



**The congregation is encouraged to review this policy and is welcome to discuss or report any concerns to a member of the team. The member will communicate with the appropriate people to ensure your questions and concerns are answered.**

Each member of this team has been trained according to the policy and wants to make sure each child, youth and vulnerable adult is safe and comfortable at Sugar River

**Mike Weigand, Pastor:** [PastorMike@sugarriverumc.org](mailto:PastorMike@sugarriverumc.org)

**Children and Family Ministry Coordinator:** [childrensministry@sugarriverumc.org](mailto:childrensministry@sugarriverumc.org)

**High School Youth Coordinator:** [tammi.hagensick@sugarriverumc.org](mailto:tammi.hagensick@sugarriverumc.org)

**Servant Leadership Board Representative:** [ktjohnsen@yahoo.com](mailto:ktjohnsen@yahoo.com)

**Congregation Representative:** [erin.ford@sugarriverumc.org](mailto:erin.ford@sugarriverumc.org)



# Sugar River



## Our Covenant:

*As a Christian community, the Sugar River United Methodist Church pledges to conduct the children and youth ministry in a way pleasing to God. We will do this in ways that will assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth, volunteers and staff. We will follow reasonable guidelines, educate our staff and volunteers regarding the guidelines and best practices of Christian care.*

Sugar River United Methodist Church  
415 West Verona Avenue  
Verona, WI 53593

[www.sugarriverumc.org](http://www.sugarriverumc.org)

# Safe Sanctuary Policy

Revised: 12/30/24

# Safe Sanctuary Policy Details



## Supervision of Children and Youth

To protect all Sugar River staff, volunteers, and minors, we will adhere to the Two Adult Rule: more than one adult supervisor will be present during any church activity. At no time during Sugar River programs may an adult staff member or volunteer be alone with a single child unobserved by another staff or volunteer.

Children or youth will never be allowed to be in the building alone or unsupervised by adults.

Children five and younger will never be unsupervised in bathrooms. (Door to bathroom can be left open or bathroom can be checked to make certain no one else is in the bathroom.)

Sugar River will assure that staff and volunteers working with children and youth are at least three years older than the oldest youth attending the activity or program.

Sugar River staff and volunteers will not discipline children by use of physical punishment.

Sugar River staff and volunteers will not verbally or emotionally abuse children.

Children in preschool and nursery care will only be released to a properly identified and preauthorized adult.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to the physical and emotional state of all children and indicate, in writing to the lead pastor or other member of the team, any suspicions of possible abusive or unhealthy activities.

All compensated persons, non-members, and volunteers who are regularly involved with supervision of minors will complete an Application for Criminal Records Check prior to working with minors. This check may include national, state and city as well as sex offender lists.

There will be a criminal records background re-check every two years for active persons involved with children and youth or someone who has left the church and wishes to volunteer with children and youth.

A Participation Covenant shall be signed by any Sugar River member who volunteers on an occasional basis (a few hours each month).

Persons new to the Congregation who wish to work with children and youth will be permitted to do so after they have been in worship regularly for six months or submit two references and have a background check. This requirement can be waived if a new member is transferring from another church within which he or she engaged in volunteer ministry under a comparable Safe Sanctuary policy.

Personal reference checks may be conducted and documented prior to prospective employees and lead program volunteers begin duties. Personal interviews will be conducted for higher risk positions e.g., youth groups, overnight trips, mission trips or largely unsupervised activities involving children or youth.

Volunteers with criminal abuse violations will not be accepted. Adults who have been convicted of or plead guilty to either child sexual or physical abuse (if known to the administration) will not be allowed to volunteer in an area involving the supervision of youth or children.

## Staff and Servant Volunteers

An orientation program including written materials explaining Sugar River policies, procedures, and regulations will be conducted for all new staff and volunteers. Upon completion, a signature will be required acknowledging having received and read appropriate policies and standards. (Participation Covenant Statement)

Sugar River congregation and families participating in children and youth activities will be made aware of our policy annually.

Staff and volunteers who are working directly with children will be provided with information regarding the signs of possible abuse. Training will provide information on procedures and mandatory reporting to any suspicion of abuse.

## Driver and Transportation

Any driver that will be transporting youth or adults for a church activity will need to fill out the Driver Information Form prior to the event. Refer to the form for our requirements of age, insurance, and safety.

Youth attending an event may only transport themselves or a family member during the event.

## LGBTQ+ Youth

Leaders at Sugar River will educate themselves on proper terminology in order to be sensitive to all youth.

Leaders will open clear communication with youth and families to ensure the best solution for all youth at overnight events.

LGBTQ+ youth will have the option to use the family restroom if more comfortable for them.

## Responding to Allegations of Abuse

At the first report of suspected abuse, the staff member or volunteer receiving the information will take immediate action by notifying the Lead Pastor or the a member of the Safe Sanctuary Team.

Sugar River leadership will meet relevant State or local child abuse reporting requirements and will cooperate to the extent of the law with authorities involved.

If a reported incidence involves a staff member or a volunteer, that person will be suspended and not allowed at Sugar River until the investigation is complete.

Suspension of the staff member or volunteer will end only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the team. Reinstatement is at their discretion.

Sugar River will promptly notify a parent or legal guardian of the child involved in the alleged incident as specified by the State or local agency.

Discrete and confidential reporting of suspected abuse is expected in all cases. Sugar River staff members and volunteers must be sensitive to this need, and therefore, should only discuss the suspected abuse with the Lead Pastor and the Safe Sanctuary Team members.

All allegations will be taken seriously, but will not be pre-judged.

Situations will be handled forth-rightly, with due respect for privacy and confidentiality.

Sugar River’s insurance carrier will be notified promptly.

Civil authorities will be given full cooperation within the guidance of Sugar River’s attorney.

The victim’s wellbeing will be respected and protected. The victim should not be held in any way responsible. Pastoral resources available will be extended. The care and safety of the victim is the priority.

Guidelines from the Wisconsin Annual Conference will be followed if an allegation is reported involving a staff member.



## Communication Guidelines

Sugar River staff and volunteers will communicate to parents and youth together or in group chats, never texting or emailing just one child or youth.

Sugar River staff will recognize and respect that behaviors and actions online are also reflections of how other Christians associated with Sugar River may be portrayed.

Sugar River staff and volunteers will not access or download pornographic images on church computers or devices.

## Sex Offender Guidelines

Sex Offenders should communicate with the Pastor upon attending church. They are welcome to worship in accordance with a Shepherd Policy where there is another adult with them at all times in the building or church related activity.

A registered sex offender will never be allowed to volunteer with vulnerable adults, children or youth.