

**Glossbrenner United Methodist Church**  
**Safe Sanctuaries**  
**Implementation Procedures**  
September 11, 2019

The GUMC Safe Sanctuaries Implementation Procedures should be used in tandem with the GUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy. These Procedures do not represent the entire Policy; they offer guidance on executing the intent of the Policy.

**Role of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee**

Broadly speaking, the role of the Glossbrenner UMC Safe Sanctuaries Committee (SS Committee) is to:

- **Research** current EPA Conference Safe Sanctuaries Policy and resources, Glossbrenner parental opinions and ministry programs, and other EPA Conference local church practices.
- **Recommend** a Glossbrenner UMC Safe Sanctuaries Policy and companion Implementation Procedures to the church's pastor, director of children and youth ministries, SPRC, and Administrative Board.
- **Equip** Glossbrenner employees and volunteers, through selection and training processes, to provide a safe and legally compliant environment for children and youth in any church-sponsored ministry program.
- **Advise** pastor, director of children and youth ministries, and ministry program leaders on Policy when a potential non-compliance situation is brought to the SS Committee's attention, to be accompanied by ideas on possible ways to satisfy the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and/or minimize the risk of non-compliance. The SS Committee holds no power to approve or disapprove ministry programs.
- **Safeguard** all confidential Safe Sanctuaries records, which shall be kept in a secure location with access restricted on a need to know basis. All files shall be maintained for three (3) years after the worker's service ends.

Specifically, the SS Committee will develop and update, as needed, the local church version of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and the Implementation Procedures that will:

- **Outline a screening process**, a training process, and supervision requirements for Glossbrenner volunteers and employees.
- **Train employees and volunteers about their roles** and responsibilities, and the accountability chain in each process, including identifying who is responsible for addressing Policy problems.
- **Describe supervision requirements** for employees and volunteers, with guidelines for the congregation as well.

The SS Committee members will practice healthy communication in the way they:

- Turn first to the pastor, as the administrative executive of the church, for guidance on SS Committee matters.

- Recognize that the SS Committee is accountable to both the pastor and the SPRC. The pastor and director of children and youth ministries will serve as the first line of review of SS Committee recommendations, then SPRC, who in turn will present any recommendations to the Administrative Board.
- Respond to parishioners who contact the SS Committee with concerns about a program leader's implementation of the SS Policy. SS Committee members first will share the guidelines of the Glossbrenner UMC Conflict Resolution Policy and advise the concerned persons to speak directly with whom they disagree or have an issue. The Conflict Resolution Policy outlines the steps to take to reach an acceptable resolution.
- Publicly uphold Policy and SS Committee decisions, even when their individual opinions differ from the group's agreed course of action.

### **Safe Sanctuaries Committee Make-up**

The Committee shall comprise a designated SPRC member as the Chair, with at least three other approved adults, and the pastor for oversight guidance. All members of the Committee shall be approved adults, having current background checks and completed Safe Sanctuary training.

### **Definitions:**

**"Child"** – any person who has not reached his/her eighteenth birthday. For purposes of this policy, youth and developmentally challenged persons shall be considered equally vulnerable as children, and therefore should receive equal protection under this policy.

**"Child Abuse"** – As defined by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee shall ensure that current definitions of child abuse are available on the conference website.

**"Direct contact with children"** – The care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.

**"Mandated Reporters"** - The following adults are required to make a report of suspected child abuse, if the person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse:

- A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization
- An individual paid or unpaid, who, based on the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child
- An individual supervised or managed by a person listed above

**"Person responsible for the child's welfare"** – a person who provides permanent or temporary care, supervision, mental health diagnosis or treatment, training or control of a child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control. The term includes any such person who has direct or regular contact with a child through any program, activity or service sponsored by a school, for-profit organization or religious or other not-for-profit organization.

## Recordkeeping

1. The following records should be stored together in a designated locked cabinet in the church office:

- a) Applications, and associated reference checks, for employment or volunteer service, must be kept for **three years after application** - regardless of application acceptance.
- b) Employee and volunteer worker applications and background checks must be kept for **three years after the worker's service ends**.
- c) Written records that document any physical intervention that may have been necessary to protect a child from harming self or others. This intervention does not always constitute discipline and/or discipline may be necessary. Such incidents shall be reported to the pastor and the parents/guardians and shall be documented in writing by the person or teacher involved.

2. The church representative reviewing, and then copying, original background check documents will be a designated SPRC member, or the pastor, or the director of children and youth ministry.

3. Only those who may evaluate clearance information jointly, i.e. the designated member of SPRC, the pastor, or the director of children and youth ministry, shall have access to background checks.

## Training for Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Implementation Procedures

All persons who have direct contact with children shall participate in orientation training and then an annual review. The initial training shall occur prior to the adult having direct supervision of children. The annual review shall include a review of the Safe Sanctuaries policies, procedures for supervision, and current information on how to identify and report child abuse.

Complete Orientation:

- **Required for all new paid and volunteer workers**
- Recommended for existing paid and volunteer workers
- Safe Sanctuaries Committee either will provide the training or communicate where workers may attend training. Training will include the following:
  - a) The need for Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures
  - b) Supervision requirements
  - c) Appropriate discipline practices
  - d) Recognizing signs of child abuse
  - e) The role and responsibilities of the mandated reporter
  - f) Reporting procedures
  - g) PA state law definitions of child/youth abuse, and legal reporting requirements
  - h) Signing a covenant to uphold the church's policies and procedures

## Annual Review:

- **Required, as a minimum, for all existing paid and volunteer workers**
- Safe Sanctuaries Committee will provide a self-paced review, with questions to complete, of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Implementation Procedures.
- Required to sign a covenant to uphold the church's policies and procedures

## Additional Protection for Children/Youth

### 1. Supervision

- a) An alternative to the two-adult rule may be, in unavoidable cases to use a "roamer." The roamer shall be an approved adult worker. The roamer accepts responsibility to check on assigned ministries and activities, providing as-needed support to ensure Safe Sanctuaries.
- b) Two related adults should understand that by serving together they accept a potential legal risk should either be accused of abuse or neglect, because they might not be permitted to testify on each other's behalf.
- c) Special attention will be given to those situations when mixed choirs (adult and children), collaborate on musical presentations. Not all adults will know who are approved adult workers, and so the possibility exists that children may be left in the care of unapproved adults by accident. To reduce potential confusion, adults and children shall always remain separated in standing, walking, and sitting for rehearsals and presentations.
- d) No physical discipline shall be administered at any time. Physical intervention to protect a child from harming self or others does not constitute discipline and may be necessary. Such incidents shall be reported to the pastor and the parents/guardians, shall be documented in writing, and kept on file with clearance check information in the church office.
- e) Bathroom Policy
  - 1) Only approved adults will give bathroom assistance to minors.
  - 2) Children should be taken to the bathroom in groups of two or more children whenever possible.
  - 3) The stall/shower curtain/dressing stall/bathroom door shall remain propped open if the child needs assistance.
  - 4) Nursery
  - 5) Only approved adults shall change diapers
  - 6) Anyone assisting a child in the bathroom shall keep the door partially open. If child is independent, he/she may close the door.
- f) In the absence of an off-site program's guidelines on the following topics, the church will adhere to the following:
  - 1) Off-site activities for minors will require written consent from a parent or guardian, specifying approval to transport the minor in a vehicle. The consent form shall include the name of the minor, the date and time of the events, the purpose, and a brief description of the activities planned.

2) Any vehicles transporting minors shall strive to adhere to the off-site “2-to-1” rule at all times. If, after actively seeking enough approved adults, there is only one adult available for some vehicles, the off-site program may proceed if all cars stay together and no one car is out of sight of the other cars in the caravan. All persons will wear seatbelts and all driving laws will be strictly observed. The driver, with valid license, must be at least 25 years of age. All vehicles must be safety-inspected and have current inspection approval and registration requirements, and properly functioning equipment.

3) All overnight chaperones must be approved adults who have met the training and clearance check requirements. If the overnight activity includes minors of both genders, there shall be at least two approved adults of each gender. It is often recommended that youth sleep in one room, while adults sleep in another room when possible. But under such arrangements, special care must be made to make sure the adults arrange among themselves to check on the youth on a random schedule during the night. Note: If the overnight activity occurs at an EPA Conference camp, the camp policy applies.

4) Exercise special care when children and youth are around playground equipment, including proper adult supervision. Complete strangers can take advantage of unsupervised children at playgrounds.

## 2. Social media

- a) For children and youth birth through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, no staff or volunteers will directly contact the child by phone, text, Facebook or internet communication.
- b) For youth members in grades 9-12, staff and volunteers will proactively request parental permission for phone, text, Facebook or internet communication with the child. This permission will be requested annually.
- c) Any communication should never be sexually suggestive or explicit or otherwise inappropriate to the age of the child or youth or the practice of ministry.
- d) Group emails must use the “Bcc” option (blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.
- e) Any staff member/volunteer receiving inappropriate /questionable communication from a minor (in person or otherwise) shall not respond without consulting with the director of children and youth ministry or the pastor to determine a plan of response, which may involve contacting parents and/or Child Line.

## 3. Images of children

- a) Parental permission is required in advance of taking photos of children (other than their own) at church events, or using photos of congregational children during worship, or for promotional purposes of any kind.
- b) Children will sit facing the altar, not the congregation, when they are seated during the Children’s Message.

#### 4. Counseling with youth

- a) The two-adult rule does not prohibit one-on-one mentoring, as long as appropriate supervision and transparency are achieved, including by way of example, reasonable communication with parents (or guardians) and pastor or director of children and youth ministries about when, where, with whom, and why such meetings are taking place, and that such meetings are scheduled during reasonable hours and take place in public or church facilities in accordance with Safe Sanctuaries policy.
- b) The two-adult rule does not prohibit occasional one-on-one pastoral crisis intervention, with reasonable transparency and accountability. Repeated need for crisis intervention may indicate a need for referral for professional counseling or assistance.
- c) At any counseling sessions with youth, the door of the room used should remain open for the entire session. Ideally, the session will be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within easy listening distance.

#### 5. Six-month relationship with church for volunteer workers

- a) Any exceptions to the required six-month active relationship with the church for volunteer workers will be evaluated by the pastor in counsel with the entire SPRC.
- b) A Fellowship Friend for the prospective volunteer worker requesting the exception will be identified by the SPRC. The Fellowship Friend should be someone who has already met all Safe Sanctuary requirements and already working in the area the prospective volunteer expects to be working.
- c) The person bringing the exception must be the pastor, or SPRC member, or director of children and youth ministry.

#### 6. Convicted sex offenders participating in the church

- a) We recognize offenders as persons of sacred worth and welcome them into the church community as long as they can uphold the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults as set out in the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Implementation Procedures.
- b) In accordance with Megan's Law, offenders are required to inform the pastor(s) of their legal status as early as the first visit to a church event or worship.
- c) Any congregation member believing a church guest or member to be a convicted sex offender should inform the pastor(s) immediately. The pastor, accompanied by an appropriate lay leader, will go and talk with the identified person to confirm their legal status and discuss next steps to protect children/youth and the offender.
- d) When a convicted sex offender wants to return to/join the church, the pastor will contact the District Superintendent for the most current EPA Conference guidance on this sensitive situation. At a minimum, the pastor and offender will negotiate a written covenant to include agreements in the following areas:
  - Participation in a professional counseling program as legally required
  - Adult "covenant partners" to accompany the offender while on church property or attending church activities
  - Areas of church facilities that are "off limits"
  - Restrictions on leadership in or on behalf of church

- No role in church gatherings, events or ministries with easy access to verbal or physical contact with children or youth
  - No use of media or any photographic or video equipment of any kind on church property, or during any church events – for any reason
  - Any additional conditions for presence or participation.
- e) The offender, the pastor(s), and appropriate lay leaders will sign the original covenant. The pastor will inform and work with lay leaders of the church, as specified by current guidance by the District Superintendent and Cabinet.
- f) One signed original of the covenant will be given to the offender, and one signed original of the covenant will be kept with other Safe Sanctuaries records in the locked cabinet so designated. One signed copy will be sent to the District Superintendent to be kept at the District Office, to ensure that a member of the EPA Conference Cabinet is aware of the situation.
- g) “Covenant partners” and future lay leaders will sign a companion form to the covenant that verifies their review, understanding, and acceptance of responsibility to uphold the church’s part of the covenant. The companion form to the covenant will be kept with the covenant.

## Safe Sanctuaries Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of Glossbrenner United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, workers, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregations' 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.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, or ritual abuse) should volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
2. All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have had an active relationship with the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment. All requests for exceptions must be evaluated by the entire SPRC.
3. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" when on church property and the "2 to 1 Rule" when off-site, as set forth in the Policy and Implementation Procedures, so that no adult is ever left alone with one child or youth.
4. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the local church and broader EPA Conference to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
5. Adult volunteers, as state-mandated reporters, shall immediately report any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate to the state, as well as to the pastor or director of children and youth ministry.

Please answer the following questions, as a volunteer in this congregation:

1. Do you agree to observe and abide by all state laws, as well as church policies and procedures regarding working in ministries with children and youth? Yes No
2. Do you agree to observe the "Two Adult Rule" when on church property, and the "2 to 1 Rule" when off-site? Yes No
3. Do you agree to abide by the "Six-Month Rule" before beginning a volunteer assignment? Yes No
4. Do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment? Yes No
5. Do you accept your legal responsibility as a "mandated reporter" to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior, and also inform the pastor or director of children and youth ministry? Yes No
6. Do you agree to inform the pastor of this congregation if you are, or have ever been, convicted of child abuse? Yes No

I have read all the statements and policies set forth above, and I agree to observe and abide by them.

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Signature

Date

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Print full name