



PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS MISSOURI ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

All adult sponsors responsible for supervision of minors during a Conference or district-sponsored ministry event shall be certified through the Missouri Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuaries Certification process. Employee contractors or vendors are not required to be Missouri Conference Safe Sanctuaries certified.

1. **Ratio Rule – Two Adult Rule:** During Conference and district-sponsored ministry events, an adult shall not be alone with a minor. This restriction includes all aspects of the event at all times. For small group activities that are led by one adult who is supervising, two or more groups are to meet in sight and sound of each other. The ratio for adult to student interaction should be 1:8 (meaning one leader to eight attendees). For daytime-only events/camps, the Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified supervising adults may supervise a gender group different than themselves (meaning a female Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified supervising adult may supervise a group of males). Events/camps that provide overnight accommodations require a ratio of 1:8 (meaning one leader to eight attendees) and must have a conference safe sanctuaries certified supervising adult representing the 1:8 ratio of male and/or females present (meaning 1 female conference safe sanctuaries certified supervising adult must be present for the eight female minors attending). These ratios may be changed by the Office of Next Generation Ministries for a specific ministry event at which time a notice of the change in these ratios will be made available to all participants in the ministry event.
2. **Rules Related to Age of Supervisors – Four Year Gap Rule:** Persons supervising minors shall be at least four years older than the oldest participant. Individuals who are 18 years and under may serve as a supervisor once they have completed certification and training, provided they serve under the supervision ratio of 1:1 by a Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified supervising adult who is 22 years or older. Some events may require that the Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified supervising adult be older than 22 years, if so, those requirements will be communicated prior to the beginning of the ministry event. In camps for children, no one under 15 years old may serve as a counselor. All other requirements with regard to the ratios between leaders and participants will remain the same in the event that individuals under the age of 18 act as a counselor/leader.
3. **Accommodations**
 - a. Each minor shall have his/her own bed and shall not share with another minor or adult. Exceptions to this rule may be for related persons and requires a written letter of acknowledgement from the legal guardian of both parties.
 - b. There shall always be two Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified supervising adults in a room/tent at all times. A parent/legal guardian of a minor(s) may stay in the same room without an additional adult but they cannot act as a supervisor/sponsor to minors if they are not the parent/legal guardian of those minors unless there is an additional Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified supervising adult that will be accommodated in the same room/tent. (See Accompanying Parents section below.)
 - c. There shall be separate sleeping areas for males and females with two or more same

gender Safe Sanctuaries-certified adults. *See ratio rule*

- d. Accommodations with a connecting room between minors and adults will only be appropriate when there are two Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified supervising adults are present together in the same connecting room.
- e. Accommodations at a hotel/motel shall only be used when there is only interior door access to the hotel/motel rooms. Exterior door accesses to rooms are not preferred. The doors of each room may not be locked on the exterior in such a way that would prevent an escape in the event of an emergency. When two Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified adults are not present in the same room, one Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified adult may sleep directly outside the room or make use of an approved door alarm (*contact Office of Next Generation Ministries*) device that will notify Safe Sanctuaries-certified adults of an access breach.
- f. Open showers are prohibited. Separate shower times for minors and for adults shall be designated to prevent minors and adults showering together. Instances may occur where swimsuits will be needed. Adults shall not enter the showering facilities/areas at any time when a minor is present.
 - i. Shower accommodations must have a changing area directly outside the shower allowing minors to dress in private.
4. **Accompanying Parents:** All supervising adults at an event must be Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified. A parent/legal guardian may not accompany his/her child or youth who is participating in an event unless he/she is Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified themselves *and* invited by the event leadership to serve as a supervisor/sponsor. Supervision of a minor remains the responsibility of the Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified adult serving as a sponsor unless the parent has been invited to become a supervisor/sponsor themselves.
5. **Medical Release:** All minors shall have a completed medical release form and completed parental permission form before he/she will be permitted to participate at any event.
6. **Social Media:** Social media applications used for interacting between adults and minors e.g. Facebook, Google Groups, etc. must have two adults who serve as administrators and are Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified. Social media applications used for conference ministries between adults and minors e.g., Youth Leadership team or Youth Academy shall in addition to having two Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified adults also grant full administrative access to the Director for Next Generation Ministries. Any public social media pages for publicizing NextGen events must grant administrative access to the Director of Connectional Ministries.
7. **Conference Councils with Minors:** Adults serving on a conference council with minors shall maintain Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified.
8. **Global Connect Teams (a.k.a. Volunteer in Missions):** When Global Connect teams or Mission Camps are primarily in settings with minors then all adult volunteers shall be Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified.
9. **Mobile Camps (a Conference-sponsored ministry) hosted at a Local Church:** The conference paid employees who are core staff and the local church volunteers are required to be Conference Safe Sanctuaries-certified.
10. **Conference-Sponsored Meetings hosted at a Local Church:** When minors or vulnerable adults accompany adults to a district or Conference-sponsored meeting; hosted at a local church and the local church provides day care; local church certification for the Day Care workers is required.