

Safe Sanctuary Policy Requirements Checklist
Greater New Jersey Annual Conference
Updated January 2023

Policy Requirements:

1. Policy includes an application form for adults seeking to work with children/youth/vulnerable adults, an incident report form and clear screening procedure for all staff and volunteers both long term and occasional
2. Policy includes that a background check and training is done for all ministry workers lay and clergy, and is done through Ministry Safe.
3. All volunteer workers who are supervising programs or leading within programs must be regular attendees of a local congregation for at least six months.
4. The policy requires previously screened/trained workers to report any new incidents that would appear on a new background check to the pastor or DS immediately.
5. The policy requires that all applications of prospective volunteers shall be reviewed by the Chairperson of the SPRC, the Ministry Lead (or supervisor) and the pastor.
6. All forms shall be maintained in the Ministry Safe Database or in the confidential personnel files of the church after the termination of any employee or volunteer for a minimum of 20 years.
7. The policy requires that the Safe Sanctuaries policy be reviewed/updated every year by the Administrative council, and will submit to the Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator every other year.
8. The policy differentiates between local church programs and non church operated programs.
9. The policy requires necessary certificates of occupancy.
10. The policy requires all groups conducting such programs shall have the necessary certificates of insurance for both liability and workers' compensation. They shall be displayed as required by law.
11. The policy states and explains supervision procedures, including Sunday School, youth group, overnight programming, etc. including the Two-Adult Rule, Five-Years Older Rule, and safeguards for ministry contexts
 - a. Policy forbids one-adult-one-child situations
 - b. Policy requires First Aid/CPR trained person always available
 - c. Policy requires classroom windows to be unshaded
 - d. Policy requires one-on-one counseling to be held within eyesight of another adult
 - e. Policy requires notice to parents about ministry events and activities (no "secret" activities)
12. The policy states that different ministry programs will require different supervision procedures and will lay out policies for those events (ie Vacation Bible School, Overnight Retreats, IGNITE, Day programs, After School care etc).
13. The policy spells out who and how to report suspected abuse (includes state reporting phone numbers)
 - a. Policy requires that any knowledge or suspicion of child abuse be reported to the DCPD hotline in NJ/NY/PA
 - b. Policy states that only the Pastor is authorized to speak to media on behalf of the congregation when there is an allegation of abuse
 - c. Policy requires notification of Ministry Leader and Pastor

- d. Policy requires notification of District Superintendent when allegation or suspicion of abuse occurs
 - e. Policy requires removal of child to a safe setting
 - f. Policy requires removal of alleged abuser
 - g. Policy requires calling 911 only in cases when child is in immediate danger
 - h. Policy requires a written record of all steps taken in response to allegation
 - i. Policy includes a report form for suspected incidents of sexual or physical abuse (provide copy)
14. The policy spells out how the local congregation will respond to abuse.
15. The policy requires yearly education of the entire congregation on the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, and the re-screening and training of all volunteers according to Ministry Safe.
16. The policy includes the standard definitions as listed below:
- a. Definition of Terms:
 - b. Child: In the United States, this term is commonly used to identify anyone age eleven or younger. Youth: Anyone not a “child” and under eighteen (age of legal majority).
 - c. Adult: Anyone who has reached the age of legal majority and has finished high school.
 - d. Vulnerable person: A person whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse, or neglect is significantly impaired through social, physical, or mental disability or illness.
 - e. Paid staff person: Someone paid by the church, overseen by the staff/pastor parish relations committee, and screened according to the church’s Safe Sanctuary policy and any additional required personnel screening.
 - f. Unscreened adult: Someone who has not been screened. The individual may work in a room with a two screened adults or screened-paid staff persons. They should never be alone with children, youth, or other vulnerable people. Unscreened adults may or may not be church members. The use of unscreened adults should be an exception rather than normal practice. Rare exceptions may be made in consultation with the pastor in charge in special situations.
 - g. Screened adult: A volunteer who has gone through the screening process involving a criminal background check, reference check, interview, and risk reduction training. These people may or may not be members, but they must be regular attendees and active in the church for at least six months.
 - h. Youth helpers: People under the age of eighteen who are assisting with child or youth activities. They can assist with activities but should not be considered adult volunteers and should always be supervised. Youth helpers should be at least three years older than the children or youth they are helping. A youth helper will normally be considered “unscreened.” It is recommended that before Youth Helpers participate in an activity as a helper, they are given some training in regards to bathroom usage, not being alone
 - i. Roamer: A Safe Sanctuaries trained/screened adult leader who meets the minimum age requirements as defined in this policy and moves throughout the facility to provide additional oversight and supervision during activities.
 - j. Ministry supervisor: A screened individual, staff, or volunteer, responsible for a particular ministry with oversight of the leaders in that ministry.
 - k. Physical abuse: Violent, non-accidental contact that results in injury. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, biting, or shaking. Injuries include bruises, fractures, cuts, and burns.

- l. Sexual abuse: Any form of sexual activity with a child/youth/any other vulnerable person, whether at the church, at home, or in any other setting. The abuser may be an adult or another minor.
- m. Emotional abuse: A pattern of intentional conduct that crushes a child's/youth's/other vulnerable person's spirit and attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.
- n. Neglect: When a person with responsibility for a child, youth, or other vulnerable person fails to care for that individual's physical and/or emotional needs.
- o.
- p. CHURCH PROGRAMS/NON-CHURCH PROGRAMS AS RELATED TO INSURANCE: Programs relating to children, youth and vulnerable adults are covered under the GNJ Property and Casualty Insurance Program so long as they are church-operated. That is, the church must have control over starting and stopping the operation, hiring or firing the employees and the management of the day-to-day operations. The decision to operate a program, as described above, should be a matter of record in the meeting minutes of the Administrative Board or Board of Trustees of the local church. This will lay to rest the question of whether it is a church-operated or a non-church program that is using the church premises. The non-church program is not covered by the GNJ insurance and the church should be sure that these non-church programs carry a minimum of \$1,000,000 General Liability Insurance and are covered by Workers' Compensation insurance. Certificates of these insurance coverages should be requested and received by the church annually. GNJ and the local church should be named as additional insureds on these policies. The employees of the church-operated childcare centers are covered under the Workers' Compensation Program and as such should be reported on the annual Workers' Compensation salary audit of the local church.
- q. SCREENING FORMS: Screening forms for use with volunteers are designed to assist the local church in gaining information on persons who are applicants for working in church programs with children, youth and vulnerable adults. Their use is designed to enhance the protection of those who participate in the programs. The use of the screening process should be required in both "church" and "non-church" programs.
- r. BACKGROUND CHECKS: As with the screening forms, background checks are designed to protect those individuals involved in the programs offered by the church to children, youth and vulnerable adults.

If the Ministry Context has overnights:

1. All Churches, if they have programming for youth, children, or vulnerable adults that require an overnight will have a policy in place for safeguarding and caring for folks in those situations.

If the Ministry Context is in relationship with LGBTQIA+ persons

1. Churches are to be in a relationship with youth, children, or vulnerable adults who self-identify in the LGBTQIA+ community, they will have policies and procedures outlining how to keep youth/children/Vulnerable adults safe, cared for, and protected.

If the Ministry Context includes online ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults:

1. Policy includes rules and guidelines for all church computer use and internet activities
2. Policy requires all church computers to be password protected
3. Policy requires Computers to be monitored when in use by children, youth, or vulnerable adults
4. Policy requires computers to only be used for ministry related purposes
5. Policy requires appropriate blocks installed on computers for specific internet sites