

Horne Memorial United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuary Policy

Scriptural and Doctrinal Context

“In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish” – Matthew 18:14

“Children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse” Paragraph 162C – Methodist Social Principles 2004 Book of Discipline

“With God’s help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ that *this child* surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.” – Baptismal Covenant II page 44, United Methodist Hymnal

We, the members of Horne Memorial UMC, in response to the general conference resolution of 1996 and the North Carolina Annual Conference resolution of 2004 that all churches develop comprehensive policies and procedures to reduce the risk or abuse of our children and youth have developed and implemented the following Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures.

Safe Sanctuary- Policy Definitions

“Adult” means a person 18 years of age or older.

“Child abuse” is defined as a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Child abuse includes non-accidental:

- Physical Abuse - Examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that result in or could result in serious physical injury.
- Sexual Abuse - Sexual abuse is any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile. This involves a range of activities, including fondling or other inappropriate physical contact. It also includes, without limitation, exhibitionism, child pornography, and suggestive behaviors or comments.
- Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse is expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child that is likely to create serious emotional or psychological damage in a child of ordinary sensibilities.
- Neglect -Child neglect can be defined as any serious disregard for a juvenile's supervision, care, or discipline.

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- Definitions from Prevent Child Abuse NC. Under North Carolina law, anyone who has cause to suspect that a child or youth has been abused or neglected is a mandated reporter of such abuse or neglect.

“Child or youth” means any person under the age of 18. “Children’s ministries” at Horne Memorial encompass infant through fifth grade. “Youth ministries” involve children in grades six through twelve.

“Children’s and youth activities” means any activity or program performed in connection with Horne Memorial UMC in which children are under supervision of persons (staff or volunteers) in charge of these activities.

“Church” or **“We”** or **“Horne Memorial”** means the congregation of Horne Memorial United Methodist Church.

“Conference” means the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

“Staff person” means any person employed by Horne Memorial.

“Volunteer” means a person who assists in a leadership or support role in children’s and youth ministries.

“Safe Sanctuaries Review Committee” shall be comprised of a member of the Staff-Parish committee, a member of Trustees, the youth and children’s programs directors and a member at large of the congregation.

“Safe Sanctuaries Crisis Response Committee” shall be comprised of the Senior Pastor, the chairpersons of the Staff-Parish committee and Trustees and outside consultants as necessary. On a case-by-case basis, the youth and/or children’s programs directors may be members of this committee to assist in managing an incident. In no event, shall a person alleged to be involved in a reported incident of abuse serve as a member of the Committee during the review process of such incident.

“Outside Group” means any group that does not fall under the responsibility of Horne Memorial, its staff or congregation and that has been approved to use Horne Memorial’s facilities..

Policies and Procedures

In order to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for our ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry’s and workers’ vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be enforced.

Screening and Training:

1. Potential volunteers may work with children and/or youth on 2 different levels of interaction and will complete a volunteer application based on their length of church membership and choice of level as set forth below:

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- a. Regular Supervised Interaction (application part A): an adult who regularly and frequently volunteers at church sponsored events or programs primarily for children or youth in a supervised capacity. Examples include, without limitation, regular nursery, Sunday school or youth program helpers, children's church volunteers, vacation bible school 5 day volunteers.
 - b. Unsupervised Interaction (application parts A and B): an adult volunteer who has regular and frequent unsupervised interaction with children or youth at church sponsored events or programs primarily for children or youth, or who supervises adult volunteers who interact with children or youth. This category also includes all staff members. Other examples include, without limitation, youth or children's group leaders, overnight chaperones, Sunday school leaders, mentors, nursery staff.
2. Any potential volunteer working with children or youth must be a member of or regular attendee of Horne Memorial for a minimum of 6 months before becoming a level A volunteer, except that parents of children ages birth through 3 may volunteer to work in the nursery on Sunday mornings at level A immediately upon completion and approval of a volunteer application. Any potential volunteer must be a member or regular attendee of Horne Memorial for a minimum of 1 year before becoming a level B volunteer.
3. Level B volunteers will be interviewed by the children's or youth director, as applicable, and must undergo North Carolina statewide criminal background and sex offender registry checks conducted by an independent company as part of the application process. All information pertaining to criminal background and sex offender registry checks will be collected and maintained by the church business administrator and will be reviewed only by either the youth or children's programs director, as applicable. All such information will be held in confidence by such person. Any documentation will be maintained in a locked cabinet or unalterable pdf file accessible only by such person and the church business administrator.
4. All volunteers will update their applications annually and may as deemed necessary receive appropriate training on the policies and procedures associated with Safe Sanctuaries as defined by Horne Memorial and the Conference.
5. The youth and children's programs directors will present lists of volunteers at each level to the appropriate youth or children's council for review, provided that no confidential information may be divulged by such directors. Any person who may not be suitable to work with children or youth in the discretion of the youth or children's programs director, as applicable, will be prohibited from working with children and youth.

Procedures

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1. At least 2 adults must be present for each function and in each room or area involving children's (see exception in number 3 below) and youth activities. The presence of a designated adult supervisor who moves in and out of rooms and monitors the hallways at all times during any function involving children and/or youth may be counted as one of the adults for purposes of this rule.
2. Hallways, classrooms and other areas of the building will be monitored while activities for children and youth are ongoing. All classrooms and offices will have windows or other provision for visibility and accountability.
3. With exception to children's ministries a person in grade 9 and above may volunteer to assist an approved adult. An adult in this case is defined as anyone over the age of 21.
4. The procedures set forth in this section are in addition to all other procedures set forth by other committees of the church, including without limitation, transportation, nursery/preschool and Trustee policies regarding outside use of the church building.
5. All Outside Groups using the facilities of Horne Memorial will be given a copy of this policy and expected to abide by its requirements as applicable.
6. The Safe Sanctuaries policy of Horne Memorial will be reviewed at least annually by the Safe Sanctuaries Review Committee, and the Congregation will be informed of any substantive changes thereto.

Crisis Response Plan

Upon the occurrence of a possible or alleged incident of abuse, any witness shall immediately notify the volunteer or staff member responsible for the event. When an allegation of abuse of a child or youth is made against a staff member or volunteer, the Safe Sanctuaries Crisis Response Committee, excluding any member allegedly involved, will do the following:

1. Notify the parents of the alleged victim and take any necessary steps to assure his or her safety until the parents arrive.
2. Treat the accused with dignity, if the accused is aware of the accusation against him or her, but remove him or her from further involvement with the children or youth as soon as possible.
3. Notify the proper law enforcement agency and follow its instructions regarding the persons and/or area involved.
4. Notify the Bishop's office of the Annual Conference and the Church's insurance agent.

5. Complete a Report of Suspected Incident of Child or Youth Abuse (see attached) and keep a written record of all steps taken by the Church in response to the allegations of abuse.
6. Call on a designated spokesperson to make any necessary statements or responses to the news media.
7. Seek prompt legal advice from the Church's attorney.

HMUMC Children/Youth Volunteer Application

Parts A Supervised regular volunteers

Parts A & B Unsupervised volunteers

Part A

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Day Phone: _____ **Evening Phone:** _____

Current Job and Responsibilities:

DOB: _____ **Member of Horne Memorial since:** _____

Has a civil lawsuit or employment or criminal complaint ever been filed against you for child neglect or abuse or sexual abuse? _____ (yes or no)

Have you ever been convicted of a crime related to child neglect or abuse or sexual abuse? _____ (yes or no)

Have you left an assignment or employment or been removed from an assignment or employment for reasons related to allegations of child neglect or abuse, physical abuse or sexual abuse or for other inappropriate conduct related to a child or youth? _____ (yes or no)

If you answered yes to any of the above, please give details.

I understand that in signing this personal information sheet, I affirm that the information I have given is true and correct, that any pertinent omission will be considered an untruth and that all the information given will be held in confidentiality by Horne Memorial Children/Youth Director as applicable.

Applicant Signature

Date

Part B

Volunteer Experience – Please list your volunteer experiences with HMUMC, other churches, civic and non-profit organizations. You may use additional pages if needed.

Organization	Volunteer Duties	Dates of Service	Contact/ Supervisor	Phone Number or e-mail

References: List at least three personal references that could attest to your character and leadership abilities, other than relatives:

Name/Relationship (professional or personal, etc.)	Address	Phone/e-mail

Page Three (Part B continued)

Horne Memorial United Methodist Church appreciates your willingness to share your faith, gifts, and skills. Providing safe and secure programs for members of our congregation is very important to us. The information gathered in this application is designed to help us provide the highest quality programs for the children and youth of our congregation. Please read and attest to the statements below:

Applicant Verification and Release

I recognize that Horne Memorial is relying on the accuracy of the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all of the information that I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize Horne Memorial UMC to contact any person or entity listed in this application, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide HMUMC with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release Horne Memorial UMC and any such person or entity listed herein from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize Horne Memorial UMC to conduct a criminal background investigation if such check is deemed necessary in the sole discretion of any official of Horne Memorial UMC (Application Level B).

I have carefully read the Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures of HMUMC, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children and/or youth at all times.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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Part B (for office use only)

_____ Interview Conducted (Date: _____)

_____ Background Check Completed (Date _____)

ANNUAL UPDATE:

I hereby confirm that no substantive changes to the information contained herein have occurred since the date of my last signature:

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

<OR>

The attached document sets forth all substantive changes to the information contained herein that have occurred since the date of my last signature.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Horne Memorial UMC

Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check

I, _____, hereby authorize Horne Memorial United Methodist Church to request the _____ police/sheriff's department, any other law enforcement agency, or any company in the business of performing background searches on persons, (collectively the Reporting Entity), to release information regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in its files, or in any criminal file maintained on me, whether said file is a local, state, or national file, and including but not limited to accusations and convictions for crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law. I do release said Reporting Entity, from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print applicant's full name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Print all other names that have been used by applicant (if any) during applicant's life:

Date of birth: _____ Place of birth: _____

Social Security number: _____

Driver's license number: _____ State issuing license: _____

License expiration date: _____

Request sent to: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

List each address at which you have resided in the last five years.

Address: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

List each town and state in which you lived at any time prior to the last five years.

For Office Use Only:

Request sent to: (name, address, phone number)

Horne Memorial UMC

Confidential Report of Suspected Incident of Child/Youth Abuse

[Collected by the Safe Sanctuaries Crisis Response Committee as part of the evidentiary record compiled on behalf of the Church and the appropriate authorities]

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of abuse of youth or child(ren):

2. Victim's Name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth: _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from witness or victim:

4. Witness' (or Victim's) initial statement causing sufficient grounds for a report: _____

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

6. Reported to pastor or Safe Sanctuaries Crisis Response Committee:

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____
