

STEPS

1) **Recognize or build a sense of need**

- a) to protect children, youth, and adults at church activities
- b) to respond to a child's report to someone in the church of abuse anywhere

Recognition of need: Hopefully a brief, clear presentation to a church board will bring about thoughtful consideration and strong support for a decision to establish a task force to develop a policy.

Building a sense of need: Sometimes church boards will not be ready to seriously consider and approve the development of a Safe Sanctuary policy. Individuals who have seen the need should not lose hope. Like plants, many important issues need cultivation before they blossom. Suggestions on how to nurture the Safe Sanctuaries concept are available in printed and human form: contact the Dakotas Conference Safe Sanctuaries Board.

2) **Local church Safe Sanctuaries Task Force**

Include: pastor, lay leader, staff and lay leadership from both children and youth ministries, member of SPRC and Trustees. Each group working with children and youth should be represented!

3) **Educate and listen to Task Force members**

Prayer

Biblical study

Resource materials from Conference Resource Center

Knowledge of policies of other children and youth organizations

Media clippings and reports about safety efforts and church related child abuse tragedies

Videos from Conference Resource Center

Requirements and expectations of church's insurance company

Dakotas Conference Safe Sanctuaries Board

4) **Educate and listen to:**

Leaders and volunteers involved in children and youth ministries or working with vulnerable adults

Congregation: through "mission minute" during worship and church newsletter. Indicate who persons can contact if they have questions, concerns, or input.

5) **Practical problem solving**

Wise safety rules can raise problems: "Two adult rule", "Five years older rule", "Windows for class room doors", "No workers under eighteen"

For example:

A requirement for two teachers for every class can be a challenge for recruiters but is a gift to the teachers.

Small churches may not always be able to have two adults physically in a classroom at all times but once the Trustees have installed windows, a church school superintendent or treasurer can be visually present from time to time. And stop in as well! The "no workers under 18" rule doesn't mean that youth can't help. It does mean that they should not be expected to replace adults in lead teaching or care giving roles.

6) **Contact Dakotas Conference Safe Sanctuaries Board** for sample local church policies against child abuse and sexual abuse/harassment in a ministerial relationship.

7) **Write your local church policies including:**

Brief Biblical and theological rationale

Safeguards to put in place

Employment application

Volunteer application

Background checks

Signed releases

Where are records kept?

Who has access?

Regular education of leaders, workers, children, youth, and new members.

Response plan in case of allegations.

Who has the responsibility to respond?

What are the specific steps in the response?

How will written records of the steps be made?

Who is informed and monitors the process?

(At least one person not related to reporter.)

Accident response and report plans

Transition steps

Who works through plan with new pastoral, professional, and volunteer leadership?

- 8) **Share your draft policy with workers and committees.**
- 9) **Check your draft policy with local legal counsel.**
- 10) **Present plan to church council for ratification.**
- 11) **Inform the congregation of the policy's ratification and its general provisions.** Post and make available copies of the complete policy.
- 12) **Request signatures on application and release forms.**
- 13) **Process reference checks.**
- 14) **Have a service of celebration of your church's commitment to be a safe sanctuary for everyone including regular advertising that your church has safe sanctuary policies and procedures in place.**
- 15) **Yearly:**
 - Review of the adequacy of your policies/procedures
 - Worker training
 - Education component for children, youth, new members

HELP IS AVAILABLE!

Your Dakotas Conference Safe Sanctuaries Board (appointed by the Bishop) is ready to help you find the resources you need to plan for your local church policies on sexual abuse/harassment within a ministerial relationship and on child abuse. Both of these policies were mandated by the 1996 General Conference and are now required for all churches in the Dakotas Conference.

Contact Board members for further assistance:

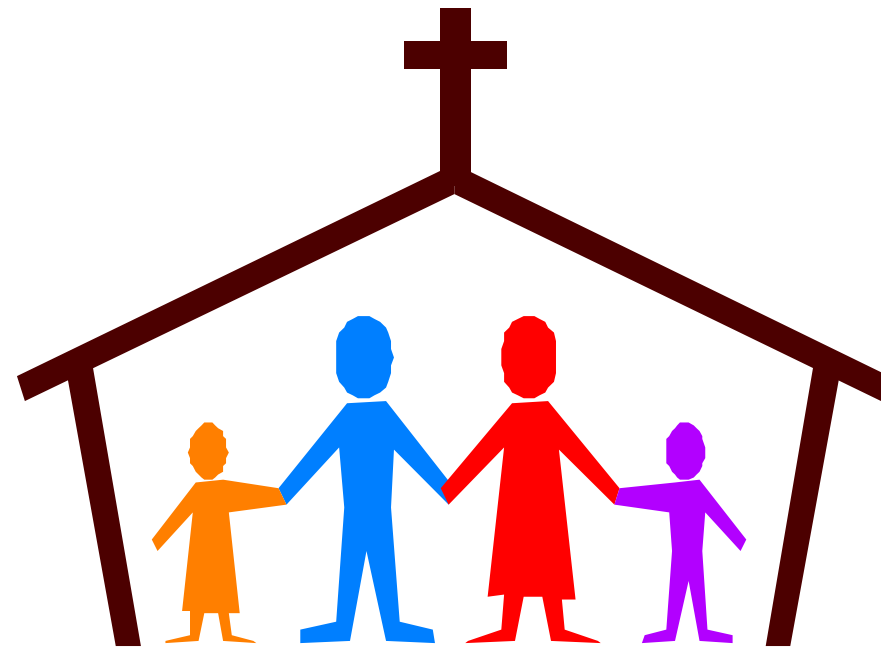
Barb Goodman, Chair 605-677-5158
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Local Church Steps

to Implementing a

Safe

Sanctuary*



"Safe Sanctuary: The church is called by God to be a haven of safety in many ways. In the context of this document "Safe Sanctuary" refers specifically to a church's intentional effort to reduce the risk of sexual abuse for children and adults.