

# UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

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# Context

United Women in Faith is an organization that seeks to put faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth. In light of this and a heritage that embraces ministry with the marginalized, United Women in Faith has given careful attention to establishing practices for creating a safe environment for everyone who attends United Women in Faith-sponsored events/meetings/programs with a specific focus on children, youth, and vulnerable adults. See the *Practical Planning Guide for Sustainable Meetings*. Go to [uwfaith.org/what-we-do/serve-and-advocate/climate-justice](http://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/serve-and-advocate/climate-justice).

## Principles

- Prevention – We will do all we can to establish ways of operating that provide physical, emotional, social, and spiritual safety. We will do everything possible to see that no abuse, harassment, mistreatment, or harm comes to anyone.
- Awareness – We will raise awareness and enlist the help of staff, resource persons, and attendees in creating a safe and comfortable environment for everyone.
- Response – In the event of an occurrence of abuse, harassment, mistreatment, or harm, we will implement the response plan that prioritizes the safety of the person(s) involved first and then the integrity of the event.

## Practices


### *I. Prevention*

#### **A. Regarding staff, United Women in Faith directors/Program Advisory Group members, and resource persons**

- 1) United Women in Faith programs and events often include vulnerable persons. Therefore, background checks shall be conducted every three (3) years for staff, and at the beginning of each quadrennium for United Women in Faith directors and Program Advisory Group members. Background checks shall include any reports of child abuse/neglect or incidences of violence.



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- 2) Awareness training shall be conducted every year for all staff, directors/ Program Advisory Group members, and resource persons.
  - 3) As much as possible, every effort shall be made to observe the Two Adult Rule from *Safe Sanctuaries Policy* for leaders in venues such as workshop/ classroom/small group.

## **B. Regarding participants**

- 1) A designated staff for an event shall send a Covenant of Conduct to all participants under the age of 18 along with a medical consent form. Their parent/guardian must also sign these forms. An adult chaperone who will be in attendance at the event must be designated by the parent/guardian.
- 2) The event-designated child protection staff shall contact the parent/guardian of the person under the age of 18. The staff person will:
  - a) Confirm the parent/guardian has read and discussed the Covenant of Conduct with their child;
  - b) Ensure parent/guardian understands that violations of this covenant may likely result in United Women in Faith having the parent/guardian come to pick up their child at their own expense;
  - c) Share the requirements of this policy with the parent/guardian;
  - d) Convey to the parent/guardian the nature of the venue (hotels are public; conference centers are public);
  - e) Share with parent/guardian that while every precaution is being made to ensure the safety of their child, there are no guarantees;
  - f) Confirm the parent/guardian has designated an adult chaperone.
- 3) Underage persons must room with other underage persons or room by themselves. In some cases, roommates may be at the discretion of the participant with the approval of their parent/guardian. Underage persons may room with their chaperone with the parent/guardian's permission.



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## **II. Awareness**

- 1) Notice of the organization's intention to provide a safe environment must be included in printed material of the event and shared verbally at the event.
- 2) United Women in Faith's website shall include a statement about the organization's commitment to a safe and comfortable environment at all United Women in Faith-sponsored events/programs/etc.
- 3) A staff person must be designated and identified at each event as point person for determining response and reporting.
- 4) Designated persons should be fully trained in Safe Sanctuary Policy and be knowledgeable about response and reporting practices for General Agencies.

## **III. Response**

Any reported or suspected sexual abuse of a child that occurs, either at an event or from experiences revealed onsite, must be reported to the local authorities. (Prior experiences are more complicated and must be left to the discretion of the designated person(s)). The designated staff will:

- 1) Immediately take steps to make the victim safe.
- 2) Call local authorities to report the incident.
- 3) Contact the Safe Sanctuaries office of Discipleship Ministries.



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## **A. Abuse**

Any reported or suspected sexual abuse of a child that occurs, either at an event or from experiences revealed onsite, must be reported to the local authorities. (Prior experiences are more complicated and must be left to the discretion of the designated person(s)). The designated staff will:

- 1) Immediately take steps to make the victim safe.
- 2) Call local authorities to report the incident.
- 3) Contact the Safe Sanctuaries office of Discipleship Ministries.

## **B. Misconduct**

- 1) Incidences of harassment, bullying, or other misconduct must be addressed appropriately in consultation with the leadership, United Women in Faith staff cabinet member(s), and/or designated person(s) at the event.
- 2) Careful records shall be kept of any incidences so as to maintain privacy as well as history in the event of investigation or further misconduct.
  - a) Records involving United Women in Faith staff shall be maintained by Human Resources;
  - b) Records involving non-staff, including directors/Program Advisory Group members, resource persons, and participants, shall be maintained by the recording secretary of the United Women in Faith Board of Directors.

This policy shall be reviewed every four years for updates and improvements.



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