

Jackson United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuary Quick Reference Guide Sheet

1. Safe Sanctuary training (**every 2 years**) and background checks (**every 5 years**) are required for all adults supervising children, youth and vulnerable adults. CPR/First Aid is recommended.
2. **6 Months:** Time involved in the life of the church before volunteering w/ children/youth.
3. **At least 21 Years Old & 5 Years Older:** Required to supervise children and youth. Youth assistants and interns can be “helpers” with an adult present and approved by the appropriate staff person.
4. **Two Adult Rule:** Two unrelated adults with children, youth & vulnerable adults present.
5. **Floater:** Moves between open door rooms when only one adult is present.
6. **Minimum Ratios (adults:child/youth):**
 - a. Infants: 1:2
 - b. Toddlers to 18 months: 1:3
 - c. 19-23 months: 1:5
 - d. 2-3 years: 1:6
 - e. 4-5 years: 1:8
 - f. 1-3rd graders: 1:10
 - g. 4-5th graders: 1:10
 - h. 6th-8th graders: 1:10
 - i. 9th-12th graders: 1:10
7. **Window or Open Door:** Ministry is to occur in open view to hallways.
8. **Permission to post:** You need permission to post pictures of children and youth on a church website or social media page.
9. **Social Media/Texts Communication:** E-mail and texts from adults sent to youth and children should be limited to information related to youth and children ministries.
10. **Watch for Cyberbullying:** posting of insults and hurtful comments on social networking sites.
11. **Report all accidents:** Contact church staff and fill out a report on any cuts, falls or incidents that cause harm.
12. **Report all abuse...**the definition of abuse includes:
 - a. The deliberate or intentional bodily harm done to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult that is non-accidental.
 - b. Endangering an individual’s health, safety, or welfare.
 - c. The regular, intentional physical, sexual or psychological violation of an individual to appeal to a higher authority or power.
 - d. Report all concerns to the supervising staff member and/or senior pastor.
13. *Exceptions* can be made by the Senior Pastor and/or Staff Parish Relations Committee.
14. **Our Safe Sanctuaries policy protects everyone. Let’s all be on the same page!**
15. **Jesus says, “Feed my lambs” & “Care for my sheep”.** (John 21:16-17)

* Approved by Administrative Council on April 25, 2023

**Jackson United Methodist Church
Jackson, Georgia
Safe Sanctuary Policy for Year 2023**

(Administrative Council Approved April 25, 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 our children, youth and vulnerable adults. 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 policies and procedures are regarding the safety of our children, youth and vulnerable adults. The leadership of Jackson United Methodist requests the cooperation of all in our church, as they must abide by the guidelines of this policy. Members of the community using the facilities will be provided a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy.

Policy Standards and General Christian Moral Standard

Staff and volunteers who work in any area of children and youth ministries or with vulnerable adults at Jackson United Methodist Church are required to adhere to these policies and standards as moral Christians.

Supervision of Children, Youth Workers and Vulnerable Adults

The church staff and volunteer age level coordinators who supervise children and youth workers and workers with vulnerable adults 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.

Supervision of the Safe Sanctuary

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. These policies govern all activities held by the church that involve children and youth under the age of 18, any adult with a mental age under 18 or any vulnerable adult.

These policies 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.

Classification of the Workers

Jackson United Methodist uses the following classifications of its workers:

1. **Primary Workers:** Paid staff working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults and volunteer age level coordinators are classified as primary workers and will be required to meet "primary worker" responsibilities. Primary workers have the primary responsibility for, interaction with and greater access to youth, children, and vulnerable adults. A primary worker must be a minimum of 18 years of age. Primary workers are staff, age level coordinators, and paid interns.
2. **Secondary Workers:** Secondary workers are volunteers who have occasional contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults. These persons work with supervision of a primary worker. A secondary worker must be a minimum of 18 years of age. 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 in VBS and other special occasions. These workers may be adolescents. Special Occasion Workers who are adolescents must always work under the leadership of a primary worker and must always work in twos. All adolescent Special Occasion workers must be at least three years older than the children or youth with whom they will be working.

Guidelines for Volunteers

Any person wishing to work with youth, children, or vulnerable adults must have been a member of the church or have been a steady visitor for a minimum of six months before being allowed to volunteer unless supervised by an approved volunteer. This policy can be waived only by the Senior Pastor, on a case by case basis, when needed.

Background Checks

Any primary worker or volunteer working with the youth, children, or vulnerable adults of Jackson United Methodist must undergo a national criminal background check. The report must show no drug related or violent offenses or they will not be allowed to become a worker. Any serious violations must be reviewed by the Senior Pastor and the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee for consideration before being allowed to work with Children, youth or vulnerable adults. They can refer to the S-P R Committee if they deem necessary. Any information within a background check must be kept confidential by those members. Workers will not be allowed to chaperone any event off of church grounds until the background check has been completed and the report has been cleared by the Senior Pastor or the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee. A primary worker awaiting results may participate with on site activities as long as they are supervised by another primary worker. A new background check must be done at least every five (5) years. The Safe Sanctuary Committee will maintain a list of volunteers trained, their date of training and date of background check in the administrative assistant's office. The committee will review this list both in the spring during policy review and in August prior to submitting updated policy to Charge Conference in October.

Any person who drives children, youth, or vulnerable adults in church owned vehicles must have a background check that includes their driving history.

The results of all background checks will go directly to the Senior Pastor or SPR Chairperson for review. The results of all background checks will remain confidential and filed with the SPR Committee's personnel files.

First Aid and CPR Training

Since the safety of our children, youth and vulnerable adults is a top priority, every primary worker is encouraged to be trained in both First Aid and CPR. All program staff must be trained in First Aid and CPR and nursery workers must be certified in infant CPR as well. The church will hold training classes once a year and it is the worker's responsibility to sign up for that class or a comparable class at another location. All program staff and nursery workers will be required to renew their certificates every two years or by the expiration date of their certificate.

Annual Orientation/Training

All new primary workers must attend a Safe Sanctuary orientation/training. The church will provide an orientation and refresher course that will provide information on child, youth and elder abuse and explain any changes made to the Safe Sanctuary Policy. Any member of the Safe Sanctuary Committee or designated Trustee may lead this orientation/training. This may or may not be held in conjunction with First Aid and CPR training. **All primary workers must take a refresher course every two years.**

Worker and Classroom Rules

There must be two workers in a classroom when there is a child, youth or vulnerable adult present or else there must be a floater walking the halls on a regular basis. Married couples only count as one unit, thus requiring another adult to be present to meet the recommended ratios. 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 at all times. No decorations will cover the window glass. If there is only one teacher and one child in a class and a floater serving as the second person, the student and teacher will join another class near in age or go to a public location.

All one-on-one counseling with a child or youth 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.

Transportation

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

Church approved volunteers may provide transportation to and from activities held away from the church. 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 directors or leaders to drive other youth. Church approved volunteer drivers must have a valid driver's license and an insurance card on file in the Church office.

Drivers of Church Vehicles and transporting people for church activities must not have had any of the following violations:

Any driver convicted of the following in the preceding 36 months will not be allowed to transport.

1. Any violation involving alcohol or drugs.
2. Negligent homicide or vehicular manslaughter.
3. Leaving the scene of an accident.
4. Fleeing or eluding a police officer.
5. Reckless or careless driving.
6. Driver license or registration suspension or revocation due to multiple violations.
7. Driving with a suspended or revoked driver license or registration.
8. Drag racing or racing on roadways.
9. "Super Speeder" under Georgia Law or more than 3 speeding violations.

Sleeping Arrangements

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 youth or child. The primary worker in charge of the trip will evaluate the situation and make the best possible decision for the safety of the youth, children, or vulnerable adults.

Parent and Family Communication and Education

The approval of this policy will be communicated to the church at large with special emphasis on communicating to all parents of our children and youth. Copies of the policy will be available for all parents and other interested parties. A copy of the policy will be given to all new members who request it. Any revisions to the policy must be communicated to the congregation as soon as possible.

From time to time educational events will be made available to parents and other interested parties. These events will provide information on the Safe Sanctuary Policy, child abuse and any other information that will enhance parenting skills.

Parents will be provided with advance notice of all regular scheduled and special youth and children's activities. Written permission will be required for participation in activities that are not on church grounds.

Social Media, Photos, and Electronic Communication

Electronic communications is becoming more and more important. E-mail and texts from adults sent to youth and children should be limited to information related to youth and children ministries. Contact information of youth and children should be protected and not given out. If allergy signs are posted, they should not show the names. Written permission must be received from parents before any photo of children or youth is posted on a church sponsored website.

Reporting Abuse

Jackson United Methodist regards any form of abuse and evidence thereof as unacceptable and has a strict policy regarding the reporting of such abuse. This is a serious criminal allegation and will be taken seriously. If a volunteer becomes aware of an abuse allegation, he or she must report it to a Jackson United Methodist staff member IMMEDIATELY. If there is not a staff member on the grounds, then the Senior Pastor should be contacted at home or his or her designee must be contacted. Please do not hesitate to contact a staff member if you feel there is abuse occurring. For ALL SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE, a report MUST be made by the reporter by phone to the Department of Family and Children's Services in the county of the victim's residence. A copy of the report must be turned into the Senior Pastor within twenty-four hours. (See attached.) If any further reporting is needed, the Senior Pastor or the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee will handle the future reporting, including a report to the District Superintendent and law enforcement. Should the press or TV become involved, only the Senior Pastor should respond. It is better not to make any response. Do not try to interview the victim. Leave that process to the proper professional law enforcement official, who is better qualified.

The following is a definition of child abuse supplied by The Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services. The same definitions apply to elder abuse.

“What is considered child abuse and neglect?”

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.

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 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.

Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable Adults are people over the age of 18 who may be more at risk for abuse because of mental or physical disabilities or advanced age.

While much of this policy addresses the need to protect our children and youth, Jackson United Methodist recognizes that abuse of impaired and older adults is a major concern. Many older adults are also subject to financial abuse. We must be vigilant for signs of abuse in our adult membership and report any suspected abuse, following the process outlined above. The local Department of Family and Child Services has a division with responsibility for supervising elder care.

When adults take a church-related trip, they will be asked to fill out a form with a listing of their medications, operations they have had, and contact information for next of kin. This information will be in a sealed envelope that will be held by the leader of the trip and then returned to the adult at the conclusion of the trip.

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

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: _____

4. Date/ Place of initial conversation with/ report from victim: _____

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

6. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, etc.):

7. Reported to Senior Pastor: _____

Date/ Time: _____

Summary: _____

8. Call to victim's parents/ guardian: _____

Date/ Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to local children and family service agency: _____

Date/ Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Call to local law enforcement agency: _____

Date/ Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

11. Other contacts: _____

Name: _____

Date/ Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Jackson United Methodist

Accident Report Form

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: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone _____

Name: _____ Phone _____

Name: _____ Phone _____

Describe the accident: _____
