

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in April 1996 and the Biblical teaching, traditions, and beliefs of the United Methodist Church, we the people of Cashiers United Methodist Church adopt the following policy and procedures so as to provide a *Safe Sanctuary* for children and youth. *Safe Sanctuary* describes a church with ministry in place to provide adults, youth, and children a safe place to be formed in the Christian faith within the church and for any event that is connected with the ministries and operations of this church.

STATEMENT OF COVENANT AND POLICY

As a Christian community of faith, Cashiers United Methodist Church pledges to conduct the ministry of the Gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children, youth, and adults as well as all workers and volunteers. We as a congregation pledge our utmost to protect all who enter our doors by adopting the following procedures as defined by the general statutes of North Carolina in Chapters 7, 7A, 7B and 14 of the North Carolina Criminal Law and Procedure. Nothing in this policy or procedure is designed to hinder or prevent the investigation of suspected, reported or confirmed violations of any North Carolina Criminal laws.

PROCEDURES

While the following are the basic procedures to ensure a safe physical and emotional environment, there is a need for common sense procedures in dealing with hazardous conditions.

1. All teachers and those who supervise directly or indirectly children/youth must be at least 18 years of age.
2. All teachers supervising children/youth must have a complete criminal background check from local, and when appropriate, state and national law enforcement agencies. These may be provided by law-enforcement agencies, if available, or by the use of an approved investigation agency.
3. All classrooms or areas being used by children/youth must have an open door to allow for outside monitoring. In addition, one person may be designated as a "roamer" and should make unscheduled visits to check on all classrooms or areas.
4. When possible, a minimum of two persons should be present for any church sponsored program or event involving children/youth. If the rule of two is not possible, the door of the classroom must remain open or have a glass panel. In no instance should the two teacher/supervisors be from the same family.

5. All paid or volunteer teaching/supervising staff working with children/youth must be trained in the safe sanctuary policy and procedures prior to teaching or supervising. Thereafter, all teachers/supervisors should be retrained yearly. Training may be provided by the individual church, district or conference training programs.

6. Any teaching or educational experience that requires travel from the church or overnight travel must have the approval of the pastor and the written permission of the parent or guardian of the children/youth. The rule of two must be followed with no exceptions.

7. It is encouraged that more than one child be taken to the restroom at the same time if they need assistance. The door of the restroom should be kept open or ajar with as much privacy as possible being provided for the child/youth.

8. Children/youth must be supervised at all times by a responsible person (at least 18 years of age and five (5) years older than those being supervised) to lessen the likelihood of any situation that could result in injury, abuse, or neglect.

9. Any suspected or reported case of neglect or abuse should be reported immediately to the Pastor. In the event that the Pastor is implicated, the District Superintendent must be notified by the Chair of the Administrative Council as soon as possible.

10. In case of any suspected or reported neglect or abuse, an incident report should be filled out with all available details. The District Superintendent should be notified by the next business day when possible. It will then be the decision of the District Superintendent and Pastor, as to the appropriate action to be taken. The District Superintendent shall have the final local authority in the matter. However, in no event shall any of the above fail to report substantiated abuse or neglect to the proper law-enforcement or social service agency as required by North Carolina law.

This Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures was approved by the Administrative Council of Cashiers United Methodist Church on August 15, 2005 and is effective as of December 31, 2005.