

Lewisville United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuaries Policy



Updated April 2024

Lewisville United Methodist Church
6290 Shallowford Road
Lewisville, NC 27023

Purpose

“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. As for whoever causes these little ones who believe in me to trip and fall into sin, it would be better for them to have a huge stone hung around their necks and be drowned in the bottom of the lake” -Matthew 18:5-6 (CEB)

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, and the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, in June 2004, adopted resolutions aimed at reducing the risk of abuse of children and youth in the church. It has been mandated that a policy be in place in the local churches by December 31, 2005. Lewisville United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe environment for all people, including youth and children. In establishing this Safe Sanctuaries Policy, Lewisville United Methodist Church is expressing its unconditional and steadfast promise to the physical and emotional safety of all children and youth involved in any ministries or programs related to the church. It is essential to know that abuse crosses all economic, racial, and ethnic lines, and that it can occur in churches of all sizes and in all locations. In order to prevent the abuse of our children, we must first recognize that it can and does happen, and we must be able to identify all of its forms.

Included in this policy you will find a list of relevant definitions, expectations and procedures for children’s and youth ministries, expectations for outside groups who use the church, cyber-safety guidelines, procedures for responding to allegations of abuse, details of implementation, and all relevant forms.

Any questions or concerns may be relayed to Kara Harvey Chamberlin, Associate Pastor by phone (336-945-3203) or email (associatepastor@lewisvilleumc.org)

Definitions

Abuse: A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child or youth. The includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and ritual abuse.

Adult: Any person eighteen years of age or older, and not in High School.

Child: Any person between birth and the end of 5th grade.

Emotional Abuse: Expressing attitudes or behaviors towards a child or youth that creates serious emotional or psychological damage.

Neglect: Any serious disregard for a child or youth's supervision, health, education, care or discipline.

Physical Abuse: Examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that could result in serious physical injury.

Ritual Abuse: Abuse in which physical, sexual or psychological violations of a juvenile or vulnerable adult are inflicted regularly, intentionally and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the person's welfare.

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile or vulnerable adult.

Sexual Harassment: Behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome or inappropriate sexual remarks or advances in a work place or other professional or social situation that creates a hostile or uncomfortable environment.

Staff: Any person who is full-time, part-time or retained or contracted as an employee of Lewisville United Methodist Church.

Five Years Older Rule: The adults that are in a supervisory role must be at least 5 years older than the oldest participant/child/youth they are supervising

Volunteer: Any person who performs volunteer assistance for children's or youth ministry programs and/or activities

Youth: Any person from the 6th Grade through the completion of the summer after the 12th Grade.

Procedures for Screening Children's and Youth Ministry Volunteers

When a potential volunteer is identified for any ministry pertaining to children or youth, the staff person responsible for the specific ministry area the potential volunteer would like to serve is responsible for facilitating the below procedures before the volunteer can begin their role. The following must take place in order for ANY person to serve a volunteer with children or youth. For an individual to be considered for a volunteer role, they should be an active participant in the ministries of Lewisville United Methodist Church for at least 6 months.

- 1.) The staff person must meet with the potential volunteer to discuss the volunteer opportunity. At this time, the staff person should explain the expectations of the volunteer, as well as obtain a National Criminal Background Check Consent Form.
- 2.) The staff person must turn the completed National Criminal Background Check Consent Form to the Associate Pastor.
- 3.) The Associate Pastor must complete the National Criminal Background Check within one week of receipt of the Criminal Background Check Consent Form.
- 4.) Once the results of the National Criminal Background Check have been obtained, the Associate Pastor should let the staff member know if the potential volunteer "passed" or if there were any areas of concern.
- 5.) The Associate Pastor must keep the results of the National Criminal Background Check in a secure file.
- 6.) Having learned of no issues on the National Criminal Background Check, the staff person should share the Lewisville United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy with the potential volunteer. The potential volunteer should be trained on the policy, either digitally or in-person, and should sign/complete the "Safe Sanctuaries Policy Acknowledgement and Receipt" form. A copy of this form should be kept by the staff person and the Associate Pastor.
- 7.) No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse, ritual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect) shall be permitted to work or volunteer with minors in any church sponsored activity.

General Standards and Expectations for all Staff and Volunteers Working with Children and Youth

1. No use of tobacco or vapor products during any ministry event, trip, or outing.
2. No consumption of alcohol before or during any ministry event, trip, or outing.
3. No use of profanity at any ministry event, trip, or outing.
4. No use of ethnic or racial slurs at any ministry event, trip, or outing.
5. No exposing of personal body parts in the presence of children or youth during any ministry event, trip or outing.
6. No yelling, shaming, or unnecessary disciplinary actions that could result in the emotional or psychological distress of a child or youth during any ministry, event, trip, or outing

Procedures and Policies for Ministry Opportunities for Children and Youth

1. At the beginning of each school year, the staff member responsible for children's and youth ministries will distribute a "General Participation Permission Form" to all children and youth who are members or participants in children's and youth ministry. Once completed, these forms should be kept in a "Safe Sanctuaries" binder by the staff member.
2. All children fifth grade and under should be under the supervision of their parents, guardians, or the adult ministry leaders at all times. Children are not allowed to be "at large" on church property and must be under direct supervision of an adult at all times. Parents and/or guardians are asked to monitor the whereabouts of their children.
3. A minimum of two unrelated adults must be present during any children's or youth ministry event. The only exception to this rule is the Preschool program which operates under state guidelines for child to adult ratios, per the permission of the Board of Trustees.
4. If two unrelated adult volunteers are not available, the door to the room must remain fully open. A staff person or adult volunteer must be appointed as a "rover" to periodically walk by the room and monitor what is happening in the room. If only one staff person or volunteer is available, the ministry opportunity should be cancelled.
5. In rooms that are used for children's and youth ministries, windows in doors and walls will remain uncovered for the protection of staff, volunteers, children, and youth.
6. No volunteers under the age of eighteen will be allowed to work with children without the direct supervision of a lead adult.
7. Children and/or youth must not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity, or any other reason, without the written or electronic permission of their parents or guardians.
8. Any volunteer who is working with children or youth must be at least 5 years older than the oldest participant of the age group they are working with.
9. When an event is scheduled for children or youth, two adults (staff and/or volunteers) should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the event and should not leave the location of the ministry event until all children or youth have been picked up.
10. Personal space boundaries should be maintained. Children older than five should not sit in the lap of a staff or volunteer. No staff or adult leader will ever be allowed to engage in a physical relationship with a child or youth.

11. Sometimes, children and youth may need one-on-one counseling with a staff or volunteer. If counseling of this nature is requested, it should be attempted to be done during regular business hours and on the campus of Lewisville United Methodist Church. If counseling is requested to be done with a staff member, that staff member should let another staff member know when and where they will be counseling the child or youth. If counseling is requested to be done with a volunteer, that volunteer should let a staff member know when and where they will be counseling the child or youth. A staff member or adult leader may not counsel a child or youth for more than five sessions.
12. Staff and volunteers working with children and youth should follow all guidelines in the "Cyber-Safety" section of this Safe Sanctuaries Policy.
13. Lewisville United Methodist Church will facilitate an opportunity for staff and volunteers to be trained in both CRP and First-Aid one per calendar year. Someone who is trained in CPR and First-Aid should be present at all ministry events for children and youth.

Cyber-Safety

In our digital-age, communicating and interacting with children and youth in a digital space is needed for successful ministry. It is important that staff and volunteers follow these guidelines related to cyber-safety, for the protection of all parties involved.

1. A "Likeness" Waiver and "Communication" Waiver should be obtained for all children and youth involved in ministry at Lewisville United Methodist Church. These forms, once on file, will be kept on file until the child or youth graduates or changes their church membership. This form only needs to be completed by the parent/guardian one time.
2. Staff should maintain and provide to volunteers an updated list of children and youth involved in ministry that have waivers on file to guarantee that no photos or videos are digitally shared of students without permission from parents/guardians.
3. Photos, videos, or any likeness should not be digitally posted or shared of a child or youth if a "Likeness Waiver" is not on file.
4. Names of children and youth should never accompany an identifying photo on any digital platform used by Lewisville United Methodist Church, its staff, or volunteers. This includes presence of name-tags in photos or videos.
5. When communicating with children or youth, all communications must be sent to parents/guardians and not a child or youth unless a "Communication" Waiver has been obtained.
6. When communicating with children or youth who have a "Communication" Waiver on file, staff and volunteer should communicate carefully using the following recommendations
 1. When sending emails to children or youth, use the "Bcc" option, or use an email platform that does not allow for "reply-all" or for email addresses to be seen by any recipient.
 2. Seek to use mass/group texts.
 3. Pay close attention to language and word choice.
 4. Seek to have prolonged discussions in-person.
 5. Keep all communication professional.
 6. If a child or youth divulges information that is concerning to a staff or volunteer, the parent/guardian of the child or youth should be made aware of the situation.
 7. If any abuse is divulged digitally, it must be reported in accordance to the guidelines for reporting suspected abuse found in this Safe Sanctuaries Policy.
7. It is permissible for staff and volunteers to engage with children and youth on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, however the "request" for

engagement should come from the child or youth and not the staff or adult volunteer.

8. If staff members or volunteers are going to engage with children or youth on social media platforms, they should monitor their content and conduct closely, ensuring that their social media interactions do not undermine their ability to be a positive role model for children and youth. Staff and Volunteers who engage with children and youth on social media platforms should not post anything to their social media accounts that they would not want on a resume or printed in the church newsletter. Inappropriate comments and photos should not be posted.

Procedures for Overnight Trips with Children or Youth

1. Lodging requirements for each trip are unique. With that in mind, the lodging situations will be evaluated to determine the best and safest sleeping arrangements and will be completed carefully for those attending the trip. Parents will ALWAYS be given advance notice of the unique lodging arrangements for each trip.
2. There must always be two adult leaders in each room.
3. An adult leader will not be allowed to share a room with only one child or youth, unless the adult is a parent or guardian.
4. No males will share a room with females or vice versa.
5. No adult will ever share a bed with a child or youth unless the adult is the parent or legal guardian.
6. In making lodging arrangements, the staff person responsible for the trip will request that all rooms be located in the same block of rooms, in lodging scenarios where this is relevant.
7. On some occasions, lodging will be facilitated at a local church or other multi-purpose facility. At that time children and/or youth will be separated by gender and a clearly defined dividing line will be established. Adult leaders will be strategically placed to ensure the two genders do not sleep with or beside each other.

Procedures for Transporting Children or Youth

1. Staff or adult volunteers who are unrelated to a child or youth may NOT transport a child or youth without written permission from the parent or guardian. Written permission may be in the form of an email, text, or electronic registration form.
2. If a staff or volunteer must transport children or youth, a copy of their insurance must be on file with the church.
3. Whenever possible, if a staff member or adult volunteer must transport a child or youth, another adult of the opposite gender should ride with them as they transport the child or youth.

Scouting and Other Programs

The Safe Sanctuaries Policy of Lewisville United Methodist Church applies to all programming and ministries that serve or includes children or youth at Lewisville United Methodist Church, as well as to all outside groups who regularly gather to serve or includes children or youth and use the physical facility of Lewisville United Methodist Church.

When an outside group that serves or includes children or youth establishes regular use of the building, the leader of said group should be met with by the Associate Pastor for explanation and distribution of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy. All adult leaders involved in this outside group must return a completed "Safe Sanctuaries Policy Acknowledgement and Receipt" form before the group can begin meeting at Lewisville United Methodist Church. All leaders must be background checked. This may be facilitated by the outside group, or by the church at the expense of the outside group. Proof of background checks must be submitted to the Associate Pastor before the group can begin meeting at Lewisville United Methodist Church

The Associate Pastor will make yearly contact with previously established outside groups who serve or include children or youth and who meet at Lewisville United Methodist Church to ensure that the Safe Sanctuaries Policy is adhered to. Any observations of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy not being adhered to by outside groups should be reported to the Associate Pastor.



LEWISVILLE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Allegations Against a Paid Staff Member (including Clergy)

1. If there is cause to suspect any form of abuse has occurred or is continuing to occur to a child or youth that is part of Lewisville United Methodist Church activities or ministry events, a "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" form must be completed by the observer. Forms are available in the Safe Sanctuaries binder in the church office. North Carolina State law mandates child abuse reporting for all citizens.
2. Give the completed "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" form to the Senior Pastor. If the Senior Pastor is the alleged offender, the form should be given to the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
3. The Senior Pastor will give a copy of the "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" to the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
4. The Senior Pastor and chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee will immediately remove the alleged offender from contact with children or youth at all Lewisville United Methodist Church activities until the allegation is fully investigated and resolved.
5. The Senior Pastor or the chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee will contact the Department of Social Services (336-703-2287).
6. The Senior Pastor or the chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee will contact the Yadkin Valley District Superintendent (336-722-1222).
7. The Senior Pastor or chairperson of the Staff Parish Committee will contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
8. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will contact the insurance carrier.
9. The Senior Pastor or chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee will appoint a media spokesperson at the church for immediate response to any media inquiries. This person should then immediately contact the Communications Liaison for the Western North Carolina Conference.

10. All appropriate contacts will be made within 24 hours of the alleged abuse occurring.
11. Respond with care to the congregation, the alleged victim and the alleged offender.

Allegation Against a Volunteer

1. If there is cause to suspect any form of abuse has occurred or is continuing to occur to a child or youth that is part of Lewisville United Methodist Church activities or ministry events, a "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" must be completed by the observer. Forms are available in the Safe Sanctuaries Binder in the Church Office,
2. The "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" form should be given to the Senior Pastor or designee.
3. The Senior Pastor or designee will immediately remove the alleged offender from contact with children or youth at all Lewisville United Methodist Church activities until the allegation is fully investigated and resolved.
4. The Senior Pastor or designee will contact the Department of Social Services at 336-703-3503.
5. The Senior Pastor or designee will contact the Yadkin Valley District Superintendent at 336-727-1222.
6. The Senior Pastor or designee will contact the Chair of the Church Council.
7. The Senior Pastor or designee will contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
8. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will contact the insurance carrier.
9. The Senior Pastor or designee will appoint a media spokesperson at the church for immediate response to any media inquiries. This person should then immediately contact that Communications liaison for the Western North Carolina Conference.
10. All appropriate contacts will be made within 24 hours of the alleged abuse occurring.
11. Respond with care to the congregation, the alleged victim and the alleged offender.

Allegation Against a Non-Church Related Individual (Parent/Care Giver/Other Adult)

This section covers the procedures for handling alleged abuse of children or youth that comes to the attention of a staff or volunteer. This alleged abuse includes the results of adult domestic violence that may be observed.

1. If there is cause to suspect any form of abuse has occurred or is continuing to occur to a child, or youth that is a part of Lewisville United Methodist Church activities or ministry events, a "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" form must be completed by the observer.

2. If completed by a volunteer, the "Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse" form must be turned into the staff person responsible for the ministry area in which the volunteer is serving.
3. The staff person should give the completed form to the Senior Pastor or their designee.
4. The Senior Pastor or designee should call the Department of Social Services at 336-703-2287.
5. If the alleged abuser is the parent or legal guardian of the child or youth, the parent or guardian SHOULD NOT be made aware of the call made to DSS.
6. If the allegation reported involves adult domestic violence, the Senior Pastor or designee should call Law Enforcement.
7. All appropriate contacts will be made within 24 hours of the alleged abuse occurring.
8. Respond with care to the congregation, the alleged victim, and the alleged offender.



LEWISVILLE
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Acknowledgment of Safe Sanctuaries Policy Manual Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Lewisville United Methodist Church is committed to protecting and nurturing children and youth in an emotionally, physically, and spiritually safe environment. By completing this form, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Lewisville United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy. Furthermore, I agree to abide by all policies, procedures, and standards put in place. I understand that failure to do so could result in immediate dismissal from my responsibilities with children and youth at Lewisville United Methodist Church.

Signature

Date



LEWISVILLE
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Criminal Records Background Check Consent Form

First Name: _____

Middle Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

I understand that due to my involvement with the children and/or youth of Lewisville United Methodist Church, a National Criminal Background Check and Sexual Offender Check can be run again at any time at the discretion of Lewisville United Methodist Church.

I confirm that I have never been convicted of child abuse as an adult or juvenile, nor had such a conviction expunged from my records.

Signature.

Date

For Office Use Only

Background Check Completed by: _____



LEWISVILLE
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Permission Form for Communication with Children and Youth

By signing below, I give permission for my child to receive e-mail communications, phone calls, text messages, and/or communications via social media from the Lewisville United Methodist Church Staff or Ministry Volunteers. I understand that these communications will be made only in accordance with the Lewisville United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

Name of Minor: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only

Date Collected by Lewisville UMC Staff: _____

Signature of Lewisville UMC Staff: _____



LEWISVILLE
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Permission Form for Participation in Children's and Youth Ministry

By signing below, I give permission for my child to participate in ministry activities facilitated by the Children's and Youth Ministries of Lewisville United Methodist Church. I give permission to the staff and/or volunteers of Lewisville United Methodist Church to obtain medical treatment for my child in the case of an emergency.

Name of Child: _____

Name of Parents/Guardians: _____

Child's Birthdate: _____

Home Address: _____

Parent's/Guardian's Cell Phone Numbers: _____

Does your child have any allergies? If yes, please explain: _____

Does your child have any physical limitations? If yes, please explain: _____

Emergency Contact (Name and Phone Number): _____

Who is authorized to pick up your child? _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

For Office Use Only

Date Collected by Lewisville UMC Staff: _____

Signature of Lewisville UMC Staff: _____



LEWISVILLE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Likeness Waiver for Children and Youth

By signing below, I give permission for Lewisville United Methodist Church to use photographs, videos, audio, or likeness of my child on the church website and/or church social media accounts. I give permission for my child's likeness to be used in any other print media.

Any likeness used of children or youth are only for entertainment or promotional purposes and are not for resale. These images will only be used in accordance with Cyber-Safety Portion of the Lewisville United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy,

Name of Minor: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only

Date Collected by Lewisville UMC Staff: _____

Signature of Lewisville UMC Staff: _____



LEWISVILLE
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Permission for Children or Youth to Ride with Staff or Adult Leader

By signing below, I give permission for my child to ride in the personal vehicle of a staff or adult leader on a sanctioned church outing. This will only be allowed when deemed necessary by a member of the staff and when no other seating arrangements can be made. Church-owned transportation will be used when possible.

Name of Minor: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only

Date Collected by Lewisville UMC Staff: _____

Signature of Lewisville UMC Staff: _____



LEWISVILLE
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Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse

Name of Individual Making Report: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Name of Alleged Victim: _____

Name of Alleged Perpetrator: _____

Gender: _____ Age: _____

Relationship to Alleged Victim: _____

Describe your concerns in as much detail as possible, including names, times and dates where applicable and known. Use the back fo this form if necessary. _____

Name of Recipient of Form: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to Department of Social Services Date and Time: _____

Spoke With: _____

Important Details from DSS Conversation: _____

If a Staff Person

Call to Chair of SPRC, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to District Superintendent, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to Chair of Trustees, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to Insurance Carrier, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

If a Volunteer

Call to Chair of Church Council, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to District Superintendent, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to Chair of Trustees, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to Insurance Carrier, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

If a Parent or Non-Church Related Individual

Call to Chair of Church Council, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to District Superintendent, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to Chair of Trustees, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Call to Insurance Carrier, Name: _____

Call made by, Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____