

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY
Calvary United Methodist Church
4700 Locust Lane
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Approval

This updated policy was approved by the Commission on Education on April 8, 2021 and was presented to Church Council on April 22, 2021.

Introduction

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, in April 1996 (reaffirmed in 2004, 2008 & 2012), adopted the resolution, Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes [a] child...welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, "If any one of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that "...children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse."

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse (ritual abuse refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be) occur in churches, both large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation in their churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. (From The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church – 2012. Copyright 2012 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission. [pp. 384-386].

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church.

Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuary Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the overall safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and vulnerable adults. As a congregation we want to protect all the children, youth and vulnerable adults that come to us, to protect both our paid and volunteer staff from false allegations of abuse and to limit the extent of legal liability of Calvary United Methodist Church (Calvary UMC).

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that ensure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as all those who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all those who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries through the Susquehanna Conference Office if an incident occurs.

Statement of Hospitality and Inclusivity

Our faith calls us to offer hospitality and protection to all children and youth as well as to those who are committed to ministry with them as volunteers and employees. True hospitality means that we are to be inclusive of all children and youth. This process is constantly changing and evolving. Currently, there are a few considerations that we have found useful in making decisions around hospitality and LGBTQ+ persons.

1. Make no assumptions about a young person's sexual orientation or identity.
2. Be intentional about creating a safe environment and culture by awareness and training around homophobic language and bullying.
3. In the case of working with young children, do not enforce or reinforce gender stereotypes.
4. Please be kind and accepting should questions regarding transgender or gender non-conforming children or their parents arise. This is a changing and fluid issue that we are approaching with love and grace as a people of God. Should you need help making a decision, err on the side of compassion and please speak to the Senior Pastor or Staff Person if changes need to be made regarding bathroom use and signage or overnight accommodations for a participant. We do not want any child of God to ever feel alienated and contrary speech or behavior will NEVER be tolerated.
5. Bullying of any kind cannot be tolerated, and should be addressed quickly. Please speak to the Senior Pastor or Staff Person to decide the best course of action in these instances.

Definitions

Adult

A person 18 years of age or older.

Age Level Coordinator

An adult age 21 years or older who is responsible for recruiting teachers, helpers and substitutes for Sunday School classes.

Child

Any person under the age of 18.

Child Abuse

As defined under Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (Pa. Law 23 C.S.A. §6303):

1. Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.
2. An act or failure to act by a perpetrator, which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
3. Any recent act, failure to act or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
4. Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning. No child shall be deemed to be physically or mentally abused based on injuries that result solely from environmental factors that are beyond the control of the parent or person responsible for the child's welfare, such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care.

Children's Activities

Any activity or program in which children are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.

Cyber Space & Cyber Safety

While ministries and activities take place in a variety of venues, new forms of communication via the internet and wireless cell-phones and other handheld devices constitute a new space for ministry and activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults, herein called cyber space. Cyber space includes communications via email, instant messaging and cell phone (speaking and texting) and other devices; communicating on social networking sites; web surfing and downloading of materials from the internet; and gaming. Cyber space is a fluid space which changes more and more as communications become more portable and websites change with increasing frequency.

Cyber safety is the part of our Safe Sanctuary policy that seeks to encourage those in ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to update their knowledge of cyber space; provide ground rules for ministries and activities in cyber space; encourage critical thinking among those ministered to for posting, reading and seeing; encourage good sense and safety in cyber space; and, model appropriate cyber space behaviors.

Helper

Anyone ages 14 – 17 who aids in ministry. Helpers are not counted in the 2-adult rule.

Mandatory Reporter

An individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service, accepts responsibility for a child. (PA Act 22 of 2014 – Section 2. (a)(7).

Persons required to report child abuse

Persons, who, in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession, come into contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults. Such persons include, but are not limited to, medical professionals, school administrators, teachers and nurses, social service workers, day care center workers, mental health professionals, peace and law enforcement officers. Under the CPSL there are multiple separate categories of individuals who are mandated reporters, including all Clergy and all employees and volunteers who, as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accept responsibility for a child or have direct contact with children.

Staff person

Any person employed by Calvary United Methodist Church. This person may have regular and direct contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults and must be 21 years of age or older.

Unrelated Adults

Individuals 18 years of age or older who are not residing in the same household.

Volunteer

Any adult who assists in conducting children's activities under the supervision of a staff person and/or age level coordinator, has regular and direct contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults. The volunteer is counted in the 2-adult rule.

Vulnerable Adults

Any person, 18 years and older, who because of mental or physical infirmity or emotional disability or other physical, mental or emotional dysfunction, may be vulnerable to maltreatment. We also mean vulnerable adults to be adults who have been abused either as a child or an adult.

Youth

A child in the age range of 12 to 18 years. A colloquial term used in ministries to junior and senior high school age groups.

Procedures

Note: The following procedures are the necessary precautions for protecting children, youth and vulnerable adults according to our covenant together to do no harm by word or action. Calvary UMC will endeavor to monitor updates and recommendations by the United Methodist Church and may modify these procedures.

1. Recruiting, screening, hiring workers
 - a. Six-month rule – any volunteer, coordinator, roamer or helper who is recruited to work with programs or activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults must demonstrate an active relationship with Calvary UMC for at least six months.
 - b. All employees (paid) need to complete the following background clearance:
 - i. Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Report.
 - ii. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance.
 - iii. Online training using MinistrySafe Training approved by The Susquehanna Conference.
 - iv. FBI Criminal History Report (Fingerprint-based background check).
 - c. All volunteers need to complete the following background clearances:
 - i. Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Report
 - ii. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
 - iii. Online training using MinistrySafe Training approved by The Susquehanna Conference.
 - iv. FBI Criminal History Report (fingerprint-based background check). NOTE: The FBI Criminal History Report is not required for incumbent or prospective volunteers:
 1. who have resided in Pennsylvania continuously for a period of 10 years prior to becoming a volunteer or applying for volunteer status and who sign a Volunteer Affidavit affirming that they have not committed certain crimes that otherwise would prohibit them from being a volunteer responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children; or
 2. who have received such Report at any time since establishing residency in Pennsylvania and provide a copy of the Report to the person responsible for the selection of volunteers.
 - d. Background clearances are valid for 60 months and must be obtained again after every 60-month period.
 - e. A current driver's license, registration, and current automobile insurance is required when transporting children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.
 - f. Use of age and developmentally appropriate language in educating children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding definitions of abuse and procedures for reporting should be considered.

- g. All forms and reference reports shall be kept as a part of an applicant's confidential personnel file which the Calvary UMC Director of Congregational Engagement will maintain in a locked file in the church office. Access will be authorized by the Director of Congregational Engagement or Education. The Director will review and follow-up on all forms prior to service.
 - h. Non-Calvary UMC programs shall maintain their own personnel files. Calvary UMC reserves the right to obtain an explanation of the non-Calvary UMC's record-keeping process and, upon written request by the Senior Pastor, to be given copies of documents applicable to programs conducted at Calvary UMC.
 - i. The staff person in charge of the children's activity(ies) is responsible for reviewing the Safe Sanctuary policy with each applicant prior to service.
 - j. All workers must agree to a Covenant Agreement which states they understand, agree with, and will abide by all Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures.
 - k. All workers must complete an application which shall include references and where they disclose any involvement in Social Media accounts to ensure appropriate use of cyber space.
 - l. In cases where a certification reports a record, the child advocate, ministry supervisor, and the supervising pastor will determine the candidate's eligibility for a volunteer position. Individuals who have been convicted of child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, or ritual) or whose name appears on Megan's List, may not work in any church-sponsored activity or program for preschoolers, children, youth or vulnerable adults. Records listed in the addendum 'Convictions That Keep People from Working with Vulnerable Persons' will preclude candidates from volunteering with groups of vulnerable people as previously defined in this policy. Other records will be handled on a case-by-case scenario.
 - m. An emergency plan for evacuating the building is in place and posted in each room. Every adult who works with children and youth will be made aware of and should be familiar with the plan.
2. Supervision
- a. Two-Adult Rule – requires that no matter the size of the group, there will always be at least two unrelated adults present. This may include the presence of an adult “roamer” who moves in and out of rooms. This applies both at Calvary UMC and for off-site group events such as camps and retreats. This Two-Adult Rule is encouraged for any ministry setting with senior and vulnerable adults.
 - b. Adults who serve children will be identified by an ID that will be worn at all times when they are serving at Calvary UMC. Children will be educated that those adults are “safe adults” who are always there to help them.
 - c. Teenagers in the classroom – no person shall supervise an age group unless they are at least 18 years of age or older and is at least 5 years older than the oldest child or youth being supervised. Teenagers age 14 years or older can be a helper.
 - d. Roamers – to ensure that classes have adequate supervision, a roamer will visit each pre-school, elementary and youth classroom on a Sunday morning throughout the entire year. Using a checklist, all classrooms will be visited. If substitutes are needed, the roamer will become a substitute or they will secure

substitutes from the authorized list of volunteers from the adult Sunday School Department for the classroom(s). The checklists will be kept on file.

- e. Parents are always welcome with children and youth in classrooms and at activities but may never be left alone with any child other than their own.
- f. Doors – each room or space where children, youth or vulnerable adults are being cared for, shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open.
- g. We will implement safety procedures and guidelines for all who work with vulnerable people in ministry programs and events both to protect participants and to guard our professional and volunteer staff from being suspect or accused of wrongful behavior.
 - i. Open-door counseling will always be practiced with children and youth. For youth counseling that takes place off-campus, we allow adults to meet one-on-one with youth only in a public place, such as restaurant, store or coffeehouse.
 - ii. Open-door visiting will be practiced with senior & vulnerable adults when visiting in public healthcare facilities. Volunteers will be encouraged to take a spouse or other church member with them when visiting in a setting where the homebound person lives alone.
- h. Annual training is a requirement for all staff persons, coordinators and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable adults in church activities.
- i. Equipment and environment – any adult volunteer will inspect the equipment and activity space before an event to ensure safety for children, youth and/or adults that will be participating in that activity.
- j. Adult volunteers will ensure that no child will be left unsupervised while attending a Calvary UMC children's activity. Parents are responsible for supervising their other children who are not participating in that activity. When children are in the church or on church grounds but are not involved in a children's activity, they must be under the direct supervision of their parent/guardian.
 - i. Children whose parents/guardians drop them off for activities such as Sunday School, choir or Youth Group must time their drop-off and return so that children are not unsupervised at any time while at the church.
 - ii. Youth who drive themselves to church activities shall arrive just in time for an activity and shall leave immediately following the activity's conclusion.
 - iii. Children in the Nursery up through Fourth Grade will not be released from a class or program until a parent (guardian) has come to retrieve them. If someone other than a parent will be picking up the Child, it is necessary to make prior arrangements with the Volunteer in charge of the event or class.
 - iv. Children in Fifth through Twelfth Grades will be released from a class or program at the designated ending time. A Volunteer or Staff person will be present as long as there are Youth remaining for the class or program.
 - v. If parents/legal guardians refuse to comply with Safe Sanctuaries policies they and their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) will be asked to leave the event.

- k. Accurate participation records shall be maintained for all activities or events involving children, youth or vulnerable adults by the staff person or volunteer supervising the event. At a minimum, these records will list the date and hours of the activity, its location, the names of the participants, and the names of the adults and any helpers on site that day. This should also include whether any were dismissed early and the times of the dismissals.
- l. Staffing/Leader Supervision – the following minimum ratios will be maintained for on-site activities (in addition to the two-adult rule; helpers are not included in computing the ratio):
 - i. Nursery through 2 year olds – 1:4 (1 adult to every 4 children)
 - ii. 3-4 year olds – 1:6 (1 adult to every 6 children)
 - iii. Kindergarten-6th grade – 1:8 (1 adult to every 8 children)
 - iv. 7th-12th grade – 1:10 (1 adult to every 10 youth)
 - v. Special needs – 1:2 (1 adult to every 2 persons)
- m. One of our goals is to provide care for all children in an environment that fosters safety and well-being. There are several reasons for a sick child to be excluded from a Christian Education setting. The first is to prevent the spread of any communicable disease or infection to other children, volunteers, or staff. Another reason is to ensure that the child receives adequate rest and attention. Therefore, it is very important that parents/guardians do not bring any child or youth if:
 - i. They have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. (Children should NOT be sent if they are administered a fever reducing medication prior to attendance as that will mask the symptoms.)
 - ii. They have an unexplained rash.
 - iii. They vomit or have persistent diarrhea (or is not contained to their diaper).
 - iv. They have a contagious disease or condition including but not limited to:
 - 1. Pink eye (conjunctivitis) – until 24 hours after treatment
 - 2. Chicken pox – until all the blisters are scabbed over & new blisters haven't appeared for at least 6 days.
 - 3. Lice or scabies – until 24 hours after treatment is started and the infestation is controlled. (Proof of treatment is required)
 - 4. Strep throat- until 24 hours after antibiotic is started
 - 5. COVID-19 (follow current protocols in the State of Pennsylvania)
 - v. If a family member tests positive for Covid-19 and your child or youth has participated in Christian Education at Calvary within the 10 days prior, please notify us as soon as possible. We are required to follow the guidelines put in place by DHS and DOH, and a family quarantine will be implemented for the required length of time.
 - vi. If your child or youth must stay home due to a contagious disease, please contact the church office so we can alert other parents of children in the class that they may have been exposed. (Strict confidentiality rules are in place so you need not fear the name of your child or youth being revealed as the ill child.)

- vii. If your child begins to exhibit symptoms of any illness or condition noted above, you will be contacted immediately to pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, a person designated by you as an emergency contact will be called.
 - viii. When your child is dropped off for Christian Education, it is assumed that they are able to participate in all activities. If your child is unable to spend brief periods of time outdoors, due to illness, we believe that they are too ill to be at Calvary UMC, since it is impossible for us to leave one child indoors while the rest of the class is outside.
- n. Off-Site and Overnight Events/Activities
- i. The following minimum ratios will be maintained for off-site activities. Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.
 1. Nursery – 4 years old – 1:3 (one adult to every 3 children)
 2. Kindergarten – 6th grade – 1:5 (one adult to every 5 children)
 3. Youth (grades 7-12) - 1:8 (one adult to every eight youth)
 4. Special needs – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons)
 - ii. Advance notice will be given to parents prior to events and will include date, time, location, the means of transportation, and a summary of activities and events. Specific written parental/guardian approval for off-site/overnight events is required. Should details of an event's start/end time change (or other pertinent information), the event's coordinator will contact the designated adult back home to notify parents.
 - iii. Activity Registration, Parental/Guardian Permission, and Signed Emergency Medical Release forms including participant's name, address, birthdate, parent/guardian information, telephone number, emergency contact information, pertinent information about the participant such as medical history (allergies, medications, special instructions, etc.) and insurance information, Safe Sanctuary guidelines and contact information, and the latest version of the Calvary UMC telephone directory. These forms will be maintained, secured, and carried in a designated folder by the staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or activity.
 - iv. Persons coordinating off-site activities will ensure every participant has completed the appropriate forms, and will take copies of these forms along on the event in a folder marked "Emergency Forms" and give copies to the designated adult back home.
 - v. All participants who can understand a covenant shall enter into a signed Participation Covenant/Permission Form. Rules shall be explained to the participants and their parents at the outset of the program.
 - vi. Events attended by youth of both genders must be adequately chaperoned by adults of both genders.
 - vii. It is recommended that event coordinators attempt to secure at least one (1) adult with current certification in First Aid and CPR for each trip or event, and that all adult leadership participating in the trip or event is aware of such person(s). All medications and medication instructions shall

be given to a selected adult prior to the trip for disbursement as appropriate and will be enclosed in its original container (including prescription meds). [Exception: Epi-pens and inhalers may be carried by youth, with the understanding that they will be secured and out of sight unless needed; due to the nature of these medications, adult leaders will be aware that the youth is carrying medication, and will be familiar with how to use an Epi-pen in case of emergency]

- viii. For outdoor programs that occur in non-traditional settings which make supervision challenging, the staff person or volunteer in charge of the activity shall take extra appropriate measures to make sure that the setting and any equipment used is free of obvious safety hazards and suits the activity, and by implementing these measures, will minimize risk of incident or injury to all participants
- ix. Appropriate buddy systems, check-in times, and appropriate male and female supervision need to be established for each ministry or activity. Events where direct adult supervision of youth is not feasible (amusement parks, youth rallies and other large-group public events) will, at the minimum, incorporate a 3-5 person buddy system and check-ins for all participants as part of appropriate adult supervision.
- x. Drivers to and from events must have completed the appropriate forms (see Procedures 1.a,c,e and Cyber Safety page 13 #6). Drivers must be a minimum of 25 years of age or older. If the two-adult rule is not feasible to maintain, drivers will make reasonable effort to not transport less than two (2) participants at a time. Each vehicle should have a first aid kit and one (1) seatbelt per occupant. Drivers will practice safe driving procedures such as ensuring all passengers remain properly secured throughout the trip and obeying all posted speed laws and regulations and refrain from making cell phone calls unless necessary. The event's coordinator should provide any appropriate maps, directions, and emergency contact numbers to each driver, as well as a communication plan for contacting assistance should an emergency arise.
- xi. For overnight youth events:
 - 1. There will be separate sleeping areas for both genders.
 - 2. At least one adult will be present in each sleeping area and will be of the same gender as the youth in that area.
 - 3. Sleeping areas should be prearranged by the staff person or event coordinator prior to the trip.
 - 4. Random and regular rounds may be conducted by two (2) adult leaders throughout the nighttime sleeping hours of all sleeping areas.
 - 5. Separate shower and bathroom facilities are highly encouraged. When separate facilities are not possible, procedures for use of the facility will be conveyed to all event participants by the staff person or event leader.

6. If youth are found to be in violation of the Participation Covenant/Permission Form, the situation will be handled by the staff person or event coordinator as deemed appropriate. Such action may result in the parent(s) of the participant being notified regardless of the time of day/night, and the participant may be required to leave the event.
- xii. Adults must respect the privacy of youth (during such situations as changing, showering, etc.), and should intrude only to the extent that health or safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations as well.
 1. Bathroom needs: When possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs, but should a child require assistance, the outer bathroom door will remain open while a Safe Sanctuary certified volunteer assists the child with an additional volunteer being present. For younger children assistance will be provided. For elementary age assistance should be limited to unfastening and fastening clothing. If more assistance is needed, parental permission should be received in advance. When accompanying a child to take care of their own bathroom needs, the Safe Sanctuary certified volunteer will check the bathroom and stalls prior to the child entering the bathroom. Again, the outer bathroom door should be left open. A non-certified volunteer should never provide assistance with bathroom needs. Youth should take a buddy to the restroom.
 2. If a participant requests to speak privately with an adult, the adult will ensure that they and the individual are visible to others while talking, even though they may not be heard.

Cyber Safety

1. Have parental permission information for children, youth, and vulnerable adults in writing for:
 - a. Photos or videos posted on any websites or included in an e-mail or text message
 - b. It is recommended that children under 24 months of age not be included in photos or videos.
 - c. E-mailing, Instant Messaging (IM'ing), calling, texting or sending data to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by computer, cell phone, or other electronic device.
 - d. The sharing of any full name or contact information.
2. Never transmit easily identifying information online.
 - a. Use "Bcc" options in sending mass e-mails
 - b. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests.
3. Limit individual communication with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
 - a. Conduct any communications in a professional manner
 - b. Save all communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. (An electronic "paper trail" can be important)

- i. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to communicate using Snapchat or other forms of social media that fail to offer a reviewable record with children, youth, or other vulnerable adults.
 - c. If you are uneasy about any topic addressed in an e-mail or an e-mail in general, contact the parent/guardian (if appropriate) or another trusted adult. Honor privacy, not secrecy
 - d. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.
- 4. Use safety measures for sharing photos electronically
 - a. Consider obtaining copyrights for any photo posted directly on a conference ministry website or shared electronically. Keep in mind that copyright laws are not necessarily universal and can get rather complicated
 - b. When posting photos, refrain from using names and never use last names or identifying information
 - c. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure they uphold your mission. Check to make sure nametags are not distinguishable.
 - d. Use low-resolution photos whenever possible and slightly blur/pixelate photos.
 - e. Block “save photo as” options on websites.
 - f. Limit access to photos by employing the use of a password
 - g. Obtain additional permission to use photos elsewhere (i.e. a journal or website, local paper, etc.).
- 5. Social Media sites (Facebook, Blogs etc.) Do not use your personal Social Media presence for ministry. Use a group Social Media site that is monitored by senior leadership, for example a Facebook site for the specific group.
 - a. Include a code of conduct/terms and conditions for the site that expressly states expectations for posts and a clear expression of how violations, offensive and objectionable material will be addressed.
 - b. Monitor the site and remove inappropriate comments, photos, links, etc.
 - c. Restrict who can be a friend.
 - d. Do not post anything that you would not want printed in the newspaper, church newsletter or bulletin.
 - e. Be familiar with, and comply with, Social Media provider policies, restrictions and terms and conditions. For example, according to Facebook’s own terms, children under 13 years of age may not sign up for a Facebook account.
 - f. Encourage children, youths, and vulnerable adults to follow these same guidelines as appropriate. Refrain from sharing passwords to your accounts.
- 6. All employees or volunteer youth workers of Calvary UMC must sign a Texting and Electronic Communications Covenant.

State Reporting Requirements

A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged or actual incident of abuse is necessary and expected to ensure the safety of the victim and any additional potential victims. In all cases of alleged or actual abuse, professional support is obtained by informing the police, ChildLine and Abuse Registry, or other appropriate authorities. The legal parent/guardian of the

victim will be notified unless they have been named as the alleged perpetrator of the abuse (see “Reporting Checklist”).

1. A mandated reporter must make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances.
 - a. The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
 - b. The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
 - c. A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
 - d. An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.
2. How to respond to allegations of abuse while at an event – once a person or child has disclosed alleged abuse, the one to whom the disclosure had been made should reassure the alleged victim of a concern for his or her safety and well-being. The alleged victim (and any other potential victims of the abuse that has allegedly taken place onsite) should be calmly moved to another safe place onsite in view of at least two other non-related adults. Someone safe and familiar should stay with the victim at all times. Appropriate action should be taken to minimize risk for all potential victims. Persons who are the objects of the report, if on-site, will be immediately removed from the ministry setting (both the alleged abuser and the victim to separate locations) until the incident is resolved. This is to protect all persons involved, including the accused. The person to whom the disclosure was made should inform the victim that the alleged abuse will be reported to the appropriate authorities. If the victim is able to assist in making the report, the person to whom the victim disclosed and another unrelated adult should go with the victim to the person onsite who is designated as responsible for making reports, or in absence of that person, proceed to a quiet place where the report can be made by telephone. If the incident involves an alleged perpetrator 18 years or older, the Senior Pastor will assist with contacting local police. (In any removal of a person from any children’s activities, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.)
3. The staff person in charge of the children’s or youth’s activity or the Senior Pastor in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall immediately attempt to obtain information necessary such as the name of the alleged victim and his or her address and family information.
4. In cases of children or youth, we will notify the proper law enforcement or child protective agencies by calling ChildLine **immediately** as required by Pennsylvania State law, or submitting a written electronic report through the Child Welfare portal. The ChildLine number is 1-800-932-0313.

- a. In cases of vulnerable adults or adults with disabilities, the Protective Services Hotline should be called at 1-800-490-8505. If possible, the reporter should make the call with the appropriate ministry leader or pastor as listed below, as long as it does not slow the reporting process.
 - b. The appropriate ministry leader and the Senior Pastor will be notified. This should be the Senior Pastor whenever possible. If the appropriate ministry leader or pastor is available immediately they should be included at the time of the report.
 - c. The ministry leader or pastor will begin a Calvary UMC Safe Sanctuaries Incident Report form to track actions and to be kept with other Safe Sanctuaries documents as permanent documentation of the church's response.
5. Should the victim be in need of immediate medical attention, a call should be made for medical transport by ambulance. If it is appropriate, the parents of any victim under the age of 18 should be notified. It may not be appropriate to contact parents if they are the alleged perpetrators. The Senior Pastor or their designee should handle contacting the parents when appropriate.
 6. The police will be contacted if the incident involves a victim 18 years or older. The Senior Pastor or their designee will be notified and will assist the victim with contact information or supporting services.
 7. Any person who is the object of the report will be required to refrain from all children's activities until the incident report is resolved.
 8. (In allegations from within Calvary UMC ministry) Notify the Harrisburg District Superintendent (717-766-8124) within 24 hours, the Susquehanna Conference Communications Director (Janelle Walker 717-766-7441, ext. 3613 or cell 570-971-9108), and Calvary UMC's insurance agency (1-800-627-3732, ext. 227, Account Manager, Engle Hambright & Davies). In addition, the person about whom the allegation has been made will be removed immediately from their ministry position. The necessary steps will be taken to insure the safety of the victim.
 9. Refer all media contacts to the Susquehanna Conference spokesperson Janelle Walker, office phone 717-766-7441 ext. 3613 or cell phone 570-971-9108 for comment.
 10. The Director of Communications of the Susquehanna Conference or their designee is the only person/s authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements shall be directed to the Director of Communications (Janelle Walker, office phone 717-766-7441 ext. 3613 or cell phone 570-971-9108). Staff persons and volunteers are to be trained in how to handle media requests by referring them to the Director of Communications. If a member of the media – newspaper, TV stations, Radio station, magazine – calls or approaches a staff person in person and asks about the situation, that staff member should get their name and phone number and respectfully tell them that the Director of Communications will get back to them with the answer as soon as possible. The following "hold response" can be used:

"I want to make sure we give you the most accurate and up-to-date information. Our Director of Communications can best help you. If you give me your contact information, deadline and topic you are calling about, I will

have him return your call as soon as possible.” Or, “Here is the phone number/email of our Director of Communications...”

No staff person should answer any questions. The staff person should be polite, but firm. A staff person should never tell a reporter, “No Comment,” as this response raises concern that the incident (alleged or known) is not being dealt with or taken seriously by the church. Nothing is assured to be “off the record” when talking to the media. A staff person should realize that any statement made to the media can be used publicly, even if the reporter says it is “off the record.”

11. Allegations are to be discussed only on a need-to-know basis. The person or persons to whom the allegations were disclosed should immediately contact the Senior Pastor or their designee and should give the details to that person only. Other adults on-site should be alerted to stay with the alleged victim and other potential victims, but they do not need to know the allegations. Once the allegations have been reported to the Senior Pastor or their designee, the person to whom the allegations were made should not discuss the matter with other persons except law enforcement or designated state investigators. Allegations should never be discussed outside the investigation. This can cause irreparable harm to victims, their families and the community. All inquiries or questions shall be referred to the Conference Director of Communications (Janelle Walker 717-766-7441, ext. 3613 or cell 570-971-9108). A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse will be initiated and documented. The Senior Pastor or their designee will prepare a brief and honest statement that can be made to the congregation. Do not give unnecessary details, blame, interfere with victim’s privacy or violate any confidentiality. There is a difference between confidentiality and secrecy. Make sure the statement is cleared with the Conference Director of Communications and the Harrisburg District Superintendent. When the investigation is completed, send another letter to the congregation explaining the results of the investigation and steps taken.

Note: Church-sponsored groups such as Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts are responsible to report any abuse situations to their own organizations. Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts should report to the Executive Director of the New Birth of Freedom Council (717-766-1591) and Girl Scouts should report to the Executive Director of the Girl Scouts in the Heart of PA Council (717-233-1656). The Senior Pastor or their designee should be informed that an event has been reported as occurring on church property.

Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child, youth and vulnerable adult will be “...surrounded by steadfast love,...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal” (Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44).

Updates

Policy written, updated and revised by the Commission on Education.

- This policy was adopted as written on June 11, 2013.
- This policy was updated on February 7, 2017.
- This policy was updated on April 8, 2021.

Addendum

Convictions that Keep People from Working with Vulnerable Persons (page 6, 1.l.)

Supplemental Material

1. Volunteer Affidavit (page 5, 1. c. iv. 1.)
2. Covenant Agreement (page 6, 1. j.)
3. Application (page 6, 1. k.)
4. Participant Covenant for off-site/overnight activity (page 9, 2. n. v.; page 11, 2. n. xi. 6.).
This form can change based on the nature and/or location of the event.
5. Texting and electronic communications Covenant (page 13, 6.)
6. Reporting Checklist (page 13)
7. Safe Sanctuaries Incident Report Form (page 14, 4. c.)

ADDENDUM I

CONVICTIONS THAT KEEP PERSONS FROM EMPLOYMENT/MINISTRY WITH VULNERABLE PERSONS

All Calvary UMC employees and volunteers who work with vulnerable persons will be precluded from engaging or continuing said work with vulnerable persons if they have been convicted of an offense under one or more of the following provisions of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state (includes attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit):

Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide);
Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault)
Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking);
Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping);
Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint);
Section 2910 (relating to luring a child into a motor vehicle or structure);
Section 3121 (relating to rape);
Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault);
Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse);
Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault);
Section 3124.2 (relating to institutional sexual assault);
Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault);
Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault);
Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure);
Section 3129 (relating to sexual intercourse with animal);
Section 4302 (relating to incest);
Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child);
Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children);
Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children);
A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses), section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances);
Section 6301(a)(1)(relating to corruption of minors);
Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children);
Section 6318 (relating to unlawful contact with minor);
Section 6319 (relating to solicitation of minors to traffic drugs);
Section 6320 (relating to sexual exploitation of children); and
A felony offense under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act.