

East Longmeadow United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuaries Policy Guidelines

For the Care of Children, Youth, and Adults

1. "Two Adult Rule"

Two adults should be present at all times when working with the youth in any capacity. Husband and wife teams are welcome after these teams have fulfilled all the other necessary criteria. The following steps must be completed by individuals who are involved with the programs at ELUMC:

- Complete and sign the following:
 - Volunteer Information form
 - CORI Request Form (Criminal Offender Record Information Request Form)
 - Participation Covenant Statement
- Attend and participate in the ELUMC for at least 6 months.
- Attend a review of the Safe Sanctuaries Program

"Floater" - A person such as the church school superintendent will oversee and look in on classrooms as church school is in session. This person will move in and out of the classroom or view the room from the window. A 'floater" will constitute the second adult in the event only one adult is available.

The "two adult" rule as it pertains to transporting youth is at the discretion of the driver/youth advisor. Ideally we should strive to always have two adults present when in a vehicle, however, this committee realizes that this is not always practical. A permission slip should be signed by a parent to insure that that parent is aware of the individual transporting their child and they have prior knowledge. A blanket permission slip for local travel would be acceptable. Drivers for church sponsored youth events must be 21yrs. of age or older. (See section on advance notice to parents.)

2. "Five Year Older Rule"

A volunteer or staff member in a paid position must be at least five years older than the youth they are supervising.

3. "No Workers Under the Age of Eighteen"

No person under the age of 18 will be left solely in charge of children in any situation. They would be welcomed to assist another adult.

4. "Windows in All Classrooms"

East Longmeadow Methodist Church does have windows in all classrooms and the classroom doors. This helps to make the rooms accessible to viewing at all times.

5. "Open Door Counseling"

Doors should be kept open at all times during one-to-one counseling or while advising any youth in the church. This practice is already being adhered to at ELUMC.

6. "Confidentiality"

It is essential to maintain confidentiality with children and/or youth except when it is revealed that somebody has been, is, or would be subject to harm of any kind. Such information must be passed on to those who can help. Children, youth and adults need to be reminded that such will be the case.

7. "Advance Notice to UMYF Parents"

Transportation permission slips and medical release forms will be sent home at the beginning of the program year, giving youth advisors and volunteers permission to transport children locally. A long distance or overnight event should have a separate permission/medical slip that is returned to the youth advisor before a child is allowed to participate in that event. "Blanket" permission slips should be kept on file throughout the year and updated as needed. Adults and youth group members aged 18 or over are not required to have permission slips, but are encouraged to have a medical release form on file.

8. "Parent and Family Education"

It is our intention to provide on-going educational events inviting parishioners to learn the facts about child abuse prevention and about our church's policies to reduce the risk of abuse at the ELUMC.

9. "Safe Environment"

It is our intention to provide a safe and supervised environment wherever our ministries may take us.

10. "Conference Insurance Policy"

As of 8/01/02, the conference provides the Church, employees, officers and trustees with one million dollars of liability coverage if an incident occurs. This coverage is valid if the accused are found NOT guilty of charges alleged against them.

Our conference policy does not cover other volunteers. It is recommended that volunteers working with children and/or youth in any capacity check for coverage under their individual homeowners policy.

Revised and approved 5/21/07

East Longmeadow United Methodist Church
Supplemental Safe Sanctuaries Policy Guidelines
For Reporting and Responding
To Allegations of Abuse

REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. Those reporting an allegation of abusive or inappropriate behavior to the pastor and/or the chair of the Staff/Parish Relations Team will need to help provide the following information:
 - a. church name and phone number
 - b. date of report
 - c. name, age and address of victim
 - d. name, age and address of perpetrator
 - e. date, time and place of alleged abuse
 - f. nature of alleged abuse
 - g. name and phone number of reporter
 - h. desire to remain anonymous or not
 - i. names of pastor and chair of Staff/Parish Relations Team
2. Those reporting an allegation of abusive or inappropriate behavior may be asked to help carry out the church's response as described below.

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. Of primary concern will be to take steps to ensure the care and safety of the victim.
2. The alleged perpetrator will need to be treated with dignity and respect, while being removed from further involvement with children and/or youth, at least until the results of the investigation into the alleged abuse become known.
3. The pastor will notify the District Superintendent and report to the Department of Social Services Protective Screening Unit, or other appropriate organization, regarding the allegation.
4. The pastor will notify and meet with the custodial parent or parents of the victim as soon as possible.
5. The pastor, or his or her designated representative, will act as the sole spokesperson about the allegation to the District Superintendent, government agencies, the congregation, the media, etc.
6. In the event that the pastor is personally involved in the allegation of abusive or inappropriate behavior, the chair of the Staff/Parish Relations Team will perform the duties of the pastor as described above in # 3, 4 and 5.
7. Written records will be kept of all actions taken by the church in response to the allegation.
8. All involved will strive to maintain a caring balance between confidentiality and the need to know throughout all aspects of an allegation and the church's response.

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