

St. Paul United Methodist Church

Gainesville, Georgia Safe

Sanctuary Policy

St. Paul United Methodist church believes that the spiritual, emotional and physical well being of our children, youth and vulnerable adults is imperative. We must do all that we can to nurture and protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults. This policy is intended to provide a guide for that protection, as well as the protection of our adult workers and the church. This policy is enacted to ensure that the parents, members, volunteers and staff of St. Paul UMC have a clear understanding of what the policies and procedures are regarding the safety of our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Policy Standards and General Christian Moral Standard

Staff and volunteers that work in any area of children and youth ministries or with vulnerable adults at St. Paul, are required to adhere to these policies and standards as moral Christians.

Supervision of Children and Youth Workers

The church staff and volunteers who supervise children and youth workers and workers with vulnerable adults are charged with enforcing this policy. Any violation of these policies or persistent failure to follow this policy can result in immediate dismissal, disciplinary action or reassignment to another area of work at the discretion of the Church Council and/or Staff Parish Relations Committee. Anyone who suspects this policy is not being enforced should bring it to the attention of the person who is deemed "person in charge " of the specific program or event. This person must take immediate action on this violation. All reports must be brought before the Senior Pastor immediately.

Guidelines for Volunteers

All volunteer workers must be at least 18 years of age. Youth under the age of 18 may assist with the Children 's Ministries, under the leadership of an adult worker, but adherence to the Two person Rule is mandatory.

Any person wishing to work with the youth, children or vulnerable adults must have been a member of the church or have been a steady visitor for a minimum of six months before being allowed to volunteer. This policy can be waived only by the Senior Pastor, on a case by case basis, when needed.

Background Checks

Any worker working with the youth, children or vulnerable adults of St. Paul UMC must undergo a national criminal background check. The report must show no serious* offenses

Annual Orientation

All new primary workers must attend a Safe Sanctuary orientation. The church will provide an orientation and refresher course that will provide information on child, youth and elder abuse and explain any changes made to the Safe Sanctuary Policy. All workers must take a refresher course every two years.

Two Person Rule

There must be two workers NOT from the same family in all classrooms and events working. This rule is for the protection of the students as well as the adults.

Classroom Windows

All classrooms will have at least one window in the door. The window must not be covered at any time with decorations, etc.

Reporting Abuse

St. Paul UMC regards any form of abuse and evidence thereof as unacceptable and has a strict policy regarding the reporting of such abuse. This is a serious criminal allegation and will be taken seriously. If a volunteer becomes aware of an abuse allegation, they must report it to a St. Paul staff member IMMEDIATELY*.

The following is a definition of child abuse supplied by The Georgia Department of Family and Child Services. The same definitions apply to elder abuse.

- What is considered child abuse and neglect?
Physical abuse is injury to a child under age 18, by a parent or caretaker, which results in bruises; welts, fractures, burns, cuts or internal injuries.
Neglect is the failure of the parent or caretaker to see that the child is adequately supervised, fed, clothed, housed or provided medical care.
Sexual abuse occurs when a parent or other adult uses a child under age 18 for sexual stimulation. "

Vulnerable Adults

While much of this policy addresses the need to protect our children and youth, St. Paul UMC recognizes that abuse of impaired and older adults is a major concern. Many older adults are also subject to financial abuse. We must be vigilant for signs of abuse in our adult membership and report any suspected abuse, following the process outlined above. The local Department of Family and Child Services has a division with responsibility for supervising elder care.

Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse

Name of worker observing/receiving disclosure of abuse: _____

Address: _____ Phone # _____

Victim's Name: _____

Victim's Age/Date of Birth: _____

Date/Place of witnessed activity or initial conversation with victim: _____

Victim's Statement: _____

Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim: _____

Name of Pastor/Ministry Supervisor to whom you reported: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

The following should be completed by the Pastor/ Ministry Supervisor in charge:

Name of parent/guardian to who reported: _____

Date/Time: _____

Summary: _____

-Call to Department of Family and Children Services

Spoke with: _____

Date/Time: _____

Summary: _____

-Call to Local Law Enforcement

Spoke with:

Date/Time:

Summary:

Other Contacts/Action Taken
