



SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

“. . . the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

Purpose: Spirit of Hope seeks to provide a welcoming environment that is free of abuse, harassment, and discrimination. We have established this policy:

- to promote a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and to enable program ministries to carry out its mission while exercising reasonable efforts to safeguard children, youth, and vulnerable adults from maltreatment,
- to reduce the risk that anyone suffers the harm of bullying, violence, or abuse, in any form (or the accusation of the same) on church grounds or at church activities,
- to equip volunteers to lead in a positive, effective, and safe manner, and
- to acknowledge supervisory and training procedures for volunteers in program areas affecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

For ease of reference, all uses of the term “child” and “children” herein should be understood to include youth and vulnerable adults.

The terms “will” “must” and “shall” are mandatory. The terms “should” and “may” are permissive.

Definitions: In writing this policy, we have used the following definitions.

Child/ren: a person under age 18 years, or under age 20 years and still enrolled in secondary school, whichever is later

Church Activity: Sunday School, confirmation, youth group, Vacation Bible School, day or overnight camps/camping trips, JUMYS trip, YUMYS trip, mission activities/trips, musical groups, any other church-sponsored activity for children (e.g., Kids for Christ, lock-ins)

Parent: A child’s parent or legal guardian

Supervisor: An adult working with any child(ren), youth, and/or vulnerable adult at church activities

Vulnerable Adult: Minnesota Statute 556.772, subdivision 22 contains the legal definition of vulnerable adult. The legal definition is lengthy, but it includes adults who possess a physical or mental infirmity that impairs their ability to provide for their own care without assistance, and impairs their ability to protect themselves from maltreatment.

Youth: Children who have started grade 6 or above (A child between grades 5 and 6 is not yet a youth)

Supplemental Documents/Appendix: We have attached the following forms and other documents that are referenced herein:

- Acknowledgment of Safe Sanctuary Policy
- Consent to background check
- Media Policy and Opt-Out Form

Expectations of Supervisors: Supervisors are expected to strive for the following when working with children on behalf of the church:

- Act in a safe, mature, Christian manner
- Strive for inclusive participation
- Treat others with respect, care and sensitivity.
- Understand how to respond to a child whom the supervisor believes may have been abused.
- Practice direct communication with church staff and other supervisors

General Guidelines for Supervisors: In order to provide as secure an environment as possible and to protect supervisors and children, we encourage:

- Two or more adults in a setting where children are present.
- If only 1 adult present the classroom door must remain open.
- Escort preschool children to and from restrooms (as set forth in greater detail in Restroom Guidelines section below).
- Children under grade five (5) remain in class/event until parent/guardian picks them up.
- No child should be left alone.
- Care in language use, and appropriate touch, so that words and actions are not misconstrued.
- Youth assisting supervisors must be at least 5 years older than the children with whom the youth is assisting.
- Advance notice to parents for any church activities.

Background Checks: All supervisors shall have consented to a background check which the church shall have performed before the activity in question, and the church shall have a current background check on file for any supervisor. Background checks shall be performed via LifeWays backgroundchecks.com or a comparable service.

Restroom Guidelines

1. Infant and toddler nursery
 - a. Only the child's parent/guardian or church paid staff will attend to diaper and toilet needs.
2. Preschool (age 33 months to entering kindergarten)
 - a. Children will be taken to the restroom only upon their request, at the request of one of their parents, or if the child shows obvious signs of needing to use the restroom. Only adults will accompany a child to the restroom, although a child may ask to have another child accompany him/her along with the adult.
 - b. When taking a child to the restroom, the supervisor should remain outside the stall or bathroom, but where the supervisor still can hear the child.
 - c. If the child requests the supervisor's help in the bathroom, the supervisor will try to teach the child how to help himself/herself as much as possible. The supervisor should spend as little time in the stall/bathroom with the child as possible.
3. Elementary (enrolled in kindergarten-5th grade) a. Supervisors should be present in restrooms only in emergency situations.

Transportation

When the church provides transportation to/from church activities, the transportation may be public transportation or privately-owned vehicles.

When privately-owned vehicles, all drivers shall:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have current driver license.
- Have current insurance
- Transport their passengers in vehicles with seat belts in working order for driver and all passengers
- Comply with laws regarding child seats

Overnight Activities

- All overnight activities must be supervised by two adults for every 10 children.
- At least one supervisor of the same gender must be present in each sleeping room.
- A supervisor shall not share a bed with a child to whom the supervisor is not

directly related.

Communication

Communication outside of church grounds and/or church activities, whether in person, via telephone, writing, e-mail, text, video-conferencing, or any other means of communication, between any supervisor and any nonrelated child regarding church activities should be approved by the child's parent for each activity. The supervisor communicating with a child should confirm, on at least an annual basis, the permission of the child's parent to communicate with the child.

Photographs/Visual Recordings/Audio Recordings (refer to the Media Policy and Opt Out Form)

With modern technology, children may be photographed or recorded while attending church activities. However, the church will obtain written consent from a child's parent/guardian before disseminating outside the church any photograph or visual/audio recording of a child either in print or electronically (i.e., posting on a website). When parent consent is obtained and a child's image is disseminated, the church will not identify any child or children by name in the disseminated material. Supervisors should not disseminate photographs/visual recordings/audio recordings of any children at church activities without the express written permission of the child's parent.

Dress Code

The church reserves the right to enact and enforce a dress code for children. Church activities may include activities sponsored by other church organizations or other outside organizations with activity- specific dress codes.

First Aid/ CPR Training

All supervisors are encouraged, but not required, to have completed first aid and CPR training. The church will attempt to offer an annual first aid and CPR training course.

Definition and Reporting of Abuse/Maltreatment

Spirit of Hope UMC follows the state requirements for reporting maltreatment:

1. Minnesota statute requires anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to report. The report should be made to the County Attorney of the applicable county or Child Protection Services. A report should be made as soon as possible for the safety of the child involved and so that all details can be preserved as close in time to the alleged incident as possible.
2. Abuse/neglect are defined as follows:

Types of Maltreatment

Physical Abuse. Physical abuse is when a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the child's care hurts a child, causing any physical injury, other than by accident.

Sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is criminal sexual conduct with a child by a person responsible for the child's care, or by a person who has a significant relationship to the child.

Emotional abuse. Emotional abuse or maltreatment is the consistent or deliberate infliction of mental harm on a child by a person responsible for the child's care where there is an observable, sustained, adverse effect on the child's physical, mental or emotional development.

Neglect. Child neglect is continued failure by parents or caretakers to provide a child with needed care or protection. Usually, this is the failure to:

- Supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical or mental health care, education or appropriate supervision.
- Protect the child from conditions or actions that endanger the child.
- Take steps to make certain the child is educated according to the law. With neglect, the most common form of maltreatment, the harm results from what the parent or caretaker fails to do.

Educational neglect. State law requires children to attend school. For children 5-11, seven (7) un-excused absences falls under the state guidelines for educational neglect and, therefore, within the legal criteria for child protection.

Reporting Process:

- If a staff member or supervisor sees evidence of child abuse or neglect, he/she should consult immediately with one of the following Church resources:
 - A: Staff Person
 - B: Pastor
 - C. SPR Chairperson
 - D. District Superintendent
 - E. Bishop
- The resource person (above) can assist the supervisor in making the report to Child Protection Services. In case of immediate emergency, call 911.

- Additional points regarding incidents:
 - Notify a parent/guardian of the alleged victim and take any necessary steps to assure his/her safety until a parent/guardian arrives.
 - Keep a written record of the steps taken by the church in response to the allegations, and give it to the Pastor and/or Youth Director. The written report will be kept in a confidential file.
 - Be prepared to cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or the Department of Family Services.

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is defined as a form of sex discrimination. It exists in the workplace where an employee is subjected to unwelcome advances, suggestive comments, or physical contact of a sexual nature, which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. **Sexual harassment** also exists if any employment decision affecting an employee is related in any way to the employee's participation in, or rejection of, conduct of a sexual nature. The perpetrators of sexual harassment may be supervisors, co-workers, or even non-employees such as customers, vendors, and others who come into contact with the company's employees. Employers may be held liable if they are aware an employee is subject to sexual harassment by employees or non-employees, yet fail to take timely and appropriate actions to protect their employees. Sexual harassment cases have involved allegations of a man harassing a woman, a woman harassing a man, and people of the same sex harassing one another.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Safe Sanctuary Policy of Spirit of Hope UMC

By signing, I acknowledge that I have received, read, understood and agree to the items contained in the Safe Sanctuary Policy of Spirit of Hope UMC.

Signature

Date