

Safe Sanctuary Policy
Project Crossroads
May 8, 2013

The following are the guidelines that we function under as a mission project within the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church and a General Board of Global Ministries Church and Community Project. This policy is in force for our staff (paid and volunteer) and summer interns during any project function. This is also the policy that any work team shall agree to abide by while serving with us in our ministries in addition to their church's safe sanctuary or equivalent policy.

Definitions

Adult: any person 18 years of age or older

Child: any person under the age of 18

Child Abuse as defined under Child Protective Services:

- a. Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator, which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child
- b. An act or failure to act by a perpetrator, which causes non-accidental serious mental injury or to sexual abuse or sexual exploration of a child
- c. Any recent act, failure to act or series of acts of failures to act by perpetrator, which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child
- d. Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning

Vulnerable Adults: adults whose mental or physical condition makes them susceptible to abuse

Children's Activities: any activity, program or project in which children are involved and under the supervision of adult staff persons or volunteers

Ministry/Mission/Project Team Leader: any person who supervises an activity that involves all ages but includes children in part or as whole of the group, and has direct regular contact with children and must be 21 years of age or older and counted in the "2-adult rule"

Volunteer: any adult who assists in a function of the project and assists with groups containing children under the supervision of a staff person and or team leader, and has direct contact with children and is counted in the "2-adult rule"

Persons Required To Report Child Abuse and Vulnerable Adult Abuse: any persons, who in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession, come into contact with children/vulnerable adults. Such persons include, but are not limited to, medical professionals, school administrators, teachers, social services workers, daycare center workers, mental health professionals, and peace and law enforcement officers.

Screening Procedures

All assigned missionaries are already screened through GBGM in the application process prior to hiring and assigning.

All hired staff shall be required to fill out a Volunteer Screening form that shall include:

- a. Standard contact information
- b. Experience and qualifications for the position
- c. Voluntary disclosure of past criminal history
- d. Waiver of confidentiality allowing the Project Crossroads to secure the background checks necessary for the position being applied for
- e. Listing of three non-related references with contact information

All Summer Interns shall be recommended by letters from their local pastor and the youth leader of the sponsoring church. This recommendation shall confirm that the applicant has no past criminal history and no allegations of child or vulnerable adult abuse.

All forms and letters as well as necessary background checks shall be kept in applicants confidential personnel file.

Supervision

1. Training for all individuals working with children and vulnerable adults will take place to educate about our policies, the procedures for supervision and information on how to identify and report abuse.
2. Minimum supervisory standards will include the "2-adult rule". Two adults will be present at all times with a group of any size that contains children.
3. No children or those 18 or older described as youth participants shall ride with a staff person unless another adult from that group is present in the vehicle.
4. At no time shall children or those 18 or older described as youth participants ride with a summer intern.
5. Each group that participates in our ministries are requested to have their own safe sanctuary or equivalent policy and abide by that policy as well as ours while serving with Project Crossroads.
6. When work teams are assigned to projects in which they will be at a person's/family's home, the project shall check the sexual predator list to make sure that the residence does not have someone living there who is on the list. If that is the case that person/family will be removed from the list for volunteer teams containing children and youth or anyone under 21 years of age.
7. A release shall be signed by the parents of children or by those over 18 years old must be obtained in order to use pictures for promotional purposes whether in print or electronic (power point presentations) forms.

Reporting

Once an incident of child or vulnerable adult abuse occurs or allegations of such are made, it is crucial that it be dealt with speedily and in a clear manner.

1. The staff or volunteer who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported is required to report the incident immediately to the person in charge of the function.
2. The person in charge of the function in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information, such as name of alleged victim and their address and family information as well as the name of the alleged abuser.
3. Where possible the director or appropriate person in authority is to be informed immediately before or subsequent to the making of a report.
4. Upon completion of gathering information of the alleged abuse the director will contact the appropriate authorities in a timely manner.
5. Any person who is the object of the report will be required to refrain from all functions involving children or vulnerable adults until the incident report is resolved.
6. In any removal of or restriction of a person from such functions involving children or vulnerable adults, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.

Response Plan

A quick, compassionate, and unified response to an alleged incident is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse, the entire staff and adult volunteers of that function shall be at the service of all official investigating agencies.

1. The director or designee is the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements should be directed to the Director.
2. In response to all allegations of abuse, the person in charge of the function shall make the initial contact with the Director.
3. If the allegation is against a staff person, summer intern or volunteer, the custodial parent or care taker will be notified immediately and a face-to-face meeting will be scheduled. This may include the leader of volunteer team if child is a part of a team serving with Project Crossroads in our ministries.
4. In all cases, the Director's support will be available to all persons involved with the incident as indicated.