

# **Conyers First United Methodist Church**

## **Safe Sanctuaries Policies**

### **(Abbreviated)**

#### **Two Adult Rule**

Every effort will be made to provide at least two adults at all times during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children or youth. Whenever possible, these adults will be non-related and male/female ratios will be appropriate to the male/female ratio of the children or youth.

#### **Adult to Child Ratio**

We will do our best to ensure that adult to child ratios are better than the following minimums. If you see that your classroom exceeds the ratio, contact a staff person immediately.

- a. 0-2 years require a minimum of 1 adult to 3 children ratio
- b. 3-10 years require a minimum 1 adult to 10 children ratio
- c. 11-18 years require a minimum 1 adult to 15 children ratio

#### **First Aid/CPR Training**

Basic first aid and CPR training will be regularly offered and is strongly encouraged for all volunteers and required for all staff who work with children or youth.

#### **Accident Reporting**

Accident/incidents reports will be completed for all significant injuries/incidents and submitted to Amy Watts, Parish Administrator, Children's Minister, and parent or guardian of the child. Forms will be placed in all classrooms.

#### **Background Checks/Screening**

All volunteers to work with children and youth will be asked to sign consent forms for background checks and will be screened prior to volunteering by Shane Burns, Director of Children's Ministries.

#### **Teenagers do not count towards the 2 adult or ratio rules.**

People under the age of 21 are encouraged to serve with Conyers kids. They, however, are not old enough to provide sufficient oversight and accountability. Their presence does not count towards our two adult minimum, nor towards proper adult to kid ratios.

#### **Five Years Older Rule**

Staff and volunteers must be at least 5 years older than the children and/or youth they are leading.

#### **Open Door Counseling**

At any one-on-one counseling session with children or youth, the door of the room should remain open for the entire session. Ideally the session will be conducted at a time when others are nearby.

#### **Evacuation**

In case of emergency, we will evacuate into the back parking lot according to the posted evacuation plan. Non-walkers will be placed in cribs and rolled out.

#### **Discipline**

Discipline in the classroom environment is the provision of loving boundaries so that the child can know where his circle of safety is, and the environment remains a positive learning environment for other kids.

## **Physical Punishment or Abusive or Demeaning Language is never a proper discipline method.**

Up to age 1 ½, discipline is just a small redirection of behavior, usually moving them to a new activity.

### **1. 1 ½ to 3 years old**

- a. Discipline begins with a clear description of expectations,
- b. If the expectations are broken, use light touch on shoulders and a calm and cheerful voice to state what behavior we want to see.
- c. If that does not work, pick up the child and move them to a new location.

### **2. Age 3 through Elementary**

- a. Discipline begins with a clear description of expectations.
- b. If expectations are broken, use light touch on shoulders and a calm and cheerful voice to state what behavior we want to see.
- c. Move them away from friends and next to an adult leader.
- d. Remove them from the activity.
- e. Take them to the staff member in charge.

## **Appropriate and Inappropriate Affection**

Know that inappropriate affection and touching is a grooming behavior for child molesters. Do not demand hugs or other types of affection from children, as it teaches them to be compliant. Report any suspected inappropriate affection to a staff member immediately.

High fives, light touching on the shoulder or arm, and quick hugs are encouraged!

## **Child Abuse Notification**

*If an abuser is caught in the act or if someone's safety is at stake – call 911 immediately!*

For suspected child abuse:

- Contact Shane Burns, Children's Ministry Director (224) 619-8648

Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between a worker and a member of any child, children's or youth group must be reported to a Minister or other Staff Person immediately and addressed.

A caretaker or worker or staff member who suspects that child abuse has occurred will promptly report the incident or suspicions to a senior staff member.

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs may include:

1. Physical: lacerations and bruises, nightmares, irritation, pain or injury to the genital area, difficulty with urination, discomfort when sitting, torn or bloody underclothing venereal disease
2. Behavioral: anxiety when approaching church or nursery area, nervous or hostile behavior toward adults, sexual self-consciousness, "acting out" of sexual behavior withdrawal from church activities and friends
3. Verbal: I don't like (a particular worker), (A church worker) does things to me when we're alone. I don't like to be alone with (a church worker). (A church worker) fooled around with me.