

sexual misconduct and abuse. At a minimum, the church will consult with the District Attorney General who will search the National Criminal Investigative Center database and state Sex Offender Registries nationwide for prior arrests and convictions. Background checks will be limited to matters directly relevant to sexual misconduct and sexual and physical abuse. Any prior conviction for sexual misconduct or sexual or physical abuse will disqualify the applicant from serving in any capacity that involves direct instruction or supervision of minors. Prior allegations or arrests not leading to conviction will be taken seriously and addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Volunteers must have been an active participant at Central United Methodist Church for a minimum of 6 months before being assigned to work with children or youth. An exception may be made if the volunteer has transferred from another United Methodist Church with a "Safe Sanctuary" policy. Upon verification from their previous church and after a clean background check has been received, this person may be assigned. Volunteers in sensitive positions—for example, positions involving overnight supervision of children and youth—will be subject to increased application requirements similar to those for paid employees.

Anyone hired to work with youth must be at least 5 years older than the oldest youth under their leadership. No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to work with children. Those 16 and older may help in certain instances but they do not count toward the two-person rule.

All applications, background checks, training records, and resulting decisions will be maintained by the church office. All personal information will be considered confidential and will be processed by the Staff Parish Committee on a need-to-know basis.

Supervision

The CUMC leadership approach will be to adopt the "two adult" rule. In every church activity involving minors, our goal is to ensure that two non-related adults are present at all times. If two related adults would like to work together, they will be permitted but will only count as one adult. Another non-related adult must be present in this event. In practice churches depend on volunteers and shortages of volunteers are inevitable. Highly structured classroom activities, such as Sunday school classes, may be taught by one adult when necessary, provided the Sunday School Superintendent, staff member, or designee observes the classroom activity from time to time. However, in no case will any activity outside the highly structured classroom setting be conducted with less than two adults. In case of an emergency, one adult may remain with the group while the second adult takes a sick or injured child for medical treatment. In no case will an activity involve one adult and one minor.

Planning of sleeping arrangements prior to overnight trips with youth is required. Youth shall be housed separately from adults. If possible, rooms should be arranged so that an adult room is between two youth rooms. The adults are required to take turns checking the rooms on a random schedule during the night. If at all possible a dormitory or hotel setting should have rooms that open into a corridor. Because the safety of our youth is our ultimate goal, the adult leaders and an authorized staff person may use their discretion with the above policy if they feel their particular circumstance and the policy are creating a greater risk.