



First United
Methodist Church
of Hanover

One Church
two campuses
200 Frederick Street • 200 East Middle Street
Hanover, PA 17731

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Grow Faith



Grow God's Family



Serve the World

*Adopted September 7, 2007
First Amendment May 2012
Second Amendment April 2013*

First United Methodist Church
200 Frederick Street
Hanover, PA 17331

Safe Sanctuary Policy
For the Protection of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

“Embracing the Community with God’s Love”

PREAMBLE

When the disciples tried to keep the children away from Jesus, he was quick to respond, “Let the children come to me.” Jesus taught that children were to be included and provided for within the community of faith. Today, the church may be the only place where some children find the unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow and thrive. As Christians, we must take our responsibilities to our children very seriously.

In April 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. Therefore, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt the following policy for the prevention of child abuse within our First United Methodist congregation.

POLICY & PURPOSE

First United Methodist Church of Hanover’s purpose for establishing this policy is to reduce the risk of abuse by following practical procedures of prevention. Our procedures demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth; and to protect both our paid and volunteer staff.

DEFINITIONS

ADULT - A person eighteen (18) years of age or older.

CHILD - Any person under the age of eighteen (18). For the purpose of this policy any person under the age of eighteen (18) shall be referred to as a child.

CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES - Any activity or program in which children are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers to include First Church Joyful Noise Preschool.

HELPER – Person who provides occasional assistance and is not counted in the two (2) adult rule including youth ages twelve (12) – eighteen (18).

PERSON(S) REQUIRED TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE - All who are involved in working with youth, children and vulnerable adults. We are mandated by PA law.

PERSON INVOLVED IN A CHILDREN’S ACTIVITY – Individual participating and responsible for the conduct of scheduled activity. In the case of non-church programs operating on church property, the duties of the “staff person in charge of a children’s activity” shall be carried out by the non-local church lead staff or volunteer.

VULNERABLE ADULTS - Adults whose mental or physical condition makes them susceptible to abuse.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH – First Church of Hanover, FUMC, Frederick Street Campus, Middle Street Campus, 200 Frederick Street, 200 Middle Street

SCREENING PROCEDURE

1. All staff and volunteers who have regular and direct contact with children shall be required to complete a **Volunteer Application for Children and Youth Workers**. All parts of the application must be completed. Information shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Personal contact information.
 - b. Statement of personal beliefs, gifts, and talents.
 - c. Voluntary disclosure of past criminal history and allegations of criminal history.
 - d. Waiver of confidentiality allowing First Church to submit the necessary background information to Trak-1 Technologies for clearance. These will be renewed every three years. Local, State, and the National Megan's Law website will be checked by Trak-1 Technologies.
 - e. Three (3) non-related references that must include name, address and daytime phone number.
 - h. Volunteer must have a minimum of six (6) months active relationship with First United Methodist Church before being permitted a volunteer role in children's activities. In the event of new staff hires, references deemed adequate by the hiring supervisor will replace the 6 month required waiting period.
 - i. All staff and volunteers must agree to sign a Participation Covenant¹ stating they understand, and will abide by, the Safe Sanctuary guidelines set by First United Methodist Church.
2. All forms and reference reports shall be placed in the applicant's confidential personnel file² which the Director of Children's Ministry will maintain. All reference checks shall be included in the personnel file.
3. Non-church programs shall maintain their own personnel files. First United Methodist Church reserves the right to obtain an explanation of the non-local church's record keeping process and, upon written request by the Pastor, to be given copies of documents applicable in programs conducted at First United Methodist Church.
4. The Directors of Children's and Youth Ministries, or designees, are responsible for reviewing this policy with each applicant during an interview prior to service.

¹ The Covenant is a statement in which the participants and leaders/chaperones agree to take part in the ministry; give their best efforts to the ministry; respect the other participants and leaders; treat others as well as they would wish to be treated.

² Files kept regarding volunteers will be accorded the same status as personnel files of staff persons with any applicable exceptions required by the *Discipline* regarding clergy volunteers.

Screening Procedure continued:

5. If children or youth will be transported in a volunteer's personal auto, the driver's license number and updated insurance information must be on file. A Driver's License check will be completed or the volunteer may be asked for Proof of Driving Record to be updated every three (3) years.
6. All persons volunteering to drive the 15 Passenger Bus, at any given time, will follow all Safe Sanctuary procedures. A Driver's License check will be completed, to be updated every three (3) years. All drivers must view a driver training DVD and pass a physical driving test, administered by a member of the Bus Committee, before sitting in the driver's seat. Minimum driving age is 25 years.

SUPERVISION PROCEDURE

To reduce the possibility of abuse to children or vulnerable adults, and to protect staff and volunteers from unwarranted accusations, First United Methodist Church adopts this "**SUPERVISION PROCEDURE.**" The following are MINIMUM standards and each children's activity may adopt more stringent requirements as necessary.

1. All staff and volunteers working with children in church related or Joyful Noise Preschool activities shall be trained on an annual basis. Training shall include, but not be limited to, review of the Safe Sanctuary Policy, how to recognize the signs of child abuse, and Cyber Safety.
2. Two UNRELATED Adult rule will be followed. There will be two (2) unrelated adults for each First Church and Joyful Noise activity involving children. If it is not possible to have two unrelated adults, there will be a "Roamer" who moves amid the activities during the program with unscheduled appearances on a random basis.
3. **No child will be left unsupervised** while attending an activity at First United Methodist Church. A buddy system will be used when a child needs to leave the room for the bathroom. Buddies are the child needing to leave the room **and** another classmate. The adult will wait outside the bathroom until the children exit and are ready to return to the activity.
4. Each room or space where children are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open. All activities shall occur in open view. Should the children's activity be an outdoor program, or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this policy, the staff person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure that the setting suits the activity, the equipment is in safe operation, and the children are properly supervised.

Supervision Procedure continued:

5. All activities in which children are outside the direct supervision of their parents/guardians shall require signed, written permission forms. Parents/Guardians shall supply pertinent health information as well.
6. No person shall supervise an age group unless he/she is **AT LEAST** 18 years of age or older, and is five (5) years older than the oldest child being supervised.
7. Accurate Participation Records shall be maintained for all children's activities. At a minimum, these records should list the date and hours of the activity, its location, the names of the children participating, including whether any were dismissed early and the times of such dismissals, and the names of all adults and helpers involved directly in the activity.
8. All staff and volunteers will maintain an appropriate use of any social networking websites that might be used including MySpace, Facebook, etc. Refer to Addendum A.
9. Parents and other relevant family members will be informed regarding our policy once a year or when amendments are made.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Listen intently to our children and report any potential incident of abuse in the outlined manner.

1. Notify the parent of the alleged victim and take any necessary steps to assure the child's safety. **The child's safety is the first concern.** Information such as the child's name, address, and family information should be gathered.
2. Upon receiving such information, the teacher or Volunteer will call the Pennsylvania Childline & Abuse Registry (1-800-932-0313), or local law enforcement, or Children and Youth Services Agency and file a report.
4. **The Lead Pastor is to be informed immediately.**
5. If the alleged abuse occurred on First Church property by a church volunteer or staff, removal of the volunteer or staff from contact with children shall be immediate until the incident has been resolved. Care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is being conducted. They shall not be banned from other church ministries.

Reporting Procedure continued:

7. The Crisis Management Plan stating reporting procedures shall be posted at every telephone within the Church Building, Fellowship Hall, and Light House.
8. Pastoral support will be available to all persons involved with the incident.

RESPONSE PLAN

A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously.

1. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in a children's activity, all adults involved in that activity shall be required to cooperate with the Pastor of First United Methodist Church, the First United Methodist Church Minister of Safe Sanctuary, and the designated United Methodist Conference Representative.
2. The lead pastor will prepare a brief and honest statement that can be made to the congregation. Unnecessary details, blame, or interference with the victim's privacy or violation of privacy will be avoided. This statement will be cleared with the Conference Communicator, the York District Superintendent, and Director of Connectional Ministries.
3. The lead pastor shall be the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All statements are to be reviewed with the Conference Communicator, York District Superintendent, and Director of Connectional Ministries before they are shared with the media.
4. If the allegation is against a staff person or pastor, the Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee will contact the District Superintendent immediately.
5. When the investigation is completed a letter will be sent to the congregation explaining the results of the investigation and steps taken after being cleared by the Conference Communicator, York District Superintendent, and Director of Connection Ministries.
6. **Pastoral support** will be available to all persons involved with the incident as indicated.

AMENDMENT “A” - CYBER SAFETY

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Some incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. There is no such thing as privacy in cyberspace. Consider anything and everything on the internet as public information.

1. Written parental permission for children and vulnerable adults will be required for:
 - a. The posting of photos on any websites hosted/owned by First United Methodist Church, and its Children’s Ministries, Youth Ministries, New Song, and Joyful Noise Preschool.
 - b. Emailing, Instant Messaging, Calling, Texting, or the sending of data to a child, or vulnerable adult by computer, PDA, or cell phone.
 - c. The sharing of any full name or contact information.
2. Easily identifiable information will not be posted online.
3. All communications will be conducted in a professional manner and communications with children and/or vulnerable adults shall be limited. All communications with children and vulnerable adults will be saved for the purpose of an electronic paper trail.
4. If made uneasy about any topic addressed in an email or an email in general, a blind carbon copy will be sent to the parent/guardian or another trusted adult. Privacy will be honored, but not secrecy.
5. If abuse is divulged electronically standard reporting procedures as outlined by this policy shall be followed.
6. The following procedures shall be followed for the safety of sharing photos electronically.
 - a. Refrain from using names and never post a last name when posting photos or identifiable information.
 - b. Photos will be checked for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure the photos uphold the mission/ministry. Nametags shall not be distinguishable.
 - c. Whenever possible, low resolution photos and/or slightly blurred pixilated photos will be used.
7. The following safety measures are in place for social networking sites:
 - a. Privacy limits are required to be set to limit who can see the profile. Restrict who can be a friend. Passwords to accounts will not be divulged.
 - b. Use of higher level security features will be used when offered by the network.
 - c. Do not post anything on the site you would not want on your resumes or printed in the church newsletter or bulletin. Remove and/or do not post any inappropriate comments, photos, etc.
 - d. First Church children will be encouraged to follow these same guidelines.

AMENDMENT “B” – PHOTO PERMISSION

Photo Permission FOR YOUTH and ADULTS
OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
200 FREDERICK STREET & 200 MIDDLE STREET HANOVER, PA 17331

- I give permission for still or video pictures of my child to be used for promotional purposes.
- I do not give permission for still or video pictures of my child to be used for promotional purposes.

Signature of **PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN of YOUTH (if under 18 years of age)**

- I give permission for still or video pictures of myself to be used for promotional purposes.
- I do not give permission for still or video pictures of myself to be used for promotional purposes.

Signature of **ADULT (if 18 years of age or older)**

**AMENDMENT “C” – CYBER COMMUNICATION
PERMISSION**

Cyber Communication Permission FOR CHILDREN and YOUTH
OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
200 FREDERICK STREET & 200 MIDDLE STREET HANOVER, PA 17331

My child _____ has my permission to communicate with First UMC Director of Children/Youth Ministry/Director of Children’s Choirs (circle one or both) via:

Check all that apply:

Phone Call _____, Cell Phone Call _____, Cell Phone Text _____, Facebook _____, Email _____, Instant Messaging _____, The Sending of Data by Computer or PDA _____.

A copy of all email will also be sent to me at _____.

I insist that the Director of Children’s Ministry/Director of Youth Ministry/Director of Children’s Choir (circle all that apply) become my friend on Facebook before communicating with my child. You will find me on Facebook as _____ (Please provide your Facebook Name).

Signed: _____ (parent) **Date:** _____
_____ (child/youth)
_____ Director of Children/Youth Ministry

Children and Youth Ministries will use the Internet as an aid in teaching lessons during Sunday School, Children’s Church, Kids 4 Christ, and Living Light. All computers accessible to our Children and Youth have Parental Controls in place.