

**SAFE SANCTUARY GUIDELINES FOR  
MONROEVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Monroeville United Methodist Church strives to be a holy place of sanctuary for the children of God. Our church provides a place where people of all ages can come together for worship, study, fellowship and service with the assurance that they are safe and secure in the community of faith.**

- 1. Screening of Workers:** Any member of the church staff whether an employee or volunteer or clergy or laity who will be involved in working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults must submit to a criminal background check and receive a child abuse clearance. These clearances are maintained in the church office by the Director of Christian Education and the Safe Sanctuaries Chairperson. A list of persons at MUM with Safe Sanctuary clearances is updated regularly by the chairperson. New employees are required to submit to the FBI background clearance requiring fingerprinting. Staff members' clearances will be paid for from the Safe Sanctuary budget and volunteers who do not wish to pay or are not able to pay for these clearances will also be paid from the Safe Sanctuary budget.
- 2. The "Two-Adult Rule"** requires no fewer than two adults present at all times during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and youth. Risk will be reduced even more if the two adults are not related. There must be at least two adults in every classroom and in every church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and youth.
- 3. The "Five-Years-Older Rule"** Volunteers and employees must be at least five years older than the children and youth entrusted into their care.
- 4. No Workers as Leaders or Sole Workers under the Age of Eighteen.** Volunteer workers under the age of eighteen can be very helpful when placed as assistants in the classrooms or outdoors for recreation. However, teenagers should not be assigned as the leaders or sole workers. At least two adults should be present and an adult should always be assigned as the leader and teenagers assigned as helpers.
- 5. Windows in All Classroom Doors** Each room set aside for children and youth should have a door with a window in it or a half door.
- 6. Advance Notice to Parents** A basic rule for ministry with children and youth is to always give the parents advance notice and full information regarding the event(s) in which their children and youth will be participating.

7. **“Six-Months Rule”** All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been members of the congregation or must have been attending regularly for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
8. **Dismissal Policies** Each of the ministries involving children has a dismissal policy to ensure the safety of the children. In Sunday School the children in classes from two year olds through second graders will only be dismissed into the care of their parents or guardians at the conclusion of Sunday School class time. Parents and guardians may make special arrangements with the Sunday School teacher if another person will be picking up the child. Teachers will remain in the classroom until all children are dismissed. The Dismissal Policy for each other church-sponsored program, event or ministry is to be appropriate to the event and the children/youth who are involved and is to be in keeping with Safe Sanctuaries, and is to be communicated to parents in advance of the event.
9. **Sexual Offender is welcome to attend church, but.....**An accused or convicted sexual offender may want to attend church and/or to take part in church activities and programming. Offenders should be welcome in church but must always be under the close supervision of a trained Shepherd, must not be permitted to be in any area of the church that is generally used for classes and activities for children and youth, and must not be in close contact or conversation with children and youth. The offender and the church should enter into a “Second Chance Boundary Covenant”, a document which clearly sets forth the guidelines under which the offender may attend church and any church activity/program (whether on the church property or at any third party site where an activity/program is taking place). The Covenant should also set forth the responsibilities of the church and the offender, and the document should be signed by the offender, Pastor, Chair of the Church Council (Board), and the Safe Sanctuaries Chair.

**SAFE SANCTUARIES: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth written by Joy Thornburg Melton, 2008, published by Discipleship Resources is the resource used in writing the Safe Sanctuary Guidelines for the Monroeville United Methodist Church.**