

## **SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY**

**LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Lisbon Falls, Maine**, is a “Safe Sanctuary” congregation committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth and adults, who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. Below are policies and practices that ensure we are doing our best to keep our children, youth and adults – both able-bodied and “vulnerable”- and those who work with them safe.

### **Definitions**

1. “Children” or “Child” means any person 12 years of age or younger
2. “Youth: means any person 13 years to 18 years of age
3. “Vulnerable adult” means any person 18 years or older identifies by him/herself or caregiver, who because of a physical or intellectual disability or emotional condition, (1) has a legal guardian, (2) without the assistance of other, is unable to carry out the activity of daily living or manage his/her resources or (3) is receiving pastoral care in a formal one-one caring relationship.

### **PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDELINES**

1. **BACKGROUND CHECKS:** Criminal backgrounds checks, as well as previous employment and all references, must be checked for all adults in supervisory capacities with children, youth and vulnerable adults; including but not limited to paid staff.
2. **TWO ADULTS:** Two unrelated adults must be in the room or vehicle at all times. No child or youth should be alone with one adult any time.
3. **ROVING MONITORS:** IN the event where there are not two adults in the classroom or nursery, there must be a roving monitor during the meeting or teaching time and the door to the room(s) must be open.
4. **AGE LIMITS:** Staff and volunteers should be at least 5 years older than the oldest child/youth being supervised. No one under the age of 18 years should be given supervisory capacity.
5. **VISIBILITY IN ROOMS:** Every room that is used for activities and teaching of children/ youth should have a window in the door. If there is no window, the door(s) must be left open at all times.
6. **OPEN DOOR COUNSELING:** Pastoral counseling is expected to be confidential in nature, but it is for the protection of both parties that such session takes place where other people are nearby, but not withing normal hearing distance.
7. **FIRST AID & CPR:** There should be at least one adult present at every church activity, and they must be certified in basic first aid and CPR.
8. **COMMUNICATION AND ADVANCE NOTICE TO PARENTS:** Parents should be kept abreast of the programs their children are involved in and be given advance notice and detailed information regarding any activity that deviates from the traditional classroom instruction offered at the church during Sunday School, UMYF, Vacation Bible School, etc. Permission forms with medical information should accompany children/youth for any activities involving travel or extreme sports activity (e.g. skiing, white-water rafting).
9. **PHOTO PRIVACY AND PROTECTION:** Parents must indicate in writing whether or not they give permission to allow their child’s photo displayed on-line, on bulletin boards with the church facility or in the newspaper. The forms of written permission would be valid from September through August of the program year, but can be revoked at any time by notifying the Sunday School Director. Permission must be given each year at the

## SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

time of registration. Permission for photos and personal information will be obtained for use in the church directory – not to be distributed to the public domain.

### TRAINING:

1. **POLICY AWARENESS:** training for any paid staff, volunteers working with children/youth and vulnerable adults.
  - a. **AGE AND ACTIVITY APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT:** in church classrooms, nurseries and playground areas.
  - b. **TRANSPORTATION:** Youth are not allowed to drive to any off-site church-sponsored activity. Supervisory adults must comply with insurance guidelines when using their personal vehicles for the transportation of children or youth to off-site events.
  - c. **TRACKING ATTENDEES:** Supervisors must be aware of all members of the group and actively prevent access by unauthorized people.
2. **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & INTERNET USAGE** (see separate policy)
3. **BUILDING SAFETY PROCEDURES:**
  - a. All outside doors will be locked at the beginning of any activity involving children or youth, including church services, Sunday School or VBS.
  - b. Emergency escape route maps showing the closest exit must be placed in each room. Emergency exit drills should be practiced at least once a year.
  - c. Building Exits must be marked and designated with illuminated signs.
  - d. Ample lighting must be maintained to ensure the safety of all inhabitants.
4. **LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERAGE:** The church will maintain adequate insurance coverage for all church activities, on and off premises. There will also be insurance to cover sexual misconduct. Guidelines and information for reporting sexual misconduct or any type of abusive conduct.
5. **DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSON:** The District Superintendent will be notified immediately of any allegations of abuse and will be the spokesperson or will designate one. All other persons at the church (staff and volunteer) must refrain from speaking to the press.

Many Waters District Superintendent: Rev. Arlene Tulley

Phone# 978-682-7676 ext. 281

Email: [mwds@neumc.org](mailto:mwds@neumc.org)

The Safe Sanctuary Policy can be amended by a majority vote of the Administrative Council of Lisbon United Methodist Church.