



# Hickory Grove United Methodist Church

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## Safe Sanctuaries Policy

### Hickory Grove United Methodist Church Introduction

HGUMC believes that scripture instructs us to care for the children brought into the church. These children may be regular attenders, or they may be the children of guests, grandchildren of our members, or others. Regardless of how these children come to us, we covenant to commit to their protection, and in doing so to represent God's justice and mercy in the world.

### POLICY

As part of our commitment to care for and protect the minors, defined as anyone under the age of 18, as well as the vulnerable adults among us, we commit to the following:

1. All volunteers and paid staff working with minors and vulnerable adults shall complete a background check that includes a State of North Carolina criminal check, National (Multi-Jurisdictional) criminal check, and national sex offender registry check if not included as part of another check. These will be completed within 90 days for current volunteers (if not completed in past 3 years), at the time new volunteers begin serving, and not less than every 3 years thereafter.
2. All volunteers and paid staff working with minors or vulnerable adults shall complete Safe Sanctuaries training led by a certified district trainer not less frequently than every 2 years. We will offer this either as a church or in cooperation with other local churches. Additionally, volunteers and staff working with vulnerable adults shall complete additional training on the unique needs of the group(s) with which they are working.
3. Volunteers and paid staff must be at least eighteen (18) years old, and at least 5 years older than the oldest member of the group(s) with which they are working. Additionally, they must have been regular attenders in worship for at least six (6) months prior to serving unless this requirement is waived by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.
4. Volunteers and paid staff shall be responsible for no more than ten (10) minors or vulnerable adults at any given time, and at all times where a group of minors is present there must be two or more non-related and non-cohabitating adults. If two non-related adults are not available, the "least-related" adults should be used

(for instance, cousins are preferable to siblings). At no time shall a husband and wife serving together be counted as two adults for purposes of this policy.

5. Volunteers and staff driving minors and vulnerable adults to off-site events shall be qualified as leaders, and additionally shall complete a motor vehicle record check and provide proof of current insurance coverage. Chaperones shall be the same gender as the minors or vulnerable adults being supervised, and shall not share a bed with any minor including their own child. Where possible, hotels opening to an interior hallway should be utilized for overnight events. For any off-site event, the trip's leader must obtain medical information and liability release forms for all participants, and provide parents/guardians with a schedule and contact information.
6. HGUMC mandates reporting of observed or suspected abuse in a church setting. In the event that abuse is observed or suspected, the ministry area leader shall report it to the Senior Pastor or Discipleship Director, who will report it to the Department of Human Resources and local law enforcement. In the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Senior Pastor or Discipleship Director, the report shall be made to the chairperson of the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

#### Revision History

Date	Who Made the Change	Change Made
8/14/2019	Trustees and Admin Council	Revised policy
7/16/20	Kim Long	Added consistent template to document and revision history.