

**SAFE SANCTUARIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
BASIC ESSENTIAL OPERATING PROCEDURES
For Lee's Chapel United Methodist Church
Greensboro, North Carolina**

1. **POLICY FOR RECRUITING, SCREENING, HIRING, AND REGULAR TRAINING YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S STAFF AND VOLUNTEER WORKERS:**
All employees of the church (and applicants for employment) will be screened with respect to their suitability to work with and around children. This screening shall include a criminal records check and the completion of a questionnaire concerning the person's past work history (volunteer or paid) with children. The church shall require all volunteers who wish to work with children's ministries to complete the work history questionnaire. In addition, volunteers will be required to acknowledge in writing that they have read this policy. The collection of the documents required by this policy with respect to volunteers will be phased in over a period of two years. Training sessions for all workers with children and youth will be held annually. These procedures and records will be under the authority and control of the Board of Trustees in conjuncture with the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
2. **TWO ADULTS:** Two (unrelated) adults must be in the room or vehicle at all times. No child or youth should be along with one adult at any time. Adults working with children or youth must be a member for six months.
3. **ROVING MONITORS:** In the event where there are not two adults in the classroom, there must be a roving superintendent or monitor during meetings or teaching time and the door must be left open.
4. **AGE LIMITS:** Staff and volunteers should be at least 5 years older than the oldest child/youth being supervised. No one under the age of 18 should be given supervisory capacity. This procedure does NOT prohibit adults who are less than 5 years older than the youth or children in an activity from participating as a "counselor" or "helper" for the activity.
5. **VISIBILITY IN ROOMS:** Every room that is used for activities and teaching of children and youth should have a window in the door, or half door, that gives visibility to all areas of the room. The window must be left uncovered. If there is no window, the door must be left open at all times.
6. **OPEN DOOR COUNSELING:** Pastoral counseling is expected to be confidential in nature, but is for the protection of both parties that such sessions take place where other people are nearby even though not within hearing distance. The pastor's door should have a small glass window in it.
7. **FIRST AID AND CPR:** At least one adult present at every church activity should be certified in basic first aid and CPR. The church should offer training annually.

8. **COMMUNICATION AND ADVANCE NOTICE TO PARENTS:** Parents should always be kept abreast of the programs their children or youth are involved in, and given advance notice and information regarding any activity which deviates from the traditional classroom instruction offered at the church during Sunday School, UMYF, Vacation Bible School, or other regular activities at the church. Permission forms with medical information should accompany the children/youth for any activity involving travel or extreme sports activity (skiing, etc.) We will have a “Safe Sanctuary” training time for the parents and families of the children and youth, with copies of the Lee’s Chapel Church policy available.

9. **AGE AND ACTIVITY APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT:** We will examine the safety and appropriateness of the equipment we are using in the nursery, classrooms and playground.

10. **MAINTAIN ADEQUATE LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERAGE:** We will maintain adequate coverage for all church activities held both on and off the premises.

11. **DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSON:** We will have a designated spokesperson in case of an incident or allegation of abuse. There will be a prepared statement made before releasing any information to the press. All other persons must refrain from speaking to the press.

12. **NURSERY:** For safety reasons, parents/guardians must sign children in and out of the nursery. Electronic communication will be maintained between the nursery and an usher or monitor at all times during the worship service.

13. For safety purposes, a parent or guardian is asked to accompany any child to and from the restroom during Sunday worship service.

CONCLUSION: In all our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be “surrounded by steadfast love, established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.” (From Congregational Pledge 2 of the UMC Baptismal Covenant II).