

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY AND PROCEDURES ADOPTED: NOVEMBER 2022

*Revision: November 6, 2022
Revision #3*

**Glencoe United Methodist Church, Inc.
601 GLENCOE CHURCH LOOP
SUMMERFIELD NC 27358
(336) 616-0017**

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones ... it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea."(Matthew 18:5-6). This biblical mandate is again affirmed each time we participate in a baptism. We recognize again and reaffirm our responsibility to all of God's children when we pledge, "With God's help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this child, surrounded with steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." (Book of Worship, Baptismal Covenant, Congregational Pledge 11). We therefore firmly believe we are called to offer hospitality and protection to those who cannot protect themselves. In direct response to this call we hereby adopt this policy for establishing safe sanctuary for all.

Safe Sanctuaries is the ministry within the United Methodist denomination that equips and enables ministry that is welcoming and safe for children, youth and vulnerable adults and all adults who are in ministry to them. Safe Sanctuaries educates the likelihood of child abuse occurring within our ministry setting and aids in protecting our adult leaders against false allegations. The Glencoe United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Committee will be comprised of members of Children, and Youth ministries, along with other at-large members as needed. These persons will be recommended by the church staff and Trustees. The Committee shall, at least annually, review and (when necessary) recommend revisions of the Glencoe United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries policy to the Administrative Council. The Committee shall submit an annual report to the Administrative Council with the following information:

- That the policy has been reviewed;
- Recommended adjustments to the policy, if any, and;
- Other pertinent information.

PURPOSE:

Our purpose in establishing this policy and commensurate procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to create a safe environment that fosters comprehensive health, growth and development of all within our charge and care.

STATEMENT OF INTENT:

It is our declared intent to:

1. Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of staff and volunteers;
2. Provide adequate training for staff and volunteers regarding the implementation of our policies and procedures;
3. Implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events that will encourage the development of our adults and children;
4. Adopt reasonable safety measures for travel and off-site church sponsored procedures;
5. Educate parents and others in our congregation as to our policies and procedures;
6. Design a clearly defined procedure for reporting instances of injury, harm or abuse in accordance with the requirements of state and federal laws;
7. Report allegations of abuse in accordance with the requirements of the Western North Carolina United Methodist Conference and state and federal laws;
8. Respond with compassion and integrity to needs as they present themselves following incidents of harm, injury or abuse;
9. Review our policies and procedures regularly to meet changing legal, health, and safety standards. Nothing in this policy is meant to hinder or prevent the investigation of suspected, reported or confirmed violation of any criminal laws.

I. SCREENING AND RECRUITMENT

- 1.1. Prior to serving in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults, all volunteers will be evaluated through the following criteria: a written application, a national criminal background check, and a national sexual offender registry check.
- 1.2. All volunteers in the areas of children, youth or vulnerable adult ministry will be required to complete a Safe Sanctuaries Background screen through Trak-1 (trak-1.com) or other approved background check systems. This screen allows a complete confidential Criminal and Sexual Offender background screen on all persons applying to work with our children, youth and vulnerable adults at Glencoe United Methodist Church.

- 1.3. Information obtained from the background screening and application process will be held in the strictest of confidence, filed in a locked cabinet in the Church office, and accessible only by Church Staff or designated Safe Sanctuaries Team Member.
- 1.4. Any person with any criminal conviction related to abuse, neglect or any sexually-related assault will not be able to serve in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults at Glencoe United Methodist Church. All other convictions will be reviewed and handled on a case by case basis.
- 1.5. All backgrounds will be rechecked every 2 years, unless there is a gap in participation in church life, or reasonable suspicion occurs to re-run before the two-year renewal date.
- 1.6. All background procedures must be completed in their entirety prior to engagement in children or youth ministry.

II. TRAINING

- 2.1 Glencoe United Methodist Church welcomes all who wish to become a part of our growing ministries. It is our practice that all potential volunteers share in an active experience of at least 3 months in community prior to becoming a volunteer with children, youth or vulnerable adults before moving into a role of leadership in our congregation so that we might become familiar with one another.
- 2.2 All volunteers will be required to participate in Safe Sanctuaries training prior to serving.
 - 2.2.1 Glencoe United Methodist Church will offer Safe Sanctuaries training annually for all leaders serving with children, youth and vulnerable adults.
 - 2.2.2 After an initial training session, all volunteers will be required to participate in a Safe Sanctuaries training event at least once every two (2) years.
- 2.3 All volunteers who come into an area of ministry between these annual training sessions will participate in "job shadow training" with another experienced volunteer or by paid staff.
 - 2.3.1 Job Shadow Training is offered for all who have completed the aforementioned screening process, have been an active part of this congregation for at least 3 months, and who express a desire to

serve in between our annual training. This training includes a minimum of 2 hours of observation with a volunteer who has actively served in the ministry for at least 1 year, to learn the details of the position for which they desire to serve. The guidelines of our Safe Sanctuaries policy will also be explained to the volunteer during this phase. This is followed by a question and answer conversation with the age level coordinator or director of the ministry area to address any concerns that may arise during their time in the training session.

2.3.2 Once this initial job shadow training is completed, the volunteer will be assigned to lead in the classroom/activity setting, with the training leader/staff to provide them with support. This portion of shadow training will be for a minimum of 1 hour.

2.3.3 When these steps are completed, new volunteers will be considered fully trained in the ministry and assigned leadership based on the availability of their schedule and that of the ministry. It is expected that all volunteers entering ministry through job shadow training will also participate in the next regularly scheduled Safe Sanctuaries training.

III. SCREENING AND RECRUITMENT

Prior to serving in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults, all Ministry with children, youth and adults is a privilege and should be viewed as a sacred relationship at all times. We are entrusted with young person's here at Glencoe United Methodist Church and are to keep appropriate boundaries between ourselves and those to whom we minister at all times.

3.1 **TWO-ADULT RULE:** Our church always strives to place two non-related adult volunteers in the classroom at all times. In those instances when we are unable to place 2 adults in every room, there will be a team of one Adult/one Youth (between 16-18 years), or an adult that serves as a roving monitor. Additionally, there will be no less than 4 years difference in age between the oldest child being supervised and the supervisory people.

3.2 **HALL DISCIPLE PROGRAM:** Glencoe United Methodist Church has adopted a Hall Disciple program to help in the ministry of protecting our children and youth. Hall Disciples are adults who will be roving the halls throughout the Worship and Sunday School hours to make certain that children and youth are not wandering the halls without supervision. These persons presently include members of the Education Team, and church staff/pastors who are serving in this capacity.

3.3 **COUNSELING:** Opportunities for counseling come in many forms. Every member of our church staff is a representative of Christ and should welcome opportunities to share our faith and God's love with those who are in need.

3.3.1 All counseling situations should fall under the following guidelines:

3.3.1.1 All counseling will be conducted under the highest of Christian principles and boundaries.

3.3.1.2. Anyone having knowledge of a counseling situation in which misconduct is suspected should report their concerns immediately to the Chairperson of the StaffParish Relations Committee and/or Senior Pastor.

3.4 **OPEN-DOOR POLICY:** It is expected that all classroom and office doors will have windows.

3.4.1 Door windows are to remain clear for visibility into classrooms and offices.

3.5 **FIRST AID TRAINING:** Glencoe United Methodist Church will offer CPR and First Aid Training bi-annually at the church, by a certified instructor for the American Heart Association and/or Red Cross, and open to any member of the congregation who is interested.

3.5.1 Should an accident or injury occur while participating in a church-sponsored event, first aid kits are provided in the facilities.

3.5.1.1 First Aid Kit Locations:

3.5.1.1.1 The Kitchen

3.5.1.1.2 AED – Fellowship Hall

3.5.2 All interior first aid kits are maintained by a designated church member.

3.6 **ADVANCE NOTICE:** It is our desire to communicate clearly and thoroughly with all participants and their families involved in children and youth ministries. In addition to other forms of communication, we will provide a minimum of one week's advance written notice of all activities, costs and requirements.

3.6.1 In every ministry event involving children and youth in which parents/guardians are not present during the event Glencoe United

Methodist Church will have on file at least one emergency contact name and phone number, as well as any known allergies for the child/youth who are in attendance.

- 3.6.2 All children/youth participating in regularly scheduled activities offered by Glencoe United Methodist Church will also have on file in the church office:
 - 3.6.1.1 Medical Release Form
 - 3.6.1.2 Permission form for transportation
 - 3.6.1.3 Photo Release for publicity and church media and use
- 3.6.3 For activities that require leaving the church campus, every ministry involving children and youth will have on file a roster of those participating, along with the volunteers who accompany the group. This will also include at least one emergency contact name and phone number per volunteer, as well as any known allergies for volunteers who are in attendance.

IV. TRAVEL

- 4.1 Male and female leadership will be present for all trips beyond the church campus in which male and female youth are involved.
- 4.2 All transportation needs for travel will follow the guidelines as set forth in the transportation ministries policy and procedures.
- 4.3 Sleeping quarters will be gender segregated.
 - 4.3.1 If the group accommodations are in a hotel, where there are only 2 beds that sleep 4, then children/youth will be assigned to a room and adults will be assigned to a separate room.
 - 4.3.2 If the room sleeps 6 or more, then 2 unrelated adults of the same gender will be assigned to a room with at least 4 children/youth of the same gender.
 - 4.3.3 If the accommodations are dormitory-style which may sleep 8 or more, adults and children/youth will share the same room with at least 2 volunteers over the age of 18 years of the same gender present.

- 4.3.4 In a tent camping situation, adults of the same gender will sleep in separate tents from children/youth.

V. EDUCATION

- 5.1 Glencoe United Methodist Church will educate our congregation in any of the following ways regarding our Safe Sanctuaries policies and guidelines:
- Brochures
 - Church website
 - Informational materials for volunteers
 - Annual training for volunteers
 - Annual parent information sessions

VI. REPORTING

- 6.1 In the event of an accident/incident/injury, the teacher or leader is to complete an accident/ incident form (copy to be attached).
- 6.1.1 A copy of this completed form will be provided to the parent/ guardian.
- 6.1.2 The original completed form will be turned into the church office.
- 6.2 North Carolina statutes require that all persons who have strong suspicions of abuse or neglect regarding a child, disabled person or vulnerable adult report these suspicions to the local Department of Social Services: for Rockingham County, at (336) 342-3537 or After Hours at (336) 342-8100. Such reports will be made as soon as possible.
- 6.3 A report will be made to Law Enforcement via 911 in all cases where persons abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult. Such reports will be made as soon as possible.
- 6.4 Any person suspecting abuse of a child or vulnerable adult is to fill out an accident/incident report form and return it to the church office or supervising staff person.

VII. RESPONDING WITH COMPASSION AND CARE

- 7.1 A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child/vulnerable adult abuse will be initiated.

- 7.2. All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and the church will conduct an initial assessment of all allegations to make an informed decision on how to proceed once an allegation occurs.
- 7.3 The Senior Pastor of Glencoe United Methodist Church will designate both a staff and a lay representative to speak and offer statements on behalf of the church. Only the designated spokesperson(s) shall speak on behalf of the church.
- 7.4 Pastoral support will be available to all persons involved in this incident.
- 7.5 In accordance with the North Carolina Statute (#14-208.18) commonly known as “Jessica's Law”, we recognize our inability to welcome onto the premises of our church property for purposes of worship, participation in the life of the faith community, or pastoral care of any person currently registered as a convicted sexual offender. This does not preclude, however, pastoral care that may be offered on behalf of the church in locations deemed appropriate and acceptable within the bounds of the law.

(We have set the date of March 1, 2024 to reach complete compliance with the above policies).

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Safe Sanctuaries Volunteer Application Form
- B. Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check
- C. Volunteer Applicant's Statement
- D. Accident/Incident Information Form
- E. Photo Release Form (for use by individuals not a part of Sunday School, Children's Programs for which a form is regularly used, or Youth Ministry)
- F. Youth Ministry Medical Release/Permission Form
- G. Children's Ministry Medical Release/Permission Form