

Home Moravian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy

Purpose: The purpose of establishing this policy and accompanying procedures is to:

- 1) demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual wellbeing for all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults;
- 2) protect our staff and volunteers from potential false allegations of inappropriate behavior;
- 3) limit the extent of legal liability of the congregation and the Southern Province.

Scope: The scope of this policy applies to all Home Moravian Church programs and activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Effective Date: Fall 2013

Policy review and accountability for the review: annual review; responsibility of the Christian Education Committee.

Approval by: The Boards of Elders and Trustees of Home Moravian Church

Definitions:

Pastor – the ordained and appointed (senior) clergy of Home Moravian Church.

Staff – refers to any person who is paid, either hourly (including contract workers) or salary on behalf of Home Moravian Church.

Volunteer – refers to any person who performs an unpaid job for Home Moravian Church. There are two categories of volunteers.

1. *Ongoing Volunteers:* refer to volunteers who are repeatedly present (i.e. on a week-to-week basis) and includes those who chaperone overnight or off-site events. Sunday School teachers, mission trip leaders, youth fellowship leaders, Godly Play leaders, etc. fall into this category. An *Ongoing Volunteer* must be a minimum of 21 years of age.

2. *Occasional Volunteers* refers to those who volunteer infrequently to assist staff. An example would be a Women's Fellowship volunteer helping 1-2 times for their assigned month of nursery duty.

Adult – refers to any person who is 21 years of age or older.

Child or children – refers to any person from birth through the 5th grade of school

Youth – refers to any person from the 6th grade through high school and may include persons up to 21 years of age

Vulnerable adult: a person who is 21 years of age or older whose functional, physical, or mental ability to adequately care for him or herself is compromised.

HMC – Home Moravian Church

PEC – Provincial Elders Conference

REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYED & CONTRACTED STAFF

I. Recruitment and Screening Guidelines:

A. **Applications:**

1. All applicants for paid positions within the church (including contract workers) will submit an application which includes personal identification, qualifications, experience, and references. Church leadership or staff will verify the information submitted.
2. All staff employees who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be required to undergo drug screening and sign an “*Authorization and Release of Information and Records*” form.
 - a) The information requested on the form will be used to obtain a nationwide criminal background check.
 - b) The background check and drug testing will be obtained

by the human resource department of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church at HMC expense.

- c) Home Moravian Church reserves the right to refuse to allow any person from working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. based on their previous record or convictions.

B. **Background Checks:**

1. Criminal background checks and drug tests will be obtained for all ordained positions as required by the PEC, all non-ordained staff, and contract workers who have responsibilities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
 - a) A background check may include criminal records, sex offender registry, child abuse registry and motor vehicle report when applicable.
2. Background checks and drug tests will be repeated every three (3) years if the person is in a continuous staff or contract worker position.

3. A Motor Vehicle report documenting a valid driver's license and an applicant's driving record will be required for those who may be driving children, youth, and vulnerable adults to church related functions.

- a. This report is to be updated every year as needed.
- b. Motor Vehicle reports can be obtained by including the request at the time of background checks or by requesting the church's insurance agency to obtain the report.

C. **Employment Interviews:**

1. The Personnel Committee will work with the Pastor as head of staff and any consultative program committee (for example, *Music & Worship Committee*) to help recruit and screen/interview all applicants for non-ordained staff positions and contract workers.

2. All information gathered during recruitment and screening will be considered strictly confidential.
3. Personal interviews must be conducted for all staff with at least two interviewers present and documented by a written summary.
4. The Pastor as head of staff will be in charge of interviews and will be the primary receiver of background checks.

D. **References:**

1. Staff applicants will be asked to provide a minimum of two (2) character and work history references.
2. The designated screener will contact the references and other contacts supplied by the applicant. A particular concern will be the applicant's experience and abilities when working with children and youths.

3. All responses to each reference check or attempted reference check will be documented in writing.

II. Orientation:

- A. Paid staff and contract workers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will have training provided by HMC regarding this policy and must participate in the orientation and training. The HMC Director of Christian Education is responsible for developing the plan for education, orientation, and training and assigning accountabilities for its implementation.
- B. All paid staff and contract workers will sign an acknowledgement of training regarding this policy.
 1. A copy of the *Home Moravian Church Safe*

Sanctuary Policy will be provided to all paid staff and contract workers upon acceptance of a position working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

2. Upon receipt of this policy, paid staff and contract workers will be required to sign a statement that he/she has read the *Home Moravian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy*.
3. Policy orientation and training is required for all paid staff and contract workers who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, but it is also open to all interested parents and church members.
4. Orientation may be done one-on-one or at available workshops

REQUIREMENTS FOR ON-GOING VOLUNTEERS

I. Recruitment and Screening Guidelines:

A. Applications:

1. *Ongoing Volunteers* who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will submit a *Volunteer Interest Form* that will include personal identification, qualifications, prior experience of working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, and names of leaders or colleagues the volunteer has worked with in the past. Church leadership or staff will verify the information submitted.
2. All *Ongoing Volunteers* who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be required to undergo drug screening and sign an

“Authorization and Release of Information and Records” form.

- a. The information requested on the form will be used to obtain a nationwide criminal background check.
 - b. The background check and drug testing will be obtained by the human resource department of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church at HMC expense.
 - c. Home Moravian Church reserves the right to refuse to allow any person from working with children, youth, and vulnerable based on their previous record or convictions.
3. All information gathered during application or screening will be considered strictly confidential

B. Background Checks:

1. Criminal background checks and drug tests will be obtained for ***Ongoing Volunteers*** who have responsibilities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
 - a. A background check may include criminal records, sex offender registry, child abuse registry and motor vehicle report when applicable.

2. Background checks and drug tests will be repeated every three (3) years if the person is in an ***Ongoing Volunteer*** position.

3. A Motor Vehicle report documenting a valid driver's license and an applicant's driving record will be required for those who may be driving children, youth, and vulnerable adults to church related functions.

- a. This report is to be updated every year as needed.
- b. Motor Vehicle reports can be obtained by including the request at the time of background checks or by requesting the church's insurance agency to obtain the report.

C. References:

1. Names of leaders or colleagues the volunteer has worked with in the past will be obtained from information submitted on the *Volunteer Interest Form*.
2. The church leadership or staff will verify the information submitted.
 1. Verification checks will be documented in writing.

II. Orientation:

- A. ***Ongoing Volunteers*** who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will have

training provided by HMC regarding this policy and must participate in the orientation and training. The Director of Christian Education is responsible for developing the plan for education and training and assigning accountabilities for its implementation.

- B. All *Ongoing Volunteers* will sign an acknowledgement of training regarding this policy.
1. A copy of the *Home Moravian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy* will be provided to all *Ongoing Volunteers* upon acceptance of a position working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
 2. Upon receipt of this policy, *Ongoing Volunteers* will be required to sign a statement that he/she has read the *Home Moravian Church Safe Sanctuary Policy*.

3. Policy orientation and training is required for all *Ongoing Volunteers* who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, but it is also open to all interested parents and church members.
4. Orientation may be done one-on-one or at available workshops.
5. ***Ongoing volunteers*** will sign the Home Moravian Church ***Volunteer Covenant of Participation*** form. **See Appendix I.**

REQUIREMENTS FOR OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS

- I. *Occasional Volunteers* refers to those who volunteer infrequently to assist staff for activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

- A. Examples of activities that involve *Occasional Volunteers* include (but are not limited to) Women's Fellowship nursery helpers, Bible School helpers, helpers with holiday parties and seasonal one-time events.
- II. *Occasional Volunteers* will sign the Home Moravian Church *Volunteer Covenant of Participation* form. **See Appendix I.**
- III. Last minute replacements for *Ongoing Volunteers* at activities (for example Sunday school teachers) will be treated as an *Occasional Volunteer*.
- IV. *Occasional Volunteers* will work at all times in the presence of one of the pastors, paid staff, or an *Ongoing Volunteer*.

REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

- I. Youth volunteers must be supervised at all times by one of the pastors, paid staff, or an *Ongoing Volunteer*.
- II. *Youth volunteers* will sign the Home Moravian Church *Youth Covenant of Participation* form. **See Appendix II.**

OUTINGS AWAY FROM CHURCH PROPERTY

All church related activities requiring transportation for children and youth as a part of the event must adhere to the following policies:

1. All children and youth participating in events requiring transportation away from the church must have written permission from parents or guardians including insurance information, notification phone numbers, medical emergency authorization, etc. Parents are to be given all pertinent information about

outings including names of leaders and their cell phone numbers, planned activities and schedule, departure and arrival times, etc.

2. Both male and female leaders will be present for overnight activities. Children and youth will be separated into gender-specific sleeping quarters with at least two same-gender leaders overseeing each group. If middle school and high school youth have joint overnight events, then separate age appropriate programs and supervision are strongly desired as much as possible.
3. All participants at youth activities are expected to remain with the group throughout the activity, unless the group leader approves.
4. Transportation:
 - a. No youth will ride alone with any staff or volunteer without written permission from a parent or guardian;

- b. All staff and volunteers who drive must have a valid driver's license and Motor Vehicle Report with acceptable results;
- c. All motor vehicle and traffic laws must be obeyed;
- d. All drivers must be a minimum of 21 years of age;
- e. In vehicles carrying more than four children or youth, there will be one adult in addition to the driver;
- f. Drivers of the Home Moravian Church bus must adhere to the policy covering the church bus. **See Appendix IV.**
- g. Occupants are required to wear seat belts or use age appropriate child restraints as required by law;

- h. Smoking, consumption of alcohol, and/or consumption of illegal drugs are not allowed by anyone in the vehicle. Consumption of prescription drugs that can cause mental and/or physical impairment are not allowed in the vehicle by drivers, staff, or supervising volunteers. Children and youth under the care of a licensed physician may take medications according to the schedule and frequency dictated by the therapeutic regimen(s) prescribed by their physician(s);
- i. A cell phone must be available when groups are away from the church. If a personal cell phone is not available, the church will take steps to make one available. The cell phone should only be used for emergencies when driving. The driver will make every effort to pull to the side of the road to safely make the

call. The driver must pull to the side of the road to text as required by law;

- j. When driving, drivers must refrain from using electronic devices such as DVD players, iPods, smart phones, computers, etc.

SUPERVISION of CHILDREN, YOUTH, and VULNERABLE ADULTS

Supervision procedures are designed to reduce the possibility of inappropriate behavior and to protect staff and volunteers from unwarranted accusations:

1. **2 Adult Rule:** Minimum supervisory standards will include the “two-adult” rule. The two-adult rule requires that no matter the size of the group, there will always be two adults (preferably not related) present. If necessary, classes and/or activities will be combined to ensure compliance with rule.

2. **Recommended Ratios of Adult to Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult:**
 - 1: 4 for nursery/preschool age
 - 1: 5 for elementary age
 - 1: 5-7 sixth through eighth grades
 - 1: 6-8 ninth through twelfth grades
 - 1: 6-8 vulnerable adults

Note: minimum for *any size group* is 2 adults.

3. **Classroom Window Rule:** Each door or space where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are being cared for shall have a window or opening in the door or the door shall be left open. All activities will occur in open view. Doors will never be locked when children, youth, or vulnerable adults are present in the room. Custodial parents of children or youth, or legal custodians of vulnerable adults, pastors, and staff of the church have the right to visit and observe the activities, classroom, or church sponsored program at any time.

4. **Nursery Rule:** There will be two adults in the nursery at all times. If

two persons can't be found, the nursery will be closed on that day. A description on nursery procedures and policies, including those for emergency evacuation, will be given to parents and volunteers.

5. **Sign-in/out Procedure:** The church will provide orientation to the sign-in/out procedures for parents leaving children in the Nursery. All children left at the Nursery will be required to be signed in and out to insure safe retrieval by the correct party. Only parents or adults with written advance permission can pick up children. It is the responsibility of the parents to report to a member of the church staff (who forwards the information on a need-to-know basis) a change in custody and/or restraining orders, etc., so that children can be retrieved safely by the correct party.

6. **Diaper Changing/Bathroom Usage:** All diaper changes for babies/toddlers will take place in an open area (such as the changing table in the nursery). If a child needs to

use the bathroom during an event or program, a properly screened staff member or *Ongoing Volunteer* (preferably one of the same gender) shall accompany them and wait outside of the bathroom stall for the child to return. Only properly screened staff or *Ongoing Volunteers* may provide hands on assistance to children using the bathroom (i.e. unfastening buttons, etc.) but hands on assistance will be as minimal as possible.

7. **Parental Consent:** Children and youth under 18 shall have signed written consent of a parent/legal guardian before attending and/or assisting activities or programs away from the church's facilities.
8. **5 Year Separation Recommendation:** It is desirable that all staff and volunteers in a supervisory role be at least 5 years older than the oldest child or youth attending any church event, program, or ministry.

9. **Age 21 Rule:** No person shall supervise any age group unless he/she is a minimum of 21 years of age.

10. **Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol:** The illegal use of drugs, tobacco, and/or alcohol in congregational facilities or at congregational sponsored youth events is prohibited. Public consumption of alcohol and tobacco at functions specifically organized for youth and children is prohibited.

11. **Leaving and Locking:** To the best of our ability, every attempt will be made to have two adults present when a child, youth, or vulnerable adult is left at the facility waiting to be picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of an activity.

12. **Overnight rule:** Any and all adult volunteers supervising overnight stays at our facilities or on congregational sponsored trips shall have been cleared to do so by staff. When married couples chaperone on trips, it is preferable for spouses to

lead different groups in activities where possible. It is highly desired that adult to child/youth ratios are applied to the separate groups of boys and girls so that volunteers will be chosen in proportion to the gender of child/youth attendees. This may warrant the recruitment of additional adults beyond the 2 adult minimum per group.

Outside groups using the church's facilities for children/youth/vulnerable adult activities are responsible for ensuring appropriate compliance with this policy while using the church's facilities. Upon approval by the Elders to use the church's facilities, a copy of this policy will be given to a leader of the outside group.

REPORTING of INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

All adults and young people have a responsibility to be alert for inappropriate behavior directed toward children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Once an incident of inappropriate behavior occurs or an

allegation of an incident is made, it is crucial that it be dealt with in a timely and clearly outlined manner.

1. Inappropriate behavior can range from the appearance of such to a deliberate criminal act and as such response can range from modifying individual or group behavior to calling civil authorities.
2. As behaviors leave the area of perception and move toward poor judgment on the part of the adult, the response from the church will become more formal. A case of poor judgment can be investigated internally, the offending adult counseled and monitored more closely in the future. If the behavior were to be repeated or other examples of poor behavior occur, the adult could be assigned to activities where they are more closely supervised by the program director, staff member or a volunteer leader. The adult could also be required to step down from their current role.

3. At some point on the continuum of inappropriate behavior, the act of an adult towards a child, youth, or vulnerable adult goes beyond appearance or bad judgment and becomes a criminal act. If there is any reason to believe that a person has committed a criminal act towards a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, the church is to notify the PEC so the proper civil authorities can be notified. The church will cooperate fully with the investigation.

Reporting Procedure:

1. If abuse is suspected by, observed by, or disclosed to a volunteer and/or paid staff member of the church, that person shall report the incident immediately to the Pastor. In the event that the Pastor is the alleged perpetrator, then the reporting will be to the Vice-Chair of the Elders.
2. Any person who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported during a church activity event or activity is required to report the incident immediately to the

person in charge of the activity or event. If the person in charge is the perpetrator, the incident will be reported immediately to the Pastor. If the perpetrator is the Pastor, then the Vice-Chair of the Elders will be immediately notified. The Vice-Chair of the Elders will immediately notify the president of the Provincial Elders Conference (PEC).

3. The person in charge will ensure the protection of and tend to the immediate needs of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult as the situation requires.
4. The person in charge or the Pastor will notify the parents or legal custodian of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult until the parents or legal custodian arrive(s).
5. Care must be exercised so that those reporting the incident are not identified or persons are not falsely accused.

6. The person who is in charge of the activity in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information such as the name of the alleged victim and his/her address and family information. The incident will be documented in writing as soon as possible using approved *Incident Report Form*. **See Appendix III.**
7. Upon receiving such information, the person in charge will report the incident and all information gathered to the Pastor or Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders. If the Pastor is the accused party, the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders will report the incident to the PEC immediately.
8. The PEC will notify the proper authorities. Proper authorities will be notified even if the parents do not wish the incident be reported.
9. If the accused is a worker, volunteer, or staff employee, the Pastor shall immediately remove the accused

from further involvement with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

10. All allegations, investigation and reports of the alleged incident are considered confidential. Information will only be discussed with those on a need-to-know status.
11. The PEC is the only entity authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. Care will be taken to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all persons involved.
12. All allegations, investigation, and reports of the alleged incident are considered confidential. Information is discussed only with those on a need-to know status.
13. Do not speak with the media. The PEC is the only entity authorized to make statements to representatives of the media.

CHURCH AUTHORITY and GOVERNANCE

- I. **Right of refusal:**
 - A. Home Moravian Church reserves the right to refuse to allow any person from working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults based on their previous record or convictions.

- II. **Ongoing Volunteers' database:**
 - A. A database of all *Ongoing Volunteers* will be established by the church and maintained by the church administrator.

- III. **Responsibility for Annual Reviews:**
 - A. The Personnel Committee is responsible for an annual review of the *Ongoing Volunteers* database of volunteers.

 - B. The Christian Education Committee is responsible for

an annual review of the
*Home Moravian Church
Safe Sanctuary Policy,
Volunteer and Youth
Covenants of Participation,
and Incident Report Form.*

IV. **Policy approval:**

- A. The Board of Elders and the Board of Trustees of Home Moravian Church are responsible for approval of this policy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Appendix I *Volunteer Covenant of Participation*

Appendix II *Youth Covenant of Participation*

Appendix III *Incident Report Form*

Appendix IV *Bus Rider Permission Form*

To download and print supporting documents, go to HomeMoravian.org/safesanctuary and select the full-size document.

Effective date: Fall 2013

Revision date: November 2014; approved by HMC Elders
1/5/15