

GARNER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Safe Sanctuary Procedures for Ensuring Child and Youth Safety

The purpose of this procedure is to make Garner United Methodist Church a safe place for all children, staff and volunteers.

I. Definitions

A. Children and Youth: Persons in age from birth through 17. 18-year-olds are considered adults.

B. Child Abuse or Neglect: At a minimum, any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare. (The *minimum* definition given in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.)

1. Sexual abuse: Rape; or the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct.
2. Physical Abuse: Non-accidental physical injury or patterns of injury to the child or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child.
3. Emotional Abuse: Expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child that create serious injury or psychological damage to the emotional stability of the child.
4. Neglect: Any serious disregard for a juvenile's supervision, care, or discipline on the part of the parent, guardian, custodian or caretaker.

C. Staff member: Any adult, paid or unpaid, working in a supervisory capacity with children/youth.

D. Church-sponsored Activities: Any activity that is conducted under the auspices of and/or endorsed by Garner United Methodist Church that primarily involves children and/or youth aged birth to 17 years old.

E. Outside Groups: Any group whose activity involving children or youth 17 years old and younger that does not fall under the responsibility of a Garner United Methodist Church age-level director and/or coordinator. Each outside group, including those currently using Garner United Methodist Church facilities, will be identifiable by submitting the Trustees' revised "Building Use Application Form," which will be kept in the church office files.

II. Activity Supervision

A. 'Two-Staff Rule': Requires that no fewer than two staff members be present at all times in the supervising of children and youth during a program or event. In the event that multiple Bible studies, programs, and/or Sunday school classes have only one staff member present or two persons related to each other, there must be another staff person who will monitor the activity; for example, by looking in on or entering each room.

B. 'Five-Year Rule': In the event that a young adult (18 or older) wishes to volunteer with the youth program (ages 12-17), the volunteer must be at least 5 years older than the oldest youth in the group.

C. 'No Supervisors under the Age of Eighteen Rule'

1. Paid and unpaid staff and volunteers serving with children/youth will be at least 18 years of age unless directly supervised by an adult at least 23 years of age.
2. If someone under 18 would like to volunteer, there will be an unrelated staff member present with him or her.

D. Classroom Windows: Classroom windows will have full visual access. Room decorations will not cover or obstruct window openings.

E. Identification

1. All staff members will wear identifying name badges.
2. Names and photographs of minors will not be displayed together in public spaces, such as door fronts or bulletin boards.

F. Restroom Guidelines

1. Preschool and young children's classes should take scheduled restroom breaks. Two staff members will escort a group of children to the restroom.
2. If only one child needs to use the restroom, one staff member may escort the child and prop the outside door open.
 - a. The staff member should then remain outside the door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom.
 - b. The staff member may call the child's name if he or she is taking longer than seems necessary.
 - c. Staff members should never be alone with a child in an

unsupervised restroom and should never go into a cubicle/bathroom with a child and shut the door.

- d. If a child needs assistance, a staff member may enter the cubicle/bathroom only if a second unrelated staff member has visible contact.
 - e. If not possible, another staff member should be informed of the situation and notified when leaving with a child and when returning.
 - f. When using bathrooms in the classroom make sure the door is slightly open and follow the above guidelines.
3. School-aged children and youth procedures:
- a. Staff members should be aware of any child who leaves the classroom to go to the restroom. If possible use a buddy system with 2 children going together. If the pair is gone for an abnormal amount of time, a staff member should go and check to ensure the safety of the child(ren).

G. Diaper Changing: Area should be located where at least one other unrelated adult/staff member can view the changing process.

1. Follow the below procedure
- a. Put on gloves.
 - b. Place baby on changing pad at diaper-changing area.
 - c. Remove soiled diaper and place in plastic bag.
 - d. Follow parents' instructions (as per doctor's written orders) regarding care of diaper area (powder, ointment, etc.).
 - e. Put clean diaper on baby.
 - f. Clean diaper-changing area with wipes and place in plastic bag.
 - g. Remove gloves without touching the exterior surfaces and put in plastic bag.
 - h. Dispose of plastic bag in trash.
 - i. Wash hands.
 - j. Each diaper change requires a new clean pair of gloves.

H. Special Events:

1. Parents and/or guardians will be notified at least one week prior to any off-site activities in which the child would leave the Church property.
2. "Parental Consent" and "Emergency Procedure Forms" must be completed, signed, and kept on file.
3. Forms must be kept in the leaders' possession during all trips and events.
4. In the event of an overnight trip, special accommodations must be made.
 - a. Hotel & Dorm Rooms: In this setting youth will be assigned to gender-specific rooms and supervising adults assigned to separate rooms. When possible, there will be one adult room between two youth rooms. Whenever possible, the rooms will open to the interior of the building rather than to the outside.
 - b. Camp Settings: If the camp has large sleeping quarters with a large number of beds, children/youth will share the same rooms with same-gender adults. When this occurs, there must be more than one unrelated adult in the room/cabin. At no time should an adult be left alone with one youth in the lodging facility.
5. All trips will be supervised by a designated program director, who may be either a paid or volunteer staff person serving as the director of the event.

I. Transportation:

1. All drivers transporting a child/youth during an activity must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance coverage.
2. Two unrelated staff members shall be in the front seats of each vehicle transporting children. Youth (ages 11-17) may be transported by one adult.
3. When church vans are utilized, drivers must be at least 25 years of age. They must submit a copy of a current driver's license to the designated church staff member at least two weeks prior to event in order to be processed and approved by the church's insurance company.

4. Children under 8 years of age or less than 80 lbs must be properly secured in a car seat, as mandated by NC state regulations.

J. Physical Contact

1. Should be age and developmentally-appropriate.
2. Appropriate Touching: the following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love.
 - a. Putting an arm around the shoulder when comforting, quieting, or greeting is an appropriate way to hug/contact side-to side.
 - b. Light touches to a hand, shoulder, or back when offering encouragement.
 - c. Adult leaders shall not initiate a hug and shall be the one to end the hug.
3. Inappropriate Touching: the following forms of contact shall be avoided:
 - a. Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
 - b. Extended hugging and tickling, or prolonged physical contact of any kind.
 - c. Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
 - d. Being alone with a youth or younger child.
 - e. Giving a full contact, body-to-body hug.

III. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers: When an allegation of child abuse is made against a staff member, volunteer or another child, the "Crisis Response Plan" will be followed.

A. Crisis Response Plan

1. Notify the Event Director and the Pastoral Staff.
2. Ensure the child's safety until the parent's arrive.
3. With dignity and without accusation, remove the accused from further involvement with children/youth.
4. Be prepared to cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by

the Crisis Response Team, law enforcement officials, and/or child protective services.

5. Complete form entitled "Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse."

IV. Health Matters

A. Infectious Control Guidelines

1. Wear disposable gloves when:
 - a. Accompanying a child to the toilet.
 - b. Changing diapers.
 - c. In potential contact with blood (i.e., nosebleed).
 - d. If an emergency precludes use of gloves when in contact with blood, thoroughly wash with soap and water.
 - e. Change gloves between each new child contact.
2. Wash hands:
 - a. After accompanying a child to the toilet.
 - b. After changing a diaper.
 - c. After assisting a child with wiping his or her nose.
 - d. Before food preparation.
3. Have a child wash hands:
 - a. After using the restroom.
 - b. After contact with nasal secretion.
 - c. Before eating.
4. Disinfect toys if a child is seen putting it in his or her mouth.
5. Use disinfecting solution to:
 - a. Wipe spills.
 - b. Clean diaper-changing station.

- c. Clean soiling from blood, urine, or feces.
 - d. Clean all equipment after each session.
- 6. Place the following in covered trash cans:
 - a. Diapers.
 - b. Trash contaminated with blood, urine, or feces.
 - c. Used rubber gloves turned inside out upon removal.

B. Clean Hands

1. Children and adults should be taught and reminded of the proper hand washing procedures.
2. Soap and warm water are adequate as long as twenty seconds is taken to wash all hand surfaces, including in between fingers.
3. Drying hands with disposable towels is best. Use the towel to turn off the faucet, and then discard the towel in the appropriate receptacle.
4. Teaching children to sing the ABC song or "Jesus Loves Me" while washing will help them to wash long enough.
5. Adults should be reminded to wash before eating, after restroom use, and after diaper changing.

V. Safety

A. Precautions

1. All teachers/leaders/volunteers shall wear staff identification name tags.
2. A staff member (paid or volunteer) or child with a communicable disease must take a leave of absence until s/he is no longer contagious.
3. Children/youth should be supervised at all times by staff members.
4. During any event with children/youth present, there should be at least one adult on site who is current in CPR and First AID certification.
5. First Aid kits are stored in the cabinets of each room on the children's wing of the church, the kitchenette on the adult wing,

and in church vehicles.

6. No drug or medication may be administered to any child/youth without specific written instructions from a parent or guardian. All medication must be in original container.
7. Parents will be contacted to pick up children/youth with a fever or other obvious signs of an infectious illness.
8. Children should only be released to their parents or a parent-approved adult.

B. Incidents

1. All injuries should be documented on an "Incident Report Form" and placed in an Incident Report binder kept in the church office. The blank forms are located in the office.
2. Parents should be made aware of any injury a child receives while in the care of the church and should sign off on the incident report form.

C. Playground

1. The gate should be closed at all times when children are on the playground.
2. A first aid kit must be taken out to the playground with each group.
3. The fenced-in area has been specifically designed for children __ years old and younger. Older children/youth should not be allowed in this area. A staff member should be in the area with the young children.

VI. Discipline

A. Defined: Discipline is guiding the behavior of young children in order to teach self-control and the necessary language skills for the child to resolve problems independently.

B. Overview

1. Discipline procedures should emphasize positive techniques.
2. Children are not to be treated in a punitive manner.
3. Garner United Methodist Church does NOT endorse physical (corporal) punishment.

C. Techniques

1. Reward good behavior with encouragement and affirmation.
2. Remind the student of proper classroom behavior/rules and expectations.
3. Redirect the student's attention and focus.
4. Remove the student from the group using a time-out/thinking chair in the classroom, in full view of teachers. Time-out minutes should not exceed the years of the child's age.
5. Language skills are taught in order to help children understand how to relate to one another and to solve problems.
6. Extreme discipline problems should be discussed with the parents of the child and with whomever is in charge.
7. Utilize an "OOOPS" form to ensure communication between the child, teacher and parental support.



North Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church

Guidelines for Churches on Responding to Immigration Enforcement Actions (Immigration and Customs Enforcement/ICE)

Please note that these guidelines are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice or direction to take any particular action. If you or someone in your congregation needs legal assistance, we encourage you to connect with a qualified immigration attorney.

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Introduction

As people of faith, we know that when one part of the body suffers, we all suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26). Today, we are suffering alongside our siblings who are living in fear and uncertainty. As United Methodists, we are committed to standing with those at risk. These guidelines seek to be a resource to United Methodist Churches as they faithfully respond to the needs of our siblings, who are the most vulnerable during this time. The Book of Resolutions states in its “Welcoming the Migrant to the U.S.” section (4271), “To refuse to welcome migrants to this country—and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the migrant community in the United States is demonized by members of Congress and the media—is complicity to sin...” The North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church is committed to upholding the dignity and rights of all people, including immigrants within our communities. Given the shifting landscape of immigration enforcement, churches may find themselves confronted with visits from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This document provides guidance to help churches prepare for and respond to such encounters in a manner consistent with legal protections and our faith-based commitment to justice, hospitality, and love to all people.

1. Understanding ICE Authority and Church Property

- **Know Your Rights:** Churches have the right to control access to their property. ICE normally **cannot** enter non-public areas without a **judicial warrant** signed by a judge or express permission.
- **Public vs. Private Spaces:**
 - Public spaces (lobbies, narthex, parking lots) may normally be entered by ICE without a judicial warrant or express permission.
 - Private spaces (sanctuary, offices, classrooms) should be clearly marked as **"Private - No Unauthorized Access."**
 - If a church operates a preschool or private school, the **entire building and campus** should be treated as private.
- **Sanctuary Status:** Federal law does not officially recognize places of worship as “sanctuary” spaces. 8 U.S. Code § 1324 prohibits churches from concealing, harboring, or shielding from detection undocumented immigrants. However, churches have the legal right to control entry and may refuse access to ICE without a judicial warrant.

2. Immediate Response if ICE Comes to a Church

A. Designate a Response Team

Each church should identify a **designated response team** responsible for handling ICE encounters. This team should include:

- A **primary point of contact** (e.g., pastor, administrator, lay leader)
- Legal counsel (or access to an immigration attorney)
- A designated communications spokesperson

B. Initial Contact with ICE Agents

1. **Remain calm** and instruct all staff/volunteers not to speak to ICE agents without the designated response person present.
 2. **Ask for identification:** Confirm the agents are from ICE (not local law enforcement).
 3. **Ask if they have a warrant ([View the Different Types of Warrants](#)):**
 - **If they do not have a warrant**, you can say:
"This is private property. We do not consent to any searches.
Please leave unless you have a judicial warrant."
 - **If they present a warrant**, check for the following:
 - **Judicial warrant (signed by a judge)** → ICE may enter private spaces to conduct a search.
 - **Administrative warrant (signed by ICE, not a judge)** → Normally does **not** allow entry into private spaces.
 4. **Do not obstruct ICE but you are not required to assist them:**
 - You are not legally required to help ICE locate individuals or answer questions.
 - Staff and volunteers should **exercise their right to remain silent** and refuse to sign any documents without legal counsel.
 5. **Record the encounter:**
 - If possible, take photos/videos from a safe distance.
 - Document the names of ICE agents and details of their visit.
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3. Legal Considerations & Protection Measures

- **Educate Your Congregation:** Conduct Know-Your-Rights training for congregants, particularly those who are undocumented or at risk.
 - **Secure Church Records:** Keep sensitive documents (e.g., membership records) in a locked and private space.
 - **Establish Relationships with Legal Resources:** Maintain contact with immigrant advocacy groups and pro bono attorneys.
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4. Supporting Immigrant Families in the Church

Churches can offer support in non-obstructive ways, including:

- **Providing safe gathering spaces:** While churches should be cautious in publicly declaring "sanctuary" due to legal uncertainties (see 8 U.S. Code § 1324), they can offer support services such as legal aid connections and pastoral care.
 - **Assisting with emergency preparedness:** Encourage families at risk of deportation to create an emergency plan.
 - **Accompanying impacted families:** If a church member is detained, assist their family in finding legal support and pastoral care.
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5. Crisis Communication Plan

If ICE conducts an enforcement action at a church:

1. **Request Support and Connectional Response:** Let your DS know about the incident and consult with them about next steps.
2. **Do not issue public statements immediately (Including social media):** Your response team discerns in consultation with your DS before any public statements.
3. **Ensure consistency in messaging.** Designate **one spokesperson** to communicate with media and law enforcement.
4. **Provide care:** Reassure affected families and the congregation through prayer, legal resources, and community support.

Changelog

3/10/25

Initial release.