

Central United Methodist Church
Kings Mountain, North Carolina

Safe Sanctuaries
Policies and Procedures

When the disciples tried to keep children away from Jesus, He was quick to respond, "Let the children come to me." Jesus taught that children were to be included and provided for within the community of faith. Today, the church may be the only place where some children find unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow and thrive. As Christians, we must take our responsibilities to children very seriously. We fail in our responsibilities if we neglect to take adequate precautions against abuse of all types in our churches.

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church passed a resolution in April 1996 that **ALL** Methodist churches are required to develop a policy and procedures plan for the protection from child abuse and sexual abuse of our youth and children. This program is called SAFE SANCTUARIES.

Statement of Covenant and Policy

As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, Central United Methodist Church pledges to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth, as well as all of the workers with children and youth ministries. Central United Methodist Church will follow reasonable procedures in all programs and events; will educate all of those who work with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies, procedures and methods; Central United Methodist Church will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law and will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident should occur. It is the policy of Central United Methodist Church to provide all children and youth a safe and secure atmosphere to encourage their spiritual growth. This also holds true for those adults who are called to work with children and youth. In all of our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ, so that each child and youth will be “surrounded by steadfast love, . . . established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal” (Baptismal Covenant 2, United Methodist Hymnal, 44).

Procedures for the Hiring, Recruiting, and Screening of Paid Staff at Central United Methodist Church

Paid Staff refers to all salaried staff employed full time or part time by Central United Methodist Church.

- A. Employee Application Form (Attachment #1)
- B. Personal Interview
- C. Criminal Background Check (Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check) (Attachment #3)
- D. Personal Reference Check
- E. Sign Covenant Statement (Attachment #4)
- F. Paid Staff shall complete a training workshop for policies and procedures for Safe Sanctuaries of Central United Methodist Church at the time of hiring.
- G. Paid Staff shall attend annual training for policies and procedures for Safe Sanctuaries at Central United Methodist Church
- H. Paid Staff information will be kept confidential.
- I. The Staff Parish Committee will oversee this process for ALL paid staff.

Procedures for Recruiting, Screening and Placement of Volunteer Staff at Central United Methodist Church

- J. Volunteer Staff Application Form (Attachment #2)
- K. Personal Interview
- L. Criminal Background Check (Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check) (Attachment #3)
- M. Personal Reference Check
- N. Signed Covenant Statement (Attachment #4)
- O. Volunteer Staff shall complete at training workshop at the time of placement.
- P. All volunteer Staff shall attend annual training for policies and procedures for Safe Sanctuaries of Central United Methodist Church
- Q. All Volunteer information will be kept confidential.

Participant Covenant Statement

The congregation of Central United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers. who participate in ministries and activities sponsored for children and youth by the church. The following Covenant Statement reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

- A. No person who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) shall volunteer to work with children/youth in any church sponsored activity.
- B. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children/youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's pastors before accepting an assignment.
- C. All volunteers desiring to work with children/youth of our church must have been members of the congregation for at least one (1) year before requesting a volunteer assignment.
- D. Persons working with children/youth shall observe the "two-adult rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children/youth.
- E. Persons working with children/youth shall be required to attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
Any behavior that appears to be abusive or inappropriate shall immediately be reported to the proper person/persons.

Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth at Central United Methodist Church

1. All prospective employees/volunteers shall complete a "Participant Covenant Agreement". (Attachment #4)
2. All prospective employees/volunteers will have a thorough criminal background check upon employment/volunteering then at random as deemed by the Safe Sanctuaries Task Force (Attachment #3)
3. Any person who has been convicted of any crime involving a child/youth will not be permitted to work with children/youth.
4. A minimum of two adults should be present during any children/youth activity. We will strive to never have a teacher working alone with any children/youth.
 - a. When this is not possible it is imperative that the one adult and children/youth remain in a public area where they can be observed by others.
 - b. If alone in a classroom with children/youth the door to the room shall remain open.
 - c. Windows in doors and walls shall remain uncovered for the protection of the children, youth, and volunteers.
 - d. Another adult (Sunday School Coordinator, Nursery Coordinator, Coordinator of Christian Education, Youth Coordinator) will be in the hallways whenever teachers are teaching children/youth. This person will act as a visible presence in support of teachers, as well as a deterrent of any potentially harmful situations for our children/youth.
 - e. Doors can be closed ONLY if there are two un-related adults present. One of the adults WILL have to be screened.
5. No person under the age of eighteen (18) will be allowed to work with children/youth without the direct supervision of an adult. We recognize that putting children in charge of children invites disaster.
 - a. To be considered the "adult" a person must be over the age of eighteen (18) when working with children.
 - b. To be considered the "adult" a person must be over the age of twenty-one (21) when working with youth.
6. Children/Youth shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the written permission of their parents/guardians. (Attachment #6)

Procedures for Transportation of Children and Youth

1. No youth or child below high school age will travel in the front seat.
2. It is recommended that when a youth travels in the front seat that youth should be the same gender as the adult driver.
3. It is preferred that there are at least two adults in a vehicle transporting children/youth. No driver is to transport any youth/child alone without permission from the parents or guardians of said youth/child. If possible, there will always be more than one youth/child in the vehicle. Every effort will be made to have a third adult when traveling on the road for emergency situations.
4. All riders and drivers must wear seatbelts and comply with NC child safety restraint laws.
5. Vehicles should be driven with headlights on for safety.
6. Drivers must be at least twenty-one years of age.
7. All drivers must fill out a transportation form. This form is good for one academic year. (Attachment #5).
8. All drivers must have a valid NC Drivers License. Drivers who have DUIs or evidence of excessive motor vehicle violations will not be permitted to operate motor vehicles on behalf of Central United Methodist Church.

Procedures for Overnight Trips with Children/Youth

1. The lodging situation on overnight trips will be assessed to determine the best sleeping arrangements for those in attendance. Required:
 - A. In a hotel, child/youth and adults will have and maintain separate rooms. The only allowable exception will be for parents of child/youth in attendance. Chaperones will work together to monitor all child/youth and ensure their safety. No adult will be in a room alone with a child/youth, unless they are the parent of the specific child/youth. In a cabin, must have at least two (2) adults present at all times.
2. The group leader will strive to have all of the rooms together in a block when possible.
3. No unrelated adult will share a bed or room with a child/youth.
4. Whenever practical one unrelated adult should not spend the night alone one child/youth. An exception would include sickness, emergency, etc.
5. As a part of the participant covenant parents or guardians will agree to pick up their children/youth in the case of inappropriate behavior. In cases of long distance trips, arrangements will be made with the parents of affected children/youth to do so at the earliest and safest time.
6. All children/youth involved with overnight trips will have to complete a permission slip from the parent/guardian. (Attachment #6)

Central United Methodist Church Policy on Discipline

Central UMC policy on discipline centers around appropriate discipline procedures. Discipline procedures will focus on the behavior/incident, and not on the child. Will always be used.

- A. If a child/youth is behaving inappropriately, the staff will tell the child/youth the specific behavior that is unacceptable and state what the acceptable behavior is. For example, "We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building". (Use of verbal direction)
- B. If this measure is not effective, the child/youth will be guided to another activity. (Redirection of activity)
- C. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the child/youth may be placed at the table to work alone away from the other children/youth.
- D. If the child/youth's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the child/youth's parents will be contacted to remove the child/youth out of the activity.

Central UMC does not allow physical discipline or verbal abuse of children, **under any circumstances**. This is grounds for immediate termination of a staff member.

Important note: According to North Carolina Laws, a teacher (which can include church staff) accused of striking a child may be charged with felonious assault on a minor under age.

Central UMC
Children Ministry (KID Central)/All Activities Check-In/Check-Out
Procedures

All Children below Fifth Grade Level will be required to be signed in/out of all KID Central activities by their parent/guardian (or to another individual only with advance written notice).

KID Central sign in/out policy

1. All children in the KID Central children ministry will need to be “Signed-in/Signed-out”
2. Please sign your child in each Sunday and fill in the check-in sheet completely with the requested information.
3. If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, please let the KID Central director/volunteer know this before you leave and ensure it is documented.
4. For nursery age children please wait at the door to both drop-off and pick-up your child. Do not go into the room.
5. Please have your child’s diaper bag labeled on the outside with his/her name. Also label any bottles or sippy cups.
6. If your child is being toilet trained, please alert the volunteers. (Remember that children who are being toilet trained are not as likely to ask or go to the bathroom with adults they do not know. If this is the case, we ask that you take your child to the bathroom before dropping your child of in the nursery.)
7. Children may experience separation anxiety. This is a normal part of their development. If after 15 minutes, the volunteers have been unsuccessful in calming your child, we will request you to return to the proper KID Central room to comfort your child. In addition to being in the best interest of your child, it also ensures that the volunteers can meet the needs of the other children in the nursery.
8. If your child has any special needs or concerns, please alert the nursery staff. They are here to make the nursery experience a pleasant one and the more knowledge they have of your child the better they can meet his/her needs.

If you are a parent and are not currently volunteering in the nursery and would like to, please contact the Director of Youth and Children Ministries.

Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade Class Rooms:

- A. All children in the Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade Sunday School classes will need to be "Signed-in/Signed-out"
- B. Please sign your child in each Sunday and fill in the check-in sheet completely with the child's name and your name and where you will be (i.e. your Sunday School class)
- C. If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, please let the nursery volunteer know this before you leave.
- D. Please wait at the door to both drop-off and pick-up your child. DO NOT GO INTO THE ROOM.

Third Grade and Above:

- 1. All children should be with a parent/guardian or teacher at all times.

For all other church related activities, not a part of KID Central.

- 1. All children should be under the supervision of their parents or guardians. Please do not allow your children to roam the halls.
- 2. For the safety of their children, parents or guardians are asked to monitor the whereabouts of their children.

Procedure for Reporting Allegations of Abuse

The procedure is the same regardless of whether or not the alleged perpetrator is a Staff Member, Volunteer, or Guest of the church:

1. The reporter should immediately complete the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form (Attachment #7)
2. The Senior Pastor and Lay Leader and/or age-appropriate ministry coordinator should complete an accurate incident report/written record of the steps taken by the church in response to the allegations that have been made; including the dates, times, locations, and responses. A copy of the incident report will be maintained for records.
3. Inform the appropriate staff person responsible for the area of ministry in which the situation took place, Director of Youth and Children Ministries, the Senior Pastor and Lay Leader.
4. If the Senior Pastor and Lay Leader have not been informed they should be informed of the situation.
5. The Director of Youth and Children Ministry, Senior Pastor and Lay Leader will then investigate the report of the allegation and respond accordingly:
 - A. follow-up must be done promptly and discreetly.
 - B. The Director of Youth and Children Ministry, Senior Pastor and Lay Leader must report back to the person making the initial report of their decision on the case.
 - C. When dealing with allegations that upon investigation appear to be true it is strongly recommended that the Director of Youth and Children Ministry, Senior Pastor and Lay Leader report to the Department of Social Services.
 - D. If the Director of Youth and Children Ministry, Senior Pastor and Lay Leader decides not to report the incident to the Department of Social Services the initial reporter must be made aware that he or she may report to the Department of Social Services him or herself if he or she feels it necessary.
6. If the Director of Youth and Children Ministry, Senior Pastor and Lay Leader decides that the Department of Social Services should be contacted they should call the Department and give a full statement based on the information they have collected. (Cleveland County Department of Social Services 704-487-0661).
 - a. When making a report the Director of Youth and Children Ministry, Senior Pastor and Lay Leader should give their names and contact information so that later on DSS may gain information about the progress of the investigation. If a person makes an anonymous report he/she loses all rights to further information.

7. The Director of Youth and Children Ministry, Senior Pastor and Lay Leader should next contact the chair of the Staff Parish Committee, the chair of Church Council and a lawyer for council.
8. The District Superintendent should then be contacted by the Senior Pastor and Lay Leader/Chair of the Staff Parish Committee (Gastonia District Office: 704-865-3580)
9. If the incident occurred on church property, on a church sponsored activity, or involved a staff member, the insurance carrier should be notified.
10. For all of the above steps, if the suspected offender is one of the staff members listed above, the reporting party will advise all other available staff listed. In order to avoid conflicts of interest the involved staff member will be omitted from the above steps of resolution.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

1. Immediate notification of the parents/guardian of the victim/alleged victim.
- 2.
3. Ensure the victim's safety until the parent/guardian arrives. If needed contact 911 for first responders and medical needs.
4. The accused abuser shall not be confronted with anger or hostility. He/she will be treated with dignity but immediately removed from further involvement with the children/youth until the individual is cleared of wrong-doing. 2 parties will be present during this until the accused has left the church property.
5. A media spokesperson should be appointed as the only person to give statements to the media. This allows the information given to be complete and accurate.
6. The church staff should be informed of who the media spokesperson is.
7. If staff members are approached by the media, they should direct the media to the spokesperson rather than responding by saying "No comment" which could imply some hidden information.
8. Respond with care to the victim, the victim's family, the accused, the family of the accused and the congregation.

**Safe Sanctuaries
Employment Application for
Central United Methodist Church
Kings Mountain, NC**

Name:

Last

First

Middle

Are you over the age of 18?

Yes

No

Present address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Position applied for: _____

Date you are available start: _____

Qualifications:

Academic, achievements: (*Schools attended, degrees earned, dates of completion*)

Continuing education completed: (*Courses taken, dates of completion*)

Professional Organizations: (List any in which you have membership)

First aid training? _____ Yes _____ No
CPR training? _____ Yes _____ No

References: *Please list three individuals who you are not related to you by blood or marriage as references. Please list people who have known you for at least three years.*

1. Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____
 Evening Phone: _____
 Length of time you have known reference: _____
 Relationship to reference: _____

2. Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____
 Evening Phone: _____
 Length of time you have known reference: _____
 Relationship to reference: _____

3. Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____
 Evening Phone: _____
 Length of time you have known reference: _____
 Relationship to reference: _____

Waiver and Consent:

I, _____, hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application for employment is true and correct. I authorize Central United Methodist Church to verify the information I have provided on this application by contacting the references and employers I have listed, by contacting a criminal records check, or other means, including contacting others whom I have not listed. I authorize the references and employers listed in this application to give you whatever information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the job for which I have applied. Furthermore, I waive any rights I may have to confidentiality.

In the event that my application is accepted and I become employed by Central United Methodist Church, I agree to abide by and be bound by the policies of Central United Methodist Church and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my duties on behalf of Central United Methodist Church.

I have read this waiver and the entire application, and I am fully aware of its contents. I sign this consent freely and under no duress or coercion.

Signature of Applicant _____ **Date** _____

**Safe Sanctuaries
Volunteer Application for
Central United Methodist Church
Kings Mountain, NC**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ **Evening Phone:** _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Current job responsibilities and schedule: _____

Previous work experience: _____

Special interest, hobbies, and skills:

Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children and/or youth?

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children and/or youth?

**Central UMC Safe Sanctuaries
Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check**

PLEASE PRINT

Name (*First, Middle, Last*) _____ Date of Birth (*mo/day/yr*) _____

Maiden Name or "AKA" _____

Date Used (yr) from _____ to _____

Social Security #: _____ Driver's License # _____ State _____

Copy of License attached to application

Current and previous address(es). **PROVIDE ALL ADDRESSES FOR PREVIOUS 7 YEARS**
(Use extra page if necessary)

Address

City, State, Zip, Country

Dates of Residency (To/From): _____

Address

City, State, Zip, Country

Dates of Residency (To/From): _____

I, _____, hereby authorize Central United Methodist Church to request Castle Branch, Inc., to release information regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in its files, or in any criminal file maintained on me, whether said local, state, or national file, and including but not limited to accusations and convictions for crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law. I do release said Castle Branch Inc. from all liability that may result from such disclosure made in response to this request.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

**Central UMC Safe Sanctuaries
Transportation Form**

1. Name of Driver _____
2. Driver's License Number _____
3. Insurance Company Name _____
4. Have you had any motor vehicle violations in the last five years (including speeding tickets)? _____

Yes [] No []

If yes, please explain:

- _____
5. Have you read and do you agree to follow the guidelines for transportation (see below)? _____

Yes [] No []

6. If any of this information changes I will report it to a church pastor, the coordinator of Christian Education, or the youth coordinator.

Yes [] No []

Procedures for Transportation of Children/Youth

1. No youth/child below high school age will travel in the front seat.
2. It is recommended that when a youth travels in the front seat that youth should be the same gender as the adult driver.
3. It is preferred that there are at least two adults in a vehicle transporting children/youth. However, no driver is to transport any youth/child alone without permission of the parents or guardians involved. If possible, there will always be more than one youth/child in the vehicle.
4. All riders and drivers must wear seatbelts and comply with NC child safety restraint laws.
5. Vehicles should be driven with headlights on for safety.
6. Drivers must be at least twenty-one years of age.
7. All drivers must fill out a transportation form. This form is good for one academic year.
8. All drivers must have a valid NC Drivers License. No DUIs nor evidence of excessive motor vehicle violations.

Signed

Date

Attachment #5 07/2005

**Central United Methodist Church
Kings Mountain, NC
Safe Sanctuaries
Activity/Trip Permission Slip**

Name: _____

Date(s) of Activity/Trip: _____

Destination of Activity/Trip: _____

In case of an emergency, please contact:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell _____ Other _____

Name: _____
Relationship: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell _____ Other _____

Allergies/Medical Info: _____

Our family agrees to honor and adhere to the Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures adopted by Central UMC while away on this activity/trip.

Parent Signature _____ Date

Youth/Child Signature _____ Date

Central UMC Safe Sanctuaries
Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse):

2. Victim's name: _____

3. Date/Place of initial conversation with/report from victim:

4. Victim's statement (give detailed summary here):

5. Name of person accused of abuse:

Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

6. Reported to Senior Pastor and Lay Leader: _____

Date/Time: _____

Summary:

7. Call to victim's parents/guardian:

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

8. Call to the Gastonia Department of Social Services (704-862-7555):

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee:

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10: Call to the Chairperson of the Administrative Council:

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

11. Call to the Gastonia UMC District Superintendent (704-865-3580):

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

12. Call to the Kings Mountain Police Department (704-825-3792):

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Signature of Applicant

Date

**Central UMC Safe Sanctuaries
Accident Report Form**

Date of Accident: _____

Time of Accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____

Age: _____

Address of child/youth injured: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Describe Accident:

Report filled out by _____ Date

Central UMC Safe Sanctuaries
Participant Covenant Agreement

Please answer the following questions and X your response:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by the church policies and procedures regarding working in ministries with children/youth?

Yes [] No []

2. As a volunteer in this congregation do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times?

Yes [] No []

3. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment?

Yes [] No []

4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report any suspected abusive or inappropriate behavior to the proper person?

Yes [] No []

5. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of abuse?

Yes [] No []

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Print Full Name

Date

Attachment #4 07/2005