

Policy & Procedures

*Creating Safe Sanctuaries for
Child, Youth, and Those Who
Work with Them*

What's Policy? What's Procedure?

- It's a Policy when...
a statement contains a
Theology, Philosophy,
or a Set of Values
shared by the
congregation
regarding a particular
issue or problem
- It's a Procedure
when...
a statement contains a
list of activities to be
followed "in the event
that..."; Procedure
answers "If/Then"
type situational
questions

What's Policy? What's Procedure?

A policy without a procedure that implements it, is like a human body without a skeleton; It just doesn't work!

A procedure without a policy that guides it, is like a human body without a nervous system; it just doesn't work!

What's Policy? What's Procedure?

Policy and Procedure go together; one without the other is useless.

One without the other does not fulfill, necessarily, the legal concept of “due diligence.”

Ask Yourself These Questions:

“Would this be reasonable in another child care setting?”

“Could I, or another person, reasonably expect my local grammar, middle, or high school to do these type things to keep my children or grandchildren safe?”

The United Methodist Policy

A local church should:

1. Develop and implement an ongoing education plan for the congregation and its leaders on the reality of child abuse, risk factors leading to child abuse, and strategies for prevention;

The United Methodist Policy

2. Adopt screening procedures (use of application forms, interviews, references checks, background clearance, and so forth) for workers (paid and unpaid) directly and indirectly involved in the care of children and youth;

The United Methodist Policy

3. Develop and implement safety procedures for church activities such as having two or more non-related adults present in classroom or activity; leaving doors open and installing half-doors or windows in doors or halls; providing hall monitors; instituting sign-in and sign-out procedures for children ages ten or younger; and so forth;

The United Methodist Policy

4. Advise children and young persons of an agency or a person outside as well as within the local church whom they can contact for advice and help if they have suffered abuse;

The United Methodist Policy

5. Carry liability insurance that includes sexual abuse coverage;
6. Assist the development of awareness and self-protection skills for children and youth through special curriculum and activities;
7. Be familiar with annual conference and other church policies regarding clergy sexual misconduct.

The United Methodist Policy

taken from

The Book of Resolutions 2004

Page 202

So what do we do in the local church?

- If you haven't already, read *Safe Sanctuaries* by Joy Melton
- If you haven't already, develop a team to develop and implement your local *Safe Sanctuaries* policy
- If you haven't already, get your pastor on-board with the denominational policy and implementing it in the local church

So what do we do in the local church?

- If you HAVE developed a policy and procedures, review the policy and procedures and act to up-date the policy and procedure to reflect best practices.
- If you HAVE developed a policy and procedures, see what part is (or isn't) be used and ask, "What IS working well?"
"What IS NOT working well?"

Best Practices -- Policy

- Policy statements should be short & clear
- Policy statements must be adopted by action of the Church Council or Charge Conference



Best Practices -- Policy

- Policy & Procedures statements should be reviewed yearly with child and youth workers
- Offer yearly opportunities for CPR, AED, and First Aid training



Best Practices -- Procedure



- Two (or more) unrelated adults present in classrooms or at activities
- No (or limited) visibility barriers into classrooms or other spaces where events or activities occur

Best Practices -- Procedure



- No worker or volunteer can work with children or youth unless they have been a member of the congregation for at least six months
- This can include professed, affiliate, and associate members of the congregation. A minimum of six months isn't optional!

Best Practices -- Procedure



- Screen volunteers and paid staff; this is considered “due diligence” by the courts
- Re-screen at a predetermined time frame of no more than three years

Best Practices -- Procedure



- Ask parents & guardians to sign their children in and out; this prevents “Amber Alert” situations
- Procedures should be reviewed by an attorney
- Ask parents to fill-out a registration form listing contact information and who may or may not pick up their children

Best Practices -- Procedure



- Have a hallway monitor or “floater” that can watch for children and “pop-in” to classrooms
- Develop age-specific procedures
- Check the physical maintenance of spaces used at a *child’s eye level*

Best Practices -- Procedure



- Make sure there is a five year difference between the oldest participant and the youngest worker
- Don't set up youth for failure by asking them to provide care or leadership for children without adult supervision

Best Practices -- Procedure

- If transporting children or youth, try to have two adults in the vehicle with the children or youth; this helps the driver concentrate on driving and the other worker keep the peace!



Best Practices -- Procedures

- If having to transport a child or youth home after an event, and you are alone, call their home just as you are ready to leave! This way the parent or guardian will know when you leave and if the travel time is “right.”



Best Practices -- Procedures

- If you're transporting children or youth to multiple locations, call each parent or guardian, explain the situation and the order in which you will be dropping off each child or youth.



It's important...

Safe Sanctuaries is not intended to be a burden for the local church. It is a tool for the local church to fulfill its holy promise to care for children, youth, and those charged with leading these important ministries in a manner that ensures the safety and integrity of the child, youth, worker, staff member, and the congregation!