

New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuaries Policy For the Protection of Children & Youth

Purpose

New Mt. Vernon UMC is committed to providing the safest environment possible for all children and youth who enter the doors of the church and/or participate in ministries offered. In keeping with the resolutions of the Western NC Conference of the United Methodist Church, New Mt. Vernon UMC adopts the following policy and procedures to provide a safe sanctuary for children and youth. This policy will give guidelines and procedures to those individuals and ministries who work with those children and youth as the church continues to strive to provide an atmosphere which fosters more physical and spiritual growth and safety.

Covenant Statement

New Mt. Vernon UMC is a Christian community and a United Methodist congregation. The church pledges to always work to provide a place where the gospel is taught and celebrated while assuring the spiritual, emotional and physical safety of all children and youth, as well as those working with the children and youth of NMVUMC.

New Mt. Vernon UMC will work to educate all workers in regards to the policies and procedures that clearly define the standards and expectations of those workers. The church will work within the guidelines and requirements of the law of the state of North Carolina and will be prepared to respond to any and all allegations and incidents that may occur.

Implementation of Safe Sanctuaries Policy

All ministry areas for New Mt. Vernon UMC are responsible for having these policies, guidelines and procedures in place by December 31, 2006. In addition to the church community and congregation, any outside group using the facilities will be notified of this policy and will be required to meet the standards set forth in this policy and pay for the cost of the Criminal Background Checks (ie. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, visiting churches, etc).

Section I

Procedures for Hiring, Recruiting and Screening Paid Staff & Volunteers

New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies

Procedures for Hiring, Recruiting and Screening Paid Staff & Volunteers

- I. For any person currently employed as paid staff at New Mt. Vernon UMC, the following requirements must be met:
 - A. Each paid staff member must consent to and successfully pass a Criminal Background Check & Sexual Offenders Check.
 - B. The Pastor will oversee this process for all paid staff members.
 - C. Paid Staff refers to all salaried employees, whether part-time or full-time, of New Mt. Vernon UMC.

- II. For any person to be hired or employed at New Mt. Vernon UMC, the following requirements must be met:
 - A. Completely fill out and submit an application.
 - B. Each applicant for employment must consent to and successfully pass a Criminal Background Check & Sexual Offenders Check.
 - C. References will be required for any applicant and these references will be checked and reviewed prior to employment.
 - D. The Pastor will oversee this process for all prospective employees.

- III. For those volunteers working with children and/or youth at New Mt. Vernon UMC, the following requirements must be met:
 - A. The pastor will oversee the selection process for those desiring to become volunteers.
 - B. No volunteers under the age of eighteen (18) will be allowed to work with children without the direct supervision of a "lead adult".
 - C. To be considered the "lead adult" a person must be age 18 or older.
 - D. Each Volunteer must consent to and successfully pass a Criminal Background Check & Sexual Offenders Check.

- IV. All paid staff and volunteers will receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures of New Mt. Vernon UMC.
 - A. All paid staff and volunteers shall sign a Pledge and Participation Covenant agreeing to follow these policies and procedures before being permitted to participate in children and/or youth activities at New Mt. Vernon UMC.

V. Background Checks and Sexual Offender Registry Checks will be conducted by Castle Branch Inc.

Section II

General Policy Statements

New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies

Statement of General Policies

I. Two Adult / Roving Monitor Rule

- A. Whenever practical, a minimum of two unrelated adults should be present during any children/ youth activity. When this is not possible, we will try to use a roving monitor to check in with different groups.
- B. No volunteers under the age of eighteen (18) will be allowed to work with children without the direct supervision of a "lead adult".
- C. To be considered the "lead adult" a person must be age 18 or older.
- D. The adults present during children/youth activity must be five (5) years older than the children/youth being supervised. This policy does not prohibit adults who are less than five years older than the children/youth from participating or assisting with the activity so long as there is another lead "teacher" or "counselor" present who is five years older than the children/youth being supervised.

II. Windows on Doors/Open Door Policy

- A. All rooms or areas being used by children/youth should have a glass panel in the door to allow for outside monitoring. The glass panel must not be covered and should allow monitoring of all spaces within the classroom or area.
- B. If a children/youth activity is held in a room or area which does not have a window in the door, then the door to the room or area should remain open during all periods of the activity.
- C. For purposes of New Mt. Vernon UMC Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies, the rules set forth regarding Windows on Doors/Open Door Policy shall apply to any instance of pastoral counseling involving children/youth.

III. Overnight Trips/Events

- A. Please see the policies and procedures set forth under the specific and designated section for **Overnight Trips/Events** of New Mt. Vernon UMC Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies.

IV. Transportation

- A. Children shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the permission, communicated in writing or by electronic means, of their parents or guardians.
- B. For all persons authorized to transport children/youth for events or authorized to use church vehicles, New Mt. Vernon UMC shall check and/or obtain copy of driver's license
- C. Adult Leaders who are unrelated to a youth may not transport a youth without at least verbal permission of the youth's parent or guardian.
- D. No youth is allowed to drive a personal vehicle to or from any sanctioned youth trip/event, unless given prior approval by the parent/guardian and a member of the student ministries staff.
- E. Children/Youth may NOT ride in a personal vehicle of another youth or that of adult leader unless written permission is given by the parent/guardian of the riding children/youth.

V. Personal Space

- A. All volunteers and staff of New Mt. Vernon UMC should only engage in appropriate demonstrations of affection or physical contact to children/youth.
- B. No adult leader will ever be allowed to engage in a physical relationship with a youth.

VI. Background Check

- A. All volunteers and staff members working with children/youth will have a Criminal Background check and Sex Offender Check. It will be retained by New Mt. Vernon UMC in the volunteer or staff file following completion of the background check.
- B. All volunteer and staff information will be kept in a secure location and in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the Pastor and designated lay person.
- C. Any adult who has been convicted of any crime involving a child will not be permitted to work with children. Other criminal convictions will be reviewed by a committee composed of a designated lay person, the Nuture Chairperson, and the Trustees Chairperson. In the case of denial of a volunteer based on criminal record, the volunteer may appeal to the Administrative Council.
- D. If changes occur in circumstances which may effect the qualification of a volunteer or staff member to work with children/youth, the volunteer or staff member specifically agrees to inform the Pastor or designated lay person immediately upon the occurrence of such change.

VIII. Definitions

- A. For purposes of the New Mt. Vernon UMC Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies the following definitions shall apply:
 1. Child: Any person between birth and fifth grade (usually those from birth to 11 years old).
 2. Youth: Any person from the sixth grade through the twelfth grade (usually those between the ages of 11 and 18).
 3. Adult: Any person eighteen (18) years of age or older or who has graduated from high school.

IX. First Aid Kits

New Mt. Vernon UMC shall keep, maintain and make available an appropriate number of First Aid Kits. The Pastor or designee shall be responsible for reviewing the location and placement of the First Aid Kits within the Church as well as maintaining and stocking the First Aid Kits.

Section III

OVERNIGHT TRIPS/EVENTS

**New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies**

**Procedures for Overnight Events/Trips
With Children or Youth**

1. Lodging requirements for each trip are unique. With that in mind the lodging situations will be evaluated for independently for each trip. The best and safest sleeping arrangements will be determined for those attending the trip.
2. No unrelated adult will share the same bed with a child or youth.
3. The ministry leader will always attempt to have at least 1 adult leader in each room, but that leader will NOT share a bed with a child or youth.
4. All adult leaders must be at least eighteen (18) years old.
5. In making lodging arrangements, the ministry leader will request that all rooms be located in the same block of rooms, or, if a block of rooms is unavailable, the rooms should be as near as possible to one another.
6. An adult leader will not be allowed to share a room with only 1 child or youth, unless the adult is a parent or guardian.
7. For overnight events/trips in which there are male and female participants there should be both male and female adult leaders.
8. For overnight events/trips in which there are male and female participants, males and females shall not share the same room or accommodation, and shall be assigned separate rooms or accommodations.
9. On some occasions the youth and adult leaders will spend the night at a local church or other multi-purpose facility. At that time, the youth will be separated by gender and a clearly defined dividing line will be established, and adult leaders placed to ensure the two genders do not sleep with or beside each other.
10. For transportation to and from overnight events/trips, please reference Statement of General Policies of the New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies.

Section IV

RESPONDING AND REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Allegation against Paid Staff Member

1. Witness of suspected abuse must complete the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form.
2. Inform Senior Pastor.
3. Pastor will contact the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Both will quickly and discreetly investigate the report.
4. Pastor and SPRC Chair will decide if it is necessary to contact Social Services (703-2287) or not. If allegation is considered unworthy of contacting Social Services, the filer of the report may be given the choice of contacting DSS on their own if they feel it is necessary.
5. Remove alleged offender from contact with children and youth from all New Mt. Vernon UMC activities while investigation takes place.
6. Chairs of Church Council and a lawyer shall be contacted.
7. Contact Lexington District Superintendent.
8. Contact insurance carrier.
9. Appoint one media spokesperson.
10. Respond with care to the congregation, the alleged victim, and the alleged offender.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Allegation Against Volunteer

1. Witness of suspected abuse must complete the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form.
2. Inform area ministry supervisor or Pastor.
3. Pastor will contact the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Both will quickly and discreetly investigate the report.
4. Pastor and SPRC Chair will decide if it is necessary to contact Social Services (703-2287) or not. If allegation is considered unworthy or contacting Social Services, the filer of the report may be given the choice of contact DSS on their own if they feel it is necessary.
5. Remove alleged offender from contact with children and youth from all New Mt. Vernon UMC activities while investigation takes place.
6. Chairs of Church Council and a lawyer should be contacted.
7. Contact Lexington District Superintendent.
8. Contact insurance carrier.
9. Appoint one media spokesperson.
10. Respond with care to the congregation, the victim, and the alleged offender.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Allegation against Pastor

1. Witness of suspected abuse must complete the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form.
2. Inform area ministry supervisor or Chair of Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
3. Ministry Supervisor will contact the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Both will quickly and discreetly investigate the report.
4. SPRC Chair will decide if it is necessary to contact Social Services (703-2287) or not. If allegation is considered unworthy or contacting Social Services, the filer of the report may be given the choice of contact DSS on their own if they feel it is necessary.
5. Remove alleged offender from contact with children and youth from all New Mt. Vernon UMC activities while investigation takes place.
6. Chairs of Church Council and a lawyer should be contacted.
7. Contact Lexington District Superintendent.
8. Contact insurance carrier.
9. Appoint one media spokesperson.
10. Respond with care to the congregation, the victim and the alleged offender.

**New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies**

Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

Individual Making Report:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Alleged Victim:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Age/Grade: _____

Male or Female: _____

Alleged Perpetrator:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Male or Female: _____ Age: _____

Relationship to Victim: _____

Describe your concern and grounds for concern in as much detail as possible, including names, times and dates where applicable.

Reported to Staff Person: Name: _____
Date & Time: _____

Reported to Senior Pastor: _____
Date & Time: _____

Summary of Investigation of Allegation: _____

- Follow-up with Initial Reporter, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Department of Social Services, Date/Time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Report Given: _____

Contacts:

- Call to Chair of Staff-Parish Relations Committee, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Chair of Church Council, Date/Time: _____
- Call to lawyer, Name: _____
 - Date / Time: _____
- Call to District Superintendent, Date/Time: _____
- Call to Insurance Carrier, Date/Time: _____
 - Spoke with: _____

Submitted by: _____

Title: _____

Printed Name

Signature

Date

NOTIFICATION AND RELEASE

Account Manager: Beverly Miller

New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church

CAC Code: EW05

Sent by: Carol Lanny

The information contained in my application for employment or volunteer work with New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church (hereinafter, The Organization) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that any misrepresentation or false statement made by me in connection with the application or any related documents which is deemed material by The Organization shall result in The Organization not employing me or, if employed, terminating my employment, or may cause me to be rejected as a volunteer. I understand and agree that all information furnished in my application and all attachments may be verified by The Organization or its authorized representative. I hereby authorize all individuals and organizations named or referred to in my application and any law enforcement organization to give The Organization all information relative to such verification and hereby release such individuals, organizations, and The Organization from any and all liability for any claim or damage resulting therefrom. I hereby acknowledge that I have been informed by The Organization that The Organization may seek to obtain a consumer report and/or investigative report that will include personal information regarding me, including but not limited to, educational history, work references, driving record, drug testing and criminal convictions or arrest records if allowed, in order to assist The Organization in making certain employment and volunteer selection decisions. I further acknowledge notification by The Organization that reports may be provided to The Organization by other firms subcontracted for that purpose. I, my heirs, assigns and legal representatives, hereby release and fully discharge The Organization, its parent and affiliated companies and the respective officers, directors, shareholders, employees, agents of each, including subcontractors, from any and all claims, monetary or otherwise, that I may have against The Organization, its parent, affiliates or subcontractors, arising out of the making, or use of, either a consumer report and/or investigative report, including any errors or omissions contained or omitted from such reports or investigations. The Organization agrees to inform candidates if an employment or volunteer decision has been influenced by information contained in a consumer report requested by New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church and performed by Castle Branch, Inc. A free copy of the report may be obtained within sixty days by calling Castle Branch Inc. collect @ 1-910-815-3880 or toll free @ 1-888-723-4263. The Organization will make available to you "A Summary of Your Rights Under The Fair Credit Reporting Act."

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

List all names you have used in the past 7 years including married, maiden, and aliases.

Name (First, Middle, Last) _____ Date of Birth (mo/day/yr) _____

Maiden Name or "AKA" _____ Dates Used (yr) from _____ to _____

Social Security # _____ Driver's License # _____ State _____

Current and previous address(es). PROVIDE ALL ADDRESSES FOR PREVIOUS 7 YEARS. (Use extra page if necessary).

Street _____ From _____ to _____

City, State, Zip, County _____

Street _____ From _____ to _____

City, State, Zip, County _____

Street _____ From _____ to _____

City, State, Zip, County _____

Please check one:

I have not lived outside of North Carolina in the past seven years

I have lived outside of North Carolina in the past seven years

***I understand that due to my activities and involvement with the children and or youth of New Mt. Vernon UMC, a criminal background check and sexual offender check will be done on me. I have never been convicted of child abuse as an adult or juvenile, nor such a conviction expunged _____ (initials). I consent national criminal background check _____ (initials).

Applicant Signature (REQUIRED) _____ Date _____

Each background check costs \$10 for residents of NC for the past 7 years and \$18 for those who have not lived in NC for the past 7 years. If you would like to donate to help cover the cost of this, it would be extremely appreciated and checks can be made payable to New Mt. Vernon UMC. Please put "Background Check" in the memo space.

***Please return this form, the Pledge and Participation Covenant, and a copy of your driver's license to the Church Office**

**New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Children & Youth Protection Policies**

Pledge and Participation Covenant

Name: _____

Last Name First Name MI (Maiden Name)

Address: _____

House # Apt. # Street

City

State

Zip Code

Telephone #: (_____) _____

Program Involved With (Please Circle):

Children's Ministries Student Ministries Pre-School School Care

As caring Christians, we are committed to protecting and advocating for children and youth participating in the life of the Church. The Church is entrusted with providing an emotionally and physically safe, spiritually grounded and healthy environment for all children, youth and adults in which they are protected from abuse of any type. I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Children and Youth Protection Policies of New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church and I agree to abide by the policies and standards put in place. I understand that failure to do so could result in immediate dismissal from my responsibilities with the children and/or youth of New Mt. Vernon UMC.

Printed Name

Signature

Date