



Dear children's, youth and senior/vulnerable adult's adult volunteer,

Thanks for your interest in working with our students and/or adults. We are excited that you want to make a difference in the lives of God's people.

We work hard to provide an environment for spiritual growth in a context of healthy, positive relationships. We take seriously our responsibility to shield our students and vulnerable adults from sexual abuse, to protect our leaders from accusations of sexual abuse, and to limit the exposure of the church to legal risk and liability. To accomplish this, we ask that all paid staff, as well as those volunteers who will be working with anyone under the age of 18 or with vulnerable adults, complete our application process. Since you are considering working with children, youth or vulnerable adults, please carefully and thoughtfully fill out the attached application and return it as soon as possible.

So, you might be asking...

What's involved in the volunteer application process?

When you fill out the application, you authorize the church to check personal references and to request a background check for criminal records. Please thoroughly and honestly complete all forms. To help defray the cost of the background check, we ask that you pay a minimum of \$12.50 per name checked (i.e. maiden name, married name, aliases). You can attach a check made payable to HUMC, earmarked Safe Sanctuary.

On what basis does the church approve someone to work with students or vulnerable adults?

We invite into ministry only those applicants a) who have no previous conviction for sexual or physical abuse; b) for whom we receive positive responses from their personal and professional references; and c) who meet the qualifications of the position in which they want to serve.

If the background checks raise any questions, the individual will be asked to meet with the appropriate pastor or staff member to clarify the questionable issues prior to being placed in a position relating to students or vulnerable adults.

Who will see the application?

The completed application and any subsequent information on you will be available only to the pastoral staff. Once the approval process has been completed, your application and references will be maintained in a secure file.

Thanks for understanding that this paperwork is about protecting you and those to whom we minister. We appreciate your willingness to help us achieve our mission to all God's people!

Haymount UMC

1700 Fort Bragg Road ● Fayetteville, NC 28303 ● 910.484.0181 ● Fax 910.484.9805
www.haymountumc.com

Haymount United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuaries

Proposed Revision dated May 2014

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Haymount United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Policy
Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Prevention

Introduction

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes [a] child...welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that "...children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse."

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse (ritual abuse refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be) occur in churches, both large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation in their churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. (From *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church – 1996*. Copyright 1996 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission. [pp. 384-386]).

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church. In addition, we include youth and vulnerable adults.

Purpose

Our congregations' purpose for establishing this Prevention Policy and accompanying guidelines is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as all of the adult volunteers with children, youth and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of adult volunteers; we will implement prudent operational guidelines in all programs and events; we will educate all of our adult volunteers and children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each will be "...surrounded by steadfast love, ...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" ("Baptismal Covenant II," *United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 44).

”Policy and Guidelines” shall be reviewed every two years (bi-annually) by the following church leaders who comprise the Safe Sanctuaries team: Director of Christian Education (to call meeting), Pastor, Associate Pastor, SPR representative, Trustees representative, Children’s Ministries representative, Youth Director and/or Coordinator, Older Adult representative, and Missions representative.

Right to Change/Amend Policy and Guidelines, Request for Clarifications

HUMC reserves the right to change or amend this policy and the attached guidelines as it deems necessary and appropriate in its discretion and without notice. You should contact the church office for any questions or clarifications regarding this policy or the attached guidelines. A copy of the current policy and guidelines is available for your review in the HUMC church office during normal business hours. This policy and these guidelines are effective as of_____. The policy is also available for review on HUMC’s website.

Haymount United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Guidelines

1. **Accountability Guidelines for Vulnerable Populations:**

A. Sign-in Procedure for children, infant-5th grade. Parents are responsible for bringing their child to his/her classroom and signing the applicable sign-in sheet that requests allergy information, parent contact information and location, and which adult will be responsible for picking the child up. This is necessary for every ministry event offered through the church.

B. Sign-in for Youth, 6th – 12th grade. Parents and youth will complete a Youth Activities Permission form that will apply to all youth ministries for one year. (See link for forms.)

i. All ministries for youth will have youth sign in at arrival with their name and parent or emergency phone number.

C. Information on File for Vulnerable Adults. All older adults participating in church ministry are encouraged to have an emergency information form on file with the ministry leader, that will include medical conditions and emergency contact information.

D. For any church-sponsored off campus events, emergency information is required for all participants.

2. **Staffing/Participant Ratios.** There will be at least two volunteers assigned to and present with each group of children and youth with the following provisions:

A. At least one adult in each group must be Safe Sanctuaries trained and cleared/checked.

i. For children (infants-fifth grade):

- At least one leader/teacher must be an adult, 21 years or older.
- The second leader/teacher must be at least five years older than the oldest child participant, but no younger than fourteen.
- Diaper changing occurs in an open area with 2 leaders present. Restroom door should be left open, even if just slightly, when a preschooler is being supervised. If a "potty" accident occurs, two adults must be present for the clean-up and parent should be informed.

ii. For Youth (sixth-twelfth grade):

- At least one adult, 21 years or older, must be present on the premises for each activity.
- The second adult volunteer, at least 18 years old, and no longer in high school.

iii. For Vulnerable Adults:

- At least one adult, 21 years or older.
- The second adult volunteer must be at least 18 years old and a high school graduate or no longer attending school on a regular basis (with the exception of Stephen Ministries due to confidentiality issues.)

iv. All ages:

If the number of participants exceeds North Carolina State Licensing Standards for two leaders/teachers under each age-group, then the number of leaders/teachers must be increased to meet the required standards.

- B. In the event that a second person cannot be present, the responsible staff person is to be notified who will secure a “floater” or person to periodically check the room.

NC State Ratios:

	<u>Safe Sanctuaries with Maximum NC State Limits</u>	<u>NC State Minimum</u>
0-12 mos.	2/10	1/5
12-24 mos.	2/12	1/6
2-3 yrs.	2/20	1/10
3-4 yrs.	2/25	1/15
4-5 yrs.	2/25	1/20
5+ yrs.	2/25	1/25

Source: National Resource Center; <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/NC/northcarolina.htm>; 10A NCAC 09 .0713, chapter 9 - Child Care Rules (5/1/2004). Accessed 6/30/2005.

Adults	2/16	1/8
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Source: North Carolina Adult Day Care and Day Health Services Standards for Certification, pg. 8 (II. Personnel, B. Staffing Pattern)

3. **Screening Guidelines for Adult Volunteers.** A minimum of one adult volunteer per ministry area or room will complete and sign either an application (for paid staff) or a Volunteer Information Sheet, to include a release form permitting the church to request a national background check at least every 3 years. Driver’s License information will be provided by all individuals driving church vehicles. All paid staff must have a background check on file in accordance with licensing requirements. The church has agreed to maintain an annual membership with an internet background search company.
4. **Active Participation in Congregational Life by All Adult Volunteers.** Those called into ministry leadership should be active in a Christian church at least 6 months prior to serving.
5. **Advance Notice to Parents or Guardians.** No child, youth or vulnerable adult is to be taken from the location to which he or she was brought by the parent or guardian without prior notice or written consent from the parent or guardian.
6. **Annual Orientation for Adult Volunteers.** Each leader/teacher must attend a training for their ministry that includes:
 - Reviewing and accepting Haymount UMC’s Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Guidelines.
 - Reviewing the definitions of abuse and reporting guidelines.
 - Learning the parameters of the ministry for which each teacher/leader has agreed to serve, and signing a covenant supporting the ministry of Haymount Church and the goals and visions of that particular ministry.
7. **Training and Background Checks for HUMC Program Staff.** All staff of Haymount Church working in the areas of children, youth or vulnerable adults ministries will be required to attend a sexual ethics training provided by the NC Annual Conference when offered, be trained and certified in CPR and First Aid, and have a background check on file. CPR and First Aid training will be available annually by HUMC for all adult volunteers and staff at cost.
8. **Guidelines for Reporting Allegations of Abuse.** In accordance with North Carolina State law, all allegations of abuse must be reported without any exceptions. Following are the reporting guidelines:

- A. Treat any allegations of abuse seriously. Do not ignore the allegations in the hope that they will go away.

B. A written incident report form (hard copies are available on the outside door of the DCE's office, #102, or on the website) shall be prepared immediately by adult volunteers whenever any allegation of abuse or molestation connected with any ministry activity of HUMC occurs, and forward as follows:

- i. If the allegation in any concern is a member of the pastoral staff or clergy other than the Senior Pastor, notify the Senior Pastor. If concern is against the Senior Pastor, report the alleged incident(s) immediately to the District Superintendent.
- ii. If the allegations do not concern a member of the clergy, immediately notify the supervising staff person or the Pastor. The Pastor should notify the District Superintendent and, if the accused is a staff member, the Pastor should also notify the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
- iii. The district superintendent or the pastor shall immediately notify the parents/family of the victim of the allegations that have been made and the steps being taken to address those allegations, unless accused is a member of the family.
- iv. Report the allegation to the Cumberland County Department of Social Services at 677-2450 or 323-1500 after business hours as is required by state law.
- v. Either the district superintendent or the pastor, or chairperson of the board of Trustees should immediately notify the church's insurance company at 800-554-2642. (This notification should also be confirmed in writing.)
- vi. Everyone involved should observe confidentiality for both the victim and the accused.
- vii. Two staff members will explain the situation to the accused, relieving him/her from his/her duties; should they be in contact with a vulnerable population or be a staff person. (Issues of compensations should be dealt with on a case by case basis.)
- viii. During the investigative process a mentor will be discreetly assigned to the accused while he/she is on campus.
- ix. **All media inquiries should be referred to the District Superintendent.**
- x. Always show care and comfort for the alleged victims, the accused, and their families. Communicate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being.
- xi. The accused should be advised to seek legal or other counsel.

See Flow Chart for Reporting Process attached.

9. **Guidelines for Known Registered Sex Offender.**

- A. Verify information through sex offender registry online or the Sheriff's Department.
- B. If no restraining order is in place, then implement mentor program.
 - i. Contact offender to explain that their participation in church activities and use of facilities requires accompaniment by a church appointed mentor.
 - ii. Mentor will be chosen by church staff, same gender as offender.

iii. Mentor will greet offender outside the church building and will remain in the presence of offender at all times, to include restroom visits.

C. If a restraining order is in place, offender cannot come onto church property while children and youth are gathering in groups.

10. **Safe Environment.** All facilities and vehicles used by the ministries of Haymount Church are to be safe, clean and age-appropriate to encourage wholesome Christian growth of all to whom this church ministers.

A. The primary ministry leader will inspect the immediate ministry area, to include the bathrooms.

11. **Adequate Insurance Coverage.** Haymount UMC maintains insurance coverage for the full scope of ministries (children, youth, and vulnerable adults) on and off campus before church programming begins.

12. **HUMC Digital Technology Safety.** All HUMC networked computers shall be filtered and monitored. Among the items filtered are visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or material harmful to minors. It should be noted that due to the nature of the internet no filtering system is perfect. The teacher or staff supervising the child and/or youth will be responsible for monitoring the Internet for student safety and appropriate use.

- 1) An Acceptable Use Form For Digital Technology will be in place for children, youth and adults, and anyone accessing a networked computer at HUMC must have a signed form on file, including staff members.
- 2) All networked HUMC computers must be secured when unattended (including all staff computers, computer lab and AV computers).
- 3) Photo/Image usage:
 - a. Permission must be given by each individual &/or parent of minors in order for pictures to be used in HUMC publications, or publicity (YouTube, Facebook, and HUMC website.)
 - b. In HUMC publicity, all tags, captions and/or file names for photos will be first name only or numbers.
 - c. Staff and ministry leaders shall not share photos taken at HUMC events without the consent of the individuals in the photo.
 - d. All photos taken at HUMC events and shared within the ministry will be subject to the restrictions listed above.
 - e. All pictures used in HUMC communications should be protected. (Facebook, website).
 - f. No images can be published on HUMC digital or printed communication (website, PowerPoint, video, etc.) without permission from the communications staff liaison; copying images directly from any webpage (including search engines) is usually a copyright violation. The church office has resources available to download for use of legal images.
- 4) All web pages on the HUMC website will use standardized webpage development, unless permission has been given, and full access has been granted by the communication staff liaison.
- 5) HUMC staff and ministry leaders should make every attempt to convey items of this Digital Safety Policy to students and all those involved in ministry using digital technologies at HUMC.

HUMC'S REPORTING PROCESS FOR SUSPECTED ABUSE

Report made - a worker has witnessed suspicious conduct; /she completes a **Reporting Form for Suspected Incident of Abuse** which is located on the outside of office #102. Reporting is as follows:

If against a pastor...

Report to District Superintendent, M-F, 8am-5pm: 800-849-4433; or outside business hours: (919) 779-9435 or 888-661-4941

Reports to HUMC Staff/
Parish Relations Committee

Reports to NC Conference Communications Director to handle communications

Reports to Law Enforcement for investigation: Department of Social Service 677-2450; or after business hrs 323-1500, which is also the Sherriff's Dept.

Contacts the alleged victim, or parents of the victim to offer pastoral support. Must NOT interfere with investigation!!!

Reports to District Superintendent

Reports to NC Conference Communications Director to handle communications

- 1. If against a church staff person other than a pastor...
- 2. If against a congregation member or other...

Report to the pastor & Trustees Chair & SPRC (if staff person)

- 1. Selects one spokesperson for the church
- 2. Contacts Church Mutual Insurance Co. - report must be confirmed in writing. Must NOT interfere with the investigation!

Reports to Law Enforcement for investigation Department of Social Service: 677-2450; or after business hrs 323-1500, which is also the Sherriff's Dept.

Contacts the alleged victim, or parents of the victim to offer pastoral support. Must NOT interfere with the investigation!

Assigns two staff persons to meet with the accused to explain allegation and suspend him/her from duties until investigation is complete.

Will confidentially assign a mentor so he/she can continue to worship. If allegation is against a minor, accused should NOT be in spaces where children and youth gather in their groups.

Haymount United Methodist Church
Guidelines for Children's Ministries

HUMC Children's Ministries takes a positive approach to discipline based on the Christian principle, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."
(Matt. 7:12)

Classroom teachers/leaders will facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation and self-control in children by:

- Setting clear, consistent and fair limits for classroom behavior.
- Encouraging appropriate behavior, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.
- Using children's mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Anticipating and eliminating potential problems.
- Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Deflecting problems before they become conflicts.
- Modeling appropriate and acceptable behavior.
- Use of age-appropriate language with and around children.
- Use of appropriate touch and knowing personal boundaries (no full-body hugs, no kissing, etc.)
- Listening and acknowledging the feelings and frustrations of children with respect.

There will be no use of corporal punishment or humiliating or frightening techniques.

Time-outs are discouraged because children need to learn to work out their problems, not be isolated from them.

Food or beverage is never withheld as a discipline device.

If discipline issues become common for a child, the teacher may ask for a conference with the program staff responsible for that particular ministry and the parent.

For a child who has developed a pattern of physical or emotional abuse towards others, the parent may be required to accompany the child in the ministry program.

Haymount United Methodist Church
Student-Youth Staff Relationship Expectations

Discretion in staff members' personal lives is fundamental to both spiritual integrity and to continuing to do spiritual ministry among students and their families (Ephesians 5:1-12, 15-16). To live wisely and without any hint of sexual misconduct we keep the following standards:

- Any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction with any student is inappropriate.
- Having a dating relationship with any student is forbidden.
- Discretion must be used in physical contact with any students. A hug around the shoulders is not sexual abuse, but a full body-to-body hug, stroking, massaging, or affectionate kissing is inappropriate. Any overt display of affection, appropriate hugging, for example, should be made in a public setting in front of other group members.
- Sexual gestures or overtures to a staff member by a student should be reported to one of the ministry directors or the student ministries pastor so that discussion can be held with the student.
- Staff should form male/female ministry teams whenever possible.
- One-on-one counseling with a student should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or private place. As a general rule when counseling a member of the other gender, invite a member of the same gender as the counselee to be the observing staff.
- When a situation arises where you are alone with a student of the other gender, quickly move that situation to a public setting. Make the meeting as brief as necessary to accomplish God's purpose.
- Driving alone with a student should be avoided.
- Romantic or sexual attraction for a student by an adult leader should be brought up and discussed with the ministry director for prayer and guidance.
- All suspicions of child or sexual abuse must be reported according to the reporting guidelines as stated in the Safe Sanctuaries policy.
- No wrestling or physical horseplay should ever occur between staff and students.
- Youth volunteers should obtain the consent of the student's parent or guardian before attempting to spend time with the student in an unsupervised (non-church related) situation. For example, taking them to the movies, out to eat, and so on.

HUMC's Response to the Needs of Our Vulnerable Adult Population

HUMC's response to provide a safe place to worship and grow spiritually for our vulnerable adult population; HUMC will...

- Monitor hallways at all times with security cameras.
- Make sure all doorways, especially those which are equipped with handicap accessibility, are easily opened and are unlocked when ministries are in progress.
- Guarantee that all lights function properly around all entry ways.
- Make sure all steps are unobstructed and hand railings are secure.