

Safe Sanctuary Policy
for the
Prevention of Abuse of Children,
Youth, and Vulnerable Adults



**BUNCOMBE STREET
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Greenville, South Carolina

2013

**Safe Sanctuary Policy
for the
Prevention of Abuse of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults**

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Section I – Safe Sanctuary Policy Purpose

At Buncombe Street United Methodist Church, we recognize our responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment where our church family can experience the abiding love of Christ and be nurtured in faith. Buncombe Street United Methodist Church has an absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Therefore, we propose the following comprehensive strategies:

1. To protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults from emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse while involved in church activities.
2. To protect our ministers, staff, and volunteers from false accusations of such abuse.
3. To educate ministers, staff, and volunteers to recognize signs of abuse and follow proper procedures for reporting suspected abuse.
4. To respond to abuse, following proper procedures, should it occur.

For the purposes of this policy, the terms listed below shall be used to identify certain categories of our congregation:

Children – For the purpose of this policy, Children shall be defined as an infant, baby, or child from the age of 1 day old through 11 years of age.

Youth - For the purpose of this policy, Youth shall be defined as a child, teenager or young person from the age of 11 years old through 18 years of age.

Vulnerable Adult – For the purpose of this policy, Vulnerable Adult shall be defined as a person 18 years of age or older whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living or to provide for his or her own care or protection is impaired due to mental, emotional, long-term

physical or developmental disability, brain damage, or the infirmities of aging.

The first Safe Sanctuary Policy of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church was approved by the Board of Stewards on July 7, 2003. The policy was reviewed and revised where needed in 2008. This current policy was reviewed and revised and found to be appropriate to safely conduct the ministries of the church in 2013. On October 28, 2013 the Church Council (formerly known as the Board of Stewards) has found these updated policies serve in the protection of all aspects of the church and approved their use.

Section II - Why Do We Need a Safe Sanctuary Policy?

From Scripture:

Matthew 18:5-7

“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, 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. Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes”

From Tradition:

The United Methodist Baptismal Covenant from the United Methodist Hymnal

“With God’s help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.”

From the General Conference of the United Methodist Church-April 1996:

The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church-2000, pp. 180-181

“Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of the UMC state that ‘...children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse.’

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and appears to be increasing.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. In response to this church-wide challenge, child protection policies should be in place to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse.”

From the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

A resolution was introduced, and adopted, at Annual Conference, establishing a conference-wide Safe Sanctuary policy. Specifically, it requires that every local church have a Safe Sanctuary policy in place by Dec. 31, 2008.

“As a Christian community of faith, the South Carolina Annual Conference pledges to conduct the ministry of the Gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding the use of all appropriate policies; we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.”

Section III - Definitions of Abuse and Indicators of Abuse

Definitions of Abuse

1. Physical Abuse

Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. This could include battery, shaking, kicking, choking, and “non-accidental” injuries.

2. Emotional Abuse

Abuse in which a person exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child, youth, or vulnerable adult of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved but undeserving of love and care.

3. Neglect

Abuse in which a person endangers a child, youth, or vulnerable adult’s health, safety, or welfare through negligence.

4. Sexual Abuse

Abuse in which sexual contact between a child, youth, or vulnerable adult or youth and an adult, or a child and an older youth occurs. Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to: sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference, unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance. Sexual abuse includes but is not limited to: fondling, intercourse, incest, exploitation, and/or exposure to pornography or prostitution.

5. Ritual Abuse

Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the child, youth, or vulnerable adult’s welfare. The abuse may also include repeated threats of harm to the child or other persons.

Indicators of Abuse

Anxiety about coming to church or being left in a class or program, reluctance to participate when previously enthusiastic, fears of specific individuals, nightmares, or unexplained hostility toward a worker or teacher.

Section IV – Screening of Church Staff and Volunteers

Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. It can be time-consuming and expensive, but well worth the effort in peace of mind that the most reliable, committed, and experienced staff and volunteers are in place for every program that involves children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Staff

All staff and employees hired through the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) or the Child Development Center (CDC) Board of Directors will complete the appropriate screening documents, including an application, reference check, acknowledgement of nationwide criminal and financial background checks, reviewing the Safe Sanctuary Policy and agreeing to abide by them. All staff and employees hired to work in the CDC will comply with additional fingerprint criminal records checks as required by South Carolina state law in accordance with operating a licensed daycare facility. Any employment at Buncombe Street United Methodist Church will only be offered upon successful completion of the above documentation resulting in favorable reporting of the employee's references and criminal, sex offender registration, and financial background. All fees associated in conducting the background check will be paid by the church. Any staff or employee of the church must be at least five years older than the oldest child or youth participant that they are placed in supervision over. In certain circumstances, such as camp and retreat counselor leadership, a youth may serve when combined with adequate training and competent oversight by a qualified adult.

Adult Volunteers

All prospective volunteers will be required to follow the procedure outlined below:

- a. Read the Safe Sanctuary Policy of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church.
- b. Complete and sign the *Safe Sanctuary Application for Adult Volunteer*, consenting to the criminal history and sex offender registration search.
- c. Include in the application three personal references for the prospective volunteer, to be contacted by a minister or director of the church.
- d. Be at least 18 years of age **and** 5 years older than the oldest child or youth participant in supervision.
- e. Have a demonstrated committed relationship to the church of six months of continuous attendance to the worship services of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church or six months continuous enrollment of a child in the Child Development Center of the church.
- f. Be interviewed by a minister or director of the church.

Youth Volunteers (Minors Less Than 18 Years of Age)

All prospective youth volunteers will be required to follow the procedure outlined below:

- a. Read the Safe Sanctuary Policy of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church.
- b. Complete and sign the *Safe Sanctuary Application for Youth Volunteer*.
- c. Parent or guardian of the youth must also sign the *Safe Sanctuary Application for Youth Volunteer*.
- d. Include in the application three personal references for the prospective volunteer, to be contacted by a minister or director of the church.
- e. Have a demonstrated committed relationship to the church of six months of continuous attendance to the worship services of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church.
- f. Be interviewed by a minister or director of the church.

The minister or director of the ministry the prospective volunteer desires to serve in will be the initial recipient of the application, will contact the listed personal references of the prospective volunteer, and will interview the prospective volunteer. The volunteer application will be handled in a secure and confidential manner at all times. Once the minister or director has reviewed their portion of the application, the volunteer application will be submitted to the Church Administrator to conduct the criminal history and sex offender search. The Church Administrator is to be responsible for reviewing, processing, and maintaining volunteer data. If the prospective volunteer is not contacted by the Church Administrator or Senior Minister within six weeks of application regarding a “Red Flag” (see Indications of Conviction below), they will be added to the Approved Volunteer List, which will be the source document for all volunteers permitted to serve children, youth, or vulnerable adults in any volunteer capacity. The Church Administrator will advise the minister or director of the ministry of any approved or disapproved volunteer applications.

Contracted Workers, Programs, and Vendors

All contracted workers and vendors that are not employed by the church that conduct extracurricular programs with children are required to complete and sign the Safe Sanctuary Application for Adult Volunteer, consenting to the criminal history and sex offender registration search. Additionally in the CDC, DSS Form 2930 Authorization for Intervention, Therapy and Extracurricular Activities must be completed and signed by all parties (parents of child involved in activity, CDC director, and vendor) before providing services or activities. This form must be renewed yearly if services are rendered for duration longer than a year. Contracted workers, programs, and vendors do not require a six-month relationship with the church to qualify as an approved adult. All programs/vendors must be appropriately staffed with Safe Sanctuary approved adults in order to adhere to the Two-Adult Rule at all times.

Indications of Conviction (“Red Flag”)

If a criminal report is returned indicating a misdemeanor or felony conviction involving neglect, abuse, violence, sexual misconduct, or a crime of immoral character (a “Red Flag”), the Senior Minister will offer to meet with the prospective volunteer to discuss the “Red Flag,” and will make the final decision as to whether a prospective volunteer may be permitted to serve in a volunteer capacity working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults within the church. In the case where a record for an arrest of the above type of crime does not list a disposition of guilt or innocence, the prospective volunteer may be required to produce documentation of court findings.

Rechecks

The Church reserves the right to recheck volunteers at any time. All volunteers shall be rechecked for criminal history after five years of the initial check. Additional application completion by the volunteer is required. Typically if the volunteer has not left the church or moved from the Upstate of South Carolina within the five-year period, the criminal history search will be conducted locally through the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) only. Any volunteer who leaves the church for a period greater than six months shall reapply for screening prior to volunteer service with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Section V - Supervision of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

Two-Adult Rule

In order to provide for the safety and protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults from any inappropriate behavior, and to protect children, youth, and adults from any accusation of inappropriate behavior, the following policy shall apply:

1. Minimum supervisory standards will include the “two-adult rule.” The two-adult rule requires that no matter the size of the group, there will always be at least two Safe Sanctuary approved adults present. In all programs and ministries involving contact between children and adults, or vulnerable adults, it is required that two or more Safe Sanctuary approved adults are present at each and every contact made between children and adults or vulnerable adults. Full-time paid ministry staff members may occasionally need to meet individually with a minor. In the event that one-on-one ministry with a minor is necessary, the meeting should, if possible, take place in a well-lit public or visible area. When possible, the appropriate supervisor or the minor’s parents should be made aware prior to the meeting. In the rare event a supervisor or minor’s parents cannot be notified prior to the meeting, the staff member shall immediately inform his/her supervisor afterward, each and every time following a one-on-one meeting.

Additional Worker to Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult Ratio Requirements

Child's Age	Approved Adult:Child Ratio
Birth to One Year	1:5
One to Two Years	1:6
Two to Three Years	1:8
Three to Four Years	1:12
Four to Five Years	1:17
Five to Six Years	1:20
Six to Twelve Years	1:23
Twelve to Eighteen Years	1:26
Vulnerable Adult 18+	1:26

2. Unauthorized visitors are persons who are not properly registered, screened, and checked by the class or event director. These persons will not be allowed with the children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
3. Participating children, youth, or vulnerable adults will not be allowed to leave the designated meeting area without permission and supervision or release to a parent or guardian.
4. One-on-one activities shall not be conducted “behind closed doors” or in isolated areas away from the trained supervisory persons.
5. All ministry events of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church will be carried out in locations where this policy can be implemented and with safe age-appropriate equipment.
6. In classrooms with adjoining doors, that provide a clear line of sight, the number of approved adults required can be reduced to one per room.
7. In the Child Development Center, in pursuant to Department of Social Services regulation on staffing, the number of adults required during naptime can be reduced to one staff member as long as the appropriate staff-to-child ratios are upheld as outlined. (see Regulations for the Licensing of Child Care Centers, section 114-504 C SUPERVISION).

Child's Age	Naptime Staff:Child Ratio
Birth to One Year	1:5
One to Two Years	1:6
Two to Three Years	1:16
Three to Four Years	1:24
Four to Five Years	1:34

8. Each room or space where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open. All activities should occur in open view. Should the children, youth, or vulnerable adult activity be an outdoor program or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with the Safe Sanctuary Policy, the staff person or volunteer in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure that the setting suits the activity and that the children, youth, or vulnerable adults are properly supervised. In instances of Youth ages 12 –18 in a classroom setting, in which no more than four classrooms are within 30 feet of each other, the two-adult rule may include the presence of an adult “roamer” who moves in and out of rooms.
9. Registration materials for activities in which children, youth, or vulnerable adults are participating in camps or field trips shall require signed and written permission forms, which include pertinent health information and release of liability in order to participate.
10. Children, youth, and vulnerable adults being transported will be driven only by adult drivers who have consented to and received a Department of Motor Vehicles driver history background check. The Safe Sanctuary Policy two-adult rule applies to vehicles also.
11. Busses owned by the church, or professionally chartered transportation services, are the preferred mode of transporting children, youth, and vulnerable adults for events away from the church. Only persons who have completed an approved driver safety course through Buncombe Street United Methodist Church are permitted to operate the church busses. The Safe Sanctuary Policy two-adult rule applies to busses also. The bus driver does not necessarily have to be Safe Sanctuary approved, but two other approved adults must then be on the bus.
12. The transportation of children, youth, or vulnerable adults in privately owned vehicles is strongly discouraged. This practice could expose the driver to liability in case of an automobile accident. Under no exception is a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to be transported in any vehicle without two approved Safe Sanctuary volunteers in the same vehicle. Nothing in this policy prevents parents from transporting their own children, but does apply to additional passengers that are not related.
13. Fifteen-passenger vans have been deemed dangerous by federal authorities and will not be used for transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
14. In situations where lodging is required, children and adults will be segregated and will not share common rooms unless two or more Safe Sanctuary approved adults are stationed in each room. In the case of segregation between children and adults, there will be a peripheral adult supervision which does not include entering children’s rooms unless the provision stated above is fulfilled.

15. In all outings away from church property, transporting on busses, or overnight outings, participants must have a written Consent and Medical Release Form. Medical release forms may be completed for a one-year period and must be renewed annually.

Sign-In Policy

1. Children, ages infant through fifth grade, must be checked in to our electronic security system when they are away from their parent. Parents check their children in at one of five check-in stations that are located around the church (either manned or self-guided). Once a family's information is in the computer, the check-in process should take no longer than a few seconds. The system prints out a customized security badge for the child and a corresponding badge for the parent. When picking up the child from their church event, the parent will have to show the adult leader the corresponding parent badge in order for the leader to release the child. The information on the badge will include any allergies the child may have and a cell phone number for the parents. This will be used for emergency notification. Children will not be able to attend their class if they are not checked in, and parents must have the badge in order for a child to be released. No exceptions will be made regarding this aside from children of staff. If a staff member is working and is unable to transfer his/her child to another necessary location, i.e. nursery to Sunday school, two nursery workers may transport that child. For safety, only teachers, workers, and volunteers should be allowed in a classroom with children. If a family is visiting or has trouble signing in, they must go to the manned kiosk station in the main lobby.
2. In the event that the computers are down, a paper sign-in system will be used. Parents will sign their child in at their nursery or Sunday school room. They will receive a badge with two parts- one for their child and one for the parent. Both have a matching code that will be used when picking up the child. All the other procedures will remain the same.

Five-Year Rule

1. Adults who work with children or youth are required to be at least five years older than the oldest participant present in that group. This standard allows persons to be separated by enough years so as to have maturity, perspective, and recognition as an authority figure with the group they are serving.

Section VI – Custodial / Non-Custodial Parent Policy

This policy is written to guide the staff and volunteers of the church ministries and Child Development Center (CDC) in properly handling issues related to picking up minor children from activities, or CDC care, at the church by legal guardians, and custodial and non-custodial parents.

1. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent or legal guardian to give the Children's Minister and/or the CDC Director a written copy of any Judge's Order, Court Order or Order of Protection that details custody of minor children. If a copy of a written order is not on file at the church and/or CDC, the church has no power to keep a non-custodial parent from picking up a child or children. If a child or children participate in both CDC and church ministries, than a copy of the document must be delivered to both the CDC Director and the Children's Minister.
2. If a court document is delivered to the church and/or CDC indicating a non-custodial parent is prohibited from visiting or picking up a child or children, the church has no authority to reverse this order at a later time without further written court order. For example: the church will not become involved in granting visitation or custody based on the current parental relationship, but will rely on the direction and order of the court of law as previously indicated. A parent will not ask the church to ignore a previously submitted court order, but should refrain from leaving children in the care of the church staff and volunteers until the matter is corrected in a court of law.
3. Any custodial document on file at the church will be strictly confidential. Information will be provided to the teachers or other persons as needed to ensure that the child is not picked up by an unauthorized person. A copy of this policy will be signed by the custodial parent or legal guardian and kept on file with the custodial order.
4. An information sheet listing persons authorized to pick up the child, other than the custodial parent or legal guardian, will be kept readily available for the teacher. Photo identification will be provided by the person picking up the child if the teacher is not familiar with the person picking up the child.
5. If the court document allows for the non-custodial parent to pick up the child, that non-custodial parent will be listed on the authorization list. The non-custodial parent shall not expand upon the authorization list of persons granted permission to pick up the child without the expressed written consent of the custodial parent.
6. At no time shall a parent or guardian knowingly place a church staff member or volunteer into a position of argument, or endanger the safety of the worker and children within the church, due to a misunderstanding or opinion of visitation rights from another parent. A church staff member or volunteer will not enter into conflict or argument over court orders but will immediately contact law enforcement authorities by dialing 911 to report a possible danger to the child or children in question and the other children present in the classroom.

Section VII – Mandatory Reporting of Abuse and Response to Allegations

As caring Christians, we are committed to protect and advocate for children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating in the life of the Church. Every Buncombe Street United Methodist Church member, guest, employee, and volunteer should expect to participate in an environment free from all forms of abuse. It is the Church's responsibility to report suspected abuse whenever it comes to our attention, regardless of where or when the abuse occurs.

South Carolina law mandates that certain persons, by virtue of their positions, are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services (DSS) or a law enforcement agency, "when in the person's professional capacity the person has received information which gives the person reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected as defined in Section 20-7-490 (S.C. Code Ann)."

The list of required reporters includes members of the clergy, school teachers, counselors, and childcare workers in a childcare center. The term "school teacher" is not defined in the statute, and its definition is unclear; however, the term could potentially be interpreted to include Sunday school teachers.

Normally, under the *Book of Discipline*, Clergy of The United Methodist Church are required to maintain all confidences inviolate. However, the *Book of Discipline* rules governing confidentiality do not apply in the case of suspected child abuse or neglect. Thus, all communications made to United Methodist clergy about suspected child abuse or neglect are not confidential. The exception to the general rule of confidentiality is found at 341.5 of the *Book of Discipline*.

All persons should be aware that a person who knowingly fails to report as required by the statute is guilty of a criminal offense. The criminal statute is found in S.C. Code Ann. 20-7-560.

Reporting Protocol for Alleged Abuse

1. Report the alleged incident to a Buncombe Street United Methodist Church ministry staff member immediately. Obtain and complete the *Report of Suspected Abuse Form*, which will be provided by that staff member.
2. Safeguard the child, youth, or vulnerable adult, and notify a parent or guardian of the victim immediately, unless the parent or guardians are the alleged perpetrators or are suspected of involvement.
3. Notify either the Senior Minister or, if unavailable, the Church Administrator, of the incident as soon as is practicable. The CDC Director shall be notified of an incident within the CDC. The CDC Director is required to report all incidents directly to the Senior Minister and/or Church Administrator immediately. The Minister, Administrator, or CDC Director shall immediately notify the local Department of Social Services (DSS) or law enforcement, as required under South Carolina law. The Minister, Administrator, or CDC Director have no further investigative or disciplinary duty after turning the

matter over to DSS or law enforcement; however, he or she will be required to take the action outlined in the section titled “Suspension” below. The Senior Minister, Administrator, or CDC Director may continue to be consulted and involved regarding the effect any actions may have on the lives of the families involved.

4. In cases involving alleged sexual misconduct or abuse by a minister appointed to Buncombe Street United Methodist Church, including the Senior Minister, the incident must be reported to the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). The SPRC will promptly report the allegations to the District Superintendent or Bishop of the Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Once a report is made, the SPRC has no further investigative or disciplinary duty, but should take action regarding the allegations pursuant to the section titled “Suspension” below. The SPRC may continue to be consulted and involved regarding the effect any District or Conference actions may have on the minister and/or Buncombe Street United Methodist Church.
5. Document the incident using the form *Report of Suspected Abuse Form*. The individual making the report should identify him/herself in the report for later verification and reference and submit the report to the Senior Minister, Church Administrator, or CDC Director.
6. All steps taken in the course of handling the incident or making the report shall be documented and maintained in a confidential file by the Church Administrator. Confidentiality of persons involved should be safeguarded whenever practicable and where required by law.
7. The Senior Minister will report incidents and/or allegations of abuse to church legal counsel as soon as is practicable. Counsel shall make the appropriate report to the liability insurer for the church.
8. The church’s legal counsel shall be its sole spokesperson insofar as media inquiries are concerned.

Suspension

Buncombe Street United Methodist Church will suspend any accused person from further responsibilities and participation in all programs involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults until the investigation is completed and the allegations are cleared by the proper authorities. Care shall be taken in any removal of a person from any children, youth, or vulnerable adult activities to handle the removal in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still to be conducted. A suspension from serving in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults at Buncombe Street United Methodist Church will not solely prevent a person from attending worship services of the church.

Local Authorities to Report Suspected Abuse of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults

South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS)

Greenville County Square, 301 University Ridge

Greenville, South Carolina 29603

(864) 467-7700

Greenville County Sheriff's Office

Law Enforcement Center

4 McGee Street

Greenville, South Carolina 29601

(864) 271-5210 or dial 911

City of Greenville Police Department

Law Enforcement Center

4 McGee Street

Greenville, South Carolina 29601

(864) 271-5333 or dial 911

Section VIII - Education and Training of Persons Who Work with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Annual Orientation for Workers

1. All workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are encouraged to attend an orientation session in which they are informed of:
 - a. The church's policies for the prevention of child abuse.
 - b. The procedures to be used in all ministries with the children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
 - c. Possible behaviors or other signs of abuse.
 - d. Appropriate steps and state requirements to report an incident of abuse.
2. All training sessions for all volunteers who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will include information about the Safe Sanctuary Policies.
3. All new member orientations will include information about the Safe Sanctuary Policy. Prospective Volunteer forms will be available.

4. A listing of approved Safe Sanctuary Workers is updated monthly and available for ministry workers, coordinators, and volunteers to review for reference and verification of approval for service. This listing is located in the Church Business Office and provides no confidential information of the volunteers.
5. The entire Safe Sanctuary Policy and Safe Sanctuary Application of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church are posted on the website at www.bsumc.com.

Section IX - Ongoing Review of Policy

The Church Administrator shall join and meet with the Children's Minister, Nursery Director, Chairman of the Children's Ministry Board, Youth Minister, Chairman of the Youth Board, CDC Director, and Chairman of the CDC Board every five years to review this Safe Sanctuary Policy and address the following:

1. Verify that all groups working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are informed during an annual training session of the policies by asking these questions:
 - a. Has each department trained its workers regarding the policies?
 - b. Are workers following the required policies and guidelines?
 - c. What obstacles exist in complying with the policies?
 - d. What is the level of cooperation?
 - e. Do sufficient materials exist for training and information?
 - f. Are the policies printed and available?
 - g. Are there changes or updates needed to be considered for the policies?
2. Verify that all groups are following the guidelines of Safe Sanctuary Policies.

Section X – Frequently Asked Questions about the Safe Sanctuary Policy

Who will see the volunteer application and background check? Volunteer applications will be reviewed by a minister or director of the church ministry you are applying to serve in. The criminal history background checks will be conducted by the Church Administrator. All information will be handled in a confidential and secure manner.

How will applicants know if they are approved as volunteers?

The volunteer will be notified within 6 weeks of anything that might prohibit his/her working in an area of the church that serves children, youth, or vulnerable adults. If the volunteer does not hear anything within the 6 week period, he/she will be added to the approved volunteer list. The Church Administrator will forward names of approved volunteers to the minister or director of the ministry applied to serve in.

A completed listing of all approved Safe Sanctuary workers will be kept confidentially by the Church Administrator. An abbreviated listing of all approved Safe Sanctuary workers, listed by name and address, will be maintained in the Church Business Office for verification and reference by ministry workers.

What will disqualify a volunteer from working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults?

If a criminal history report is returned indicating a misdemeanor or felony conviction involving neglect, abuse, violence, sexual misconduct, or crime of immoral character, the Church Administrator will divulge the application to the Senior Minister for his or her review. If the prospective volunteer is currently involved in allegations of abuse or otherwise associated with an incident that would cause alarm, discomfort, or concern in such a manner as to distract from the normal operation of a ministry, the Senior Minister will offer to meet with the prospective volunteer to discuss the report, accusation or concern and will then make a final decision as to whether a prospective volunteer may be permitted to serve in any volunteer capacity within the church. Additionally the Senior Minister will offer to meet with a previously approved volunteer if they are suspended from serving as outlined in Section VII of this policy, prior to that person again being approved to volunteer with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

What ministries are affected by these policies?

This policy applies to any church-sponsored ministry on or off church property which involves children or youth less than 18 years of age and vulnerable adults of any age. This includes, but is not limited to the following: Sunday school and nursery programs, Children's Choirs, UMYF, Sprouts, Youth Bible studies, kids.Comm, Nursery, and Leisure Ministries involving children and youth (i.e., all BSUMC children's and youth sports programs.), the Child Development Center, and Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scout programs.

What ministries, events, or activities are exempt from the Safe Sanctuary Policy?

None. The Safe Sanctuary Policy of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church is mandated by the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church and applies to all activities within the facilities of the church, whether or not a ministry of the church. If children, youth, or vulnerable adults are gathered in the church for any reason, then the Safe Sanctuary Policy will apply and be enforced.

What other policies have been changed as a result of Safe Sanctuary requirements?

In all church programs and ministries involving contact between children and adults, it is required that two or more adults are present at each and every contact made between children and adults. In situations where lodging is required, children and adults will be segregated and will not share common rooms unless two or more adults are stationed in a room.

What if a volunteer does not comply with Safe Sanctuary policies?

Volunteers who do not comply with Safe Sanctuary requirements will be asked to serve in areas not involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Will youth volunteers still be permitted?

Youth volunteers will still be permitted as long as the two-adult policy is followed. However, youth volunteers must have a volunteer questionnaire on file.

Where do I obtain the *Safe Sanctuary Application for Adult Volunteer Form, Safe Sanctuary Application for Youth Volunteer Form, Medical Release Statement, and Release of Liability and Permission to Participate Form*?

All of the forms are available in the Church Business Office, or you may download and print the forms from the church website at www.bsumc.com.