

SUMC's Safe Sanctuaries® Policy

Sudbury United Methodist Church ("SUMC") is a "Safe Sanctuaries" congregation. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. Below are policies that assist to ensure we are doing our best to keep our children, youth and vulnerable adults and those who work with them safe. In addition, SUMC is required by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to conduct a CORI background investigation of volunteers who work with senior members.

Definitions

- "Children" or "child" means any person 12 years of age or younger.
- "CORI" means Criminal Offender Record Information.
- "CORI Administrator" means the Director of Christian Education.
- "CORI information" means the information provided by individuals subject to a CORI background investigation.
- "CORI results" means the information obtained from the CORI system as a result of the CORI background investigation.
- "Senior member" means persons 60 years of age or older.
- "Volunteer" means any lay person serving as a volunteer.
- "Vulnerable adult" means any person 18 years of age or older identified by himself or herself, a caregiver, the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Adult Ministries Coordinator, Stephen's Ministry Coordinator or other person designated by the Senior Pastor, who, because of a physical disability, intellectual disability or emotional condition (1) has a legal guardian, (2) without the assistance of others, is unable to carry out the activity of daily living or manage his or her own resources, or (3) is receiving pastoral care or care from a Stephen Minister in a formal one-to-one Stephen Ministry caring relationship.
- "Youth" means any person 13 years to 18 years of age.

Background Checks

- All persons who volunteer to work with children, youth, vulnerable adults and senior members must complete a CORI background investigation. These persons include, but are not limited to, Sunday school teachers, nursery volunteers, youth mentors, adult chaperones, Vacation Bible School volunteers, Stephen Ministers and Magic Years volunteers.
- The CORI Administrator will collect CORI information, review CORI results; discuss the CORI results with the Senior and/or Associate Pastor(s), if needed; and hold all CORI results and CORI information in strict confidence and in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The CORI Administrator will keep all CORI results and CORI information in a secure location. CORI investigations are valid for three years. After three years, a new CORI must be completed. The foregoing description of the CORI procedures is a summary only. You may request a copy of the *Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Policy* by contacting the church office.

“The Rule of Three”

- Volunteers working with children and/or youth will comply with the “Rule of Three.” The rule provides that a volunteer shall not be alone with a child or youth.

- When possible, any volunteer working with children or youth will be accompanied by at least one other adult. If this is not feasible, the volunteer must have more than one child or youth present with them.

Mandatory Five Year Age Difference to Supervise

- A volunteer or paid staff person must be at least five years older than the children or youth with whom they are working.

Open Door Counseling

- Doors should be kept open at all times during “one-on-one” counseling or while advising any child or youth in the church. If personal privacy is a concern and the child or youth feels more comfortable with a closed door, the counseling session must be accessible to viewing at all times.

Attendance Requirement

- To volunteer as a teacher or mentor, adults must be a parishioner in excess of six months to allow time for the staff to become acquainted with the individual.

Photo Privacy and Protection

- Parents must indicate whether or not they give permission to have their child’s photo displayed on-line, on bulletin boards within the church facility or in the newspaper. Youth in grades six through twelve must also give their written permission to have photos displayed.

- Written permission is expressed through the registration paperwork associated with the child’s Christian Education program.

- Written permission is valid from September through August of the program year but can be revoked at any time by notifying the Director of Christian Education. Permission must be given each year at the time of registration.

- Permission to have photos and personal information available in the Church directory will be obtained at the time photos are taken.

- Individuals over eighteen years of age who do not wish to have their photos displayed are encouraged to speak with the Director of Christian Education who will ensure the desires of the individual are communicated with those responsible for posting photos.

Safe Sanctuaries Participation Covenant

- All volunteers who work with children, youth, vulnerable adults and senior members must sign (and return to the CORI Administrator) the Safe Sanctuaries Participation Covenant every three years, which the CORI Administrator will maintain on file.

Approved by SUMC Church Conference: June 23, 2013