

# SAFE SANCTUARY

## Children and Youth Volunteer Handbook

### What is the Safe Sanctuary Policy?

It is a policy approved by the Joint Board and mandated by our Synod to ensure adults and children are in healthy and supportive relationships during times of worship, study and fellowship.

### What does it require?

- Two adult leaders are expected to be present with any group of children or youth.
- All adults who are regularly in close contact with children & youth are asked to:
  1. Participate in training on topics relevant to their ministry area.
  2. Comply with outlined safety procedures specific to their ministry area.



### Why a Safe Sanctuary Policy?

It is a commitment to ensure that every volunteer feels supported, is aware of how their work fits into the whole of our program and is ready to do their tasks.

It takes a village to raise a child. Studies have shown that children need lasting relationships with at least 5 faithful adults other than their parents to grow into an adult faith. We are setting an expectation of more adults being with our children, giving them more adults with whom they can form these relationships.

It gives parents and leaders peace of mind. Everyone can enter into our programs for children and youth knowing that someone is paying attention, is there to support them, and wants them to feel comfortable and empowered.

## Where can I get involved?

Opportunities to Serve our Children and Youth

### Nursery and Worship

Nursery for Birth-Toddlers:

A quiet place of nurture that is available during our worship services and the Sunday School hour.

Nursery for 2-4 Year Olds:

An active play space for the toddler into the early preschooler years.

Children's Church:

Children age 4 through the completion of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are invited into their own worship experience on communion Sundays. They have opportunities to creatively respond to the Bible through a variety of activities and learning stations.

### Sunday School

Pre-k – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Sunday School:

Children follow a lectionary-based curriculum and experience hands-on Bible activities including art, movement, story-telling, games, and creative expression.

2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School:

Lectionary-based Bible study continues while they experience hands-on activities at a deeper level.

6-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School/Confirmation Class:

Bible study facilitated by discussion on a variety of topics relevant to current topics. On alternating years, Confirmation class replaced traditional Sunday school offerings.

9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grades:

High School youth meet off-site for devotional prayer time under the supervision of adult mentors.

### Fellowship

Youth Fellowship:

Our MYF program for Junior/Senior high students provides a safe space for teens to pray, serve, study, discuss, and explore their faith. Camps, retreats, and mission trips give a chance to experience and grow in our understanding of how Christians are called to relate to the world.

For questions throughout any step, please contact Jami Vandock, Director of Christian Education (DCE) at 330-340-1872 (cell) or 919-787-4034 (church office).

## How do I get started?

1 - Read over the policy contained in this manual. Ask any questions you have. Then sign the Policy Acknowledgement Form.

2 - Turn the signed form in to the Church Office or directly to Jami Vandock, DCE.

\*We will offer training on-site annually. Individual sessions will be available if you cannot attend a session at the church.

## RALEIGH MORAVIAN CHURCH

### SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY STATEMENT

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuary Policy and accompanying procedures is (1) to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth and well-being of all our children and youth, (2) to protect our staff and volunteers from potential false allegations of inappropriate behavior, and (3) to limit the extent of legal liability of the congregation and the Southern Province.

#### **Definitions:**

- Child – Any person between birth and Grade 5 (usually from birth to 11 years old)
- Youth – Any person from Grade 6 to Grade 12 (usually 12 to 17 years old)
- Adult – Any person eighteen (18) years of age or older
- Staff – Any person that is an employee of RMC
- Volunteer in leadership position – Any volunteer who teaches, supervises, or counsels children/youth on a regular basis or an overnight event
- Ministry Leader – Any person(s) responsible for overseeing a church program designed for children or youth
- Province – refers to the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province which is the headquarters and governing body of all Moravian churches located in the Southern region, and is governed by the PEC (PEC – Provincial Elders Conference)
- Child Abuse - A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child, which includes:
  1. Emotional Abuse – Expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child or youth that creates serious emotional or psychological damage
  2. Sexual Abuse – Any sexual behavior imposed on a child/youth
  3. Physical Abuse – Actions that result or could result in serious physical injury (examples: beatings, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument)
  4. Child Neglect – Any serious disregard for a child’s/youth’s supervision, care, or discipline

#### **Orientation:**

1. A copy of the “Safe Sanctuary Handbook” will be provided to all staff and volunteers upon employment or acceptance of a position working with children and youth.
2. Upon receipt of this policy, staff and volunteers will be required to sign a statement that he/she has read the Safe Sanctuary Policy.
3. Policy orientation is required for all staff and volunteers who work with children or youth, but is open to all interested parents and church members. Orientation may be done one-on-one or at available workshops.

**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 policy:

1. All children and youth participating in events requiring transportation away from the church must have written permission from parents or guardians.
2. Staff and volunteers must have a valid driver's license and Motor Vehicle Report with acceptable results. All traffic laws must be obeyed.
3. All drivers must be at least 18 years of age,
4. To the extent possible, in vehicles carrying more than four children, there should be one adult in addition to the driver.
5. Occupants are required to wear seat belts.
6. No smoking while in the vehicle or consumption of alcohol or drugs (includes prescription drugs that may cause impairment).
7. A cell phone should be available when groups are away from the church. The cell phone should only be used for emergencies while driving.
8. Drivers should refrain from the use of electronic devices such as DVD players and i-Pods.

**Supervision of Children and Youth in All Venues (On or Off Campus):**

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

1. 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 present. If there are fewer than two adult leaders present, the door will remain open and a rover will pass by periodically to check each group.
2. Each room or space where children are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open unless two adults are present. All activities should occur in open view. Doors should never be locked when children are present in the room.
3. Parents of the children, pastors, and staff of the church are encouraged to visit and observe the activities, classroom, or church sponsored program at any time, unannounced.
4. No person shall supervise any age group unless he/she is at least 18 years of age and is five years older than the children being served.
5. All specific procedures/expectations for care (i.e. Nursery or Sunday school) are posted in writing and provided to volunteers in advance. They should be followed accordingly.

**Reporting of Inappropriate Behavior:**

All adults and youth have a responsibility to be alert for behavior directed toward children and youth that is inappropriate. 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. Depending on what is observed or reported, the response can range from counseling for appropriate behavior to and including notifying the appropriate authorities.

2. As behaviors move from the area of perception to that of 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, with the offending adult being counseled and monitored more closely in the future. If the behavior were to be repeated or other examples of inappropriate behavior occur, the adult could be assigned to activities where they are more closely supervised by either the program director, staff member, or a volunteer leader. The adult could also be required to step down from their current role.
3. If it is observed that inappropriate behavior of an adult towards a child or youth continues and goes beyond appearance or bad judgment and becomes a criminal act, the church is to notify the appropriate civil authority and the PEC. The church will cooperate fully with the investigation.

### **Reporting Procedure:**

1. All allegations, investigation, and reports of the alleged incident are considered confidential. Information should only be discussed with those of a need-to-know status.
2. The senior pastor under the advice of the PEC is the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. Care should be taken to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all persons involved.
3. Any person who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported is required to report the incident immediately to the person in charge of the activity or event.
4. The person in charge should ensure the protection of and tend to the immediate needs of the child or youth, as the situation requires.
5. Care must be exercised so that those reporting the incident are not identified and 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.
7. Upon receiving such information, the person in charge will report the incident and all information gathered to the senior pastor. The senior pastor or vice chairman of the Board of Elders is then obligated to notify the appropriate civil authorities and the PEC immediately.
8. If the senior pastor is the accused party, the vice chairman of the Board of Elders should report the incident to law enforcement and the PEC immediately.
9. Proper authorities will be notified even if the parents do not wish the incident to be reported.
10. The person in charge or the senior pastor will notify the parents of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety of the child or young adult until the parents arrive.
11. If the accused is a worker, volunteer, or staff employee who is involved with the children's activity, the accused will immediately be removed from further involvement with the children.
12. Even in the event that an allegation concerns activities or persons outside any relationship to the church related activity or event, the same procedures should be implemented. An example of this would be a child telling a staff employee, volunteer or helper about abuse by a relative at home. If this was reported, the incident should be communicated according to the procedures outlined previously.

### **Jessica Lundsford Act for North Carolina**

The Jessica Lundsford Act (*N.C. General Statutes §§ 14-208.17, 14-208.18*) includes conditions that are placed on the participation of a registered sex offender who wishes to be part of a church community. In compliance, the conditions and details contained in this law can be provided in written form by the DCE upon request.

**Cyber Safety:**

One of the biggest changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the impact of the internet, cell phones, and other electronic communication devices on our everyday lives. Cyber safety is an issue that all churches must identify and address. Children and youth can be victims of cyber-bullying or attract the attention of predators on the internet.

All church leaders, staff, and volunteers must adhere to the following policies:

1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner. Save all communications you have with children, youth, and parents. An electronic “paper trail” can be important.
2. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.
3. When posting photos of events or programs, refrain from using names and never use last names or identifiable information.
4. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure they uphold your mission. Check to make sure nametags are not distinguishable.

**Accidents and Injuries**

Supplies for treating minor injuries are kept in the church office. Ziploc baggies of ice can be provided by the adult leader. All accidents (even seemingly minor ones) should be reported to adult leader immediately. If an adult leader is not available, the accident should be reported to the church office. The adult leader (or other supervisor) will inform the volunteer if an accident report should be filled out – when in doubt, fill one out! Accident report forms are kept in the church office. Accidents include bumps that leave a bruise and/or require your attention, cuts, and burns incurred during an event held at the church, and anything you think a parent will be even mildly concerned about. If you use ice to treat an injury, you need to report the incident. If splinters are deep enough to require a tool (tweezers or a needle) to remove, **DO NOT** remove it! Put a Band-Aid on the area and leave the splinter intact.

Extreme caution is advised when treating any injury or unusual condition. Never send a child alone to be treated. Never leave an injured or sick child alone to seek treatment. When a child is ill, running a fever, vomiting, or requesting to go home due to illness, he/she must be accompanied until a parent is present. The on-call nursery volunteer, DCE, or other supervising adult should be paged/called. The church staff member present will then make all necessary arrangements. No phone call is to be placed to a parent without the church staff member’s knowledge.

In the event that a child becomes too ill or has had an accident that does not allow him/her to be moved, two other children should be calmly instructed to get assistance from the church staff member or the nearest adult. It is important that all adults in an emergency situation remain calm and do not alarm the children.

Children who have experienced a fall should not be moved. Comfort the child and ask where he/she is injured (“Show me where it hurts.”) Encourage the child to move his/her limbs on his/her own. Do not move the child’s limbs for him/her.

**General Safety:**

The safety of all children and youth is our first priority. To that end, children may never be left unsupervised and/or placed in situations that might compromise their health and/or safety. Staff members are responsible for ensuring that the following rules be enforced at all times:

- a. Children may not ever take medication unless dispensed by the parent or legal guardian or a staff member designated by the parent or legal guardian. Children **MUST NOT** be allowed to dispense medication to themselves – this includes such seemingly benign things as cough drops, aspirin, Children’s Tylenol, cough syrup, etc.

- b. Children are to be dismissed only to their parents, legal guardians, or other authorized caregivers. If there is any doubt whatsoever as to the identity or authority of an individual who seeks to remove a child or youth from the campus, contact the DCE or other supervising staff member. **DO NOT** release the child to that person's care until identity and authority has been confirmed.
- c. Children should move through the building, cross streets, and use the playground equipment in a safe manner.
- d. All accidents must be reported to the adult leader and a church staff member. Emergency help should be summoned immediately if there appears to be the slightest possibility of serious injury. **ALL HEAD INJURIES MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY!**
- e. All staff must be aware of children with allergies, asthmatic conditions, or other potentially dangerous medical conditions, and how to respond to emergencies involving such conditions.

The Director of Christian Education (DCE) will serve as the Safe Sanctuary Policy Coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for the administration and implementation of the policy with the following duties:

- a. Ensure all who work with children and youth adhere to RMC's Safe Sanctuary Policy.
- b. Provide Safe Sanctuary training at least annually to all.
- c. Make updates as needed to provide a safe environment for our children.
- e. Serve as the primary contact and administrator for the congregation on this policy.

