

INTRODUCTION

Calvary United Methodist Church (CUMC) is committed to ensuring that all children and youth involved in church ministries may participate in an environment of safety and security. In that light, we join other local churches to develop and implement policies and procedures to protect the children (birth through the summer following 5th grade) and youth (6th through the summer following 12th grades) in our care. The Administrative Council of CUMC established a committee in 2007 to formulate Calvary's plan of action and this policy was established. This committee is known as the Safe Sanctuaries Committee.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks will be performed on every paid staff member and any volunteer who works with children or youth. In that regard, CUMC will require each paid staff member and any volunteer who works with children or youth to complete the following, hereinafter referred to as "Forms".

- Application for Employment or Application to volunteer
- Background check permission form
- Baltimore-Washington Conference Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire
- Provide three references on attached form.

CUMC will use a reputable company to perform the following checks, hereinafter referred to as "Background Checks".

- National Criminal History Database search, including a check of the sexual offenders registries
- Social Security verification
- County criminal records search.

Any paid staff member or volunteer who may be driving children or youth for a CUMC activity will be required to submit their driver's license number to obtain a Motor Vehicle report.

All youth mission trip volunteers must have Background Checks and Motor Vehicle reports completed before embarking on the trip. A parent or legal guardian must accompany any youth who goes on an adult mission trip.

1

A background check will be conducted every 3 years if the individual serves for consecutive years. If the individual does not serve consecutive years, the background check will be conducted after each "break" in service. Motor Vehicle reports for those driving children or youth will be obtained annually.

All forms must be returned to the CUMC Director of Discipleship (currently Nancy Mills), the CUMC Director of Youth, the Director of Children's and Family Ministry (currently Julie Barkat) or to the CUMC Senior Pastor (currently Pastor Meredith Wilkens-Arnold). Individual checks must be completed prior to becoming involved with our children or youth.

All forms must be completed annually.

Any outside group that is working with children or youth must provide a copy of their policies for child safety prior to using the CUMC facilities. These policies will be reviewed and must meet or exceed the requirements set in place by CUMC. If they do not, the group must provide proof of background checks that do comply with CUMC policy. Volunteers with outside groups also must complete the Baltimore-Washington Conference Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire.

COMPLIANCE

An applicant will be rejected if information shows that he or she was convicted of child pornography, child abuse, child molestation, incest, any violent sex crime against a child, youth or adult, or any crime against a child or youth. If information indicates that charges were filed against an applicant but there was no conviction, the Safe Sanctuaries Committee shall investigate how and if the issue was resolved. When the maximum amount of information has been gathered, the Safe Sanctuaries Committee will decide if the applicant poses a risk to our children and youth.

If other questionable results appear in the Background Check, through the yearly application process, or through other sources, the applicant's information will come before the Safe Sanctuaries Committee to make a determination as to the appropriate course of action.

If violations appear on the Motor Vehicle report, the applicant's information will come before the Safe Sanctuaries Committee to make a determination whether that person will be allowed to drive children or youth for a Calvary activity.

2

RULES

The rules below shall be adhered to by all paid staff and volunteers and any outside groups using CUMC property.

Counseling sessions or music lessons with children or youth will be conducted with the door open unless there are windows in the door. The door must remain unlocked. Windows internal to classrooms may never be covered. There should be at least two adults approved by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee in any room where there are children or youth. If only one adult is present, the door shall remain open. One child/youth and one adult should not be left alone in any building or on any grounds. Youth shall always be in groups of three or more when no adult is present and when appropriate, the door shall remain open. Children should never be left unaccompanied.

For overnight activities (on-site or off-site):
o There shall be a one to five ratio, gender-specific, of adults to children/youth
o Three or more children/youth should be assigned to a room
o There shall never be one adult and one child/youth in an overnight room together
o When physically possible, sleeping areas for adults should be separate from children/youth
o Chaperones will monitor hallways when necessary or appropriate There shall be three or more people in each vehicle when children or youth are present.

Volunteers must have attended CUMC regularly for a 6-month period prior to becoming involved with children or youth. The Safe Sanctuaries Committee may grant a variance.

There must be a minimum 5-year age difference between the oldest child/youth and the person responsible for the class or activity, unless an adult approved by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee is present.

A paid staff member of CUMC will provide training to all adults approved by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee. This training will include instruction on the policies and procedures set forth in this document as well as procedures to report incidents of suspected child abuse. As of October of 2008, all Safe Sanctuaries approved staff and volunteers must attend this training prior to working with children and/or youth.

No one under age 21 can drive any participant in a church-sponsored activity or event.

3

PROCEDURES On Sunday mornings, someone designated by CUMC staff will make random classroom checks. CUMC encourages all paid staff members and volunteers to be CPR and/or defibrillator trained. Any person driving the CUMC van must also submit their name, driver's license number, and date of birth to the church secretary so it can be submitted to the CUMC insurance company.

HOW TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE

If abuse or neglect of a child or youth is witnessed, suspected, or reported to you by a child or youth, the following steps should be taken.

Step 1: If emergency, call 911. If not an emergency, proceed to Step 2. Step 2: Report the incident to the first available CUMC staff person o Rev. Meredith Wilkens-Arnold, 410-268-1776 (church), Pastor Braulio Torres, 410-268-1776 (church), or Nancy Mills, 410-268-1776 (church), Step 3: Complete the form "Report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect" provided by the above staff persons. Step 4: Contact the local Department of Social Services o For Anne Arundel County, MD the phone number is 410-421-8400 o When traveling to other locations with children or youth, the local Department of Social Services phone number should be obtained prior to departure Step 5: Make 1 copy of the completed "Report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect". o Send the original to the Anne Arundel County office of the Maryland Department of Social Services at the following address: Maryland Department of Social Services Child Protective Services and Child Welfare Screening 7500 Ritchie Highway Glen Burnie, MD 21060 o Give the copy to the CUMC staff person to whom you reported the incident Step 6: If you have observed abuse or neglect, do not talk about it except with the CUMC staff, Department of Social Services or law enforcement officers. Step 7: Please note that you cannot keep a child from their parent or guardian

The staff person to whom the incident was reported should complete the form "FollowUp to Suspected Incident of Child Abuse/Neglect".