

# Safe Sanctuaries Training Module

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Rehoboth United Methodist Church

## Our Biblical and Baptismal Mandate

“Then Jesus took a little child and put her among them; and taking her in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’” (Paraphrase of Mark 9:36-37) Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6) The Church, above all institutions, is called to welcome and nurture the child. Our goal is to maintain a safe, secure, loving place where all children may grow and where those who care for them may minister their needs in responsible ways.



“Let the little children come to me...”

Matthew 19:14, NIV

## Our UMC Mandate

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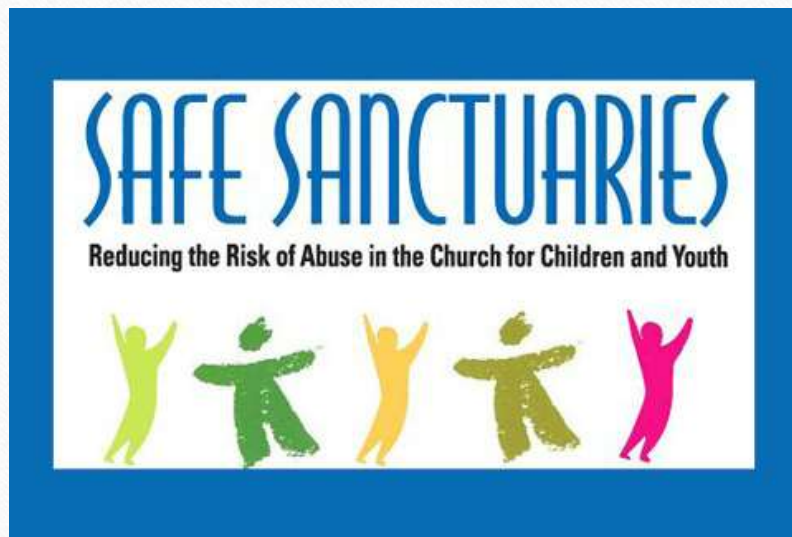
The 1996 General Conference approved a resolution that called upon local churches and annual conferences to institute policies and procedures to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in our churches and church-related activities. We, in the Tennessee Conference, accept the nature of this call and seek to expand it to include all forms of abuse and neglect that could be possible in these settings or that could come to our attention regarding all children, youth, and/or vulnerable persons in our care.



## Child Abuse

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**Child abuse** (under age 18) is the harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health or welfare or by a person in a position of trust, which harm occurs or is threatened through non-accidental physical or mental injury or sexual abuse.



## Vulnerable Persons Abuse

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Vulnerable Persons abuse is the harm or threatened harm to a vulnerable person's health or welfare by a person responsible for the vulnerable person's health or welfare or by a person in a position of trust, which harm occurs or is threatened through non-accidental physical or mental injury or sexual abuse. A vulnerable person is any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.



## Sexual Abuse

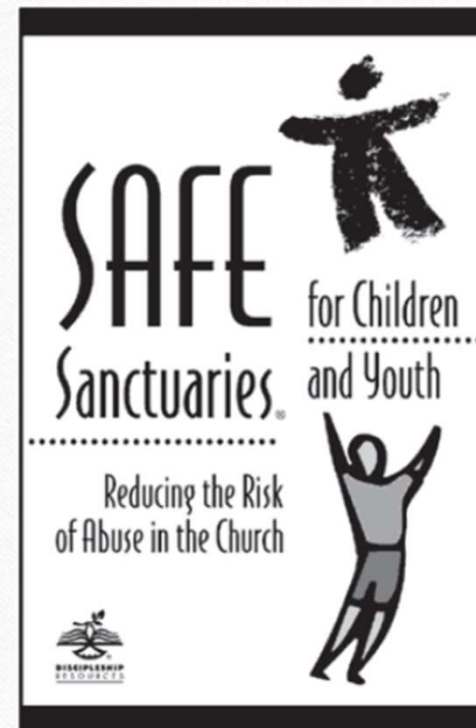
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**Sexual Abuse** is any involvement of a child, youth or vulnerable person in intentional sexual acts or sexual conduct that produces sexual arousal or gratification for the perpetrator or sexual behaviors/situations in which there is a sexual component. Sexual abuse includes, without limitation, sexual contact or sharing of sexually explicit language, gestures, or images by a volunteer or staff person with, or directed to, a child, youth or vulnerable person.



## Neglect, Physical and Verbal Abuse

- **Neglect** is failure to provide for physical survival needs (such as nutrition, medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the well-being of any child, youth, or vulnerable person) to the extent that there is harm, or risk of harm, to health or safety.
- **Physical Abuse** is any non-accidental act that inflicts bodily harm to a person, or failure to protect from physical harm where a duty exists to do so.
- **Verbal Abuse** refers to spoken or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty against a child, youth, and/or a vulnerable person.



## #1 - Appropriate Boundaries

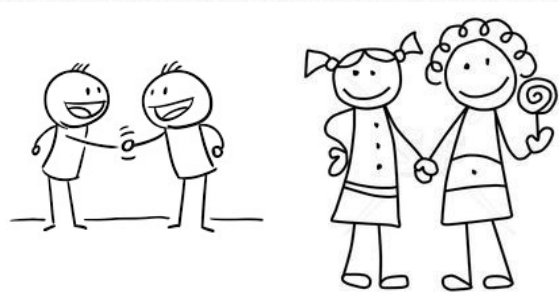
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**Appropriate Boundaries:** All persons, staff and participants, will maintain boundaries appropriate to their specific roles, age, and relations to another as defined in Safe Sanctuaries training.



## #2 – The Two-Adult Rule

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- **Two Adult Rule:** At least two Safe Sanctuaries Approved Volunteers should be present during all ministry events such that no one adult will be alone with any number of children, youth, or vulnerable persons. At least two of the adults present should be non-related and non-cohabitating. For small group activities where there is only one adult to supervise one group, two or more groups are to meet in sight and sound of each other. The Safe Sanctuaries Ministry Staff Person may also decide to combine groups to ensure the safety of all parties. Small group sizes will be determined by the size of the group, but should not exceed reasonable adult/participant ratios. For overnight events, if both genders are represented, both genders of adults should also be represented.

### #3 – Floater Rule

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**Floater Rule:** This rule allows only one primary or secondary worker to be in a classroom when there is another approved primary worker floating through the building regularly. When utilizing this rule, the classroom door must remain open at all times. This rule is to be used sparingly and at the discretion of a Safe Sanctuaries Ministry Staff Person.



**Floater  
Rule**

## #4 – Five Year Older Rule

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**Five year Older Rule:** Persons supervising children and/or youth will be at least 18 years old and will be at least 5 years older than the oldest child/youth participant.



## #5 – Open Doors

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**Open Doors:** Doors to meeting spaces without windows must remain open when children, youth or vulnerable persons are utilizing the space. Doors with window may remain closed if sight lines to all areas of the room are clear.



## #6 – Building Rule

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**Building Rule:** Youth (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade), vulnerable persons, and the parent/guardians or approved teachers accompanying children (birth-5<sup>th</sup> grade) are **encouraged to use the bathroom facility closest to them.** Children are not permitted to go anywhere outside their meeting space unless accompanied by a parent/guardian or approved volunteer in open view. At no time should a child, youth, or vulnerable person be alone in the church unattended.



## #7 - Transportation

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- **Transportation:** When transporting children, youth, and/or vulnerable persons to and from church sponsored events in one vehicle; two Safe Sanctuaries approved volunteers should be present. When utilizing two vehicles, it is permissible for one Safe Sanctuaries approved volunteer to be in each vehicle with no less than three total persons (It is not permissible for a volunteer and a child, youth, or vulnerable person to be in a vehicle alone). These two vehicles must caravan (one following directly behind one another on the same route; if one pulls over, the second vehicle pulls over, etc.) to and from the event.

## Emergency Contact Numbers

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Tennessee Child Abuse hotline

(1-800-237-0004)

Adult Protective Services hotline

(1-888-277-8366)

In a case of an emergency, immediately call  
9-1-1.



**EMERGENCY  
NUMBERS**

## Volunteer Process

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After reviewing this module, please click the link on our website to take the Safe Sanctuaries Training Assessment and Certification.

Forms and consent for background check are required for initial Safe Sanctuaries certification and every three years thereafter. You can also find a link to the forms on our website.

Please direct any questions to [churchum@gmail.com](mailto:churchum@gmail.com).

