

Mount Zion United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuary Policy

One of the most important responsibilities of any local church is to provide a safe place for God to work. That includes creating a space where children and youth are welcomed, accepted, and protected. The following policies and procedures are simply practical steps to protect children and youth, workers, and Mount Zion United Methodist Church (the Church). We have in place a form and plan of action (available in the church office) to report a suspected incident of child abuse.

- 1. The Church shall not knowingly allow any person(s) who has been convicted of, or otherwise adjudicated to be liable for, child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) to work or volunteer to work with children or youth in any Church-sponsored activity.**
2. The Church will obtain written permission to perform a criminal background check from any adult who works or serves on a regular basis with children and/or youth.
3. All adult volunteers who teach, lead, or transport children or youth (ages 0-18) of the Church must have been members of the Church for at least six months and/or attending regularly for at least one year before beginning an assignment. [Adults who do not fall under these criteria may be present with other adults who do meet these criteria.] To transport children or youth, adults must be at least 21 years of age.

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4. Adult volunteers and employees who work with children and youth shall strive to not allow there to be a situation where they are alone (out of plain view) with children or youth. Some applications of this principle include but are not limited to:
 - Classroom settings--two adults present in the class and a roving monitor who randomly, visually checks on classes and/or a video monitoring system. This applies to on-site and includes off-site Church sponsored activities.
 - Confidential discussions--two adults present and/or remain in plain sight but out of earshot of others and/or meet in a location at the Church with an open door or a window with visibility to anyone passing by or arrange to meet in a public location such as a coffee shop.
 - Sleeping arrangements in retreat settings--the Church will strive to have two adults present in the room or parents of children sleeping in the same room with one will be allowed only upon the adult consent to that arrangement in writing by the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child(ren).
 - Transportation--the Church will strive to have two adults in each vehicle and/or all vehicles in visual contact with each other.
5. Adult volunteers and employees with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the Church to keep informed of the Church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
6. Adult volunteers and employees shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate. Supervisors shall follow the plan of action to report any suspected incident of child abuse.