

Safe Sanctuary Policy
Storm Lake United Methodist Church

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Storm Lake United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy is as follows:

1. Ensure the safety of children, youth, and dependent adult in our care.
2. Protect children, youth, and dependent adults from all forms of abuse.
3. Protect all people from being unfairly accused of abusing children, youth, or dependent adults in any manner.

Employee and Volunteer Selection Policies

1. All volunteers and employees working with children will complete an *Application for Working with Minors*, which will be kept on file in the church office.
2. Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse should not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
3. Prohibited behaviors for all employees and volunteers include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Using verbally or emotionally abusive or derogatory language.
 - b. Using sexually implicit or explicit language or behavior.
 - c. Physically striking, hitting, or spanking.
 - d. Fondling or kissing.
 - e. Touching or tickling in an inappropriate or sexual manner.

Supervision of Children and Youth – 18 years or younger

1. Programs for children and youth
 - a. To the extent that it is possible, an adult leader should never be alone with one child. Adults, paid staff or volunteers, who have legitimate reasons to meet alone with a child or youth should obtain written consent for the child's parent or guardian before spending time with the child or youth in an unsupervised situation.
 - b. To the extent that it is reasonably possible, two or more adult employees or volunteers will be present at all times during an event.
 - c. To the extent that it is possible, one of the adults should be at least twenty-one years old or five years older than the maximum age of the participants.
 - d. During Sunday school, classroom doors must be kept open.
 - e. Every child in our care is encouraged to have a Medical Release Information Form on file in the church office.
 - f. All volunteers with children and youth are to receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy.
2. Nursery
 - a. Nursery care is provided for young children.
 - b. Parents or a responsible adult designated by parent must sign-in the infant/child and note where they can be reached in case of emergency.

3. Driver Policy

- a. Drivers must present a valid driver's license to the Program Director and must adhere to applicable laws.
- b. Without exception, all drivers must be at least 21 years of age.
- c. Passengers are required to wear seatbelts and use child safety seats as required by Iowa law.
- d. Owner of the vehicle must have insurance to at least minimum state of ownership requirements.
- e. No smoking while in the vehicle or consumption of alcohol at any time by a driver or adult passenger while traveling to, from, or during a church sponsored child or youth activity.
- f. Driver of the vehicle should refrain from cell phone usage while driving.

Emergency Response Procedure

1. Notify the parents, and take any necessary steps to assure the child's safety until the parents arrive. The safety of the child must be the church's primary concern.
2. Do not confront an accused abuser with anger and hostility, treat him or her with dignity, but immediately remove him or her from further involvement with children and youth.
3. Notify the proper law enforcement or child protective services agency.
4. Notify the annual conference authorities, the church's insurance agent, and the church's attorney.
5. Keep a written record of the steps taken by the church in response.
6. Call upon the senior pastor to make any necessary statements or responses to the news media.
7. Prepare a brief and honest statement that can be made to the congregation without giving unnecessary details, placing blame, interfering with the victim's privacy, or violating any confidentiality concerns.
8. Be prepared to cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.

Outings away from Church Property

1. All children participating in out-of-town and over-night outings must have written consent and a medical release form on file in the church office.
2. All overnight outings will require at least two unrelated workers. Sleeping arrangement details will be documented prior to the event, and approved by the Program Director or Pastor.
3. There will be a first aid kit available at all overnight events. The worker in charge shall report any administration of first aid or other treatment to the parent. The worker in charge will contact the Program Director or Pastor immediately and make a written incident report that will be given to the Program Director.
4. There must be access to a phone when groups are away from the church facility. The Office Administrator, Program Director, and Pastor will be given this number prior to the group departing the church.