

Mt Mitchell United Methodist Church
Kannapolis, North Carolina
Safe Sanctuaries for Children and Youth
Basic Essential Operating Guidelines (Revised 7-2007)

1. Recruiting, Screening, Hiring, and Training of Youth and Children's Staff and Volunteer Workers:

Beginning 1 January 2006, criminal background checks (criminal - felony/misdemeanor, sexual offender registry) will be performed on all staff and volunteers with a role in working with children and youth (hereafter referred to as children collectively). Those currently in positions above approved by the

Church Council will be exempt from this requirement. Exclusion criteria include those with felony convictions and those with misdemeanor convictions involving children or drugs. An appointed designee on the Staff Parish Committee will be responsible for conducting the checks and reporting to the Pastor.

Criminal background checks will be repeated on key staff every seven (7) years and/or as necessary. Previous employment and references will be screened for those in a supervisory capacity of children. (Conference recommends training sessions annually.)

Reference is made to <http://www.wnccumc.org/yth/pdf/SafeSanctuaryBackgroundCks.pdf> for additional information regarding background checks and recommended agencies. Results of screenings will be maintained indefinitely.

2. Chaperone:

Only trained/screened adults are allowed to be sole chaperone of children. Adults working with children must be an associate member for a minimum period of six (6) months. (Conference recommends two (2) adults at all times.)

3. Age Limits:

Staff and volunteers should be at least 5 years older than the oldest child being supervised. No one under the age of 18 should be given supervisory capacity. A volunteer 15 - 17 years old may assist with child care under the supervision of an adult.

4. Restroom Visits:

Efforts will be made to insure two (2) unrelated adults are present during restroom visits and clothing changes. In the event this is not possible, only child care staff of the same sex are allowed to assist children in restroom visits or clothing changes. Diaper changes are exempt from the above requirement.

5. Visibility in Rooms:

Every room that is used for activities and teaching of children should have a window in the door or a half door that gives visibility to all areas of that room. The window must be left uncovered. If there is no window, the door must be left open. Attempts will be made to place half doors in the nursery and pre-school rooms.

6. Child Pick-up:

Only a parent or legal guardian may take custody of a child from church children's workers. Identity should be confirmed by child and a verification of an ID if the children's worker does not know the individual. A list should be provided by the parents to the child care staff authorizing other designated adults to pick children up. Only persons on this list will be allowed to pick up child.

7. Open Door Counseling:

Pastoral counseling is expected to be confidential in nature, but is for the protection of both parties that such sessions be held in an appropriate area. The pastor's study should have a window in it (uncovered) or have door remain open with emphasis on maintaining confidentiality.

8. Roving Monitors:

During operational hours of church activities, a roving safety monitor should be deployed when available. This person may also serve to accomplish other tasks such as delivery/pickup of Sunday School rosters, etc.. This person should walk the entire building at least twice during Sunday School hours.

9. First Aid and CPR:

At least one adult present at every church activity should be certified in basic first aid and CPR. The church will offer training annually. An AED (automated defibrillator) and basic first aid kit will be available in the break area of the parlor. A basic first aid kit will be located on each floor in the hall near the fire extinguisher. Miscellaneous care supplies may be maintained in the individual classrooms.

10. Communications and Advance Notice to Parents:

Parents should always be kept abreast of the programs their children or youth are involved in. They should be given advance notice and information regarding any activity which deviates from traditional classroom instruction offered at church during Sunday School, UMYF, bible school, and other regular church activities. Permission forms with medical information should accompany children for any activity involving travel or extreme sports activities.

11. Age and Activity Appropriate Equipment:

The safety and appropriateness of equipment used in the nursery, church, children's rooms, and playground will be examined annually and as needed.

12. Liability Insurance Coverage:

Coverage will be maintained.

13. Designated Spokesperson:

The District Superintendent will be the designated spokesperson in case of an incident or allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct.

14. Transportation:

No youth may transport other youth to any off-ground church activity. All church members using their vehicles to transport children must maintain adequate liability insurance on their vehicle and submit to DMV checks. DMV checks must be performed on any person operating a church van/bus or rented van/bus.

15. Nursery:

All persons working in the nursery must be approved by the Staff Parish Committee and meet requirements listed above. Two (2) persons must be in the nursery anytime it is in operation. Any activity determined to be a potential danger to children will be addressed by the Staff Parish Committee.

16. Dangerous Situations:

Any church member has the authority to stop, or caused to be ceased, any activity or situation that may be deemed unsafe, pending a final review by the Staff Parish Committee or Trustees as appropriate.

17. Church Access:

Church keys will only be issued to those with a demonstrated need for special access. Keys will be issued to the Pastor, Secretary, Janitor, Choir Director, Organist, Youth Leader, Administrative Council Chair, Lay Leader, Trustees Chair, Trustees, Scout Leader, Hot Dog Sale Coordinator, Sound System Workers, Staff Parish Chair, and Circle Leaders. All other key issuance will be at the discretion of the Trustees. A key issue log will be maintained and all keys must be returned immediately when a position is changed or requested. The exterior doors must be locked once worship service begins to provide security to the nursery area (no later than 15 minutes after the service begins). The only door remaining locked is the sanctuary door. A laminated poster will be placed on exterior doors advising entrance instructions.

18. Medical Emergencies:

All medical emergencies will be handled as appropriate. 911 will be contacted in cases necessary and then emergency contacts will be made to parents/guardians.

19. Fire:

In the event of a fire, the building will be evacuated. Each group/Sunday School leader is responsible for evacuation of their group. The doors should be left open upon leaving the area. The assembly area is in the parking lot in front of the Fellowship Building. 911 should be contacted.

20. Severe Weather:

In the event of a tornado or other severe weather, each group/Sunday School leader is responsible for movement of their group to the basement hall in front of the chapel/meeting room.