

Belin Memorial United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuary Policy

Belin Memorial United Methodist Church cherishes our children and youth and has developed this Safe Sanctuary Policy to guide us in protecting the health and welfare of these precious lives and the adults who lovingly work with them. Thus in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we establish these guidelines and procedures to demonstrate our total and unwavering commitment to the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of all of our children, youth, and church volunteers. Parents, children, youth, volunteers, church staff and the church congregation operate as a team in accomplishing our common goals for the nurture, safety and well being of children and youth.

1. Definitions for the purpose of this policy:

Children = ages birth through fifth grade

Youth = ages sixth grade – 17 years old

Young adult = ages 18-21

Approved Adult Volunteer = an unpaid adult, 21 years of age or older who meets all required criteria to work with Belin's programs serving children and youth

Staff = paid employees cleared to work with all programs serving children and youth

Floater = An adult cleared, trained and approved by a Program Director to meet the Two-Adult Rule

Program Director = The church staff Directors of Christian Education, Youth, Worship Arts, Belin Creative Learning Center and the Family Life Center,

2. Approved Adult Volunteers and Staff must meet the following requirements to be cleared to work with children and youth:

- Complete an application form providing social security and driver's license numbers
- Be 21 years of age
- Give permission for background checks
- Either be a member of the church or be cleared by a Program Director or Clergy
- Attend the prescribed Safe Sanctuary Training
- Sign the Safe Sanctuary Commitment Pledge.

3 All Activities (Responsibilities, Reporting, and Recordkeeping)

A. Parent responsibilities

- Supervise their children when children are not in an organized activity
- Escort children under 6th grade to and from activities or designate and notify the activity leader of another responsible adult to do this
- In no case will children under 6th grade be allowed to leave activity locations unescorted or escorted by other children
- Require their children to follow posted and announced safety guidelines

B. Church responsibilities

- Assure the safety of equipment and facilities
- Provide training on the guidelines, reporting procedures, and indicators of abuse
- Inform the congregation annually of the policies, guidelines, and practices in place to keep our children safe.
- Provide age-appropriate education and information to children and youth on ways to recognize, avoid, and respond to situations that may be unsafe for them.
- Clearly identify approved adult volunteers (by name tag or other easily identifiable way)

C. Children and youth responsibilities

- No youth, under the age of 18, may be in the Family Life Center, Sanctuary, or Education Building when there are no adults present.
- Follow all posted and provided guidelines and instructions given by volunteer leaders and/or staff

D. Two adult rule

- Two adults are required to be present at all times during any church sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and youth.
- When situations require physical intimacy, such as examining a child for injury or changing a diaper two adults must be present.
- Workers should take every precaution to never be alone with a child or youth in inaccessible areas
- In certain circumstances, at the discretion of the Program Director, married couples or “floaters” may be used to meet the 2-adult requirement.

E. Attendance Records (use approved form)

- Rosters of those in attendance at any children’s or youth activity should be maintained and filed with the office of the program director.
- Adult names are to be recorded, also.

F. Discipline Problems

If any child or youth becomes a discipline problem such that they become a danger to themselves or others:

- the parents will be contacted and, if necessary, requested to “pick-up” the offender.
- the program director and/or one of the pastors must be notified.
- Children or youth should never be removed or sent to an unsupervised area for time out.
- The two-adult rule provides an adult to accompany any children or youth who need to leave the supervised activity area for any reason.
- Corporal punishment is strictly forbidden.

G. Emergency Cards (Use approved form)

- Required for all children and youth in attendance at church-sponsored activities detailing emergency contact and medical/allergy and insurance information
- Must be readily accessible to activity leaders and program directors during each activity

H. Accidents Reports (Use approved form)

- Are required to be submitted to the activity supervisor/director for any accident requiring more than minor treatment that has potential later complications. These reports should be turned in to the Business Administrator’s office for filing.

I. Reporting Incidences of Abuse

In the event of suspected, or a complaint of, child abuse:

- The employee or volunteer will report the incident immediately to the Program Director who will report directly to one of the two Pastors; or the Business Administrator.
- These three persons are the only persons approved to, and are the persons responsible for/to, report(ing) the incident to:

DSS
Other appropriate legal entities or law enforcement
The district superintendent, if appropriate
Parents
The congregation
The news media

- No other volunteer or staff member is authorized to discuss or make statements to the news media or others, unless required by the force of a subpoena.

J. Alcohol / Controlled Substances

No alcohol or non-prescribed controlled substances shall be consumed by any Belin participant (adult, youth, young adult, volunteer, or staff) at Belin church-sponsored events planned for children and/or youth.

4. On-Site Activities (all requirements of #3, plus the following)

A. Supervision

- Children and youth should never be allowed to roam the buildings or grounds unsupervised.
- Keep doors open as much as is reasonable. Never be alone in a locked room with a child or young person.
- Chaperones, teachers, and supervisor/leaders of activities need to be at least 21 years of age.
- Persons under 21 may serve as assistants if two other adult supervisors are present in the area during the activity.
- Children and youth under 21 who wish to assist with activities shall be approved by the activity director and assigned to work under the direct supervision of an approved volunteer over 21.
- Approved adults supervising an activity should be clearly identified.

5. Off-Site and Overnight Activities (All provisions of #3 plus:

A. Supervision Guidelines

- Adult chaperones for trips off church property or overnight are required in a ratio of one adult for every 10 participants.
- On overnight trips, adult chaperones are required to be housed in the immediate area with the children/youth under their supervision.

B. Permission and Transportation Guidelines

1. When the church sponsors overnight activities or provides transportation to off-site events:

- A written Parental Permission Form must be on file for each participant. (use the approved form)
- Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and be approved by the Safe Sanctuary Committee.
- A list of all cleared participants and chaperones must be left with the church upon departure to off-site events.
- Approved restraints or seat belts for all children/youth must be used when available in vehicles

2. Direct responsibility for transportation is held by the parent:

- To and from church activities held on-campus.
- When off-campus events are held within a 20 mile radius of the church and youth are not reporting to the church.
- Exceptions for the distance traveled addressed by this guideline must be requested to the Safe Sanctuary Committee.

6. Other

- Counseling - One to one counseling with children or youth will be done in an area where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others (such as behind doors with glass inserts for clear visibility). Whenever possible, these activities should occur during business hours or when others are in the building or immediate area. It is suggested that two adults and/or a same gender counselor be present during counseling whenever appropriate.

Approved by the Safe Sanctuary Committee Approved by Church Council April 28, 2009	March 9, 2009
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