

Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Camp Hill United Methodist Church — September 2017

As a local congregation CHUM shares in the mission of the United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. In pursuing this mission we are responsible to create a safe, loving, and nurturing environment where people at every life stage are encouraged to experience Jesus Christ and grow in their faith. To this end, we commit ourselves to provide a safe sanctuary—a place where vulnerable people will not be physically, emotionally or sexually abused while in our care. Particular groups of vulnerable people within CHUM's ministry include—

- Children from birth through grade 5. CHUM Children's vision is to grow children's hearts for God, and many serve as gardeners in this spiritual growth process!
- Youth who are students in grades 6–12. CHUM Youth's vision is to make disciples who are rooted in Jesus, relating with each other and reaching into the world!
- Adults who are homebound. "Shepherds" are recruited to minister to those who can no longer attend CHUM, with visits, transportation and other services, if needed, to keep them connected.
- Other adults who for any reason (age, health, living situation, or developmental issues etc.) are susceptible to mistreatment or abuse of any kind while participating in church-sponsored activities.

We adopt the following as a minimum standard for our ministry to vulnerable people:

- Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of all who work with them.
- Implement safety procedures and guidelines for all who work with vulnerable people in ministry programs and events both to protect participants and to guard our professional and volunteer staff from being suspected or accused of wrongful behavior.
- Educate all of our employees and volunteers who work with vulnerable people regarding Safe Sanctuaries policies and safety measures. This will include awareness and training in identifying and reporting various forms of child or elder abuse.
- Implement safety procedures and guidelines for church use of computers and related media.
- Have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of applicable state law.
- Prepare and respond appropriately if an incident occurs, including ministering to the needs of victim, the church body, and the accused perpetrator.
- Be good stewards not only of those entrusted to our care, but also of our church's assets by protecting our church against lawsuits.

Providing a safe sanctuary to vulnerable people at CHUM will be accomplished as follows:

1. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of all who work with vulnerable people.
 - a. **Background Certifications:** All persons whom CHUM hires or who volunteer to work with vulnerable people must obtain background certifications prior to the commencement of employment or volunteer service. The background certifications shall meet or exceed the standards established in the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (CPSL).
 - i. **Paid Employees** must obtain
 1. Pa State Police Criminal History Report;
 2. Pa Department of Human Services Certification; and
 3. FBI Criminal History Report (fingerprints required)
 - ii. **Volunteers** working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults must obtain
 1. Pa State Police Criminal History Report;
 2. Pa Department of Human Services Certification; and
 3. FBI Criminal History Report (fingerprints required) but Volunteers may be excused from this Report if (i) they have been a Pennsylvania resident continuously for the previous 10 years, have not committed certain designated crimes and sign a notarized Affidavit to this effect or (ii) they have received this Report since December 2014 at any time since establishing residency in Pennsylvania and provide a copy thereof to the person responsible for the selection of volunteers. As with all other clearances, such Reports expire every five years.
 4. In addition, volunteers will complete an application which shall include references and sign a covenant that states they understand, agree with and will abide by all Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures.
 - iii. Background checks and clearances for all employees and volunteers will be updated every five years.
 - iv. In cases where a certification reports a record, the child advocate, ministry supervisor, and the supervising pastor will determine the candidate's eligibility for a volunteer position. Individuals who have been convicted of child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, or ritual) or whose name appears on Megan's List, may not work in any church-sponsored activity or program for preschoolers, children, youth or vulnerable adults. Records listed in the addendum 'Convictions That Keep People from Working with Vulnerable Persons' will preclude candidates from volunteering with groups of vulnerable people as previously defined in this policy. Other records will be handled on a case-by-case scenario.
 - b. Persons who are assigned to work with vulnerable people are encouraged to be members or to have regularly attended CHUM for at least six months.
 - c. The **Two Adult Rule** states that a minimum of two unrelated adults must be present in any room where children or youth are under our care. Where such staffing is impossible, a second adult will serve as a 'roamer'. The roamer will move from room to room at random intervals and must have visual and physical access to all areas—an open door or prominent window through which an entire room can be easily viewed. This rule applies both at CHUM and for off-site group events such as camps and retreats.
 - i. For purposes of this policy an adult is defined as a person 18 years of age or older who is also at least five years older than the oldest child or youth in their care.
 - ii. Youth and young adults who do not meet this adult requirement are not to be excluded from ministry due to age. As long as the two adult rule is satisfied, they are encouraged to participate according to their gifts and maturity.
 - iii. This **Two-Adult rule** is encouraged for any ministry setting with senior and vulnerable adults.

- d. Parents are always welcome with children and youth in classrooms and at activities but may never be left alone with any child other than their own.
 - e. Adults who serve children will be identified by a t-shirt and ID that will be worn at all times when they are serving at CHUM. Children will be educated that those adults are “safe adults” who are always there to help them.
2. We will implement safety procedures and guidelines for all who work with vulnerable people in ministry programs and events both to protect participants and to guard our professional and volunteer staff from being suspect or accused of wrongful behavior.
- a. Open-door counseling will always be practiced with children and youth.
 - For youth counseling that takes place off-campus, we allow adults to meet one-on-one with youth only in a public place, such as restaurant, store or coffeehouse.
 - Open-door visiting will be practiced with senior & vulnerable adults when visiting in public healthcare facilities. Volunteers will be encouraged to take a spouse or other church member with them when visiting in a setting where the homebound person lives alone.
 - b. At CHUM all rooms where children and youth are present for classes, small groups, childcare, or special events will have a window in the door. Every effort has been made to design the educational wing of the church in a way that maximizes safety.
 - c. Children who have been signed into an activity must be accompanied at all times while in the building—even to use the drinking fountain, restroom, and/or when traveling between activities.
 - We allow youth to temporarily leave a class or event to go to the bathroom, get a drink or other health objective, without a youth worker chaperone. If the student does not return within a reasonable amount of time, then a youth worker of the same sex will look into the matter.
 - d. Parents are expected to accompany children to events and sign them in as well as out upon picking them up afterwards. Children will not be dismissed to anyone other than the parent or adult who signed them in.
 - e. Youth leaders are available to help pick up or drop off students for ministry-related programs and events when the leader—
 - i. Makes sure parents are informed at pick-up & drop-off times, via direct conversation or phone call from responsible adult or student.
 - ii. has a copy of his/her driver's license, registration and insurance card on file
 - iii. has a driving record that is clear of major points, offenses and accidents
 - iv. agrees to follow all laws and regulations, including requiring students to wear seat belts
3. We will educate all of our workers with vulnerable people regarding Safe Sanctuaries policies and safety measures. This will include awareness and training in identifying and reporting various forms of child or elder abuse.
- a. Persons who work with vulnerable people will be made aware of
 - i. the signs of child or elder abuse and inappropriate relationship
 - ii. the proper procedures to report any suspected abuse
 - iii. their legal responsibility to report any suspected abuse.
 - b. An emergency plan for evacuating the building is in place. Every adult who works with children and youth will be made aware of and familiar with the plan. CHUM support and facilities staff will see that first aid kits are available in every classroom.
 - c. Guidelines for discipline in CHUM Children’s ministry will be discussed and presented in written form to the teaching team.
4. We will implement safety procedures and guidelines for church use of computers and related media. While we recognize that Wi-Fi access, the Internet and always evolving forms of social

media present additional opportunities for abuse of vulnerable people, CHUM can observe only limited safeguards.

- a. CHUM computers will be kept in locked areas and be password protected.
 - b. CHUM Wi-Fi access will be limited and controlled.
 - c. Photographs of CHUM children and youth will be used online sparingly, without any personal names or identification, and only with prior parental permission.
 - d. Staff communication with CHUM children and youth by email, cell phone, text messaging, or any type of social media will be initiated only with prior parental permission. Staff may respond without prior permission, however, to such communications initiated by children and youth.
 - e. Staff and volunteers are not to communicate using Snapchat or other forms of social media that fail to offer a reviewable record with children, youth, or other vulnerable people.
 - f. Staff "broadcast" emails to multiple people should use the Bcc (blind carbon copy) option so that recipients do not see others' addresses.
5. We will take seriously all allegations of misconduct. CHUM has a clearly defined procedure in place for reporting suspected abuse that conforms to the requirements of the state law. Under the CPSL there are multiple separate categories of individuals who are mandated reporters, including all Clergy and all employees and volunteers who, as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accept responsibility for a child or have direct contact with children. In addition everyone is a permissive reporter.
- a. A mandated reporter must make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances.
 - i. The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
 - ii. The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
 - iii. A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
 - iv. An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.
6. Once an allegation has been made the following will happen.
- a. In cases of children or youth, we will notify the proper law enforcement or child protective agencies by calling ChildLine **immediately** as required by Pennsylvania State law, or submitting a written electronic report through the Child Welfare portal. The ChildLine number is 1-800-932-0313. In cases of vulnerable adults, the appropriate reporting agency will be notified. If possible, the reporter should make the call with the appropriate ministry leader or pastor as listed below, as long as it does not slow the reporting process.
 - b. The appropriate ministry leader—Director of Children's Ministry; Director of Youth Ministry; Minister of the Homebound—**and** a Pastor will be notified. This should be the Senior Pastor whenever possible. If the appropriate ministry leader or pastor is available immediately they should be included at the time of the report.
 - c. The ministry leader or pastor will begin a CHUM Safe Sanctuaries Incident Report form to track actions and to be kept with other Safe Sanctuaries documents as permanent documentation of the church's response.

- d. (If allegations from within CHUM Ministry) the person about whom the allegation has been made will be removed immediately from their ministry position. The necessary steps will be taken to insure the safety of the victim. Children or youth will be immediately removed from an abusive situation.
 - e. In cases of children or youth, the parents of the victim will be notified. If requested by the family, we will help to secure professional help for the victim and family.
 - f. (In allegations from within CHUM ministry) Notify the Harrisburg District Superintendent (717-766-8124), the Susquehanna Conference Communications Director (717-766-7441, x3607), and CHUM's insurance agency (800-627-3732, ext. 227, Account Manager, Engle-Hambright & Davies).
 - g. We will work in cooperation with law enforcement agencies to accurately find out the facts of the incident.
 - h. Refer all media contacts to the Susquehanna Conference spokesperson (717-766-7441, ext. 3607, Communications Director) for comment.
7. We will prepare and respond appropriately by ministering to the needs of the victim, the church body, and perpetrator.
- a. Treat the accused with dignity but remove him/her immediately from further contact with vulnerable people.
 - b. Respond to spiritual needs of both the victim and accused.
 - c. Retain a neutral position while the proper law enforcement agencies gather facts and try to decide what happened.
 - d. Keep confidential all information surrounding the suspicions of abuse and the circumstances leading to the report.
 - e. At the appropriate time make a brief but honest statement to the congregation without giving unnecessary details, placing blame, violating privacy or confidentiality.

ADDENDUM I

CONVICTIONS THAT KEEP PERSONS FROM EMPLOYMENT/MINISTRY WITH VULNERABLE PERSONS

All CHUM employees and volunteers who work with vulnerable persons will be precluded from engaging or continuing said work with vulnerable persons if they have been convicted of an offense under one or more of the following provisions of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state (includes attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit):

Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide);
Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault);
Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking);
Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping);
Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint);
Section 2910 (relating to luring a child into a motor vehicle or structure);
Section 3121 (relating to rape);
Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault);
Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse);
Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault);
Section 3124.2 (relating to institutional sexual assault);
Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault);
Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault);
Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure);
Section 3129 (relating to sexual intercourse with animal);
Section 4302 (relating to incest);
Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child);
Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children);
Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children);
A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses), section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances);
Section 6301(a)(1)(relating to corruption of minors);
Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children);
Section 6318 (relating to unlawful contact with minor);
Section 6319 (relating to solicitation of minors to traffic drugs);
Section 6320 (relating to sexual exploitation of children); and
A felony offense under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act.