

**HIGHLAND HOPE  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
12846 Daiber Road  
Highland, IL 62249  
www.highlandhope.org**

## **SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY PROCEDURES**

### **DEFINITIONS**

Children – A child\* with age between Birth through appropriate grade/age equivalent of Grade 5 level of public or private school.

Youth – A child\* with appropriate grade/age equivalent of Grade 6 through Grade 12 levels of public or private school.

\*A child is a person of less than 18 years of age.

Vulnerable Adult – An adult (a person aged 18 or over) who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Adults – Persons 18 Years of Age and older

A Volunteer is an adult person who works with a child and/or vulnerable adult in any unpaid capacity

Leader – Staff or a Volunteer with the primary supervising responsibility of an event or activity

Helper – Staff, Volunteer, or Child age 16 or older

Staff – Persons employed by Highland Hope United Methodist Church

Administrator- Directing Pastor or appropriate Staff

Intern/Assistant – Staff employed temporarily to assist with special ministry areas

Unattended Child -- A child that is not in the direct line of sight of the parent or their designated attendee

Floater – A mobile Adult assisting in the supervision of numerous areas

Parents -- Parents, guardian, and/or person responsible for attending child

### **STANDARD CHILD PROCEDURES**

1) Staff and Leaders are required to know the location of emergency aid kits, AED and have telephone access for emergency medical assistance. First Aid kits are available in kitchen, Love Room, and in the youth room. The AED is located in the east hall outside of Hope Hall.

2) Youth events, on or off campus, require a minimum presence of one Leader and one Volunteer (preferably non-related). The Leader and Volunteer must be 5 years older than the oldest participant in the event.

Highland Hope UMC requires a minimum Leader to Youth ratio of one (1) Leader to every fifteen (15) youth.

3) Children events, on or off campus, require a minimum presence of one Leader (min. age 18) and one Helper (min. age 16) (preferably non-related). Highland Hope UMC requires a minimum Leader to child ratio of one (1) Leader to every fifteen (15) children .

Exception: Kids in Christ follows DCFS guidelines.

a. When it is not feasible to have a Leader and Volunteer and/or Helper in every room, such as when a large group has divided into smaller groups, a Floater may be utilized to check between groups.

b. Parental permission forms and Medical Release forms are required for off-campus Highland Hope UMC supervised events.

c. There are to be at least two adults of each gender present at co-ed overnight events. At single gender overnight events, there are to be at least two adults of the same gender present. Both adults must be at least 21 years old and 5 years older than the oldest participant.

d. A Child attending Highland Hope UMC supervised event may not leave prior to the ending of that event without written parental permission unless the Parent has made previous contact by phone, email, or text with the Leader in charge of the event. The Leader is required to document date, time, and parental release instruction and attach the documentation with the event attendance record.

e. Children are not to be released to persons other than their Parent/Guardian without written parental permission unless the Parent/Guardian has made previous contact with the Leader in charge of the event. The Leader is required to document date, time, and parental release instruction and attach the documentation with the event attendance record.

f. Children, Birth – Grade 2, are not to be released to a sibling less than 16 years of age without written parental permission unless the Parent/Guardian has made previous contact with the Leader in charge of the event.

g. Door windows are not to be covered when rooms are in use by children or youth.

h. Leaders in charge of an event are required to take attendance and submit those records to the Church Staff.

i. Children/Youth are to be supervised while on church property. Children/Youth not attending or participating in Highland Hope UMC events are the responsibility of their Parent/Guardian.

4) Highland Hope UMC sponsored transportation will begin and terminate at the church property unless preapproved by the Staff person in charge of the event. Volunteers operating a motor vehicle will be an Adult, at least 21 years old, have a valid driver's license, current insurance on the vehicle, and comply with all traffic laws and applicable state statutes. Staff and Volunteer drivers are required to sign the Auto Safety Certification form (Appendix B) to participate in church sponsored transportation.

a. Written or verbal permission from a child's Parent/Guardian is required when only one child is being transported alone in a vehicle for a church sponsored transportation event. Parental permission granted verbally is to be documented with the date, time, parental direction and submitted with the event attendance record. Unless otherwise specified in the parental direction, a single child being transported is required to be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle. This rule does not apply in the parent-child relationship

b. All persons in vehicle must be properly restrained.

c. A child not utilizing Highland Hope UMC transportation for attending a sponsored church event is the responsibility of their Parent/Guardian.

## **PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO CHILDREN**

- 1) It is desired that children attend the grade/age level equivalent to the grade/age level they attend in school or preschool unless prearrangements have been made with the Teacher.
  - a. Preschool children should be placed in classes according to their birth dates. A child must reach the age-level of the class by September 1st of that year to be eligible for attendance. In other words, to attend the 4 Year-Old class that begins September 1, the child must have his/her 4<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to September 1.
  - b. Any child in Kindergarten or above should attend the same grade level of Christian education as they attend in school.
  - c. Promotion occurs in conjunction with the public school year-end. Children move to the next grade level at that time.
- 2) Children, Preschool through Grade 2, are required to be checked into and out of any activity by an adult, preferably a parent.
  - a. It is recommended that check in and check out occur five minutes prior to and five minutes after an event. If Children are not checked out within 10 minutes after the close of an event;
    1. The Leader in charge of the event will attempt to communicate with the Parent/Guardian of the child.
    2. Supervision of the child will be maintained by the Leader or Staff until such time as the Parent/Guardian can check their child out.
- 3) Parents/Guardians utilizing the Highland Hope UMC Nursery are required to sign their child into and out of the Nursery per the Highland Hope UMC Nursery Guidelines.
- 4) Parents/Guardians should be encouraged to remain on the property while their children are attending Highland Hope UMC events. Parents/Guardians who leave the property while their children are attending classes or events are required to provide emergency contact information to the Leader in charge of that event.

## **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF ABUSE**

- 1) According to the laws of the State of Illinois, all persons are mandatory reporters of child abuse. Pastors/latchkey/nursery workers or volunteers 18 yrs. old or older are required to take on-line mandatory reporter training through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. If a person learns of or witnesses an instance of abuse, that person shall immediately report the alleged incident of abuse or suspected abuse to the appropriate county or state authorities. The telephone number for reporting incidents in the State of Illinois is 1-800-252-2873.
- 2) Incidents of abuse or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse of children or youth will also be reported as soon as possible to the Directing Pastor or another Highland Hope staff person, the Staff Parrish Relations Chairperson, and to the Mississippi River District Superintendent, 618-622-3072.
- 3) The person reporting the incident will document, in writing, all known facts and circumstances and will also make a report that documents all steps taken in the course of handling the reported incident using the appropriate forms (See Appendix C).
- 4) The Directing Pastor and/or staff member will document all actions taken in reporting the incident of abuse using the appropriate forms (See Appendix D and E).
- 5) The confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded.

## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

- 1) Every allegation will be taken seriously. Adequate care and respect must be offered to the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators until the allegation can be substantiated or cleared.

- 2) The safety and security of the alleged victim must be safeguarded before the person accused of abuse is confronted.
- 3) The parents/guardians of the suspected victim will be notified immediately.
- 4) All procedures listed in the previous section on Reporting will be strictly followed.
- 5) All records relating to the matter will be maintained in confidential files.
- 6) All efforts in handling the situation will be carefully documented.
- 7) The Directing Pastor or his/her designee will notify the liability insurer and the legal counsel for the Church about the alleged incident.
- 8) The Directing Pastor or his/her designee will be the sole spokesperson for Highland Hope UMC and the District Superintendent will be the sole spokesperson for the district insofar as media inquiries are concerned.
- 9) Any person accused must be treated with dignity and support. That person will be immediately relieved of further responsibilities, as circumstances dictate, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

### **Background Checks**

- 1) Adults, Volunteers, and Helpers age 18 years and above, who work with children and youth are required to submit to a background check through Protect My Ministry (see church web site) or Dept. of Children and Family Services and to sign a Safe Sanctuaries participation covenant (Appendix A).
  - a. Background checks for Staff, Volunteers, and Helpers age 18 years and above will be paid for through the church budget. Payment for background checks for non-Highland Hope UMC administered events or activities are the responsibility of that organization/event.
  - b. Only the Directing Pastor and/or Executive Assistant to the Pastor will see the results of the background checks. Other staff members will receive a list of persons who have been approved for service with children and youth.
  - c. All background checks will be kept confidential.
  - d. Staff, Volunteers, and Helpers age 18 years and above are required to submit to a new background check as deemed necessary by the Directing Pastor or Executive Assistant to the Pastor.
  - e. Persons who have resided in Illinois less than 3 years are required to have a background check in their previous state of residence.
  - f. Persons who fail or refuse the background check are not allowed to work with children and youth involved in a Highland Hope UMC event or activity.

### **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

- 1) Highland Hope Safe Sanctuary Policy Procedures will be approved by the Church Council and available upon request.
  - a. Staff and Volunteers supervising children, youth, or vulnerable adults will receive a copy of Highland Hope Safe Sanctuary Policy Procedures.
  - b. Parents are encouraged to review Highland Hope's Safe Sanctuary Policy Procedures located on the Church web site, [www.highlandhope.org](http://www.highlandhope.org)
  - c. The Safe Sanctuary Policy Procedures are available during New Members Classes, available for pick-up in the church information area, and available online at [www.highlandhope.org](http://www.highlandhope.org).

d. The Highland Hope Safe Sanctuaries Policy Procedures are to be reviewed annually by the people holding the following positions:

- I. Directing Pastor
- II. Executive Assistant to the Pastor
- III. Youth Director
- IV. Nursery Coordinator
- V. Lay Representative of the Children's Educational Ministries
- VI. Lay Representative of the Safety & Security Team
- VII. Lay Representative of the Board of Trustees
- VIII. Lay Representative of the Staff Parish Relations Committee

2) Liability insurance coverage: Highland Hope Trustees shall maintain liability insurance coverage of at least \$1,000,000 per event/\$3,000,000 aggregate for activities both on and off church property. Liability insurance should include at least \$300,000 coverage for sexual misconduct claims.

3) All outside organizations using Highland Hope UMC facility or grounds will abide by Highland Hope Safe Sanctuary Policies and Procedures. Such organizations are required to sign a covenant that they have read and agree to abide by Highland Hope SSPP.

#### Addendum

Communications with youth via email, texts, or any other social media must include two adults, another leader or Parent/Guardian.

## Appendix A

### Safe Sanctuary Participant Covenant

I acknowledge I have received, reviewed, and agree to comply with the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures of Highland Hope UMC. I agree to submit a background check according to the Policy requirements. I understand that the background check is through a secure web site and is a paperless system, and that all information will be kept confidential.

---

signature

date

---

print name

### Appendix B Auto Safety Certification Form

**Vehicle Requirements:**

Vehicles shall be in good operating order, have a current valid license plate, and passenger restraints. The passenger restraints must be used while transporting a child.

Vehicles shall have insurance coverage as required by Illinois law. A copy of a current insurance card is required to be on file with the appropriate Administrator.

Vehicles will be multi-passenger vehicles. No motorcycles, scooters, or mopeds will be allowed. No vehicle will be allowed to carry more than the passenger capacity as specified by the vehicle manufacturer.

**Qualification of Drivers:**

Drivers will be qualified adult volunteers or church staff (as qualified by the Safe Sanctuary Policies and Procedures), or parents of participating youth. The appropriate administrator will pre-approve all drivers. All drivers must have a current valid driver’s license with the classification for the vehicle being driven and be at least 21 years of age, unless he or she is a staff member of the Church.

**General Rules for Transportation:**

Unless otherwise approved by the appropriate Administrator and the parents/custodians, all transportation subject to these procedures will begin and terminate at the church property. All drivers will obey all traffic laws. Failure to do so may disqualify them from driving for church sponsored activities. For overnight church functions, signed parent permission forms will be obtained from each child prior to being allowed in any of these vehicles. If the child does not have a completed permission form he/she will not be permitted to participate in the transportation arranged by the church. The permission forms are to be collected and checked by the group leader prior to leaving the church property. Upon return to the church, the forms will be provided to the appropriate administrator.

If possible, there will be more than one child placed in a vehicle. In the event there is only one child in the vehicle, the minor must be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle unless documented parental direction specifies otherwise. This does not apply in the parent-child relationship.

I have read and agree to abide by Highland Hope’s Auto Safety Certification:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C**  
**Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse**

**Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse**

1. Victim's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Victim's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Date/Place of initial conversation with/report from victim: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Victim's Statement:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Capacity in which abuse was witnessed/reported:  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of person(s) suspected of abuse:  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Reported to Directing Pastor/or appropriate Administrator Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Reported to SPRC Chairperson /Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Summary:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Person Making Report (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Signature of Person Making Report Date \_\_\_\_\_

12. Name of Recipient (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Signature of Recipient Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D**



**Suspected Incident - Initial Checklist**

**Suspected Incident Checklist**

1. Call to Victim's parent(s)/guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)
2. Call to Advice Agency  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)
3. Call to \_\_\_\_\_ Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)
4. Call to District Superintendent (if applicable)  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)
5. Call to Church Legal Counsel  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)
6. Person Making Report (please print) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Signature of Person Making Report /Date \_\_\_\_\_
8. Name of Recipient (please print) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Signature of Recipient/ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**

**Suspected Incident Follow-up Checklist (Completed after each follow-up contact)**

1. Call to Victim's parent(s)/guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)

2. Call to Advice Agency

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)

3. Call to \_\_\_\_\_ Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)

4. Call to District Superintendent (if applicable)

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)

5. Call to Church Legal Counsel

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Person completing initial here \_\_\_\_\_)

6. Person Making Report (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Signature of Person Making Report /Date \_\_\_\_\_

8. Name of Recipient (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Signature of Recipient/ Date \_\_\_\_\_