

**Safe Spaces Procedures for Next Gen Discipleship  
District and Conference Next Gen Ministry Events in the  
Tennessee Conference of The United Methodist Church**

**Definition of Terms**

**Adult-** An adult is a person 19 years old or older who is attending a Next Gen Ministry event.

**The Local Church Ministry Team:** is the group of adults responsible for the local church group attending an event.

**Host Mission Family-** This refers to the mission site(home) that the Next Gen participant is serving. It may also mean the home where the local church group is given the opportunity to shower and freshen up prior to a meal during a local retreat such as Hands and Feet Mission Retreat.

**Ministry Leader-** Can be interchangeable with children's/youth coordinator/director or Pastor. This person is the lead contact for the group attending the ministry event.

**Mission Event-** A mission event is an event such as but not limited to Hands and Feet Mission Retreat.

**Reasonable Adult/Child Ratios** - 2:12 at retreats/rallies/meetings; 2:6 at off site camps and mission trips.

**Reasonable Adult/Youth Ratios-** 2:16 at retreats/rallies/meetings; 2:8 at off site camps and mission trips.

**Staff/Volunteers-** A staff/volunteer for an event is a person who is selected to assist with the event and is not connected to a church attending the event. This may include overnight security on camp facilities or in hotel settings.

**Children's Coordinator/Director-** The children's coordinator/director for the purposes of this document is considered the lead children's minister from the local church.

**Youth Coordinator/Director-** The youth coordinator/director for the purposes of this document is considered the lead youth minister from the local church.

***The purpose of these procedures is to ensure the safety and reduce the risk of harm for all persons participating in Next Gen Ministry events.***

- 1. Two Adult Rule:** During all conference events one adult will not be alone with any number of children/youth. For small group activities where one adult supervises one group, two or more groups are to meet in sight and sound of each other. These two adults should be non-related and non-cohabitating. The ministry leader may also decide to combine groups to ensure the safety of all parties. Small Group sizes will be determined by the size of the group, but should not exceed reasonable adult child/youth ratios.
- 2. Four & Five Year Older Rule:** These persons are at least 4 years older than the oldest high school youth member of the church group. These persons are at least 5 years older than the oldest child of the church group. It is expected that all Event Staff/Volunteers in supervisory roles have a completed a background check, interview with the Director of Next Gen Discipleship, and Safe Sanctuary training.

**Safe Spaces Procedures for Next Gen Discipleship  
District and Conference Next Gen Ministry Events in the  
Tennessee Conference of The United Methodist Church**

3. **Adult/Child & Adult/Youth Ratio:** Some events may require smaller ratios. If so stricter requirements will be communicated to all adults and churches prior to the event through registration confirmation packets as well as through emails and the conference youth website.
  - a. The adult/child ratio will be at least 2:12 at retreats/rallies/meetings with the understanding that one adult will not be alone with any number of youth (refer to Procedure 1). The ratio for offsite camps and mission trips will be 2:6.
  - b. The adult/youth ratio will be at least 2:16 at retreats/rallies/meetings with the understanding that one adult will not be alone with any number of youth (refer to Procedure 1). The ratio for offsite camps and mission trips will be 2:8.
4. **Male/Female Adults:** When a group from any local church consists of both genders, the accompanying adults shall also be of both genders. This also applies to small groups and mission worksite groups.
5. **Background Checks:** All adults at Next Gen Conference events will be expected to have a background check, training on the local church's Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures\*, as well as a review of these procedures. Each church will sign a verification form listing each adult attending the event signed by the Ministry Leader and Pastor. The verification form will serve as a confirmation that each adult has completed the requirements for participation. (If your church does not have policy or background checks are needed contact Jullie Meyer, Ministry Assistant at 615-327-1533 for help.)
6. **Medical Release/Registration Form:** All children/youth and adults attending Next Gen Ministry Conference events shall have a completed medical release form and completed parental permission form. The medical release form will be valid from August -July of a given year. It is expected that a new form will be submitted if a change in medical status occurs.
7. **Ministry Leaders Responsibility:** It is expected that the Ministry Leader from the local church maintain a copy of each attendee's form at all times. These forms should be carried with the group traveling to and from events
8. **Check-In Procedure:** The Local Church Ministry Team should develop a consistent check-in procedure during the event to meet with the church group. These should be spread throughout the event and event day.
9. **Lodging for overnight events:** An adult will not share a room/hotel/tent with a child/youth unless the adult is a parent of that child/youth with whom they are sharing the room/hotel/tent.
10. **Lodging for overnight events:** There will be separate sleeping areas/rooms for males and females at all Next Gen sponsored events. When there are several rooms/cabins of youth, there will be at least two non-related adults of the same gender in the room/cabin.
11. **Showers:** In the event of open showers, separate shower times for children/youth and for adults shall be designated to prevent children/youth and adults showering together. If this is not possible, swimsuits will be required.
12. **Two Adults at Mission Sites:** There will be two adults at each work site at all times on mission project sites. (Procedure 7 applies.) These two adults should be non-related and non-cohabitating.
13. **Mission Site Responsibility:** No Next Gen participant will be alone with an adult from a host mission family during a mission event. This includes host pastors, congregation members, homeowners, clients of mission agencies, etc. Likewise, an adult mission team member will not be alone with a child/youth from the host mission.