

**Jackson United Methodist Church  
Jackson, Georgia**

**Safe Sanctuary Policy for Year 2023**

**(Administrative Council Approved August 23, 2023)**

**(Trustees Committee Approved June 27, 2023)**

**Introduction**

Jackson United Methodist Church believes that the spiritual, emotional and physical well being of our children, youth and vulnerable adults is imperative. We must do all that we can to nurture and protect them. This policy is intended to provide a guide for that protection, as well as the protection of our workers and the church. This policy is enacted to insure that the parents, members, volunteers and staff of Jackson United Methodist have a clear understanding of what the policy and procedures are regarding the safety of our children, youth and vulnerable adults. Members of the community using the facilities will be provided a copy and must abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policy.

**Supervision of the Policy**

The Trustees will appoint a Safe Sanctuary Committee to be responsible for the oversight of the Safe Sanctuary Policy. The committee will include one trustee member, pastor, children’s director, youth director and at least one church member. The policy must be reviewed by the Safe Sanctuary Committee annually in the spring and re-approved by Trustees and the Administrative Council by August and presented at Charge Conference in October. With the approval of the Administrative Council and the Trustees, these policies may be altered at any time.

**Policy Enforcement**

The Church Staff and Primary Workers are charged with enforcing this policy. Any violation of these policies or persistent failure to follow this policy can result in immediate dismissal, disciplinary actions or reassignment to another area of work at the discretion of the Administrative Council and/or Staff Parish Relations Committee. Anyone who suspects this policy is not being enforced should bring it to the attention of the person who is deemed “person in charge” of the specific program or event. This person must take immediate action on this violation. All reports must be brought before the Senior Pastor or the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee immediately.

## **Classification of the Workers**

For the purpose of this policy, JUMC uses the following classifications of its workers:

1. **Primary Workers:** Paid staff and interns and volunteer age level coordinators are classified as Primary workers. Must be at least 18 years of age. Primary workers have the responsibility for program planning and implementation; interaction with and supervision of assigned children, youth, and vulnerable adults; and supervision of assigned Secondary and Special Occasion Workers.
2. **Secondary Workers:** Volunteers who have occasional contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults are classified as Secondary workers. Must be at least 18 years of age and work under the supervision of a Primary worker. Examples are parents or other adults teaching a class or helpers in classes such as Sunday school.
3. **Special Occasion Workers:** Special Occasion Workers are volunteers who help for special occasions such as VBS. Special Occasion Workers must work under the supervision of a Primary worker. If the Special Occasion Worker is under 18 years of age, must be at least three years older than the children or youth with whom they will be working and must work in pairs.

Any person wishing to be considered as for a Primary, Secondary, or Special Occasion Worker position must have been involved in the life of the church for six months. The Senior Pastor can waive this requirement on a case by case basis.

## **Background Checks**

All Primary, Secondary, and Special Occasion Workers who are at least 18 years old and work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults must undergo a national criminal background check every five years. These workers must complete the process through the church office. Any person who drives children, youth, or vulnerable adults in church owned or rented vehicles must have a background check that includes their driving history.

The results of all background checks go directly to the Senior Pastor or SPR Chairperson for review. Any resulting report must show no drug related or violent offenses. Any other serious violations must be reviewed for consideration. The Senior Pastor/SPR Chairperson can refer cases to the SPR Committee if they deem necessary. All results will remain confidential and will be filed with the SPR Committee's personnel files in the office. Workers will not be allowed to work until the background check has been completed and the report has been cleared by the Senior Pastor or SPR Chairperson.

## Training

Safe Sanctuary Policy Training-All new workers covered under the Safe Sanctuary Policy must complete training on the policy prior to beginning work. All workers must take a refresher course on the policy every two years. Any member of the Safe Sanctuary Committee or designated Trustee may lead this training.

First Aid and CPR Training-This training is recommended for all workers. It is the worker's responsibility to take classes and to provide the office with proof of training.

### Records of Background Checks and Training

Through the Administrative Assistant's office, the Safe Sanctuary Committee will maintain a list of trained workers showing the date of training on Safe Sanctuary Policy, First Aid, and CPR and date of background check (date only, not results) The committee will review these both in the spring during policy review and in August prior to submitting updated policy to Charge Conference in October.

### Minimum Worker to Child/Youth Ratios and Rules

#### Minimum Ratios (adults:child/youth):

- a. Infants: 2:2
- b. Toddlers to 18 months: 2:3
- c. 19-23 months: 2:5
- d. 2-3 years: 2:6
- e. 4-5 years: 2:8
- f. 1-3rd graders: 2:10
- g. 4-5th graders: 2:10
- h. 6th-8th graders: 2:10
- i. 9th-12th graders: 2:10

To meet ratios:

Two Adult Rule: Two **unrelated** Adult (at least 18 years old) Primary/Secondary Workers should be present. Related pairs only count as **one**. If an Adult Special Occasion Worker is used, must work under the supervision of a Primary Worker. If a Special Occasion Worker under 18 years old is used, must be at least three years older than children or youth working with and must work in pairs under the supervision of a Primary Worker.

Floater: In the event that only one adult Primary/Secondary Worker is present, a Primary Worker Floater must be identified and must move between open door rooms. If there is only one teacher and one child in a class and a floater is serving as the second person, the teacher and student must join another class near in age or go to a public location.

The classroom door must remain open at all times unless there is a window in the door. If there is a window in the door, it must remain uncovered with no decorations at all times.

All one-on-one counseling with a child, youth or vulnerable adult will be done with the door open, with a glass-paneled door, or in a public place. If it is at all possible, it must be done with another adult close by but not necessarily within hearing distance.

## **Accidents**

The Worker in charge should provide first aid or call for emergency care as needed. The worker should contact the church staff to report all accidents. The Worker in charge should contact the parent immediately in emergency situations. If not an emergency, Worker in charge should notify the parent in a timely manner. Ex. at the end of the event. Cuts, falls or incidents that cause harm are considered accidents. The worker should complete an Accident Report Form (Appendix 1) for all accidents and submit it to the office in a timely manner.

## **Transportation**

Transportation to and from activities held at the church is not the church or church staff's responsibility.

Church approved workers may provide transportation to and from activities held away from the church with parental approval. When there is an offsite trip, there must be at least one adult worker of each gender represented. Youth will not be instructed by church leaders to drive other youth. Church approved drivers must have a valid driver's license, insurance card, and background check including driving history on file in the Church office. The background check will go directly to the Senior Pastor or SPR Chairperson for review. (See Background Checks)

Any person convicted of the following will not be approved.

1. Alcohol or drug related offenses.
2. Violent offenses.
3. Driver license or registration revoked, suspended or restricted.
4. Reckless or careless driving
5. Leaving the scene of an accident.
6. Other convictions which may put children, youth, and vulnerable adults at risk.
7. Other convictions which would cause church insurance to be cancelled.

## **Offsite Trips and Sleeping Arrangements**

When there is an offsite trip, there must be at least one adult worker of each gender represented. The Primary Worker in charge will provide permission forms which must be completed by the parent prior to the trip. On church sponsored overnight trips all youth, children, and vulnerable adults will be assigned to same-sex rooms. At no time will adults sleep in the same bed as a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. The Primary Worker in charge of the trip will evaluate the situation and make the best possible decision for the safety of the attendees. It is recommended that someone with First Aid and CPR training go on offsite trips.

## **Social Media/Electronic Communications/Photos**

Web communication is becoming more and more common and important. E-mail, texts and other electronic communication from adults sent to children, youth, and vulnerable adults should be limited to information related to the church ministries. Another church related adult should be included in these communications. Email addresses should be protected. If allergy signs are posted, they should not show the names. Written permission must be received from parents before posting photos on a church sponsored web site or social media page. If a worker becomes aware of Cyberbullying related to the group, it must be reported to the Senior Pastor and the Worker in charge.

## **Parent and Family Communication and Education**

The approval and revisions of this policy will be communicated to the church at large with special emphasis on communicating to parents of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Copies of the policy will be available for all interested parties through the office.

From time to time educational events will be made available to parents and other interested parties. These events may provide information on the Safe Sanctuary Policy and any other information that will enhance parenting skills. Parents will be provided with advance notice of all regular scheduled and special activities for the children, youth and vulnerable adults.

## **Reporting Abuse**

Jackson United Methodist Church regards any form of abuse and evidence thereof as unacceptable and has a strict procedure for reporting. The Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services (DFACS) defines child abuse and applies the same definition to elder abuse.

**Physical abuse** is injury to a child under age 18, by a parent or caretaker, which results in bruises, welts, fractures, burns, cuts or internal injuries.

**Neglect** is the failure of the parent or caretaker to see that the child is adequately supervised, fed, clothed, housed or provided with medical care.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when a parent or other adult uses a child under age 18 for sexual stimulation

Under Georgia law, ministry leaders, staff members and volunteers are mandatory reporters of child abuse. The law requires that reports of alleged child abuse be made no later than 24 hours after becoming aware. If a Worker at JUMC becomes aware of an abuse allegation, he or she must report it to the Senior Pastor and Worker in charge **immediately** followed by a written report (Appendix 2). The Senior Pastor or designee will handle reporting to Butts County DFACS within 24 hours. Also, the Senior Pastor and SPR Chairperson will handle any report to law enforcement and the District Superintendent. Should the press or TV become involved, only the Senior Pastor should respond. Do not try to interview the victim. Leave that process to the proper professional, who is better qualified.

### **Vulnerable Adults**

Vulnerable Adults are individuals over the age of 18 with mental or physical disabilities or of advanced age.

Vulnerable Adults may need special accommodations to be able to participate in the life of the church. Additionally, we must be vigilant for signs of abuse in Vulnerable Adults and if seen must follow the process outlined in **Reporting Abuse, Appendix 2**. DFACS has a division with responsibility for supervising elder care.

### **Registered Sex Offenders**

Known registered sex offenders who wish to worship at Jackson United Methodist will not be allowed in any areas occupied by children, youth or vulnerable adults other than the general worship. The person who has been convicted of sexual crime may only use the upstairs restrooms above the Fellowship Hall of the church. This person must meet with the pastor in advance and sign a covenant agreement stipulating where and when that person may be in the building and which restroom he/she may use.

**Appendix 1**

**Jackson United Methodist Church**

**ACCIDENT REPORT FOR**

**Please print all information**

**Date of accident:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of accident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of person injured:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address of injured person** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of accident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent or guardian of person injured:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone of parent or guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the accident and Action Taken:**

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**Signature of Person Completing Report/Date:**

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**Jackson United Methodist Church**  
**Report of Suspected/ Alleged Incident of Abuse**  
**of a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult**

**Section 1: Initial Report to be completed by Worker**

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of abuse:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Victim's name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Victim's age and date of birth (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date/ Place of initial report from victim: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Victim's statement: (give your detailed summary): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of person accused of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Relationship of accused to victim: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Date/Time Reported to Senior Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Worker/Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2: To be completed by Senior Pastor or Designee**

**1. Call to Butts County DFACS**

Date/ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Needed Action: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Call to Parents of Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult as needed**

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Needed Action: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Call to Jackson City Police or Butts County Sheriff as needed**

Date/ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Needed Action: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Report to District Superintendent or Other as needed**

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Needed Action: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### Jackson United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Quick Reference Guide Sheet Jesus says, "Feed my lambs" & "Care for my sheep". (John 21: 16-17)

1. **Training:** All new workers covered under the Safe Sanctuary Policy must complete training on the policy before begin work. All workers must complete refresher training on the policy every two years. Workers 18 or over must complete background check every five years. CPR/First Aid classes are recommended. Worker's responsibility to take classes and provide proof of training.
2. **6 Months:** Time need to be involved in the life of the church before serving as a worker.
3. **Classification of Workers:** Primary Worker-at least 18 years old, coordinate, plan, supervise. Secondary Worker-at least 18 years old, occasional volunteer worker, under supervision of Primary Worker. Special Occasion Worker-Volunteer for special occasions like VBS, if under 18 years old must be at least three years older than children or youth work with, under supervision of Primary Worker, work in pairs.
4. **Minimum Ratios (adults:child/youth):**
  - a. Infants: 2:2
  - b. Toddlers to 18 months: 2:3
  - c. 19-23 months: 2:5
  - d. 2-3 years: 2:6
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5. **Two Adult Rule:** Two **unrelated** Adult Primary/Secondary Workers should be present. Related pairs only count as **one**. If Adult Special Occasion Worker is used, must work under supervision of Primary Worker. If Special Occasion Worker is under 18, must be at least three years older than children or youth working with, must work in pairs, under supervision of a Primary Worker.
6. **Floater:** In event only one adult Primary/Secondary Worker is present, a Primary Worker Floater must be identified and must move between open door rooms. If only one teacher and one child in a class and a floater is serving as the second person, the teacher and student must join another class near in age or go to a public location.
7. **Window or Open Door:** Ministry is to occur in open view to hallways.
8. **Social Media/Electronic Communication/Photos:** E-mail, texts, other electronic communication from adults sent to children, youth, and vulnerable adults should be limited to information related to the children and youth ministries. (include another church related adult) You need written permission to post pictures of children and youth on a church website or social media page. If become aware of Cyberbullying related to the group, report incident to the Senior Pastor and Worker in charge.
9. **Report all accidents:** Contact church staff and fill out a report on any cuts, falls or incidents that cause harm. (attached Appendix 1)
10. **Report all abuse:** (attached Appendix 2) Report all to the Staff Member in charge and the Senior Pastor
  - a. Physical Abuse-injury to a child under 18, by parent or caretaker, which results in bruises, welts, fractures, burns, cuts or internal injuries.
  - b. Neglect-failure of the parents or caretaker to see that the child is adequately supervised, fed, clothed, housed or provided with medical care.
  - c. Sexual Abuse-occurs when a parent or other adult uses a child under age 18 for sexual stimulation.

**Our Safe Sanctuary policy protects everyone. Let's all be on the same page!**

**Jackson United Methodist Church**

**Jackson, Georgia**

**Safe Sanctuary Policy Agreement**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**I participated in training for the Safe Sanctuary Policy and agree to follow the policy.**

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

