

Safe Sanctuary Policy for Crosby United Methodist Church

Throughout the gospels, Jesus provides teachings on providing a peaceable kingdom for all of God's people, including our most precious gifts, our children and youth (Matthew 5:9, Luke 18: 15-17). The peaceable kingdom begins with sanctuary.

As Christians, we are called to create a safe sanctuary in our churches. They must be hold, safe, and protective communities for all of God's children, regardless of age or ability. 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.

BASIC PROCEDURES FOR CROSBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

(1) General

It is the intent of this policy that Crosby United Methodist Church will provide adequate adult supervision at all times.

(2) Two-Adult Rule

Leaders shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" where no fewer than two unrelated adults will be present at all times during any church sponsored program or event for children and youth. Among the factors that should be considered are the ratio of adults to children or youth, the physical structure of the facilities, the duration of the event, etc. It may be that more than two adults would be required for an event to be conducted safely. **No adult shall be alone with any one child at any time.**

(3) Ratio of Adults

The ratio of adults should be gender specific based on the number of gendered children/youth. The ratio of adults to children/youth for lock-ins, off site events, overnight trips, etc.

Children 7th Grade and Below

2 Adults for the first 5 children/youth and an adult for any portion of 5 more children.

1-5 Children	2 Adults
6-10 Children	3 Adults
11-15 Children	4 Adults
16-20 Children	5 Adults

Children 8th Grade and Above

2 Adults for the first 10 youth and an adult for any portion of 10 more youth.

1-10 Youth	2 Adults
11-20 Youth	3 Adults
21-30 Youth	4 Adults

(4) The Five-Years Older

There will be at least a five-year difference between the ages of the primary on-site supervisor and the supervised. The five-year difference in ages shall apply between the on-site adult in charge and the oldest age of the supervised. Persons being closer in age to those supervised may be acceptable in assisting the primary on-site supervisor(s).

(5) Workers Eighteen or Older

In accordance with state minimum standards, primary workers with full responsibility for children must be eighteen or older. While younger workers may be excellent helpers, they cannot be expected to have developed the maturity and judgment needed to be fully responsible for younger children.

(6) First Aid/CPR

Annual training for first aid and CPR certification for workers with children is required to help workers respond competently to the needs of children and youth. A first aid kit shall be present at all activities with children/youth.

(7) Clear Sight Lines

As much as is possible, there should be unobstructed visibility to all activities where children and youth are present. Classroom doors should have windows in them or remain open. Changing a diaper and assisting a young child with the bathroom as needed should take place where the worker and the child is in sight with the child's privacy protected.

(8) Open-Door Counseling

At any counseling sessions with children or youth, the door of the room used should remain open for the entire session.

(9) Participation Covenants

The development of written covenants for children, youth and leaders helps to clarify from the start of a program or event the standards of behavior and the expectations of the event. Covenants help to provide a safe, nurturing environment by asking everyone to agree in advance to respect others, give their best effort, and participate fully in the event.

(10) Advance Notice and Approval by Council on Ministries

A completed activities permit, containing full information about the event including but not limited to:

- What, when, why, where of the activity
- Adult/Child-Youth ratio of activity
- Detailed agenda of activity
- Cost of activity

shall be submitted to Council on Ministries for approval. The completed activity permit shall be submitted 30 to 60 days prior to the event. **Council on Ministries must approve all lock-ins, off site events, overnight trips, etc.**

- (11) Advance Notice to Parents
Activities for children and youth need clear communication with parents prior to the event, with full information about the event, and written parental permission for events specified by the church (lock-ins, off-site events, overnight trips, etc.). Upon approval by Council on Ministries, the activity permit should be presented to parents/youth/children's council at least 30 days prior to the event.
- (12) Drivers of Vehicles for Church Events
All drivers of vehicles transporting children/youth for church or other sponsored events Described herein must be at least 21 years of age and possess a current, valid driver's license, have proof of insurance at the State minimum limits, and not be otherwise disqualified from driving (i.e. under medication and the like).
- (13) Permission for Events Requiring Transportation
Prior written parental (or guardian) permission is required for events requiring transportation to and from the event location. Permission tickets will accompany the traveling group at all times.
- (14) Coed Overnight Activities
Coed overnight activities require male and female leaders without exception.

STAFF/VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS:

All persons seeking to work with children and youth should fulfill these requirements.

- (1) Membership in local congregation
 - a. Must be member for at least 3 months to teach Sunday School
 - b. Exceptions may be made for VBS, community/cooperative events, etc. or with letters of recommendations from: 1) previous pastor/church staff person or, 2) 2 current local congregation member of 6 months or longer.
 - c. Any non-member volunteer will be partnered with a member volunteer.
- (2) Complete all forms, statements, application provided by the local congregation.
- (3) Submit to criminal background check.
- (4) Supply personal references.
- (5) Cite previous relevant experience working with children and youth in churches or other other organizations, as either volunteer or paid staff.
- (6) All applicants should be interviewed (by 2 staff/lay persons who have already been screened and approved) prior to serving in the local congregation. *OR* provide 2 personal reference letters.

- (7) All information generated in this process shall be maintained in strict confidence.
- (8) Persons working with children and youth must attend initial and continual training and education events provided by the church in order to keep informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse and reporting procedures.
- (9) Adults who have been convicted of a crime involving either sexual or physical abuse should not volunteer and will not be permitted to serve in any church sponsored activity or program for children and youth.
- (10) Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of the church family. Individuals who have such a history are encouraged to discuss their desire to work with children and youth with one of the pastoral staff prior to engaging in any volunteer service.
- (11) Any outside organization, group(s) or individual(s) who use any of the facilities of the local congregation on a regular basis, shall sign Indemnification and Release form stating that they are in compliance with this policy.
- (12) Any outside organization, group(s) or individual(s) who do not use the facilities of the local congregation on a regular basis, shall sign Indemnification and Release form stating that they understand and are in compliance with the policies outlined herein, except sections designated by the local congregation.
- (13) However, certified leaders of the Boy's or Girl's Scouts of America shall be subject to their own respective organization's rules and regulations concerning safety of those individuals they are charged with caring for.