

Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy for the Protection of Children & Youth

Purpose

Mt. Tabor UMC is committed to providing the safest environment possible for all children and youth who enter the doors of the church and/or participate in ministries offered. This policy will give guidelines and procedures to those individuals and ministries who work with those children and youth as the church continues to strive to provide an atmosphere which fosters more physical and spiritual growth and safety.

Covenant Statement

Mt. Tabor UMC is a Christian community and a United Methodist congregation. The church pledges to always work to provide a place where the gospel is taught and celebrated while assuring the spiritual, emotional and physical safety of all children and youth, as well as those working with the children and youth of MTUMC.

Mt. Tabor UMC will work to educate all workers in regards to the policies and procedures that clearly define the standards and expectations of those workers. The church will work within the guidelines and requirements of the law of the state of North Carolina and will be prepared to respond to any and all allegations and incidents that may occur.

Working Definitions

- **Child Abuse**: A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. This includes:
 - **Emotional Abuse**: Expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child or youth that creates serious emotional or psychological damage.
 - **Sexual Abuse**: Any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile.
 - **Physical Abuse**: Examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that result or could result in serious physical injury.

- **Child Neglect**: Any serious disregard for a juvenile's supervision, care or discipline.

- **Child**: Any person between birth and fifth grade (usually those from birth to 11 years old).

- **Youth**: Any person from the sixth grade through the twelfth grade (usually those between the ages of 11 and 18).

- Adult: Any person eighteen years of age or older or who has graduated from high school.

Procedures for Hiring, Recruiting and Screening Paid Staff & Volunteers at Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church

- Paid Staff refers to all salaried employees, part-time or full-time, of Mt. Tabor UMC.
- The following will take place for any person to be hired at Mt. Tabor UMC:
 - Completely fill out and submit an application.
 - Successfully pass a National Criminal Background Check & Sexual Offenders Check.
 - 3 references checked.
- Staff-Parish Relations Committee will oversee this process for all paid staff members.
- Each ministry area will oversee this process for those desiring to become volunteers dealing with children and/or youth.
- Annual training in the following areas will be conducted for all staff and volunteers:
 - New Safe Sanctuaries Policies
 - CPR/First Aid
 - Looking for Signs of Abuse & How to Report Signs of Abuse.
- National Background Checks and Sexual Offender Registry Checks will be conducted by using: Group Publishing
<https://shop.grouppublishing.com/cvc/>
- These background & sexual offender registry checks will cost \$17 per check.

Standards and Expectations for All Staff and Volunteers Working with the Children and Youth of Mt. Tabor UMC

- ✓ No use of tobacco products around youth or child during an event, trip or outing.
- ✓ No use of illegal drugs anytime.
- ✓ No consumption of alcohol immediately before or during any event, trip or outing.
- ✓ No use of profanity around children and youth.
- ✓ No use of ethnic or racial slurs around children or youth.
- ✓ No joining in the watching of any movie rated above PG13, and all PG13 movies MUST be screened and deemed appropriate by the supervisor of that ministry area.
- ✓ No intentionally exposing personal body parts to children or youth.

Procedures for Overnight Trips with Children or Youth

1. Lodging requirements for each trip are unique. With that in mind the lodging situations will be evaluated for trips. The best and safest sleeping arrangements will be determined for those attending the trip.
2. No unrelated adult will share the same bed with a child or youth.
3. The ministry leader will always attempt to have at least 1 adult leader in each room, but again, that leader will NOT share a bed with a child or youth.
4. In making lodging arrangements, the ministry leader will request that all rooms be located in the same block of rooms.
5. A leader will not be allowed to share a room with only 1 child or youth, unless the adult is a parent or guardian. This may require a child/youth – Adult combination in a room to be greater than 4.

Procedures for Adults Leading Small Groups, Bible Studies or Sunday School Classes for Youth or Children at MTUMC Facilities

- Small groups, Sunday School Classes, and Bible Studies generally take place at MTUMC. If there are fewer than 2 adult leaders present, the door will remain open and a rover will pass by periodically to check each group. For classrooms with no window in the door, the door will remain at least half way open even when there are 2 or more adults present.
- In addition, Bible Studies that take place at MTUMC will be lead by either older youth or adults. When a team of adults are not present, the study will be asked to move to a higher traffic area of the church for better visibility.

Procedures for the Leading of Small Groups, Bible Studies or Sunday School Classes for Youth or Children Taking Place Away from MTUMC Facilities

- Small groups, Sunday School Classes, and Bible Studies led by adults, taking place away from MTUMC facility, should have at least two adults present if possible.
- Small groups, Sunday School Classes, and Bible Studies led by youth, taking place away from MTUMC facility, will have at least one adult present, preferably two, unless in a public place.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Allegation against Paid Staff Member

1. Witness of suspected abuse must complete the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form. Form available on church website under Safe Sanctuaries Section.
2. Inform Senior Pastor.
3. Senior Pastor will contact the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Both will quickly and discreetly investigate the report.
4. Senior Pastor and SPRC Chair will decide if it is necessary to contact Social Services (703-2287) or not. If allegation is considered unworthy of contacting Social Services, the filer of the report may be given the choice of contacting DSS on their own if they feel it is necessary.
5. Remove alleged offender from contact with children and youth from all Mt. Tabor UMC activities while investigation takes place.
6. Chairs of Church Council and a lawyer shall be contacted.
7. Contact Winston-Salem District Superintendent (727-1222).
8. Contact insurance carrier.
9. Appoint one media spokesperson.
10. Respond with care to the congregation, the alleged victim and the alleged offender.

Allegation Against Volunteer

1. Witness of suspected abuse must complete the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form. Form available on church website under Safe Sanctuaries Section.
2. Inform area ministry supervisor or Senior Pastor.
3. Senior Pastor will contact the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Both will quickly and discreetly investigate the report.
4. Senior Pastor and SPRC Chair will decide if it is necessary to contact Social Services (703-2287) or not. If allegation is considered unworthy or contacting Social Services, the filer of the report may be given the choice of contact DSS on their own if they feel it is necessary.
5. Remove alleged offender from contact with children and youth from all Mt. Tabor UMC activities while investigation takes place.
6. Chairs of Church Council and a lawyer should be contacted.
7. Contact Winston-Salem District Superintendent (727-1222).
8. Contact insurance carrier.
9. Appoint one media spokesperson.
10. Respond with care to the congregation, the victim and the alleged offender.

Allegation against Senior or Associate Pastor

1. Witness of suspected abuse must complete the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form. Form available on church website under Safe Sanctuaries Section.
2. Inform area ministry supervisor or Chair of Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
3. Senior Pastor will contact the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Both will quickly and discreetly investigate the report.
4. Senior Pastor and SPRC Chair will decide if it is necessary to contact Social Services (703-2287) or not. If allegation is considered unworthy or contacting Social Services, the filer of the report may be given the choice of contact DSS on their own if they feel it is necessary.
5. Remove alleged offender from contact with children and youth from all Mt. Tabor UMC activities while investigation takes place.
6. Chairs of Church Council and a lawyer should be contacted.
7. Contact Winston-Salem District Superintendent (727-1222).
8. Contact insurance carrier.
9. Appoint one media spokesperson.
10. Respond with care to the congregation, the victim and the alleged offender.

Policies Specific to Student Ministries (6th-12th Grade)

1. **Open Door Policy:** Youth Sunday School Classes & small group gatherings should have at least 2 adult leaders present when possible. However, due to the size of the program and the demands on adult leaders, this is not always feasible. Therefore, when 2 adult leaders are not present, the classroom door must be left open if the door doesn't have a window allowing an unobstructed view of the classroom and the participants.
2. **Travel:** Adult Leaders who are unrelated to a youth may NOT transport a youth without at least verbal permission of the youth's parent or guardian. The leader is asked to relay that permission along to the minister of youth or the associate minister of youth. Whenever possible, an adult leader is asked to take another leader of the opposite gender with them as they transport the youth.
3. **Overnight Events:** No adult will ever share a bed with a youth unless they are related and of the same gender. Even then, unless the relationship is parent/child, parental/guardian permission must be obtained to allow this to take place. No males will share a room with females or vice versa. Adult leaders will sleep on the floor when the group spends the night in a hotel or similar accommodations. The student ministries will attempt to have 2 adult leaders in each room, however this

- is not always possible. On some occasions the youth and adult leaders will spend the night at a local church or other multi-purpose facility. At that time, the youth will be separated by gender and a clearly defined dividing line will be established, and adult leaders strategically placed to ensure the two genders do not sleep with or beside each other.
4. **Student Drivers:** No youth is allowed to drive a personal vehicle to or from any sanctioned youth trip/outing, unless given prior approval by the parent/guardian and a member of the student ministries staff.
 5. **Youth Riding With Youth or Adult Leaders:** Youth may NOT ride in a personal vehicle of another youth who is not an approved driver or that of adult leader unless written permission is given by the parent/guardian of the riding youth. The only exception is when the riding youth has given written approval of a parent/guardian to a student ministries staff member, and the parent/guardian to the driver has given written permission for their youth to transport other youth. Both must be present to enable a youth to ride with another youth.
 6. **Personal Space Boundaries:** Relational ministry often means a embrace or hug to show the student is welcome, loved and cared for. However, no youth is allowed to sit on the lap of an adult leader of the opposite gender for an extended period of time. No adult leader will ever be allowed to engage in a physical relationship with a youth.
 7. **Leadership:** Youth are encouraged and nurtured to help lead other youth in small groups and Bible studies. This grows a young person's leadership potential and abilities. However, no youth will be allowed to be in a prolonged, direct supervision role of another youth. An adult leader will be assigned to help in this process.
 8. **College Students in Leadership Roles:** All leaders, whether youth, adults or college-aged will be screened and approved for service. The prospective leader will be approved or disapproved by a member of the student ministries staff. No college-aged student will be in prolonged, direct supervision of youth without the assistance of an approved adult leader.
 9. **Counseling Youth:** The one-on-one counseling of a youth by a member of the student ministries staff should be attempted to be done during regular business hours in the student ministries or office area of Mt. Tabor UMC. However, this is not always possible and sometimes emergency counseling must be done at a moment's notice at an odd hour. On those occasions, the member of the student ministries staff is asked to notify another staff member or pastor of MTUMC of the counseling session, location and gender of the youth being counseled. The best option is find a very public place for this session. The student ministries staff member is asked to NOT counsel a youth for more 5 sessions. If the reason for counseling is not resolved within that period, the student ministries staff member is asked to refer the youth to another counselor.

Children's Ministry Policies

1. All volunteers working with children will have a National Criminal Background check and Sex Offender Check. It will be retained in the volunteer file when the volunteer has been checked.
2. All volunteer information will be kept in a file accessible only to the Senior Pastor, Director of Christian Education, and Staff Parish Chairperson.
3. All volunteer orientations will include information that covers the church's policies on safe ministry with children and youth. This orientation will also make volunteers aware of the Mandatory Reporting Statute of North Carolina concerning Child Abuse. North Carolina law requires everyone to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
4. If changes occur the volunteer agrees to inform a Pastor or the Director of Christian Education.
5. Any adult who has been convicted of any crime involving a child will not be permitted to work with children.
6. Whenever practical, a minimum of two adults should be present during any children or youth activity. We will strive not to have a teacher working alone with any children or youth.
7. If a volunteer is alone in a classroom with children or youth, the door to the room should remain open.
8. Windows in doors and windows in walls will remain uncovered for the protection of the children and volunteers. This allows clear visual into class.
9. Another adult (e.g., Children Coordinator, Director of Christian Education) will be in the hallways whenever teachers are teaching children. This person will act as a visible presence in support of teachers, as well as a deterrent of any potentially harmful situation for our children.
10. No volunteers under the age of eighteen (18) will be allowed to work with children without the direct supervision of a "lead adult".
11. To be considered the "lead adult" a person must be age 18 or older.
12. Children shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the written or electronic permission of their parents or guardians.

For Sunday Mornings

1. On Sunday morning, children fifth grade and younger must be with a parent or teacher at all times.
2. On Sundays and other times, children ages five and under must be signed in and out of rooms following the nursery guidelines.

For Wednesday Night Tabor Table

1. All children fifth grade and younger should be in the Family Life Center under the supervision of their parents or guardians. Please do not allow the children to roam the halls.
2. Children who participate in Children's Choir will be escorted by an adult to the Family Life Center at the conclusion of Choir rehearsal.
3. Parents or guardians are asked to monitor the whereabouts of their children at all times.

Procedures for Nursery/Sunday School Check-in/Check-out Sunday Morning

All parents of children in the infant - 4 year old nurseries and Sunday School will be given a Security Card when checking their child into the room. **NO CHILD WILL BE GIVEN TO AN ADULT UNTIL THE SECURITY CARD IS RETURNED.**

Pick - up and Drop - off

1. Please sign your child in on the clip board outside your child's room. Fill in the check-in sheet completely with your child's name, your name, your location, and your child's Security Card number. **When checking your child in at the 8:30/Higher Ground nursery please remember to indicate whether or not you want the nursery volunteer to take your child to his/her Sunday school class.**
2. Obtain a Security Card and name tag from the Nursery Volunteer. Write the Security Card number and your child's name on the name tag and place the name tag on your child's upper back.
3. Once you have placed the name tag on your child's back the Nursery volunteer will open the door for your child to come into the room.
4. If someone other than you will be picking up your child please notify the Nursery volunteer and give that person the Security Card. **No child will be given to an adult until the Security Card is returned.**
5. Please have your child's diaper bag labeled on the outside with his/her name. Also label any bottles or sippy cups. If your child is being toilet-trained, please inform the volunteer.

6. If your child has any special needs or concerns, please let the volunteer know. They are here to make the nursery experience a pleasant one. The more knowledge they have about your child the better they can meet his/her needs.
7. When picking up your child please wait at the door for a nursery volunteer to assist you.
8. Give the Security Card to the volunteer. **No child will be given to an adult until the Security Card is returned.**
9. The Nursery volunteer will bring your child and his/her belongings to the door for you.
10. For all nurseries, please wait at the door to both drop-off and pick-up your child. Do not go into the room.
11. If you are a parent and are not currently volunteering in the nursery, please contact one of the nursery coordinators to be placed on the schedule.

Nursery Worker Procedures

Drop - off

1. Greet the parent and child at the door.
2. Give the parent a Security Card and name tag.
3. Ask the parent to fill out the Check-in sheet and name tag.
4. Verify that the Security Card number match the number on the name tag.
5. Once the parent has placed the name tag on the child's upper back open the door to allow the child to enter.
6. Check with the parent regarding any special needs their child might have.

Pick - up

1. Greet the parent at the door.
2. Ask for the Security Card and check the number on the child's name tag making sure the numbers match. **No child will be given to an adult until the Security Card has been returned.**
3. Gather the child's belongings and open the door for the child to leave the room.

Youth Nursery Volunteers

Any youth who wants to volunteer in the Nurseries must:

1. Be in at least the 6th Grade.
2. The youth must have one of his/her parents keep the nursery with him/her through the 8th Grade.
3. Once the youth enters the 9th grade they may be put in the Nursery rotation with other adults.

Special Event Childcare

To provide a safe and secure environment for children and staff the following policies are established:

1. All childcare staff will fill out an application form, provide references, and complete a criminal background check.
2. All childcare staff will be at least 18 years of age.
3. All childcare staff will participate in an annual orientation that covers policies and procedures. Staff will also receive annually an updated policy manual. Staff will attend monthly meetings.
4. CPR/First Aid training and Child Abuse /Neglect identification training is provided for the staff annually. There must be one person trained in CPR in the facility during program hours.
5. The Childcare Coordinator will keep a list of approved substitutes. Any staff member needing a substitute will secure a substitute from the approved substitute list in cooperation with the Coordinator.
6. Ratios for childcare (children/provider)
 - Infants/Toddlers: 10/2
 - Twos: 11/2
 - Threes: 12/2
 - Fours: 16/2
 - Kindergarteners: 19/2
 - First-Third Graders: 25/2
 - Fourth-Fifth Graders: 30/2
7. The childcare worker will arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the day and remain until all the children are picked up.
8. When providing childcare two staff members must be in the classroom area.
9. Children must be in the presence of an adult at all times. No child will be allowed to go to a different area of the church facility unsupervised.
10. Windows in the doors and walls will remain uncovered for the protection of the children and staff.

11. When children are dropped off and picked up, parents are asked to follow the check-in/check-out procedures using the provided Security Cards. To pick-up a child the parent must present the card.
 - Parents sign child in.
 - Parents are given a Security Card
 - Parents make a nametag for their child writing the Security Card number on the tag.
 - When picking up a child, the parent must present the Security Card and turn it in.

12. If someone other than the child's parents will be picking the child up the parent dropping the child off must notify the childcare worker who that person will be.

13. A photo ID will be required from any person picking up a child who is not the child's parent or legal guardian.

14. Adults will remain outside the door when dropping off and picking up children.

Weekday Preschool Childcare Guidelines

1. All childcare staff will fill out an application form, provide references, and complete a National Criminal Background Check and a Sex Offender Check.
2. All childcare staff will be at least 18 years of age.
3. All childcare staff will participate in an annual orientation that covers policies and procedures. Staff will also receive annually an updated policy manual. Staff will attend monthly meetings.
4. CPR/First Aid training and Child Abuse /Neglect identification training is provided for the staff annually. There must be one person trained in CPR in the facility during program hours.
5. The Preschool Director will keep a list of approved substitutes. Any staff member needing a substitute will secure a substitute from the approved substitute list in cooperation with the Director.
6. Ratios for childcare (children/provider)
 - Toddlers: 10/2
 - Twos: 11/2
 - Threes: 12/2
 - Fours: 16/2
 - Readiness: 14/2
7. During preschool hours two staff members must be in the classroom area.
8. Windows in the doors and walls will remain uncovered for the protection of the children and staff.
9. The staff will arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the day and remain until all the children are picked up.
10. Children are escorted to their classroom by a parent, guardian or preschool staff member after the doors are unlocked at 8:55 am.
11. The exterior doors to the Preschool area will be locked at 9:15 am. All preschool visitors are asked to check in through the Church office after 9:15 am.
12. Parents are to provide an emergency contact number if it is different from the number on file in the children's records.
13. Pick-up procedure will vary according to the teacher.
14. If a person other than a known parent or guardian will be picking up a child, the staff must be notified in advance. The person picking up the child will be asked for photo identification.
15. If a child needs assistance when using the restroom, the restroom door must be kept open.
16. Responding to allegations of abuse:
 - If a staff member witnesses or suspects abuse, he/she will immediately notify the Preschool Director.

- The Preschool Director will immediately contact the Department of Social Services, the Senior Pastor, and the Preschool Board.
- The Preschool Director will notify the Church's facilities manager, who in turn will contact the insurance carrier.
- If the suspected abuse involves a staff person, that person will be suspended until an investigation can be completed.
- The Preschool Director will contact the parents of the child or children involved and inform them of the steps that have been taken.
- Written records will be kept of the steps that have been taken.

Implementation of MTUMC Safe Sanctuaries Policy

- All ministry areas are responsible for having these policies in place by January 1, 2006.
- Training is the responsibility of each ministry area.
- In addition, any outside group using the MTUMC facility will be made aware of this policy and will meet the standards set forth in this policy (ie. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Kindermusic, visiting churches, etc).

Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

Individual Making Report:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Alleged Victim:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Age/Grade: _____

Male or Female: _____

Alleged Perpetrator:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Male or Female: _____ Age: _____

Relationship to Victim: _____

Describe your concern and grounds for concern in as much detail as possible, including names, times and dates where applicable.

Reported to Staff Person: Name: _____
Date & Time: _____

Reported to Senior Pastor: _____
Date & Time: _____

Summary of Investigation of Allegation: _____

- Follow-up with Initial Reporter, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Department of Social Services, Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Report Given: _____

- Call to Chair of Staff-Parish Relations Committee, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Chair of Church Council, Date/Time: _____

- Call to lawyer, Name: _____
 - Date / Time: _____
- Call to District Superintendent, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Insurance Carrier, Date/Time: _____
 - Spoke with: _____

Submitted by: _____

Title: _____

Printed Name

Signature

Date

**Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies
Acknowledgement Form**

Name: _____
Last Name First Name MI (Maiden Name)

Address: _____
House # Apt. # Street

City State Zip Code

Telephone #: (_____) _____

Program Involved With (Please Circle):

Children's Ministries Student Ministries Pre-School School Care

As caring Christians, we are committed to protecting and advocating for children and youth participating in the life of the Church. The Church is entrusted with providing an emotionally and physically safe, spiritually grounded and healthy environment for all children, youth and adults in which they are protected from abuse of any type. I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Children and Youth Protection Policies of Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church and I agree to abide by the policies and standards put in place. I understand that failure to do so could result in immediate dismissal from my responsibilities with the children and/or youth of Mt. Tabor UMC.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

**Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies**

Student Ministries & Children's Ministry

Criminal Records Check Consent Form

Name: _____
Last Name First Name MI (Maiden Name)

Date: _____ Social Security #: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Address: _____
House # Apt. # Street

_____ City State Zip Code

Telephone #: (_____) _____

I understand that due to my activities and involvement with the children and or youth of Mt. Tabor UMC, a national criminal background check and sexual offender check will be done on me. I have never been convicted of child abuse as an adult or juvenile, nor such a conviction expunged _____(initials). I consent to a national criminal background check _____ (initials).

Printed Name Signature Date

Background Check done by: _____

Date: _____ Program: _____

Each background check costs \$17. If you would like to pay for this, it would be extremely appreciated and checks can be made payable to Mt. Tabor UMC. Please put "Background Check" in the memo space.

Return this form to the MTUMC Student Ministries Office

**Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies**

Weekday Preschool Ministries

Criminal Records Check Consent Form

Name: _____
Last Name First Name MI (Maiden Name)

Date: _____ Social Security #: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Address: _____
House # Apt. # Street

_____ City State Zip Code

Telephone #: (_____) _____

I understand that due to my activities and involvement with the children and or youth of Mt. Tabor UMC, a national criminal background check and sexual offender check will be done on me. I have never been convicted of child abuse as an adult or juvenile, nor such a conviction expunged _____(initials). I consent to a national criminal background check _____ (initials).

Printed Name Signature Date

Background Check done by: _____

Date: _____ Program: _____

Each background check costs \$17. Checks should be made payable to Mt. Tabor Preschool. Please put "Background Check" in the memo space.

Return this form to the Weekday Preschool Office

**Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies**

School Care

Criminal Records Check Consent Form

Name: _____
Last Name First Name MI (Maiden Name)

Date: _____ Social Security #: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Address: _____
House # Apt. # Street

City State Zip Code

Telephone #: (_____) _____

I understand that due to my activities and involvement with the children and or youth of Mt. Tabor UMC, a national criminal background check and sexual offender check will be done on me. I have never been convicted of child abuse as an adult or juvenile, nor such a conviction expunged _____(initials). I consent to a national criminal background check _____ (initials).

Printed Name Signature Date

Background Check done by:

Date: _____ Program: _____

Each background check costs \$17. Checks should be made payable to Mt. Tabor School Care. Please put "Background Check" in the memo space.

Return this form to the MTUMC School Care Office