



# Nursery Handbook

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME, AND DO NOT HINDER THEM, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE." MATTHEW 19:14

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# **Section 1. Volunteer Information**

## **1.1. Nursery Volunteer Requirements**

All volunteer and paid staff who work in the nursery will be:

- At least 21 years old. Exceptions apply for approved youth helpers.
- At least five years older than the oldest child/youth they will be supervising.
- A regular attendee at Hampton United Methodist Church for at least six months.

All nursery staff and volunteers will:

- Complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information.
- Undergo a criminal background check.
- All applicants must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. Interviews will be conducted by the nursery coordinator and church policy and guidelines should be discussed during the interview.

## **1.2 Training of Nursery Volunteers**

There will be an orientation for new nursery volunteers. Each nursery volunteer will attend periodic meetings where not only the guidelines, goals, and safety procedures will be addressed, but also a brief training session of how to structure the time they are in the nursery.

## **1.3 Volunteer Schedules and Assignments**

Nursery volunteers will be given a schedule for duty prior to each month. The schedule will also be posted in the nursery and in the weekly bulletin and e-newsletter. If you are unable to work a shift, please find a substitute from the roster of volunteers and let the nursery coordinator know of any changes.

## **Section 2. Nursery Procedures**

### **2.1. Operation of Nursery**

#### **2.1.1 Hours of Operation**

The nursery will be operational on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. and will cover both Sunday School and worship times.

#### **2.1.2 Age of Children**

The age of children is infant to three years. The nursery is designed for children from the earliest age until their 4th birthday. Parents are encouraged to begin to transition their child into the worship services at the earliest time they deem appropriate before the age of 4. If a volunteer has the responsibility of a child too old for the nursery but too small to sit by himself or herself in worship, they may stay with the volunteer in the nursery.

#### **2.1.3 Documents and Resources**

Additional sign-in sheets and incident reports can be found in the purple box. Sign-in sheets are on the purple clipboard and incident reports are in the orange folder.

### **2.2 Procedures**

#### **2.2.1. Sign-in and Pick-up Process**

Nursery Volunteers should arrive for their shift no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the Sunday School or worship service.

Sign in:

- Parents are to sign-in children using the sign-in sheet on the purple clipboard.
- Tags will be made and provided for each child's diaper bag.
- Sippy cups and bottles will be labeled at check in unless they are already labeled.
- Volunteers will give the parent a pager and show them how it works. The volunteer can also use the parent's cell phone for texting if there is a small number of children in the nursery.
- After the start of church, the office and fellowship hall doors to the outside should be locked.

Pick up:

- At pick-up, parents will come to the doorway and sign out their child. The nursery volunteers will release the baby or child and diaper bag to the parent.
- Pagers will be returned at pick-up, preferably before the child is released. No siblings, relatives, or friends will be allowed to pick-up children unless they bring the pager, which will be the indication to the nursery that they have the parent's approval. This is for the protection of the child and to keep pick up times as short as possible.

### **2.2.2 Diaper Changing Procedures**

When any diaper is being changed, more than one nursery volunteer should be present. It will be the women's responsibility to take a toddler to the bathroom, unless a dad chooses to take his child.

Those volunteers authorized to change diapers will use the changing liners provided at each station and use the plastic gloves provided at each station. After each change, the volunteer should throw away the liner, wipe down the station with a sanitizing wipe, dispose of the gloves and wash hands.

### **2.2.3 Closing Checklist**

1. Spray all the toys with Lysol and wipe down any toy that might have been in a child's mouth.
2. Wipe down all pagers with Clorox wipes.
3. Make sure that all toys with batteries are completely turned off (not only in sleep mode.) If any batteries are dead, let the nursery coordinator know.
4. Throw away any toys that are broken. Inform the nursery worker.
5. Wipe off the changing table and blue chairs with wipes.
6. Vacuum the nursery. The vacuum is by the closet.
7. Take the trash to the outside trash cans.
8. Let the nursery coordinator know if any supplies are low.
9. Turn off all lights.

## **2.3 Behavior and Incidents**

### **2.2.1 Behavioral Issues**

Hitting, biting, spitting, screaming, temper tantrums and repeated disobedience are unacceptable and will require a parent's immediate attention. Nursery volunteers are to page the parent immediately if a child's conduct becomes a problem. The responsibility for discipline rests with the parents; however, there are some steps a volunteer can take before summoning a parent. Separating the child from the other children and verbal warnings are acceptable. Give strong instruction, but do not discipline. Stay cool; do not raise your voice or become angry. The parents should be told of their child's misconduct when the child is picked up. Open communication between volunteers and parents is vital.

### **2.2.2 Injuries**

Any time a child or worker is injured on the HUMC property, an incident report will be filled out detailing the circumstances of the incident. Incident reports can be found in the orange folder in the purple box which is located on top of the white cabinet.

## 2.4 Use of Nursery "Off-Hours":

### A SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR THOSE WHO USE THE NURSERY AFTER HOURS

A staffed nursery is not provided during any other meetings such as outside group meetings, church business meetings, or other special meetings unless otherwise announced ahead of time. Each group will find staff for their meetings and notify the Nursery Coordinator of the dates and times the nursery will be in use. The nursery will be used for children ages newborn-3 years old, and other arrangements will need to be found for older children. Children are not allowed to play in the nursery without adult supervision, or that of an older sibling or older responsible teen.

If you use the nursery after the volunteers have left or at other times, you are responsible to leave it in a neat and clean condition. Do not leave diapers in the trash can after the volunteers have left. Please do not put diapers in any of the adult rest room trash cans or any other trash can in the building. Take them with you or place them in the outside dumpster.

1. Young children should be supervised when playing in the nursery.
2. Older children will not be allowed to play on the nursery toys (only toddlers up to 4 yrs. are allowed). Damage to the toys and other problems can occur.
3. Put away all toys and vacuum floors as needed. A vacuum is kept by the cabinet.
4. Wash small toys that have been chewed on with disinfectant soap and hot water. Wipe down larger toys with disinfectant spray.
5. Place all used soft toys and blankets on the cabinet beside the changing table.
6. Wipe down tables, cribs, and playpens after use with provided cleaners in cabinet.
7. Empty all diaper pails and put in new liners. Liners are inside each cabinet below the sink. Used trash bags should be tied off and placed in the dumpster outside.
8. Close all nursery doors when you leave.

## Section 3. Security and Safety

### 3.1. Illness Prevention

**Handwashing:** Upon entering the nursery, each volunteer should wash his/her hands using the sanitation pump at entrance. Hands should also be sanitized before feedings and after changing diapers or taking children to the restroom.

**If a volunteer is sick:** If any volunteer has a communicable illness (cold, cough, fever, etc.), he or she needs to find a substitute within the volunteer roster with whom to switch and inform the nursery coordinator. Notice can be easily given to Sherrie Selman by email to [sjselman07@aol.com](mailto:sjselman07@aol.com) or call or text to 678-313-3662.

**If a child is sick:** No child with any communicable sickness should be brought to the nursery, and none will be allowed in for the protection of all children and nursery volunteers. Parents must graciously accept the decision of the receiving nursery volunteer or coordinator. If a child is found to be sick (fever, cough, runny nose unless the parents are CERTAIN it's allergy-related, diarrhea, etc.), the parent should be paged and asked to remove the child.

### 3.2 Cleanliness and Sanitizing

Cleaning should begin only after all children have been picked up by parents. At the end of each nursery, volunteers should wipe down each infant toy that was used. Any used soft toys should be placed in hamper to be laundered with the sheets, blankets, and burp cloths.

### 3.3. Emergency Situations

#### In the case of a fire:

- Each nursery volunteer will seek to remain calm, listen, and remove the children that he/ she oversees by using the sign-in sheet for each nursery area.
- The volunteers will carry the children out the exit door nearest to the nursery. The exit door in the adjacent hallway may be used as an alternate if the nearest exit door is not able to be used.
- Once each baby/toddler is outside, the volunteers will seek to transport each one to the "meeting area" under the outdoor pavilion behind the church building. Parents should meet their children in the pavilion.
- Grandparents, siblings, etc. are NOT to come to the nursery, as this may endanger more lives and impede the process of safely getting all children and volunteers outside as soon as possible. Parents are encouraged to meet their children outside, but if they go to the nursery area, they must be able and willing to help with the evacuation of all children.

#### In the case of a threat or dangerous person:

- The nursery volunteers will close and lock all nursery doors.
- The nursery volunteers will lower and close all blinds.
- The nursery volunteers will rally the children into the corner of the nursery farthest from doors/windows and stand in front of the children, facing out, and pray.

## **Section 4. Safe Sanctuary**

### **4.1 Safe Sanctuary Policy**

#### **4.1.1 Introduction**

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes [a] child . . . welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, “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). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse” (The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church--2016; ¶ 162C).

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse [“ritual abuse” refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be] occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation within churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. (Adapted from “The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church--2016, pp.182-183. Copyright © 2016 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.)

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations we adopt this policy for the prevention of abuse in our church.



#### **4.1.2 Purpose**

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuary Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

#### **4.1.3 Statement of Covenant**

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults, as well as all the workers with the children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers, staff and volunteers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate our workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

#### **4.1.4 Conclusion**

In all our ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable people this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so each child/youth/vulnerable adult will be "surrounded by steadfast love...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." ("Baptismal Covenant II," United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44.)

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## **4.2 Definitions of Abuse**

### **4.2.1 Physical Abuse**

Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, and so forth), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries. (from Safe Sanctuaries for Youth, page 15)

### **4.2.2 Emotional Abuse**

This is abuse in which a person exposes a youth or younger child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the youth or child that they are worthless, bad, unloved, and undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being locked in a closet or other confining spaces, being incessantly told they are bad, or being forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. This type of abuse is difficult to prove, reports of neglect from teenagers or children should not be ignored. (from Safe Sanctuaries for Youth, page 15)

### **4.2.3 Neglect**

This is abuse in which a person endangers a youth's or child's health, welfare, or safety through negligence. It may include withholding food, medical care, and even education to destroy the youth's or child's sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Neglect may well be the most common form of abuse. Although it is often difficult to prove, reports of neglect from teenagers or children should not be ignored. (from Safe Sanctuaries for Youth, page 16)

### **4.2.4 Sexual Abuse**

This type of abuse occurs when sexual contact between a youth, child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) happens. The youth or child victim is not capable of consenting to such contact or resisting such sexual acts. Often, the youth or child victim is physically dependent on the perpetrator (for example, a parent). Additionally, the youth victim is often psychologically dependent on the perpetrator (for example, a teacher or a youth minister). Examples of sexual abuse include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography and/or prostitution. (from Safe Sanctuaries for Youth, page 16)

### **4.2.5 Ritual Abuse**

This is abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violence is inflicted on a youth intentionally, and in a stylized way by someone (or multiple people) with responsibility for the victim's welfare. Typically, the perpetrator appeals to some higher authority or power to justify his or her abuses. Examples of ritual abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repetitious threats of sexual or physical violence to the youth or child victim or to people related to the youth or child victim. When reports of ritual abuse are made, they are often extremely horrifying. Such reports may even seem too gruesome to be true. However, any youth or child making such a report must not be ignored. (from Safe Sanctuaries for Youth, page 16)

### 4.3 Hampton UMC Safe Sanctuary Policy Reporting Plan

If a HUMC ministry coordinator has witnessed, been told about, or suspects a case of Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult abuse, the following steps will take place **as soon as possible**:

1. **If the situation is currently happening**, take every reasonable effort to immediately separate the one being abused from the abuser (call the police by dialing 911 if the immediate threat remains.) Removing people from immediate danger is the first priority. Then go to step #2.
2. **If the situation is not currently happening**, the ministry coordinator discusses the event with the Pastor who fills out the HUMC Incident Report Form for the Trustees records. The Pastor informs the SPRC Chairperson and the Trustee Chair of the incident. If the allegation is against the Pastor, the ministry coordinator goes directly to the SPRC Chairperson who fills out the Incident Report Form and contacts the Trustee Chair.
3. The Pastor (or SPRC Chair if the allegation is against the Pastor) calls the Department of Family and Children Services (DFAC's) in the county where the child or vulnerable adult lives (if known) **DFACS Web Site: <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/> or call 1.855.GACHILD (1 855-422-4453).**
4. **Let DFACS handle things from there.** The person suspected of abuse should not be informed for the call made to DFACS. It is up to DFACS to do the investigation. The victim should not be asked for more details by Church staff.
5. After a report to DFACS has been made, **the following should happen co-currently**:
  - The Pastor (or SPR Chair if the allegation was against the Pastor) informs the District Superintendent that a call has been made to DFACS.
  - The Trustee Chair calls the Hampton UMC Insurance carrier (which automatically prompts their legal counsel resources.)
6. The Pastor in consultation with the Trustee Chair, SPRC Chair, Lay Leader, and Church Council Chair decides what needs to be communicated to the Congregation (exclude anyone from the list if they are involved in the allegation.)
7. All media inquiries must be directed to the Pastor (or District Superintendent if the allegation is against the Pastor.)
8. Pray without ceasing for all involved.