

## **SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY**

### **Kingsley United Methodist Church**

All volunteers and employees shall observe appropriate interpersonal boundaries with minors. Inappropriate behavior is generally defined as, but not limited to, touching any sexual or intimate area, whether welcome or unwelcome, or any unwelcome touching. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.

It shall be the policy of the Kingsley United Methodist Church to conduct a background check on all volunteers and employees who will be working with minors, either directly or in close proximity. Working with minors includes teaching Sunday School or other classes, Youth groups, chaperoning events or in any other capacity where minors are involved. Background checks are the responsibility of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee, with the cost being incurred by the church.

Prior to performing a background check, the individuals being checked shall submit a signed consent form authorizing the background check. Records/results of all background checks shall be kept in a secure lock box accessible only by the pastor and/or the chairperson of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee. Details of such background check results shall only be reviewed by the pastor and/or the chairperson of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee, and all such information will be held in strictest confidentiality.

There will be at least two adults (volunteers or employees) with minors at all times during any church activity whether said activity is at the church or off premises. Exceptions can occur if one chaperone supervises three or more minors twelve (12) year old or older in a public place.

No employee or volunteer will work alone with minors if the volunteer or employee is under the age of eighteen (18).

All volunteers and employees working with minors shall be at least five (5) years older than the oldest minor. The Youth Council may grant exceptions on a limited case-by-case basis.

On overnight trips, no chaperones are to sleep in a bed with a minor unless the minor is the son or daughter of the chaperone. A chaperone may not sleep in the same room as a minor unless there is at least one other person in the room.

For overnight trips, a complete list of drivers and/or chaperones taking part in the trip shall be submitted to the pastor for approval at least one week prior to the departure date.

All counseling with minors will be with open doors.

Windows in classroom and office doors will not be covered at any time.

Newcomers to the church must maintain regular attendance and participation at the church for at least six (6) months before applying to work with minors.

All volunteers and employees who work with minors will receive annual training regarding child sexual abuse and the procedures for reporting such abuse. This training will include recognizing the signs of abuse, and types of abuse.

Any volunteer or employee who becomes aware of any allegation of sexual or physical abuse or neglect shall report the allegation **immediately** to the police, and **then** make the Pastor aware of the allegation. The responsibility for reporting suspected abuse or neglect lies with the individual who suspects that child abuse or neglect has occurred. A new state law requires anyone who suspects a child is being abused to report the case directly to the Department of Children's Services, sheriff, or chief law enforcement officer in the city or county where the child resides. Failure to do so is a Class A misdemeanor and punishable by a fine of \$2,500.

If such an incident is reported, no member or employee of the church shall give statements to or be interviewed by the media. Public statements will only be made by attorneys or upon advice of attorneys.

Any volunteer or employee will be required to cooperate fully during any official investigation made by any Law Enforcement Agency having venue, or by the District Attorney's Office.