

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

HeavenEarth Church

309 Main Street

Whiteland, IN 46184

1.0 Introduction

HeavenEarth Church (HEC) does not tolerate abuse, neglect or sexual abuse of Protected Persons by anyone involved in church work. We are committed to ensuring that all children, youth, and vulnerable adults involved in church ministries may participate in an environment of safety and security, without discrimination. In that light, we have developed and implemented these policies and procedures to protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our care.

2.1 Definitions, Position Statement and Applicability

2.2 Definitions

The following definitions shall be applicable throughout this document and any documents associated with these policies.

Children are persons 0-11 years of age.

Youth are 12-18 years of age, up to and including graduation from high school.

Vulnerable Adults are persons 18 years of age and over who may require additional assistance to fully participate in any of the programs offered as part of the ministry of HEC and/or are unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation due to physical, mental and/or developmental disabilities.

Protected Persons include Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults who are registered, enrolled, attending and/or participating in any program or activity sponsored by HEC.

Parents/Guardians include custodial parents and primary guardians of Protected Persons.

Staff includes any clergy person or paid employee of HEC who work with or supervise Protected Persons.

Volunteer includes non-staff persons who work with or supervise Protected Persons as a facilitator or supervisor for an activity or program.

A distinction is made in these Policies and Procedures between a Lead Volunteer, a Screened Volunteer and a Youth Volunteer based on a Volunteer's level of training, age and/or their level of commitment at the time of serving. If the term "Volunteer" is used in this policy without any of the three distinctions attached, that requirement shall apply to ALL levels of Volunteers.

- A **Lead Volunteer** is an adult (over 18 years of age) who has indicated a genuine interest and capacity to serve as a Volunteer, passed a background check, been approved by the Lead Pastor, and attended training applicable to the area in which they are volunteering, including training on this policy.
- A **Screened Volunteer** is an adult (18 years of age and over) who has indicated a genuine interest and capacity to serve as a Volunteer, passed a background check, and been

approved by the Lead Pastor or Lead Volunteer.

- A **Youth Volunteer** may be a person 12 - 18 years of age who has indicated a genuine interest and capacity to serve as a Volunteer, has been appropriately trained, and has been approved by the Lead Pastor or Lead Volunteer.

2.3 Age Out Provision

Once a Youth has graduated from one level of ministry to another (such as graduating from high school or moving from Children's Ministry to Youth Ministry), said Youth shall not be permitted to participate in the ministry they just moved out of unless they do so as a Volunteer and comply with section 4.2 – The "Three Years Older" rule.

2.4 Position Statement

HEC is committed to the well-being of every person entrusted to its care. Our calling is to provide safe sanctuary for all of God's people including our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. HEC affirms that all children, youth and vulnerable adults have the right to expect safe sanctuary.

Jesus taught that *"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me," (Mark 9:37 NRSV) and "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones... it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea."* (Matthew 18:6 NRSV).

The United Methodist Church states that "(t)he community provides the potential for nurturing human beings into the fullness of their humanity. We believe we have a responsibility to innovate, sponsor, and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest potential in individuals. Primary for us is the gospel understanding that all persons are important—because they are human beings created by God and loved through and by Jesus Christ

and not because they have merited significance.” 2016, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, ¶161

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that “...children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse.” 2016, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, ¶162

As disciples, we affirm Christ’s commandment to love our neighbors. We also serve as witnesses of Christ’s power to transform lives. Building on these foundations, we recognize that our faith calls us to offer hospitality and protection to all persons.

HEC’s policy is designed to best fit our congregational setting and programming specificities.

2.5 Applicability

This policy applies to all persons who work directly with Protected Persons in HEC programs. This policy also applies to outside groups that utilize our facility. Outside users of the church facility must conform to the HEC’s Safe Church Policy *or* submit an alternate child protection policy to be approved by the Lead Pastor.

2.6 HeavenEarth Church’s Image Use Policy

No pictures of Protected Persons shall be shared on HEC media or on personal media of staff or volunteers without the consent of Parents/Guardians. HEC staff and volunteers must get permission to share the picture of Protected Persons before *any* sharing.

2.7 Training Volunteers

All Lead Volunteers and Youth Volunteers who work with Protected Persons must be trained in this policy. At a minimum, all volunteers and staff will be provided with a written copy of these and procedures. This policy will be routinely made available to Parents of Children and Youth involved in church programs, as well as the general congregation. Refresher training will occur as needed, but at least every three years, with supporting written materials available.

3.1 Recruiting and Screening Children and Youth Volunteers

3.2 Basic Requirement

HEC will ensure that all individuals who work with our Children and Youth are aware of each of these procedures and commit to adhere to them as they perform their duties. HEC will implement a thorough screening process for all paid and volunteer persons who work with Children and Youth.

3.3 Background Investigations

3.3.1 Data Requirements

HEC performs background checks on each paid staff member, Lead Volunteer, and Screened Volunteer who works with Protected Persons. Forms, data, and information obtained through this process will be kept by HEC and will be available to the Lead Pastor. To facilitate these checks, HEC requires each person who works with Protected Persons complete any necessary forms, provide all required information, and cooperate in the screening process.

HEC uses a third-party company to do the following checks:

- National Criminal History Database Search, including a check of Sexual Offender Registries
- Social Security verification
- County criminal records search
- Driving record search (for individuals who will be driving children and youth)

Any paid staff member or Volunteer who drives Protected Persons for HEC programs shall submit a valid driver's license number and date of birth to the church. This information will also be made available to the church's insurance company.

3.3.2 Background Information Review

Any person shall be disqualified from a position of service working with Protected Persons for any sexual misconduct convictions of any kind.

Any person shall be disqualified from driving HEC Protected Persons, other than their own, for church activities, considering the previous three years:

- more than two moving violations; or
- one serious violation (including drug or alcohol violations, reckless driving, etc.), or
- license suspension.

The stipulated background checks shall be conducted every three years if the individual serves consecutive years. If the individual does not serve consecutive years, the background checks will be conducted after each break in service of more than one year.

3.3.3 Data Protection

HEC relies on the integrity of the organization or organizations with which we contract to provide the investigation services. HEC uses the information provided solely for the purpose of determining the suitability of individuals to hold positions of service within our programs. Access to the results of the background investigations will be limited to those persons responsible for processing or evaluating the information as part of these policies, and stipulated above. Any person may review information regarding his or her own background investigation upon request.

Persons gathering forms and other information necessary to implement this process shall assure the security of the personal identifying information (PII) contained in application forms and in reports received from any screening organization utilized to perform background checks. Information provided by staff and volunteers containing PII shall be destroyed immediately upon receiving background investigation reports.

4.1 Procedures for Ensuring Safe Church for Protected Persons

HEC Safe Church Policy and procedures are established to maintain a safe and caring environment in which to operate ministries and programs. HEC will ensure that all persons who work with Protected Persons are aware of these procedures and will commit to adhering to them as they perform their duties.

4.2 The “Two Person” rule

Staff, Ministry Heads, and Volunteers should **NOT** be alone with Protected Persons. There must be another unrelated Staff or Volunteer in the room during regularly scheduled programming, unless the “Clear View” rule (4.4 below) applies or the staff/volunteer is in a vehicle for purposes of transportation under section 4.13 – Transporting Protected Persons.

4.3 The “Three Years Older” rule

Adults and Youth are eligible to serve as Volunteers. All Volunteers must be at least 12 years of age. Youth Volunteers under the age of 18 must work with and under the supervision of a Lead Volunteer or HEC Staff Member. All Volunteers and Staff must be at least three years older than the oldest child or youth they are working with or supervising.

4.4 The “Clear View” rule

If Staff and Lead Volunteers are with Protected Persons and there is not another Staff or Lead Volunteer available, the Clear View rule must be followed. Staff and Volunteers MUST keep themselves and the Protected Person(s) in clear view of anyone walking by, for example, having a window on the classroom door or leaving the door open. If there are no others present on the premises, the Clear View rule requires Staff and Volunteers to move to a public location.

4.5 One-on-One Contact with Protected Persons

One-on-one contact with a Protected Person by a Staff Member or Volunteer must be in a public setting and with the knowledge of the Protected Person’s parent/guardian and/or an approved staff member or Ministry Head. Volunteers and staff bear the burden of responsibility for maintaining the Two-Person Rule and Clear View Policy.

4.6 Boundaries

During all church-sponsored events and activities, Volunteers/Staff must establish and protect appropriate boundaries. For instance, Volunteers/Staff can be friendly, but are expected to always maintain a professional relationship with Protected Persons. A professional relationship would exclude dating, private conversations, text messages, instant messages, and social media communications unless they are under the official umbrella of church-wide communications to the entire Protected Persons community. Volunteers/Staff should refer Protected Persons to the Pastor or professional resources when concerned about Protected Persons physical or mental health.

4.7 Appropriate Physical Touch with Protected Persons

All Volunteers and Staff must be sensitive to the power differential between Volunteers/Staff and Protected Persons. It is the responsibility of Volunteers and Staff *to remain above reproach*. **Physical contact should always be initiated by Protected Persons.** Acceptable physical touch could include a sidearm hug, a fist bump, a high five, or hand-holding during prayer. Kissing, holding, and cuddling are always unacceptable forms of physical touch between Protected Persons and Volunteers/Staff.

4.8 Online Communication and Interaction

- 4.8.1 Nothing should be communicated through technology that would not be stated “face to face.” We must strike a balance between safety and pastoral effectiveness. To do so, we must be guided by accountability and transparency.
- 4.8.2 Staff and Volunteers should not “friend” Protected Persons in their personal social networking account unless there is an established relationship and the

request to “friend” or connect on social media is initiated by the Protected Person and not by the Staff or Volunteer.

- 4.8.3 Staff and Volunteers need to be vigilant in representing themselves in all interactions. Anything that would cause scandal to the ministry should be avoided.
- 4.8.4 Church sponsored sites must be monitored frequently to allow for quick response to urgent or crisis concerns.
- 4.8.5 The same boundaries observed in oral/personal communication (refer to Section 4.1 – The Two Adult rule and Section 4.3 – The Clear View rule below) should be adhered to when communicating via email/interactions on social media/texting. Respect time boundaries. Communications should occur in appropriate timeframes for the applicable ministry.
- 4.8.6 Email, texting, and instant messaging should only be used in one’s professional role and parents should be informed of using this technology for communication purposes for ministry. It is encouraged to email, text or instant message the parent/guardian the same communication.
- 4.8.7 Email, texting, and instant messaging can be photographed, saved or forwarded to others. Avoid engaging in any posting or communication that would be misconstrued or misinterpreted. All communication sent digitally is NOT CONFIDENTIAL and may be shared with others.

4.9 Ensuring a Safe Environment for Protected Persons

No form of abuse will be tolerated between or among protected persons. Protected persons are expected to treat one another with respect, patience, and tolerance by following Jesus’ commandment to love our neighbors. A safe environment for protected persons extends beyond the walls of HeavenEarth Church and official programming to include social media, school, and any other social settings. Volunteers/Staff should follow detection and reporting procedures outlined in Section 5.0 – Suspected Abuse Detection and Reporting.

4.10 Discipline

No form of physical discipline or punishment may be used. A disruptive Protected Person may be removed from the group to another location. If a Protected Person is removed from the group to another location, the appropriate Parent/Guardian will be informed and Section 4.4 – Clear View Policy will continue to be followed.

4.11 HEC’s Childcare Policies and Procedures Outside of Sunday Children’s Programming

- 4.11.1 During a child’s attendance in childcare, it is required that a Parent/Guardian be on site and not leave the grounds of HeavenEarth Church unless special circumstances are explicitly established. At the time of child drop off, parents should notify the childcare provider(s) of their location during stay and provide him/her with a parent contact phone number.
- 4.11.2 Occasionally, snacks may be served to children during childcare. Please make sure all

allergies and special needs are on file for each child.

- 4.11.3 Each parent is responsible for checking in their child(ren) to childcare. Children will only be released to the person presenting the corresponding check-in stub during pick up.
- 4.11.4 If an onsite parent is needed, childcare providers will contact him/her either by phone or in person.
- 4.11.5 If for any reason extra help is needed for a single time during an event where childcare is provided, a childcare provider may ask a Parent/Guardian to stay and provide additional assistance.

4.12 Bathroom procedures for Protected Persons

- 4.12.1 **Diaper/Pull-up changing:** If a child is wearing a diaper or Pull-up, an HEC staff member, a Lead Volunteer, or a Youth Volunteer must change the child in clear view of another Volunteer.
- 4.12.2 **Potty-trained child:** If a child requests to use the bathroom, they may use the bathroom closest to the child's classroom. A Lead Volunteer or Youth Volunteer will escort the child to the bathroom and leave the door open. If a child asks for assistance, the Volunteer may help them but must keep the door open.
- 4.12.3 **Accident:** If a child has an "accident" in underwear/clothing, only the parent, legal guardian or HEC staff member may change the clothing in clear view of another volunteer.
- 4.12.4 **Kindergarten-2nd Grade:** A Volunteer or Staff member must escort the child to the bathroom and be sure that the bathroom is clear of any adults before allowing a child to enter the bathroom. Wait outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. It is preferable to take children to the restroom in pairs.
- 4.12.5 **3rd-6th Grade:** Children must be monitored as they head to the bathroom. If they are gone for longer than a few minutes, Volunteers may check on the child.
- 4.12.6 **Youth and Vulnerable Adults:** Youth and Vulnerable Adults will be allowed to use the restroom as needed, with the assumption that parents will assist Vulnerable Adults unless otherwise specified in writing. An HEC Staff Member or Lead Volunteer may check on Youth or Vulnerable Adults after an unreasonable delay in the Youth or Vulnerable Adult returning from the restroom.
- 4.12.7 Unless it is an emergency, it is not acceptable for a Volunteer to be in a closed-door restroom situation with a child or to ever be left alone with a child.

4.13 Transporting Protected Persons

Any driver for a church sponsored event or activity must have a valid driver's license, a criminal background check completed within the past three (3) calendar years, a driving background check completed within the past three (3) calendar years, and current automobile insurance, in accordance

with Indiana Law. No one under the age of 25 shall drive any Protected Persons. When Staff or Volunteers are driving Protected Persons, the Ministry Head must receive permission from a parent or guardian of each Protected Person being transported and must make specific arrangements for the transportation. A Protected Person must NEVER be alone with a Staff Member or Volunteer.

4.14 Overnight stays

Section 4.2 – the “Two Person” rule or 4.4 – the “Clear View” rule must be followed for overnight stays with Protected Persons. When staying in a hotel, if possible, Staff and Volunteers should sleep in separate rooms from Protected Persons; or if room sharing is necessary, Staff and Volunteers MUST sleep in separate beds and no ONE Staff or Volunteer should be left alone with any ONE Protected Person.

4.12 Safe Handling of Medications

Whenever medication is handled or distributed to Children or Youth during events and programming of HEC, the Safe Handling of Medications Policy – attached as Exhibit E – shall be always complied with.

4.13 Scheduling

The only Volunteers permitted to be in the nursery or classrooms with Protected Persons are to be those who have been scheduled to work at that time. In the event of an emergency or absence of the scheduled Volunteer, the Ministry Head should be notified to approve substitutions or additions.

4.14 Unexpected situations

In any situation where these policies cannot be followed, such as a situation where a Youth will unexpectedly need a ride home from an adult worker in a car, Parents shall be notified in advance via text message or phone call if necessary. These situations should be avoided. If they cannot be avoided, written permission should be obtained in advance. If written permission cannot be obtained, every effort should be made to obtain verbal permission in advance.

5.0 Responding to Allegations of Abuse

It is the duty of Ministry Heads to educate and train volunteers and enforce this Safe Church Policy. A Volunteer’s lack of awareness about these policies and procedures will be the responsibility of the Ministry Head overseeing that volunteer.

Ministry Heads and Volunteers of HEC will take the following steps to detect abuse and/or violations of this policy, and they will also take the following steps to report suspected abuse and/or violations of this policy.

5.1 Suspected Abuse Detection and Reporting

5.1.1 STEP 1: Detection

Staff and Volunteers will understand what constitutes abuse as defined below. It is the responsibility of Staff to understand abuse as defined by this policy and to train Volunteers in that understanding. It is also the responsibility of Staff and Volunteers to understand and be vigilant regarding abuse.

“Abuse” involves behavior or a pattern of behavior that leads to actual or potential harm to a Protected Person’s health, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power, and includes all forms of improper contact with, violations, and/or exploitation of a Protected Person, and any negligent treatment of a Protected Person resulting in harm to the Protected Person. This includes abuse of a Protected Person by another Protected Person. If a Protected Person is injured and you are unsure whether the injury was self-inflicted or caused by abuse, the steps in this policy should be followed.

Perpetrators of abuse against a Protected Person could be an adult, an adolescent, or another youth/child. Abuse against a Protected Person can be physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological in nature:

- a. Physical abuse is violent, malicious, non-accidental contact, which results in injury which includes, but is not limited to, striking, biting, or shaking.
- b. Sexual abuse is any sexually suggestive physical behavior and/or verbal, non-verbal, and visual, including digital, communication.
- c. Emotional abuse is a pattern of conduct that damages a Protected Person’s spirit, or attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.
- d. Psychological abuse is a pattern of conduct that negatively impacts the reasoning abilities of a Protected Person and/or makes a Protected Person question his/her judgments. It includes, but is not limited to, manipulation, bullying, and/or isolating behaviors.

Ministry Heads and volunteers should also be familiar with the Signs of Abuse/Self Harm [Appendix B].

5.1.2 STEP 2: Protection from Immediate Danger

If suspected abuse is detected or reported, the Reporting Person (Participant, Volunteer, or Ministry Head) must ensure that the Protected Person is not in immediate danger. If the Protected Person is in immediate, emergent danger, the Reporting Person should call 911 immediately.

5.1.3 STEP 3: Duty to Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Under Indiana law, everyone has a duty to report abuse or neglect. The reporting and investigating of suspected child abuse and neglect are not discretionary matters and are required by law under IC 31-33-5-1.

While reporting child abuse is everyone’s responsibility, Indiana law requires a more stringent standard of reporting in some professions, including clergy and church staff/volunteers. Clergy, Staff and Volunteers are in a unique position to observe signs of abuse and neglect and are obligated to report alleged child abuse or neglect whether the abuser is an outsider or a church member.

In order to fulfill this duty, the Staff, Ministry Head, Volunteer or Participant **MUST IMMEDIATELY**, under Indiana Law, report the suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities, which can include the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) and/or local law enforcement. DCS can be contacted at the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-800-5556.

Whether the abuse was in the past or is ongoing, it should be reported. DCS or the local law enforcement will determine the need for action.

A reasonable suspicion or "reason to believe" that neglect or abuse is happening or has happened has been defined by statute as "evidence that, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause the individuals to believe that a child was abused or neglected." (IC 31-9-2-101)

This standard should be given a liberal interpretation and does not entitle the prospective reporter to weigh the evidence and decide of whether abuse occurred. When in doubt as to whether they have "reason to believe," Staff and/or Volunteers should make a report.

5.1.4 STEP 4: Notification of Pastor or Staff

Staff or Volunteers (the "Reporting Person") who have reason to believe a Protected Person is the victim of any form of abuse or self-harm coming directly from information provided by the Protected Person or others or from observation, must immediately notify the Pastor or Staff. If an accusation of abuse is made against a Pastor, it is appropriate to notify the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) Chairperson, Hannah Fogo. Whoever receives the initial report –Pastor or SPRC Chairperson - will confirm that the Protected Person is not in immediate danger.

5.1.5 STEP 5: Consultation

No matter the form or severity of the suspected abuse, the reporting person will notify the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson as soon as possible. The Pastor and SPRC Chairperson may discuss next steps, including potential necessity of conferencing with involved parties, reporting to local authorities, notifying parents/guardians, and facilitating filling out Incident Report Form.

At this point, it is ultimately at the Pastor's or SPRC Chairperson's discretion to identify and carry out next steps, whether it is one or more of the following: conversation with parents/guardians, filling out Incident Report Form, reporting to external authorities. It may be advisable for the Pastor to consult with Staff-Parish Relations Committee, District and Conference personnel and/or mental health professionals.

5.1.6 STEP 6: Incident Report Form

The Pastor and Ministry Head will gather appropriate parties to facilitate filling out an Incident Report Form - Suspected Incidence of Abuse [Appendix C]. Filling out the Incident Report Form is always required. In all instances, Parts 1 and 3 of Appendix C must always be completed. This step may be especially important in detecting a pattern of abusive conduct. The remaining parts of Appendix C may be completed at the Pastor's discretion. Any additional steps taken beyond this point shall be identified in Part 3, and Part 4 if necessary, of Appendix C.

5.1.7 STEP 7: Conference with Involved Parties

After consultation(s), the Pastor may determine that the appropriate next step is a meeting with involved parties, including, but not limited to: Reporting Person, Volunteers, and Protected Persons.

5.1.8 STEP 8: Conversation with Parents/Guardians

The Pastor may determine that calling a meeting with the Protected Person's Parents/Guardians is the most appropriate next step. This step should be in consideration from the moment of the first and second report. Determining *when* conversation with Parents/Guardians is appropriate will be situational.

5.1.9 STEP 9: Response to Allegation(s)

Where allegations are made about Staff or a Volunteer, careful consideration must take place about the appropriateness of the person continuing to work with HeavenEarth Church. This may include suspension during any internal or external investigation and dismissal if the allegation is proved.

5.2 Suspected Safe Church Policy Violation Procedures

Violation of this policy is here differentiated from abuse. In the instance of suspected abuse, the above steps in Abuse Detection and Reporting should be followed. A policy violation is any observed or reported deviation by any Staff or Volunteer from the policies set forth herein. Pastors, Staff, Parents/Guardians, and Volunteers are able to report potential violations of this policy. If any of the aforementioned persons observe a potential violation of this policy, they are encouraged to contact Pastor, Staff or the Staff-Parish Chairperson. After the first report, these steps should be taken:

5.2.1 STEP 1: Filling Out Initial Report

The Ministry Head, Pastor, or SPRC Chairperson will engage the Reporting Person in conversation about potential violation of policy to fill out, in detail, Part 1 of Report of Potential Violation of Safe Church Policy [Appendix C]. Filling out this report does not ascribe guilt to the subject of the report, but serves as detailed information gathering.

5.2.2 STEP 2: Two-Person Notification and Conference

Depending on who the subject of the potential violation is, Staff, Pastor or SPRC Chairperson will organize a meeting with the subject of the report as soon as possible—no later than seven days after the initial report. Pastor, Staff, or SPRC Chairperson is required to seek one Supporting Person to meet with the subject of the report: Staff should seek Pastor or SPRC Chairperson; Pastor should seek Staff or SPRC Chairperson; SPRC Chairperson should seek Pastor or a member of SPRC Committee. The convener of the meeting will fill out Part 2 of the Potential Violation of Safe Church Policy.

5.2.3 STEP 3: Making Determination

In consultation with at least one accompanying person of authority, Pastor, Staff or SPRC Chairperson will determine whether there has been a violation of the policy. If it is determined there has been no violation of the policy, the Pastor or SPRC Chairperson will

indicate this in Part 3 of the Potential Violation of Safe Church Policy Report. If it is determined there has been a violation of the policy, Pastor or SPRC Chairperson will indicate this in Part 3 of the Potential Violation of Safe Church Policy Report, and they will fill out Violation of Safe Church Policy Report.

5.2.4 STEP 4: Identifying and Implementing Corrective Measures.

Depending on the result of the inquiry process, indicated in Part 3 of the above-mentioned report, the Pastor and/or SPRC Chairperson will consult about identifying and implementing corrective measures. Those measures may include but are not limited to intentional and ongoing communication with involved parties, verbal warning, written warning, indefinite suspension from volunteering, permanent suspension from volunteering.

5.3 Communicating Incidences of Abuse and/or Violation of Policy

HEC will follow the procedure below when communicating any allegations and suspected incidents of abuse to family members, the congregation, and the public, as appropriate, while protecting those involved.

5.3.1 STEP 1: Spokesperson

The official spokesperson for St. Mark's UMC HeavenEarth Church shall be the Lead Pastor, or in their absence, a person designated by the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). All inquiries or requests for information from the media, attorneys, or any other parties shall be referred to the official spokesperson. NO person other than the official spokesperson is to release ANY information regarding an allegation of abuse without the expressed approval of the official spokesperson. All efforts to respond to the alleged incident of abuse shall be documented by the Lead Pastor, or in their absence, the designated spokesperson. This documentation shall be maintained in a secure and confidential file in the church database and office.

5.3.2 STEP 2: Discretion

The Staff or Volunteer who made the initial call to Department of Child Services, Adult Protective Services, or local law enforcement, will only speak of this incident with the Lead Pastor and Staff Parish Relations Committee. For the protection of the victim and the accused, the incident will not be discussed with anyone else, unless permission is given by the official spokesperson or is in cooperation with a criminal or legal investigation, after consultation with legal counsel.

5.3.3 STEP 3: Care for the Victim

The care and safety of the victim is our priority. We will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed.

5.3.4 STEP 5: Responding to the Accused

HEC will not confront the accused without the advice of our attorney or the approval of Department of Child Services, Adult Protective Services, or local law enforcement. We will

fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of abuse. HEC will not prejudge any person accused but will take any allegation of abuse seriously. We will treat the accused with dignity and respect. If the accused is an employee of HEC, that person may be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished and they have been cleared by the authorities.

5.3.5 STEP 6: Dissemination of Information

All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

Appendix B

SIGNS OF ABUSE/ SELF HARM

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect is that individuals with developmental disabilities may exhibit certain physical and/or behavioral traits due to the nature of their disability. Therefore, it is very important to recognize changes in behavior or health (particularly those not typically associated with the individual's disability) as potential abuse indicators. It is also important to note that there is no universal response to abuse or neglect.

While each victim of abuse, neglect, or exploitation will respond differently, the available research data reveals that the presence of certain physical and behavioral indicators (described in greater detail below) are highly correlated with abusive situations and environments. As you interact with any protected person - whether child, youth, or young adult, you should pay close attention to any changes in how that person looks or acts. A sudden or gradual change in appearance or behavior can be an indicator that abuse or neglect has occurred (or may still be happening).

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Bruises (old and new, clustered on one part of body, or on both upper arms)
- Burns
- Cuts or scars
- Marks left by a gag (or some form of restraint)
- Imprint injuries (eg., marks shaped like fingers, thumbs, hands, belts, or sticks)
- Missing teeth
- Spotty balding (from pulled hair)
- Eye injuries (black eyes or detached retinas)
- Broken bones
- Sprains
- Abrasions or scrapes
- Frequent urinary tract infections or yeast infections
- Painful urination
- Abrasions, bleeding, or bruising in the genital area
- Incontinence in someone who was previously toilet-trained
- Frequent sore throats
- Sudden onset of psychosomatic complaints (males most frequently complain of stomach aches while females most frequently report headaches)
- Sudden difficulty walking or sitting
- Vaginal or rectal pain
- Bleeding from the ears, nose, or mouth

Physical Signs of Abuse: Questionable Bruises

Bruises are among the most common injuries found in persons who have been abused. It is important to remember that occasional bruising is also common in people who are not abused, and that people may be prone to bruising for other reasons. Here are some of the more common bruises that may indicate signs of abuse:

- Facial
- Frequent, unexplained, or inadequately explained
- In unlikely places
- In various stages of healing
- On several different surface areas
- Patterned, reflecting shapes
- Bilateral: means bruises on the same places on both sides of the body. Bruises on both sides of the body rarely result from accidental causes.
- Regularly evident after an absence, home visit, or

vacation

Physical Signs of Neglect

- Dehydration
- Poor or improper hygiene
- Poor grooming (e.g., overgrown fingernails and toenails; uncut, matted, or unclean hair; unshaven facial hair, body crevices caked with dirt)
- Malnourishment/weight loss
- A smell of urine or feces on the person
- Clutter, filth, or bad smell in the home
- Improper sleeping, cooking, or bathing arrangements
- Infestations (e.g., fleas, lice, roaches, rodents)
- Poor skin condition or skin breakdown (such as rashes, bedsores, or open wounds)
- Lack of necessary adaptive aids such as glasses, hearing aids, leg braces, walkers etc. or improper medication management
- Needed medical and dental care (including the administration of prescribed drugs) not provided
- Lack of adequate or appropriate supervision

Behavioral Signs of Abuse

- CHANGES in the way affection is shown, especially if unusual or inappropriate
- Suddenly fears being touched
- Sudden onset of nightmares
- CHANGES in sleep patterns; difficulty sleeping
- Sudden regression to childlike behaviors (i.e., bed-wetting, thumb-sucking)
- Sudden unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters (including excessive masturbation)
- Cruelty to animals
- Sudden fear of bathing or toileting
- Sudden fear of a person or place
- Depression, withdrawal, or mood swings
- ANY UNEXPLAINED CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR

Types of Emotional Abuse and Neglect

Emotional abuse is the most difficult form of abuse to identify. Even though emotional abuse often happens along with other forms of abuse, it can also occur by itself.

Emotional abuse can take the form of threats, insults, harassment, and less noticeable forms that are difficult to detect. These can be perpetrated by individuals or by representatives of caregiving systems.

Here are some of the most common types of emotional abuse and neglect:

- Exposure to domestic violence
- Insults and harassment
- Denial of conditions necessary for physical and emotional well-being
- Denial of communication
- Denial of right to family life
- Denial of social interaction and inclusion
- Denial of economic stability
- Denial of rights, necessities, privileges, and opportunities
- Denial of ordinary freedoms

Behaviors of Caregivers who may be Abusers

As you interact with caregivers, you should always be on the lookout for certain behaviors that may be indicators that this person is an abuser. Caregiver behaviors to look for include

- Refusal to follow directions or complete necessary personal tasks
- Displaying controlling attitudes and behaviors
- Showing up late or not at all
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Abusing or harming pets or service animals
- Using threats or menacing looks/body language as a form of intimidation
- Impulsive
- Using vehicle, money or other resources without consent
- Socially isolating protected person (including limiting educational and/or employment opportunities)
- Devalues the protected person
- Frequently switches health care providers
- Displays unwelcoming or uncooperative attitude during home visits
- Frequently makes attempts to be alone with a particular individual for no apparent legitimate purpose.

Profiles of Abusive Caregivers

Caregivers who abuse, neglect, or exploit people with developmental disabilities are either UNABLE or UNWILLING to provide care to these individuals in an appropriate way. It is very important to understand what is going on with these types of caregivers because that will help us develop and implement prevention strategies.

Caregivers who are UNABLE to provide care appropriately may include individuals who are not properly trained or have the necessary experience to perform their caregiving duties. They may have mental retardation or mental illness themselves. Perhaps they are physically unable to provide care to a person with the developmental disability due to their own medical or health condition. Caregivers who are UNABLE to provide appropriate care may also be overly stressed or overly tired. They may also be working under the influence of drugs or alcohol, which limits their abilities.

Caregivers who are UNWILLING to provide care appropriately are more likely to know what they are doing is wrong yet continue to act in that way. Research shows that these individuals will abuse, neglect, or exploit individuals with developmental disabilities repeatedly as long as they are given the opportunity to do so. Some of these caregivers may not view their victims as actual people (with feelings and emotions). In other cases, caregivers who are UNWILLING to provide appropriate care see people with developmental disabilities as the perfect victims who may not be able to defend themselves or tell anyone what has happened

Signs of Cutting and Self-Harm

One of the most common forms of self-injury is cutting, which involves making cuts or severe scratches on different parts of your body with a sharp object. Other forms of self-harm include:

- Burning (with lit matches, cigarettes or hot sharp objects like knives)
- Carving words or symbols on the skin
- Breaking bones
- Hitting or punching
- Piercing the skin with sharp objects
- Head banging
- Biting
- Pulling out hair
- Persistently picking at or interfering with wound healing
- Most frequently, the arms, legs, and front of the torso are the targets of self-injury because these areas can be easily reached and easily hidden under clothing. But any area of the body may be used for self-injury. People who self-injury may use more than one method to harm themselves.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- Scars, such as from burns or cuts
- Fresh cuts, scratches, bruises or other wounds
- Broken bones
- Keeping sharp objects on hand
- Wearing long sleeves or long pants, even in hot weather
- Claiming to have frequent accidents or mishaps
- Spending a great deal of time alone
- Pervasive difficulties in interpersonal relationships
- Persistent questions about personal identity, such as "Who am I?" "What am I doing here?"
- Behavioral and emotional instability, impulsivity and unpredictability
- Statements of helplessness, hopelessness or worthlessness
- Forms of self-injury

Because self-injury is often an impulsive act, becoming upset can trigger an urge to self-injure. Many people self-injure only a few times and then stop. However, for others, self-injury can become a long-term, repetitive behavior.

There's no one single or simple cause that leads someone to self-injure. In general, self-injury is usually the result of an inability to cope in healthy ways with psychological pain related to issues of personal identity and having difficulty "finding one's place" in family and society. The person has a hard time regulating, expressing, or understanding emotions. The mix of emotions that triggers self-injury is complex. For instance, there may be feelings of worthlessness, loneliness, panic, anger, guilt, rejection, self-hatred, or confused sexuality.

Appendix C

Suspected Incidence of Abuse

Part 1: Information Gathering with Reporting Person

Date of Incident:

Pastor/Ministry Head Present:

Other Parties Present:

Details (use Body Map if necessary):

Part 2: Account from Suspect of Reported Incident (if necessary)

Date of Conference:

Ministry Head Present:

Accompanying Person of Authority:

Other Parties Present:

Details:

Part 3: Determination

Date of Conference:

Ministry Head Present:

Accompanying Person of Authority:

Determination and Corrective Measure(s):

Part 4: Further Determination (if necessary)

Date of Conference/Determination:

Ministry Head Present:

Other Parties Present:

Determination and Corrective Measure(s):

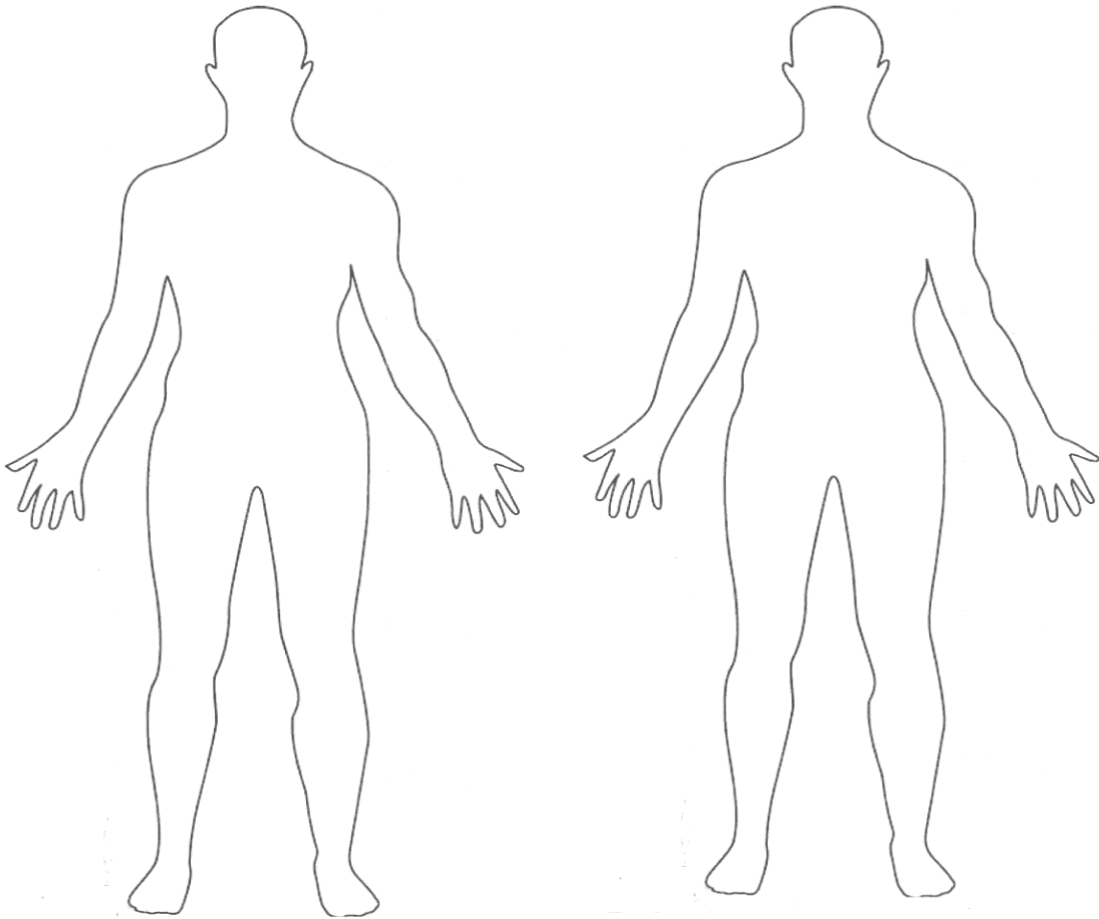
BODY MAP

These diagrams are designed for the recording of any observable bodily injuries that may appear on the person. Visible injuries apparent in soft-tissue parts of the body, including the neck, under-arms, stomach, genitals, or inner thighs, are unlikely to manifest as a result of a fall or other accidents of this nature.

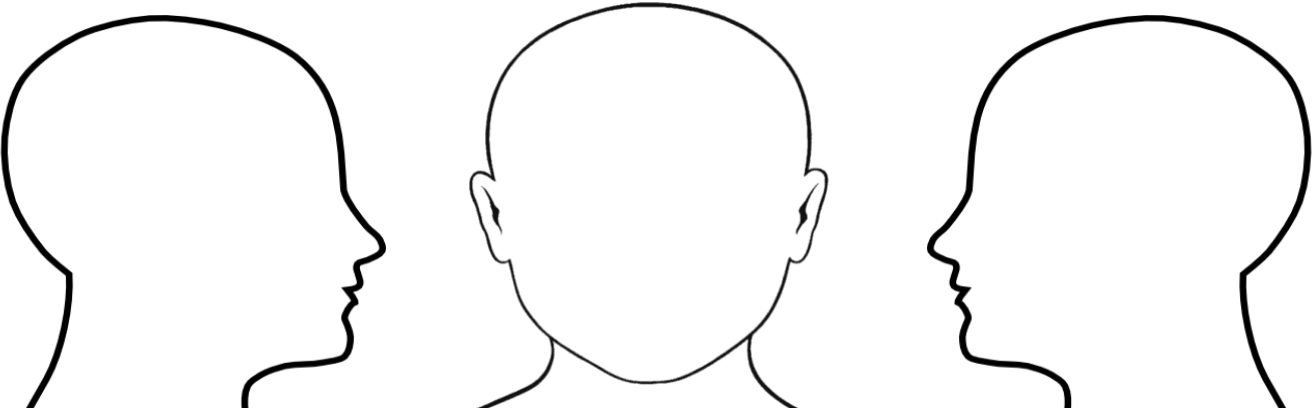
Where bruises, burns, cuts, or other injuries occur, shade and label them clearly on the diagram.

FRONT

BACK



HEAD



Appendix D

Report of Potential Violation of Policy

Part 1: Information Gathering with Reporting Person(s)

Reporting Person(s):

Date of Incident:

Details:

Part 2: Account from Subject of Reported Incident

Date of Conference:

Ministry Head Present:

Accompanying Person of Authority:

Details:

Part 3: Determination

Date of Conference:

Ministry Head Present:

Accompanying Person of Authority:

Determination and Corrective Measure(s):

Appendix E

SAFE HANDLING OF MEDICATIONS

1.0 Introduction

HeavenEarth Church (HEC) has adopted a Safe Church Policy, in part for the protection of Children and Youth at HEC events and programming. As such, we have developed and implemented this policy and these procedures for the safe handling of medications by Staff and Volunteers caring for Children and Youth during events and programming of HEC.

2.1 Handling and Distribution of Medication to Children and Youth

2.2 Consent of Parent/Guardian

Before any medication can be handled or distributed to Children and Youth during events and programming of HEC, a Parent/Guardian must complete the HeavenEarth Church Medical Release Form and the Prescription Information Form.

2.3 Who May Handle/Distribute Medication(s)

The Ministry Head for the event or programming in which a Child or Youth is participating shall designate a person to serve as the Designated Medication Handler for that event or program. To the extent possible, the Designated Medication Handler shall be someone with training in the handling of medication(s), such as an RN, LPN, MD, or Pharmacist.

ONLY the Designated Medication Handler for the event or program shall handle and distribute medication(s) for and to Children and Youth in that event or program. Children or Youth shall NOT be permitted to handle or manage their own medication(s) unless expressly permitted, in writing, by the Parent/Guardian, and upon approval by the applicable Ministry Head.

2.4 Distribution of Medication(s)

When a Child or Youth is participating in an event or programming of HEC, the Parent/Guardian has completed the Consent forms described in paragraph 2.1, and the Child or Youth requires prescribed dosage of medication for the health and safety of the Child or Youth, the Designated Medication Handler shall distribute medication to the Child or Youth in accordance with the Consent forms described in paragraph 2.1.

Any such distribution shall take place at the times designated by the Parent/Guardian in the Prescription Information Form.

2.5 Recording of Distribution of Medication(s)

A record of all distribution of medication(s) shall be maintained at each and every event or program where a Child or Youth received any such medication(s).