

# New Hope UMC Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy 2023-2024

**New Hope UMC  
Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy**

**INTRODUCTION**

The people of the New Hope United Methodist Church believe it is in the best interests of New Hope and the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of the church, and in the advancement of our Christian beliefs, to adopt policies and procedures to assist us in protecting the physical, mental and emotional well-being of those who participate in church-sponsored programs and activities.

Public ministry is a position of trust and responsibility. This trust is fundamental to the well-being of the Christian community. Misconduct of any sort, including physical, emotional or sexual<sup>1</sup>, violates this trust.

New Hope is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which people of all ages and abilities can learn about and experience God's love. We, the church, will be advocates for children, youth, and vulnerable adults and establish clearly defined safeguards, policies and procedures for their protection. In order to ensure this, we expect that all people applying to be volunteers who work with minors and vulnerable adults will have been regularly attending New Hope for at least six months. We also require all volunteers who work with minors and vulnerable adults to complete the New Hope Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form. This form advises prospective employees and volunteers they may be subject to a criminal records check and may be required to provide a set of fingerprints pursuant to O.R.C. 109.575. This procedure is in accordance with Ohio S.B. 187 - Children's Services Organizations - Recommended Best Practices Established.

New Hope reserves the right to either select or refuse any individual the opportunity of working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

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<sup>1</sup>Sexual conduct, sexual contact and sexual activity are defined under Section 2907.01 in the Ohio Revised Code and Chapter 2907 outlines the criminal law as it relates to sex offenses.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FAMILIES?

**Partnering Parents** – We understand that any protective efforts that we, the New Hope UM Church, make in order to protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults can only be realized as we partner together with families. Here are some proactive steps that we ask you to prayerfully implement as we walk this journey together:

1. **Begin in prayer** – We recognize that our child’s or vulnerable adults in our care safety is a physical and a spiritual issue and we covenant to pray for them, our church, our community and others who work with children.
2. **Check In Procedures** – We covenant to make sure we abide by the following check in procedures and identification rules for our children:
  - a. Nursery (age 0-4) All infants and children will be brought to the nursery area by their parent or guardian. At the end of their visit with us, they will be released into the care of custodial parents or legal guardians, or persons approved in advance by the parents or legal guardians. **Unauthorized persons will not be allowed to remove infants or children.**
  - b. Children (age 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade) Identification Rule – All children who attend our children’s activities (for example, Vacation Bible School, Summer Reading Program) will be brought to the programming area by their parent, guardian or persons approved in advance by the parents or guardians for registration and to receive a name tag. For those who choose to attend Junior Church when offered during worship services, once released to attend the child must remain in the classroom/chapel . At the end of the children’s program/junior church, they will be released into the care of custodial parents or legal guardians, or persons approved in advance by the parents or legal guardians. Unauthorized persons will not be allowed to remove children and **children will not be allowed to leave the area by themselves.**
  - c. Youth (7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) All Youth who attend our Sunday morning or weekday activities will go to the programming area. There they will sign in and remain in the programming area until the conclusion of the activities and they are released.
  - d. Vulnerable adults (adults with developmental disabilities or other physical conditions which may limit their ability to make sound decisions) must be accompanied by the primary caregiver when participating in church-related activities. Their caregiver may designate another church member to assist them and in the absence of the primary caregiver, another church member must be present to comply with the two-person present rule until the primary care giver returns.
3. **Drop-Offs and Pick-Ups** – As parents/guardians, we covenant that we will not drop off our children or youth to any event more than 15 minutes prior to the activity. We also covenant to pick-up our child as the event ends. If we are going to be late to pick-up our child due to an emergency, we will contact the respective ministry personnel. There should not be any infant,

child or teen wandering inside or outside of the church. We understand that if this happens, our child will be asked to return to the activity or appropriate area or we will be called. The appropriate ministry personnel should be notified upon drop-off if my child will be picked-up by another adult.

4. **Playground Use** – As parents/guardians, we will supervise our children on the playground and understand that children of any age are not permitted on the playground or outside the church building without our supervision.

### **WHAT IS THE CHURCH DOING TO ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS?**

**Two Adult Rule** – Except in unusual circumstances, at least two adults, paid or volunteer, will be present/in the program area during all official, scheduled and public New Hope activities involving youth, children, and/or vulnerable adults. At least one of the adult supervisors will be over 21 years of age. All supervisors will have completed the appropriate screening and training programs. **In the event of an exception to the Two Adult Rule, a Two Adult Rule Exception Form will be completed either before or promptly after the occurrence and kept on file. (See Appendix A)**

**Parental/Guardian Permission Rule** - New Hope staff, long term and short term volunteer workers will not under the auspices of the church spend time alone with a child or vulnerable adult in an unsupervised activity unless parental/guardian permission is secured in advance of the activity. As a general rule, there should always be two adults present with a child/vulnerable adult. Adult supervisors should generally avoid all situations in which one adult and one child are alone together. Private counseling sessions in which one child and one adult will be alone together should be arranged only with the permission of the parents or guardians and with prior notification to New Hope and only at a time and place acceptable to the parents or guardians and New Hope.

**Coaching Rule** - When one-on-one coaching is done, a two-adult exception form must be filled out and all such things must be done in a public setting or in a room where the youth is clearly visible through a window. Also, in such cases, someone else (in the general proximity when such communication is occurring in a private room) must be aware of what is going on (and this must be reported on the form).

**Transportation Rule** - No New Hope Staff or long or short term volunteer may transport a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to or from any New Hope activity without securing written permission from the custodial parents or guardians in advance. **(See Appendix C)**

**Overnight Rule** - Any program of New Hope which includes the supervision of children or youth during overnight activities will observe the following procedures:

1. Written permission from the custodial parents or guardians of the children involved will be secured in advance.
2. There should always be at least two approved adults who have completed the screening and training programs on site with the children at all times.

3. Children will not be allowed to leave the location of the overnight event with anyone except a custodial parent or guardian, or without the advance permission of the custodial parents or guardians.

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### **Suspicious Behavior Rule**

***Between adult and child/Vulnerable Adult*** - Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult and a child or vulnerable adult should be confronted immediately and investigated by the adult supervisors and the church pastor. This information should be conveyed immediately to the ministry leader, a pastor or chairperson of Staff Parish Relations for their discussion and action. The parents/guardians of the child or vulnerable adult involved will be immediately notified by church officials.

***Between youth or children*** - Any inappropriate conduct or relationship witnessed between youth or children should be confronted immediately and investigated by the adult supervisors and the church pastor. We are required by law to report any felony behavior of which we have direct knowledge to the authorities (See Anderson's Ohio Revised Code, chapter 29, section 2907. This can be found at <http://onlinedocs.andersonpublishing.com/oh/lpExt.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&cp=PORC>.) Students revealing potential questionable behavior should be coached to report activity to parents. Parents or guardians will be called in the event of inappropriate behavior. Inappropriate behavior of youth or children would include - extreme rough housing or rudeness; disrespect of others; mental, emotional or physical abuse; romantic and sexual touching or contact. In cases where behavior is confessed but not directly witnessed, students should be encouraged to report to their parents themselves and make amends as is necessary.

**Discipline Rule** - No staff member or long or short term volunteer may use physical punishment to discipline a child in a New Hope program or activity. Striking, spanking, or any other such disciplinary methods can not be used. Children can be physically restrained by an adult other than the parents or guardian only when a child is in danger of injuring himself or someone else.

## **WORKER HIRING AND SELECTION**

### **Policy**

No person may serve on the staff of New Hope who has at any time been found guilty or who has entered a guilty plea in a court of law in any state or locality to charges of physical or sexual abuse of a child, youth or vulnerable adult. All applicants for paid staff positions will be personally interviewed. This interview will be conducted before the hiring process is completed.

Any staff member who is convicted of physical or sexual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult /youth or who pleads guilty to such charges will be dismissed from the staff of New Hope according to personnel procedures.

### **Application**

All current and future volunteer workers must complete the New Hope Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form. Such form should also include statement of faith and request three personal references. Persons must have at least 6 months experience with our congregation before being considered for a volunteer position.

In the case of potential employees, the references and previous employer information will be checked as given on the Application and Disclosure Form. If the applicant is offered the position, he/she will be asked for a complete set of fingerprints for a criminal background check. A background check needs to be renewed after every five years of continuous service. Any sensitive information revealed during a background check will be considered confidential and addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Training and Levels of Children & Youth Workers**

Staff and Volunteer Leaders/Coordinators are Level I and MUST be fingerprinted and have background check. All other volunteers are Level II and they must complete the Application and go through acceptance but do not need background check or fingerprinting. Under no circumstances should Level II persons violate the two-person rule except perhaps in an emergency situation.

All Staff and Volunteers, after acceptance, must successfully complete Child Protection Training & Verification including any programs of enrichment as made available by the church.

Staff and Volunteers, once approved (Application reviewed and okayed including talking with references; Going through training and passing test; and Background check if required), are given an ID badge that must be visible on their person at all times when serving in children's or nursery-related capacity.

**NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
Child or Vulnerable Adult Abuse/Neglect Report Form**

To be completed immediately upon witnessing or becoming aware of an incident of abuse, neglect, or injury taking place on church property, facilities under the New Hope's direction or jurisdiction, or involving New Hope church staff in the course of church related activities.

Name of child/Vulnerable Adult: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary person/s alleged to have been involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe incident:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any immediate action taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reporters' signatures: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome/resolution/further action:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix A  
NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
TWO-ADULT RULE EXCEPTION REPORT**

*This report is to be used when 2-adults (one over the age of 21) are not present during any official, scheduled and public New Hope activities involving youth and children*

<b>Ministry Leader/Volunteer's Name:</b>
<b>Name of Leader or Staff Member Notified:</b>
<b>Parents/Guardians Contacted: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If No, Explain</b>
<b>If Yes, Identify Name of Parent/Guardian Contacted:</b>
<b>Date/Time/Method Parent/Guardian was Contacted :</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian Signature (necessary on all long-term exceptions)</b>
<b>Location of Incident/Session:</b>
<b>Date of Incident/Session:</b>
<b>Name of Someone in the area/facility that was made aware of the exception:</b>
<b>Brief Description of Incident/Session:</b>
<b>Name of Other Person(s) who Knew About the One-on-One Session</b>

**Prepared By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit Form To:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B**  
**New Hope United Methodist Church**  
**2023-2024 Emergency Medical Authorization Form**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information**

Name	Relationship	Home Phone	Cell Phone	Work Phone	Ext
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**Medical Conditions:** *Please list or update to include facts concerning the child's medical history including allergies, medications being taken, and any physical impairments to which a physician should be alerted.*

**The PURPOSE of this EMERGENCY MEDICAL CONSENT** is to enable parents and guardians to authorize the provision of emergency treatment for children who become ill or injured while participating in church activities, ***when parents or guardians cannot be reached.***

**(over)**

**PART I OR PART II MUST BE COMPLETED**

**PART I – GRANT CONSENT**

In the event reasonable attempts to contact the people indicated above have been unsuccessful, I hereby give consent for the administration of any treatment deemed necessary by:

**Family Physician:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Dentist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

In the event the designated preferred physician is not available, I hereby give consent for treatment by any licensed physician or dentist.

**Yes** \_\_\_\_\_ **No** \_\_\_\_\_ I hereby give consent to allow my child to be transported by Emergency Medical Services to

\_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital) or any hospital accessible. This authorization does NOT cover major surgery unless the medical opinions of two other licensed physicians or dentists, concurring to the performance of such surgery, are obtained prior to the performance of such surgery.

**Signature of Parent or Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name of Parent or Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Today's Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**IF YOU COMPLETED PART I, DO NOT COMPLETE PART II**

**PART II – REFUSAL TO CONSENT**

**I DO NOT give my consent for emergency medical treatment of my child. In the event of illness or injury requiring emergency treatment, I wish the church officials to take no action or to:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent or Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name of Parent or Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Today's Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C**

***New Hope Youth Ministry***  
**Transportation Form**

**2023-2024 School Year Programming**

(Please initial all that apply)

I allow my child \_\_\_\_\_  
*Child's Name*

\_\_\_\_1. To be transported to/from events in vehicles owned by New Hope staff, chaperones, or adult volunteers.

\_\_\_\_2. To be transported to/from events held outside of New Hope UMC by the following youth group members:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_3. To transport New Hope members to/from Church and to/from events outside of New Hope

As the year progresses and more youth receive their driver's licenses a written note and phone call to the advisor is necessary for your child to drive in the car with a member not listed above.

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**NHUMC CHILDREN & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY  
COVENANTAL AGREEMENT**

I (*name written*) \_\_\_\_\_ have read the New Hope UMC Child & Youth Protection Policy Manual and agree to follow what is set forth in this document. I am covenanting to be a volunteer in the Children, Youth or Family Ministries. I understand that this is a working document and is intended for the safety and protection of all children & youth that will be served through New Hope UMC.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

# **NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CHILD, YOUTH, and VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION PROGRAM CODE OF ETHICS AND RULES**

In the protection of our children and youth, the following rules of behavior and ethics are to be adhered to by all volunteers and staff members in our child/youth programs.

- 1) Awareness of and adherence to all procedures and guidelines specified in our Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
- 2) Smoking or using tobacco products in the presence of minors is prohibited.
- 3) Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal, or illicit drugs will not be tolerated.
- 4) Do not use or tolerate the use of profanity in the presence of minors.
- 5) Those working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall not abuse them, including:
  - Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor or vulnerable adult;
  - Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor or vulnerable adult;
  - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor or vulnerable adult;
  - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind to a minor or vulnerable adult;
  - Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
  - Physical neglect of a minor or vulnerable adult, including failure to provide adequate supervision;
  - Mental or emotional injury to a minor or vulnerable adult;
  - Allow the presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any church-related function;
  - The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal, illicit drugs;
  - The consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a church-related function
- 6) Access to any locked records will be limited to appropriate Staff.
- 7) Update Volunteer Information Form when requested.
- 8) Be willing to submit to background check and/or drug screen upon request.
- 9) Treat all people of all races, religions, ages, and cultures with respect and consideration.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

# **New Hope United Methodist Church Photography/Website/Publications Consent Form**

I hereby give permission for my child's photograph, artwork, poetry or other work produced in conjunction with a church project, Sunday School Class, or programs, to be put on any of the following: New Hope United Methodist Church website, Facebook, New Hope publications, or any other publication for the purpose of explaining and/or sharing the church's ministries, in accordance with the policies set forth by the New Hope United Methodist Church.

No child's personal information such as last name, home address or telephone number shall appear on any New Hope United Methodist Church publication.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This document will be retained by the church office, and will not expire unless request is received in writing per the student's parent/guardian.

**NEW HOPE CHILDREN/YOUTH MINISTRY**  
*Adult Volunteer Application*

**Please complete each question and submit to the office at New Hope UMC. All answers are confidential.**

1. Give a brief summary of your relationship with Jesus Christ. Include (1) when and (2) how you accepted Christ, and (3) what Jesus means to you in your daily life.
  
2. In what area is God working in your life now?
  
3. In what area of your relationship with Jesus do you see a need for growth?
  
4. Describe any previous experiences in the last 5 years, paid or volunteer, related to ministry.
  
5. What do you feel are your spiritual gifts? (examples: hospitality, prayer, counseling, preaching, leadership, etc.)
  
6. What areas of the youth ministry that you would like to explore as a volunteer?
  
7. Why do you want to serve in youth ministry?
  
8. Would you be available, if selected, to meet regularly for discipleship/leadership training and soul-tending times?
  
9. Current or previous Employer
  - a. Name \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Address \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. How long? \_\_\_\_\_

10. I have been a member of this church since \_\_\_\_\_  
I have been a friend of this church since \_\_\_\_\_
11. I have never been found guilty, plead guilty or no contest to a criminal charge involving domestic violence or sexual abuse or neglect of any person or incident.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_ (check one please)
12. I have never been involved in a civil lawsuit concerning any incident. True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_  
If false, give short explanation of lawsuit:
13. I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated relating to allegations of any incident. True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION WITH THE NEW HOPE PROTECTION POLICY TO THE OFFICE. YOU WILL BE CONTACTED WITHIN ONE WEEK BY A MEMBER OF THE STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE.**