



APEX UMC FAMILY OF FAITH COMMUNITIES

Safe Sanctuaries Manual

Updated 5/6/2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Statement of Purpose and Commitment	3
Statement of Safe Sanctuary Terminology	4
Standard Procedures for Operating Safely	5
Leader Screening Policy	6
Guidelines for Trips and Off-Site Programming	7
Procedural Guidelines for Handling Concerns or Reported Allegations of Abuse by Apex UMC Family of Faith Communities Leader (Paid or Unpaid)	8
Procedural Guidelines for Handling Concerns or Reported Allegations of Abuse by Unaffiliated Third Parties	9
Procedural Guidelines For Distribution and Handling of Concern/Incident Report Form	10
Background Authorization Form	11
Concern/Incident Report Form	12
Leader Consent	13

Safe Sanctuaries Statement of Purpose and Commitment

The 1996 General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. The Safe Sanctuaries program has been created as a guideline for churches to follow to keep our children, students, vulnerable adults and leaders safe.

Apex United Methodist Church's Family of Faith Communities is committed to providing a safe and nurturing church home, in which our children, students and adults can experience God's love and grow in their Christian faith. As members of the Body of Christ we all share in this responsibility and we further commit to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be "surrounded by steadfast love...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Baptismal Covenant II, *United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 44). To this end, anyone who is concerned about the physical or emotional safety of a child or student in our congregation, or any student who believes they have been harmed, is encouraged to report the incident so that we may fulfill our commitment to maintaining a Safe Sanctuary.

Psalm 27: 4-5

"The one thing I ask of the Lord
the thing I seek most
Is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
delighting in the Lord's perfections
and meditating in his Temple.
For he will conceal me there when troubles come;
he will hide me in his sanctuary.
He will place me out of reach on a high rock."

Statement of Safe Sanctuary Terminology

Before we progress through the training the Family Ministries team has discovered the importance of clarifying terminology that you will hear us use throughout this document. Clarity of the terms used will serve as a point of reference of what types of workers serve here at the Faith Communities.

Paid: The term “Paid Leader” describes all individuals who are hired/paid by the church and have been given the responsibility of managing, leading or directly working with children/youth. All paid leaders are background checked and required to participate and sign off on Safe Sanctuary guidelines.

Volunteer Leader: The term “Volunteer Leader” describes individuals who are given the responsibility of managing or directly working with children/youth. This however, does not describe their role as a teacher. These individuals have been background checked and Safe Sanctuary trained.

Volunteer Helper: The term “Volunteer Helper” describes individuals who work or help alongside a Volunteer Leader and have not been given the authority to volunteer alone. These individuals are volunteers who are working on completing Safe Sanctuary training and may not have been background checked at this point in time.

Standard Procedures for Operating Safely

In response to the initiative set forth by the 1996 General Conference of the church, we have taken the following steps to insure that our children and student, workers and church are safe:

- All persons working with children and students are given information about our policies and procedures during their training process.
- All leaders (including paid and non-paid staff) must be screened if working with children or students.
- The AUMC Family of Faith Communities Safe Sanctuaries policies are available on the in the church office upon request.
- Leaders (including paid and non-paid staff) are asked to sign stating they will adhere to the policy.
- Coordinators are in regular relationship with leaders in order to ensure that polices are followed.

The procedures that we have adopted to insure that our children and students are safe include but are not limited to the following:

- A minimum of one adult who has been Safe Sanctuary trained and background checked in the room at all times. One adult cannot ever be left alone with two or less children or students. In the event only one adult can be secured, the door shall remain open at all times and there will be a leader assigned to roam, if there is not a window in the door.
- Children and student classes and groups are assigned to meet in locations in the same vicinity to facilitate monitoring of activities.
- During all Family Ministry programming, a drop-in policy has been established. Leaders understand that coordinators circulate to ensure policies are followed.
- Restroom Policies:
 - “Only” paid nursery workers allowed to change diapers and preschool workers take children into restrooms to assist with toileting needs.
 - Children are monitored from outside the restroom at all times.
 - Students are expected to go and come from restrooms on their own.
 - If parents wish to change their children, he or she needs to do so in the restroom changing facilities.
 - Adults responsible for special needs children and students and/or vulnerable adults should work with Family Ministries staff to create an individual Safe Sanctuaries plan.
- Students may be assigned to assist with children’s ministry programs; these students are subject to the “five-years-older rule” and are expected to participate in a training.
- Concern/Incident Report Forms are available at check in locations, in Family Ministry information areas and may be requested from coordinators.

Leader Screening Procedure

- All off site events and trips require written permission forms, unless a child's parent/guardian is present.
- Anyone wishing to be a leader in an area that directly relates to children and students must consent to a background check.
- To participate as a children or student leader you must regularly attend one of the faith communities of Apex UMC , be pursuing membership, member of another UMC or reference check may be required. Leaders are expected to active participants in the worship life of the Apex Family and agree to the doctrine and practices of the United Methodist Church.
- The Background Authorization Form is available on Apex UMC Family of Faith Communities website or it can be obtained from the following (see page 11):
 - Wendy Dupree, Preschool Director
 - Lennie Furlough, Director of Student Ministries
 - Dana Hall, Student Ministries Administrator
 - Desiree Bland, Apex Children's Ministries Coordinator
 - Jennifer Hartman, Peak Children's Ministries Coordinator
 - Jessica Matthews, 519 Children's Ministries Coordinator
 - Deborah Wade, Nursery/Childcare Coordinator
 - Toby White, Director of Missions and Senior Adult Ministry
 - Kate Shoffner, Operations Director
- Completed background forms are to be returned to your coordinator who in turn will give the information to the Director of Operations who will process the request. Results are kept confidential and locked. Only the Operations Director will view the report. The 'Background Check Authorization' form is shredded to protect confidentiality and the 'Safe Sanctuaries Leader Consent' form is kept on file.

Guidelines for Trips and Off Site Programming

The following additional guidelines address issues of safety that may arise when children and students participate in off-campus trips and programs.

Transportation

- An adult can transport 3 or more children in a vehicle. If an emergency situation arises where a student needs transportation and only one adult is available (e.g., utilizing two adults would compromise the supervision of remaining student), then every effort will be made to relieve the emergency situation.
- Drivers will be asked to give permission to check driving history.

Lodging & Activities

- Parents will have access to advance notice and full information regarding event(s) in which their child or student is participating.
- At no time will a student and an adult leader stay in a room by themselves unless they are related. Students and adults will not sleep in the same bed with whom they are unrelated.
- When large common sleeping areas are used adults remain in the immediate vicinity sleeping near the exits.
- All participants should have privacy for showering/bathing. If there is a common shower, arrangements should be made to schedule showers separately for student and adults.
- The Family Ministries Team will obtain rules and policies of hosting organizations in advance so that a modification plan can be put in place should there be a need for adjustments.
- In independent activities (e.g., skiing, beach), students must stay in groups, checking in with an adult supervisor in a public place at designated times.

Procedural Guidelines For Handling Concern or Reported Allegations Of Abuse By Apex UMC's Family of Faith Communities Leader (Paid or Unpaid)

1. Any allegation of abuse of a minor by an Apex UMC's Family of Faith Communities leader (paid or unpaid) must be immediately reported to a member of the Family Ministries Team and then, subsequently, to the Lead Pastor immediately upon initial receipt of an allegation. Such notification shall be by personal statement, phone call, text, email or whatever form of communication is quickest in the circumstance the person making the report find him/herself. If such an allegation is reported to a staff member, said staff person still is to turn report immediately into the Lead Pastor. If the allegation is against the Lead Pastor the report shall be made to the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the following procedures followed absenting the Lead Pastor from each process.
2. Upon receipt of such allegation, the Lead Pastor, the Council Chair, and the Chairperson of the SPRC will immediately determine whether the allegation in question is a reportable incident within the guidelines set forth by applicable N.C. statutes and the Wake County Department of Human Services. If so, the allegation will actually be reported to the appropriate authorities by the Council Chairperson or SPRC Chair and the Lead Pastor as soon as possible.
3. The allegation in question shall be then reported, within 24 hours of receipt, to all clergy, as well as, to the Chairperson of the SPRC and the Chair of the Administrative Council, as well as, to the appropriate member(s) of the Family Ministries Team, to the extent that they are not the initial recipient of such an allegation or the subject of same.
4. The Lead Pastor shall immediately notify the District Superintendent of the allegation and will work with the DS. If the allegation is against a clergy person, the DS will determine if the allegation is a chargeable offense under The Book of Discipline. If the allegation is against the Lead Pastor, The SPRC Chair will contact the DS.
5. If the allegation in question is not a reportable incident, the Lead Pastor, the Council Chair, the SPRC Chair along with the appropriate pastor and/or staff member(s) described in paragraph one above, will nonetheless immediately determine how best to further investigate the allegation in question, and/or address the same with the accused, the minor, and the minor's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
6. Any concern or allegation of abuse regarding a minor who is affiliated with one of Apex UMC Faith Communities, that is directly observed or reported requires immediate report to the civil authorities per The Book of Discipline. Therefore, any report or allegation or observation of abuse made to any pastor or staff member must therefore be immediately reported to the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor and said pastor or staff person will immediately contact the appropriate authorities.

Procedural Guidelines For Handling Concern or Reported Allegations Of Abuse By Unaffiliated Third Parties

- i. Any concern or allegation of abuse regarding a minor who is affiliated with one of the Apex UMC Faith Communities, made to anyone other than the Family Ministry Team or the Executive Pastor, must be reported to said staff members within 24 hours of the initial receipt of such an allegation.
- ii. The allegation in question shall be then reported, within 24 hours of receipt, to all clergy, and to the appropriate member(s) of the Family Ministries Team, to the extent that they are not the initial recipient of such an allegation or the subject of same.
- iii. The Executive Pastor and/or Family Ministries Team, along with the appropriate staff member(s), will then immediately determine whether the concern or allegation in question is a reportable incident within the guidelines set forth by applicable N.C. statutes and the Wake County Department of Human Services. If so, all clergy shall be immediately advised of such determination, and the allegation will actually be reported to the appropriate authorities no later than 48 hours from the initial receipt of such allegation.
- iv. If the allegation in question is not a reportable incident, the Executive Pastor and/or Family Ministries Team along with the appropriate staff member(s), will nonetheless immediately determine how best to further proceed with the concern or allegation in question, including being in contact with the minor's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), to the extent they are not the subject of the allegation. These individuals will then confer within 24 hours with all clergy to reach consensus on the recommended course of action, with the goal being to implement same within no more than 48 hours from the initial receipt of such allegation.
- v. To the extent that any allegation of abuse of a minor presents immediate ongoing harm to the minor, the procedures detailed above should be taken by the involved persons with all possible haste.

Procedural Guidelines For Distributing and Handling Concern/Incident Report Forms

1. Distribution: Concern forms will be available to all Apex UMC Family of Faith Communities leaders (paid and unpaid), church members, parents, students and/or visitors in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:
 - in Family Ministries information areas
 - Available in church offices

2. Handling of Concern/Incident Reports

All concern/incident reports received by anyone affiliated with ApexUMC's Family of Faith Communities shall be immediately directed to the appropriate persons as set forth in the guidelines established in the Safe Sanctuaries Manual.

Access to such reports during the implementation of the procedures listed in these guidelines shall be strictly limited to the designated persons.

Following completion of such procedures, all such reports shall be stored in a segregated file cabinet or storage compartment, kept locked at all times, and made available for subsequent review only by clergy or paid staff who are directly responsible for making employment and/or leader selection decisions.

3. Handling of General Concern Reports. All reports received by anyone affiliated with Apex UMC Family of Faith Communities that relate only to general concerns shall be immediately directed to coordinators and campus pastors.

4. Acknowledgement of Receipt. Upon receipt of the Concern/Incident Report Form, the Executive Pastor or other appropriate personnel will acknowledge the receipt of the form to the submitter of said form.



Background Check Authorization

Ministry Leader/Ministry Area _____

Print Full Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Former Name(s) and Dates Used: _____

Current Address Since: _____
(Mo/Yr) (Street) (City) (Zip/State)

Have you ever been charged, convicted or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony including but not limited to drug related charges, child abuse, and/or other crimes of violence, theft, or motor vehicle violation?)

Yes ___ No ___ If yes, please explain:

The information contained in this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize **Apex United Methodist Church Family of Faith Communities** and its designated agents and representatives to conduct a comprehensive review of my background causing a consumer report and/or an investigative consumer report to be generated for employment and/or volunteer purposes. I understand that the scope of the consumer report/ investigative consumer report may include, but is not limited to the following areas: verification of social security number; current and previous residences; employment history, education background,; drug testing, civil and criminal history records from any criminal justice agency in any or all federal, state, county jurisdictions; driving records, birth records, and any other public records.

I further authorize any individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency (including the Social Security Administration and law enforcement agencies) to divulge any and all information, verbal or written, pertaining to me, to **Apex United Methodist Church Family of Faith Communities** or its agents. I further authorize the complete release of any records or data pertaining to me which the individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency may have, to include information or data received from other sources.

I hereby release **Apex United Methodist Church Family of Faith Communities**, the Social Security Administration, and its agents, officials, representative, or assigned agencies, including officers, employees, or related personnel both individually and collectively, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind, which may, at any time, result to me, my heirs, family, or associates because of compliance with this authorization and request to release.

Signature:	Date:
------------	-------

**Safe Sanctuaries
Leader Consent**
(detach, complete and turn into staff)

I, _____, (printed name) commit myself to serve God and others by participating as a member of the Apex UMC Family of Faith Communities Family Ministries Team. As a member of the team, I join with other leaders who are committed to excellence in all we do for our community of faith.

Yes, I have received, read and understand the Apex UMC Family of Faith Communities Safe Sanctuaries policies and understand that I consent to a background check before working with children or youth.

Signature

Date