

Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures: Child, Youth, and Adult Safety Cowan Fellowship Church (CFC)

Our Calling

Cowan Fellowship Church is a sacred place where God's people of all ages come together for worship, study, service and fellowship. The ministries of Cowan Fellowship Church seek to share the Good News of the Gospel of Christ and make disciples of Jesus Christ -- that all who enter may come to know God and experience the love of Christ.

Our Mandate

The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our preschoolers, children, youth, workers, employees, volunteers and the entire church body. Careful and confidential documentation is essential to show compliance with policies, to verify information as needed, and to have an accurate record in the case of an incident.

Our Purpose

We have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children, teens and adults to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, Cowan Fellowship Church has developed policies and procedures designed to ensure the safety of all children, youth, and adults connected with and participating in our ministries.

Scope of Policy

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all persons including all paid and unpaid adults, whether lay or clergy who have any direct or indirect contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults who participate in any activities or events sponsored by this church.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This Safe Sanctuary Policy of Cowan Fellowship Church has been approved by the Governing Council and is available to all church members.

- ◆ The pastor, program leaders and volunteers will receive a copy of CFC's Safe Sanctuary Policy.
- ◆ The Safe Sanctuary Policy will be available to all members upon request and available online at www.cowanfellowship.org.
- ◆ A notebook containing CFC's Safe Sanctuary Policy and Implementation Guide will be kept in an accessible place at the church (the church kitchen and the pastor's study).
- ◆ The CFC Safe Sanctuary Policy team will meet quarterly to evaluate the safety policy and its implementation during the previous quarter and will revise policy and procedures as appropriate for the next quarter.

Volunteer Screening:

1. All participants will be required to complete a Volunteer Application with two references (See APPENDIX 3 for Volunteer Application). All volunteers will sign the covenant and consent to a background check. Background checks will be completed through the UMC Tennessee Conference (See APPENDIX 8 for background check information). The Volunteer Application

will be completed at the Volunteer Training.

2. All persons shall be screened annually. Results of screens shall be kept confidential.
3. Cowan Fellowship Church reserves the right to turn away any persons for service.
4. Volunteer Application Renewal: Prior to the beginning of each new school year, returning volunteers will review and make necessary changes to their volunteer application from the previous year-- then initial each item in the original application and re-sign/date the application.

Volunteer Training

1. All volunteers will be offered training in regard to the implementation of the Safe Sanctuary policy and procedures.
2. Leader and volunteer training will include: (A) definitions of abuse (physical, verbal, sexual). (B) appropriate discipline, (C) appropriate physical and emotional boundaries, (D) leader/volunteer misconduct, and (E) spiritual boundaries for Safe Sanctuary as described in APPENDIX 4 (Volunteer Training Topics).
3. This church will maintain a list of volunteers that have completed Safe Sanctuary training.
4. Volunteers will sign in and review Volunteer Guidelines for each event. (See APPENDIX 1 for Volunteer Guidelines and APPENDIX 2 for Volunteer Sign-in Form).

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The Pastor, program leaders and other volunteers will know the location of the emergency aid kit and have telephone access for emergency medical assistance.

- a. Local access telephones are available in the kitchen and the pastor's study.
- b. A First Aid kit is available in the kitchen.

POLICY TO ENSURE THAT NO HARM COMES TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Cowan Fellowship Church is responsible for each child/youth/vulnerable adult in attendance at an event from the beginning to the end of the event, in the location that the event occurs.

1. At least two unrelated adults must be present in the room where children and/or youth events, classes, etc., are occurring. When only one teacher is present the door will be left open and a floater will check on the group.
2. CHILD TO ADULT RATIOS: (NOTE: The two-adult rule also applies.)
 - Nursery: Babies 1:3; 2-3 year olds -- 1:4
 - Children: 3 year-Kindergarten -- 1:5; 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade – 1:8; 4th-5th grades 1:10 (Trips 1:8)
 - Youth: In Church 1:20 Trips 1:8
3. No worker under the age of 18 will have sole responsibility, nor be alone with, any child or youth without oversight. All leaders and volunteers are strongly encouraged to avoid being alone with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

4. For events that require overnight accommodations, policies and arrangements will be determined by parents and volunteers and approved by the Governing Council.
5. All adults providing transportation will show proof of insurance.
 - a. Youth with a driver's license must have a note from their parent/guardian giving them permission to drive themselves to and from the event. They will not be permitted to transport other children/youth without a note from the parents of both parties.
6. Sign-in and sign-out procedures and permission forms with parent/guardian and emergency contact information are required for special events. (See APPENDIX 6 for Child/Youth Sign-in and Sign-out Form and APPENDIX 5 A & B for Parent Permission Forms with policy procedures.)
7. Children will only be released to persons other than parents if prior contact has occurred between the parents and the program director.
8. Cowan Fellowship Church is not responsible for children/youth who are not signed in to an event.
9. All event documentation will be kept in church files for a minimum of five years.

Responding to Alleged/Suspected Injuries or Inappropriate Conduct

The following are steps to be implemented upon notification of an injury or inappropriate conduct of a child, youth or adult.

1. The Pastor is the "designated individual" who will receive all reports of incidents from the program leader. In the case of serious injuries, parents/guardians will be notified immediately. Minor injuries will be communicated to the parents/guardians. (See APPENDIX 7 for Child/Youth Protection Incident Report Form)
2. All such conversations shall be documented using the *Child/Youth Protection Incident Report* form (See APPENDIX 7.). Careful and confidential documentation is essential.
3. All reports are confidential and the Pastor shall maintain a record of such reports, and the corresponding committees shall be kept informed.
4. The Pastor, or responsible volunteer as designated by the Pastor, will take appropriate action at the time of the incident.
5. The Pastor and the volunteers are obligated to report injuries/incidents to the appropriate state or local authority as required by law.
6. The Pastor, or designated volunteer, will then document all steps taken in an investigation of an incident.
7. The Pastor, or designee of the Governing Council, will notify an attorney, the insurance agent, and the *Tennessee Conference-UMC* and the *Presbytery of Middle Tennessee*, as appropriate.
8. The Pastor and all other persons involved in the incident will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the person(s) involved.
9. Cowan Fellowship Church will cooperate with any official investigation conducted by a governmental agency.
10. The Pastor, an attorney, or someone designated by the Governing Council, are the only persons authorized to speak to the media.

11. The person(s) under investigation will be suspended from all responsibilities with children and/or youth until the investigation is completed.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT REFERENCES:

This document with appendices was compiled by the CFC Safe Sanctuary Team members: Lori Smith, Ray Council, Debbie Skotte, MaryAnn Gay (facilitator) and presented to the Governing Council for final approval on February 15, 2016.

Primary resources used for the creation of this Safe Sanctuary Policy: The safety policies of First Presbyterian Church (Franklin, TN) and Christ United Methodist Church (UMC FL Conference), as well as UMC TN Conference Safe Sanctuary Resources. The items in the APPENDIX were modeled after documents from various churches.

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Child, Youth, and Adult Safety*

Cowan Fellowship Church

APPENDIX

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Adoption

**The Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures: Child, Youth, and Adult Safety
Including Appendix Items**

is adopted by action of the Governing Council of Cowan Fellowship Church

this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Pastor

Chair of the Trustees Committee

Governing Council Secretary