportation and Activities**

**Procedure:**

1. Parental consent forms will be obtained for overnight activities at the church, and for all activities off church property.

## **IX. Policy on Open Classrooms**

**Policy:** Classrooms or child care rooms may be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents or other volunteer church workers.

**Purpose:** To observe classrooms for appropriate staffing, lessons pertaining to the church's educational purposes, and for the safety of both the children/youth and children's and youth workers.

**Procedure:**

2. Brief observation may be conducted by the Director of Children's Ministries, Sunday School Superintendent, or other appropriate staff during Sunday School, Worship time, or during any other children's or youth programs at CUMC.
3. Observation of new teachers or leaders shall take place during their first two months of service by a supervisory person.
4. All classrooms shall have doors with clear glass windows, or shall be left open to ensure easy viewing of all activities.
5. During any counseling session with children or youth, the door of the room being used shall remain open for the entire session. In addition, the session shall occur when other adults are nearby (even if not within hearing distance).

**X. Policy on Classroom Discipline**

**Policy:** Paid or volunteer children's or youth workers will not use any physical, emotional or verbal abuse at any time.

**Purpose:** To ensure a safe, secure and respectful environment without any ridicule or physical, emotional or verbal abuse by any children's or youth worker.

**Procedure:**

1. If or when a problem arises, the children's or youth worker in charge will discuss the incident as soon as possible with the child's/youth's parent, guardian and Pastor to resolve the problem.
2. If the needs of the child/youth and/or parent are not met, and having the child continue in the program is to the detriment of other children or youth, the child or youth may be asked to be withdrawn from that program.

**XI. Policy on Nursery Use**

**Procedure:**

1. Two adults will be in attendance at all times with infants, toddlers and children using the Nursery.
2. All infants, toddlers and children using the Nursery must be signed in and out by a parent or guardian in the Nursery Log.
3. Nursery staff or volunteers may change soiled diapers as long as another adult is present. All diaper changes will be recorded in a log using the following format: "time, name of child needing diaper change, provider who changed diaper." At the end of the event, the parent or guardian will be informed that a diaper has been changed.

**XII. Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

**Procedure:**

1. In case of a fire or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the building, teachers and volunteer workers will escort the children or youth from the building in accordance with evacuation plans/maps which are posted in each classroom.

### **XIII. Policy on Other Church Use – Space and Facilities**

**Policy:** Leaders of community groups of children, youth and vulnerable adults who use the CUMC facilities, or other groups using the facility while children, youth or vulnerable adults are present, will be required to read the *Safe Sanctuary Policy* and the Policy on Reporting Child Abuse (XIV.). They will also be required to sign an agreement to abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policy.

**Purpose:** CUMC is committed to provide protective care of all children, youth, vulnerable adults, and all children's/youth workers and volunteers who participate in church-sponsored activities, and while the facilities are being used by others.

**Procedure:**

1. The leader of the group using the facility will be asked to read the *Safe Sanctuary Policy* and the Policy on Reporting Child Abuse (XIV.).
2. The leader or person in charge of the group will be required to sign an agreement to abide by these policies.
3. The group will be refused use of the facility if the leader or person in charge refuses to sign such an agreement.

### **XIV. Policy on Reporting Child Abuse**

**Policy:** Should an allegation of child abuse on the property of CUMC or during any of its church-sponsored events, or if an allegation of child abuse is made of any church staff (paid or volunteer), the following steps will be taken.

**Purpose:** To take any allegation seriously and to provide care and resources when needed. Also, to make sure that the allegation is handled by appropriate church leaders, and/or law enforcement officers and the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFYS).

**Procedure:**

1. We will treat any allegation of child abuse seriously.
2. We understand that intentions and perceptions are not always the same. It is our policy to treat seriously a person's perception of the truth of their experience if/when child abuse is reported.
3. It is appropriate to show care and comfort for the alleged victim; this should be the pastoral objective from the moment the allegation is received or otherwise made known.
4. We will pray for the church and for all persons affected by the allegation.
5. We will report allegations of child abuse to DYFYS, local police, the Pastor or Assistant Pastor, and the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
6. Immediately upon notification, one of the church leaders in #5 will notify the parents or guardian or the child, if they are not the accused.
7. The church leader in #5 will immediately document all actions observed in the handling of the allegation by appropriate authorities. This documentation shall include:
  - (1) Names, ages, addresses and telephone numbers of the accused and the alleged victim
  - (2) The nature of the alleged abuse, with dates where possible
  - (3) The factual details of the report
  - (4) The name of the person making the report and the date that the information was received.

8. If the incident involves appointed clergy, we will immediately inform the appropriate District Superintendent, in accordance with *A Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Abuse or Harassment* of Centenary United Methodist Church and of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. The District Superintendent will move to conduct an investigation.
9. One of the church leaders in #5 will immediately notify the church's insurance carrier or its agent broker of the allegation.
10. DO NOT CONFRONT THE ACCUSED with any allegation. If the accused has assigned duties within the life of the church, that person must be temporarily relieved of their duties until the investigation is complete.
11. The Pastor should extend whatever care and resources are necessary, but under no circumstances should the Pastor or any church leader or member INVESTIGATE the allegation. In providing care to the principles (alleged victim and the accused) and their families, the Pastor or church leaders should under no circumstances be drawn into a discussion of the truth or falsity of the allegation which could contaminate the investigation. Do not assign blame or take any steps that involve establishing or refuting the allegation.
12. We will observe confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused.

#### **XV. Administration and Review of Safe Sanctuary Policy and Policy on Reporting Child Abuse (XIV.)**

**Procedure:**

1. Administration of the Safe Sanctuary Policy: The Director of Children's Ministries, or his/her designee, shall administer the Safe Sanctuary Policy.
2. The Education Committee of Centenary United Methodist Church will serve as a Safe Sanctuary Policy Review Board. Its responsibilities will include:
  - (1) Ensuring the education of all Supervisors, Assistants and employees of CUMC about the Policy
  - (2) Providing awareness about the CUMC *Safe Sanctuary Policy* for all church members
  - (3) Answering questions about the Policy
  - (4) Ensuring compliance with the Policy
  - (5) Granting exceptions to the Policy, in appropriate circumstances
  - (6) Supporting and assisting, where appropriate, those persons authorized to engage in the investigation of alleged abuse
  - (7) Reviewing and renewing the Policy annually, or as needed
3. Upon the recommendation of the Education Committee (Safe Sanctuary Policy Review Board), this *Safe Sanctuary Policy* and Policy on Reporting Child Abuse (XIV.) shall be reviewed and approved by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the Church Council of Centenary United Methodist Church.

**Reviewed, Approved and referred to the Church Council by the CUMC Staff-Parish Relations Committee on April 3, 2007.**

**Reviewed, Amended and Approved by the CUMC Church Council on May 14, 2007.**

**Upon the Approval of the Church Council, this *Safe Sanctuary Policy* shall be in effect.**



# CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

200 Hillside Avenue • Metuchen, New Jersey 08840-1900

Telephone: (732) 548-7622 • Fax: (732) 548-6256

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Web: <http://www.CentenaryUMCnj.org>

## Supervisory Form for Children or Youth Work

This form is to be completed by persons seeking to serve in any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an “application” form. Our intention is to know you and your talents, as well as to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Church History and Prior Work with Children and Youth

Are you presently a member of a church?     Yes     No

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

List other churches you have attended regularly in the past 5 years:

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

List all previous church work involving children/youth (list the type of work performed and dates).

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

List all previous non-church work involving children/youth:

Name of Org.	Address	Position	Dates
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Centenary United Methodist Church  
Supervisory Form for Children or Youth Work – Page 2**

List any education, training, special gifts or other factors that have prepared you for work with children/youth:

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Personal References: (You must submit three [3]. Not former employers or relatives.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Information

Please indicate the age group you prefer to work with: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the date you would be available to work: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the time commitment you would be able to make? \_\_\_\_\_

- Do you agree to submit to a criminal background check? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
- As a church worker with children or youth, do you agree to abide by the *Safe Sanctuary Policy* of Centenary United Methodist Church? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
- The information contained within the Supervisory Form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references listed in this form to give you information that they may have regarding my character and fitness to work with children and youth.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

IF I will be transporting children/youth, CUMC may request my driving record from the Division of Motor Vehicles. Attached is a copy of the ***Driver Information Form***.



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### Driver Information Form

Please return this form no later than one week prior to any driving event involving children or youth.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

State Issuing your Driver's License: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you over the age of 21?       Yes       No

Do you have Automobile Insurance?       Yes       No

Name of Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Coverage: \_\_\_\_\_

In compliance with Centenary United Methodist Church's *Safe Sanctuary Policy*, I hereby grant permission to check my driving record.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach copies of your current Driver's License,  
Vehicle Registration and Proof of Insurance card to this form.**



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### Non-Supervisory Form for Children or Youth Work

This form is to be completed by persons who assist in children's and youth activities, but are not in extended contact with children/youth on a regular basis. This would include, but is not limited to: Sunday School teachers, occasional speakers, adult chaperones, or drivers NOT on overnight outings, grounds crew people, and children/youth volunteer workers. The *Safe Sanctuary Policy* of Centenary United Methodist Church (CUMC) reflects our commitment to provide protective care for all children, youth, staff and volunteers who participate in church-related activities. The following items briefly outline the policies and procedures:

1. Persons who have been convicted of a felony, child sexual or physical abuse, should not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program with children/youth.
2. All adult volunteers working with children or youth are required to be active in participation at CUMC for a minimum of six months.
3. Someone in a supervisory position will observe the performance of new workers at some time during their first two months of service. A mentor will be available to assist new workers with their understanding of job expectations.
4. Adult volunteers should immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to the Pastor, Assistant Pastor or Director of Children's Ministries.

Please answer the following question (Your response will be confidential):

As a church volunteer working with children or youth, do you agree to abide by the *Safe Sanctuary Policy* of Centenary United Methodist Church?       Yes       No

Centenary United Methodist Church may check my driving record with the Division of Motor Vehicles if I transport any children/youth during a church-sponsored event.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Follow-Up Form for Children's/Youth Work Interview

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Interview was conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reference Check

References or Churches contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Persons Contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Conversations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was this applicant approved for children's/youth ministry? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, what position will s/he serve? \_\_\_\_\_

### Signature and Position of Person filing this form:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual Review:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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### **Agreement to the *Safe Sanctuary Policy* of Centenary United Methodist Church**

I have read and understand the *Safe Sanctuary Policy* of Centenary United Methodist Church and agree to abide by this policy.

I do attest to the fact that I have never committed a felony, or been convicted of the following: crimes against nature involving minors; taking indecent liberties with children; child abuse/neglect, obscenity, pornography or other crimes involving minors.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_