

**Safe Sanctuary Policy
Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church
Raleigh, North Carolina**

Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church is a community of faith. We proclaim the risen Christ as Lord and Savior and gather in response to His grace. We believe that we are commissioned by God in this time and place to faithfully serve God's purposes. We take seriously our responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all, particularly for children and youth who are vulnerable because they are not yet adults. It is essential then, that the adults who work with children and youth are those with gifts for this ministry and who will always seek the greater good for the children and youth in their care.

1. Purpose

The primary purposes of this Safety Policy are to outline procedures and guidelines that will:

1. Protect the children and youth who participate in our ministries.
2. Create a physical environment that reduces the likelihood for abuse, whether physical, sexual or verbal.
3. Protect adults from false accusations.
4. Train adults in child and youth safety.

2. Definitions

This Safety Policy reflects the commitment of Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church to seek to provide safe environment for all who participate in our ministries. To this end, Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church requires staff and volunteers to commit themselves to this Children and Youth Safety Policy adopted by the Session of the Church.

For the purpose of this Safety Policy, the following definitions shall be adopted:

Adults: Persons who are 18 years old or older

Associate Pastor: Ordained pastor(s) at Hudson other than Head of Staff or Staff

Children: Infants and all minors who have not begun sixth grade

Hudson or Church: Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church

Pastor: Head of Staff at Hudson

Policy: Safe Sanctuary Policy

Safety Administrator: The person designated by the Session to manage the administrative and confidentiality tasks related to background checks and other safety procedures and policies.

Session: The Session of Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church

Staff: who are paid by Hudson to work with Children or Youth, such as Director of Youth Ministry (“DYM”) and Children’s and Youth music leaders & directors.

Volunteer: Any Adult who meets the age requirements listed above and volunteers in Children’s or Youth programs or activities at Hudson.

Youth: All minors who have started sixth grade up to and including those in the summer following their graduation from high school through August 31 of that year (unless considered to be “Adults” per the definition below).

3. Screening/Background Check Procedures

1. Background checks, which include review of criminal and civil history/records, review of sex offender records, social security number verification, and driving history including any traffic citations, will be conducted at this time through a contractor approved by the Session.
2. Volunteers will be asked to complete an application form which includes background check permission and affirmation.
3. Staff responsible for children and youth will ensure that each Volunteer has completed appropriate form.
4. The Safety Administrator will maintain a list of approved children and youth volunteers.
5. The Safety Administrator will scan the form and background check report as secure, encrypted electronic files on the Hudson computer. Paper copies will then be shredded.
6. For all background checks that have no findings, the Safety Administrator will inform the committee chair who has requested the background check that the Volunteer is approved.
7. For a background check that has any finding that would exclude the applicant from serving with Children and Youth, the Safety Administrator will give the report to the Pastor, who will inform the applicant in writing that he/she will not be permitted to work the children or youth.
8. Credit reports will not be conducted.
9. A motor vehicle report along with a Volunteer Driving Application and Vehicle Use Policy confirmation will be requested only for individuals who may drive Children and Youth.
10. A background check is valid at Hudson for a period of three years, and will need to be repeated at least every three years (or more frequently if there is reason to believe that such is necessary).

4. Requirements for Adults Working with Children or Youth

1. Every Adult working with Children and Youth at any Hudson sponsored activity is required to follow all guidelines and procedures in this Policy.
2. A volunteer who is not an HMPC member, or has been a member for less than six months, will be paired with someone who has been an HMPC member for longer than 6 months.
3. Adults who wish to volunteer with Children or Youth must complete an application every 3 years.
4. Volunteers are required to report immediately any behavior which seems inappropriate or abusive to the Pastor, an Associate Pastor or Staff member.

5. Procedures During Church-Sponsored Activities

A. General Procedures:

1. In order to best protect the Children, Youth and Adults of our Church, no Adult is to be alone with a Child or Youth or out of the sight of another Adult. This rule is the "two-Adult" rule and is to be the standard for all Adult employees and Volunteers who interact with Children and Youth.
2. It is recognized, however, that in some circumstances such as pastoral counseling, confirmation mentoring or unexpected circumstances, following the "two-Adult" rule may not be possible. During these situations it is required that the Adult select public locations that are within sight of other Adults such as a room at the Church with the door open or with a glass paneled window in the door, a restaurant, etc.
3. At all times and in all situations, Adults will abstain from inappropriate comments or touching that is, or could be thought of as, sexual harassment or abuse.
4. During all Church sponsored activities, Adults will abstain from tobacco, alcohol or narcotics use in the presence of Children or Youth.
5. Whenever photographs of Children or Youth attending Hudson events are published on the Hudson website, no identifying captions will be used. Further, no photographs will be published by Hudson anywhere of any Children or Youth for whom parents have completed a Photography Prohibition Statement. Parents photographing Children and Youth at Hudson events should not use identifying captions if photographs are posted to their personal web pages and no photographs of Children or Youth for whom parents have completed a Photography Prohibition Statement shall be posted anywhere by anyone who is aware of the existence of such Photography Prohibition Statement.

B. On-Site Procedures:

1. In the classroom, the "two-Adult" rule requires that one Adult is never alone with Children or Youth without a second Adult present or in a place that is out of view of another Adult.
2. In the event that two Adults are not available, a Youth 8th grade and above may serve as the second person for Children 3rd grade and younger. Note that if additional help must be summoned, the Adult will stay with the Children and the Youth will leave to obtain additional help.
3. In the event of having only one Adult working with Children and/or Youth, the classroom door shall remain open at all times. In classrooms, where the Children are two years of age and younger and there is only one Adult (and combining classes would result in an excess of 6 Children per Adult), a gate shall be securely placed at the open door thus preventing any Child from exiting the classroom unattended.
4. There may be circumstances when fewer than six Children are present with a paid Child-care worker and parents are nearby. In this circumstance, one Adult is allowed with the Children if the door remains open and/or a child gate is in place and a functional pager communication system allows the Child-care worker to quickly contact the children's parents.
5. In the event a Child needs to use the bathroom, the Child (if first through fifth grade) shall choose a same gender "buddy" to accompany him/her. Children in kindergarten and younger classes shall use the nearest bathroom facilities in

or outside of his or her classroom, with one Adult accompanying the Child to the extent necessary and leaving the bathroom hallway door open and another Adult staying with the remaining Children in the classroom until the departed Adult returns with the Child from the bathroom.

C. Off-Site Procedures

1. The "two-Adult" rule applies to all Church sponsored events, including those away from the Church building (off-site).
2. A ratio of 1 Adult to 6 Children or Youth will be maintained for all Hudson-sponsored off-site activities. The gender mix of male and female Adults will attempt to mirror the ratio of male and female Children/Youth to the greatest extent possible.
3. In some circumstances such as a small group meeting in a home where Child care is provided, one Adult may stay with the Children in a different part of the home while the parents gather in the same home.
4. Adults driving Children and Youth in the church vans must fill out the Volunteer Driver Application and abide by the Vehicle Use Policy. This must be repeated every 2 years.
5. Adults driving Children and Youth in their own vehicles must abide by the HMPC Vehicle Use Policy.
6. Males and females shall be segregated during sleeping time at all overnight activities or retreats.
7. Adults will provide an area at all overnight events where males and females may gather for programs, conversation and snacks. The doors to this room will remain open.
8. When the facility does not provide enough sleeping quarters and it is necessary for Adults to share sleeping accommodations with the Children/Youth, a minimum of two Adults (the same sex as the Children/Youth) shall sleep in each area.

D. Initial Reporting of Suspicious Activity

1. Because "All North Carolina citizens are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect," any suspicious activity brought to the attention of or observed by an Adult participating in Church sponsored events must be reported immediately to the Pastor, Associate Pastor or Staff. The person reporting the activity, Pastor, Associate Pastor or Staff shall document in writing, to the best of their ability, the details of the suspicious activity to include what, when, where and how as well as the date, time and circumstances.
2. The Pastor, Associate Pastor and Staff shall determine what further action is to be taken. If the alleged person is the Pastor, Associate Pastor or a Staff member, a Pastor, Associate Pastor or Staff member who is not involved in the allegations shall make the determination of the next step.

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Safe Sanctuary Policy**

Affirmation

As an Adult working with Children or Youth at Hudson, I will conduct my life in a manner that will support the ministry of Hudson to Children and Youth as delineated and quoted in items 1-5 below from the "Life Together in the Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (USA). I will:

Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;

Treat all persons with equal respect and concern

Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my position, my commitments to family and other primary relationships and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual renewal;

Refrain from abusive, addictive or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs; and

Refrain from gossip and abusive speech.

I recognize that HMPC has adopted the above Safe Sanctuary Policy. I have read and understand the policy, support it, and agree to abide by it. I affirm that I will do my part in providing a nurturing Christian environment in which our children and youth can develop in faith and in trust.

I certify by my signature that I have not to my knowledge been the subject of any investigation, complaint or legal or church related action involving a reported instance of physical, sexual or verbal abuse of children or youth, and I have never been refused, resigned from or been asked to resign from a position for reasons related to such abuse.

Do you have any medical training? _____

Are you CPR Certified? Yes No If yes, please supply a copy of card

Background Check Release Form

I understand that a background check prior to volunteer service or employment is conducted by Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church. My signature below acknowledges and gives HMPC the authority to conduct a background check. I will supply HMPC the information needed for this check.

Name (Legal Name) _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Date of Birth _____

Social Security Number _____

Signature _____

Date _____