Policy for the Prevention of Abuse of Children, Youth and other Vulnerable Persons

Shenendehowa United Methodist Church
Clifton Park, New York

Approved and adopted by Church Administrative Council
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Preface

“Whoever welcomes [a] child… welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5)

As Christians, we are called to live according to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be engaged in ministry with children and youth. Children are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God. They are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. God calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to children and other vulnerable persons. God wants us to create communities of faith where children and adults can grow safe and strong.

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse have occurred in churches, both 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.

In April 1996, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church, stating “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse” (Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, ¶ 162C).

Living faithfully with one another, we must recognize our responsibility to provide a safe, nurturing environment for all of God’s children while they are in our care. We must not allow the risks of possible abuse to undermine or stop our ministry. Rather, we must:

- Acknowledge the risks and develop a practical plan to reduce them.
- Take steps to prevent harm to our children, youth, other vulnerable persons, and to protect our volunteers and staff.
- Act in a professional, responsible, and reasonable manner when responding to unforeseen events not covered in this policy.
- Continue to answer the gospel’s imperative to be in ministry all persons, making a difference in their lives.

As a community of faith, Shenendehowa United Methodist Church (SUMC) in Clifton Park, New York is committed to preventing abuse of children, youth, and other vulnerable populations wherever it may occur and to protect our volunteers and staff. Therefore, we adopt this policy to protect these persons in our care from abuse in all its forms.

It Can Happen Anywhere

It is important to recognize that, while churches are created and designed to be places of love, spiritual nurture, and caring, abuse can happen. As a church family, we have an obligation, morally if not legally, to maintain an atmosphere of love and trust for those among us who are
vulnerable. “Without a comprehensive strategy against abuse, [churches] are taking a needless risk that harm may be done to our children or our workers with children.” To ensure complete success and protection, the entire congregation must support these strategies. No one is exempt from the policy for any reason.

**Purpose of Policy**

Our congregation’s purpose for establishing this Policy for the Prevention of Abuse of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable Persons (Policy) and its procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all children, youth, and other vulnerable persons and all in our midst. Although we are not legally mandated reporters of suspected abuse, we do have legally mandated reporters among our members and the SUMC community has decided it is morally obligated to do so.

**What Is Abuse?**

Abuse is any action (or lack thereof) that endangers or impairs a person’s physical, psychological, spiritual, or emotional health and development. It can manifest in different ways. All forms of abuse and neglect are detrimental to the person; physical and sexual abuses are crimes. The different types are described below.

*Physical Abuse* occurs when a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a person. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, etc.), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bone, and a variety of other non-accidental injuries.

*Emotional/Psychological Abuse* occurs when a person is exposed to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. It tells the person s/he is bad, worthless, and not only unloved but undeserving of love. Such individuals may have been locked in a closet, deprived of parental affection, repeatedly told they are bad or stupid, allowed or forced to abuse alcohol/drugs. It can include constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing. It is very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

*Neglect* occurs when a person’s health, safety, or welfare is endangered through negligence. It may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the individual’s self worth. It is the most common form of abuse.

*Sexual Abuse* is when sexual contact occurs between a child, youth, or other vulnerable person and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth). The individual is not able to resist or consent to such contact and/or sexual acts because s/he is often physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples include fondling, sexual intercourse, incest, exploitation/exposure to child pornography, exhibitionism, or prostitution.

*Ritual Abuse* occurs when physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a person are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by an individual responsible for the individual’s welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. It could include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, or animals. Such reports are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children, youth, and other vulnerable persons making such reports should never be ignored.

1 “Safe Sanctuaries,” p. 19.
Prevalence
Each week, child protective services throughout the United States receive more than 50,000 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. In the year 2002, 2.6 million reports were made and 856,000 children were found to be victims of child abuse including 1400 deaths. Tragically, an average of three children die every day as a result of child abuse or neglect. On average, one of every three girls and one of every five boys will experience child abuse before the age of 18. No group of children is immune.

Abusers: Who Are They?
Just as children from all segments of our society are victims of child abuse, it is also true that abusers come from all segments of society. They can be found in every racial, ethnic, economic, and social group. They can be young, old, charismatic, sociable, sympathetic, married or unmarried; they can also be teachers, camp counselors, pastors, parents, etc. They are not easily recognizable as they look just like you or me. In fact, they are most likely related to, or at least acquainted with, the vulnerable person. Strangers perpetrate less than 12 percent of abuse. However, they are also people who have greater power in relation to a vulnerable person and they use that power to harm the person.

The Many Victims and Effects of Abuse
When a person is abused in the church, there are many victims. First and foremost, the individual who has been harmed must be cared for. It is imperative to first offer care, support, love, and concern to the affected person. The trauma of abuse can produce life-long effects for all persons involved. Other victims of abuse include: the person’s family, the family of the abuser, and the congregation. It is important that the church encourage healing for all the victims of incidents of abuse.

Child/Vulnerable Person & Family
The impact of abuse is far greater than its immediate, visual effects. The child, youth, or vulnerable person may struggle with the betrayal they feel as a result of the crime occurring in the church. Abuse and neglect are associated with short- and long-term monetary and physical consequences that may include brain damage, developmental delays, learning disorders, problems forming relationships, aggressive behavior, and depression. Survivors of child abuse and neglect are frequently at greater risk for problems later in life (e.g., low academic achievement, drug use, teen pregnancy, criminal behavior, etc.). Such behaviors affect not just the child and family, but society as a whole.

The Family of the Abuser
The members of an abuser’s family may feel isolated, judged, or embarrassed by the actions of an abuser. They, no less than any other, will need the support and healing and love of the church. Families of abusers often suffer in silence, unable to express or release their grief regarding the actions of their family member. If the family is also involved in the life of the church where the abuse took place, it can create a very difficult situation for the pastor(s), the abused person’s family, and the congregation. The family of the abuser may “hide out” from the congregation, halting their attendance at worship and other church activities.

The Church Congregation
Church members will experience a variety of feelings and reactions. Many members will be stunned that such a crime could have happened. Some will be humiliated by their failure to keep the church a safe and holy place. Others will worry that they are not prepared to help the victim. Many will feel angry and betrayed by a person they welcomed and trusted.
Frequently, members will disagree on how the many problems created by the incident should be addressed. In addition, litigation may result which will keep the incident alive for an extended period of time and make resolution of the emotional issues even more difficult. Finally, financial cost of settlements or verdicts can be astronomical. **Thus, no congregation can afford financially, ethically, or morally to fail to implement procedures and educational programs for reducing and preventing child abuse.**

Therefore, the following procedures and programs have been created to reduce the likelihood of abuse to children, youth, and vulnerable persons in our church and to respond to its effects if it does happen:

- Recruiting, Hiring, and Screening Procedures
- Safety Procedures, which include our Choir Policies, Education Policies and background checks of all
- Education Programs
- Faithful Responses

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**Recruiting, Screening and Hiring Procedures**

**Please note:** The clergy (Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor) who are appointed by the Troy Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to serve this church will be subject to the rules and policies of Troy Annual Conference. The church shall request that all persons appointed to serve in pastoral appointments be subjected to criminal background checks within a period of three years prior to the appointment. If the Conference is not currently conducting background checks, then Shenendehowa UMC will have one completed.

All paid staff positions and any volunteer position that requires a person to work with children, youth and other vulnerable persons shall be recruited and screened through the procedures defined in this section. The recruiting, screening and hiring procedures are designed to provide the controls and security necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of all children, youth and other vulnerable persons participating in the life and ministries of our church. These procedures also ensure the confidentiality of all information gathered in the process of recruiting, screening and hiring a person.

These procedures are summarized as follows:

Applicants wishing to fill a position or positions shall apply in writing using the appropriate application forms.

2a. For paid staff, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) shall be responsible for posting a position, collecting resumes and applications, forming an ad hoc committee according to the Personnel Policies and Procedures, and conducting the interview process. Nothing in this policy shall limit the responsibilities set forth in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The SPRC shall interview candidates and select the person they feel is most qualified based on skills, employment history and other relevant information obtained from the application and personal interviews.

2b. For volunteer staff the Child Advocacy Team (CAT) or appropriate paid supervisor will

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screen and select people for the available openings.

2c. While church membership is not a requirement, all volunteer applicants must have been attending SUMC on a regular basis for at least six months.

3. For paid staff, the selected applicant(s) will be provided a conditional offer of employment by the SPRC or, in the case of a volunteer, a conditional offer of volunteer status will be made by the appropriate supervisory entity, contingent upon completion of the appropriate background screening process, including a NY State and National Criminal Background check. In all cases, a background check must be completed.

4. The CAT shall conduct a background check on the selected candidates. For all positions, paid or volunteer, the CAT shall review the candidate’s background, background check results and references to determine if there are any conditions that would render the candidate unsuitable for a position caring for and working with children, youth or other vulnerable persons.

5. Upon completion of the screening process, CAT shall provide the applicant an official notification of the results, and volunteers will be officially listed as an approved volunteer.

Position Descriptions
Position descriptions shall be written and maintained on file for all positions that require a person to work with children, youth and other vulnerable populations. All paid staff descriptions shall be created and maintained by the Committee on Staff Parish Relations as part of the Personnel Policies and Procedures of the church. All volunteer position descriptions shall be created and maintained by the body that provides supervision for the position (supervisory entity). The Ministry Area Coordinators are responsible for maintaining position descriptions of volunteer positions under their area of ministry that require a person to work with children, youth and other vulnerable populations. All position descriptions shall be kept in the employment records file and shall be updated at least every three years or as required by the staffing needs of the church.

Position Applications
All persons wishing to fill a paid staff position must complete the following forms:
- Application for Employment (Appendix F)

Any person wishing to fill a volunteer position must complete the following forms:
- Application for Volunteer Positions (Appendix G)

The SUMC Safe Sanctuaries Team and CAT will develop and maintain a list of volunteer positions that require the completion of these forms. All forms, once completed, are considered confidential and shall be stored in the Employment or Volunteer Records File and shall be reviewed only by persons authorized to make the position selection or the CAT. (Background check results will only be available to the persons authorized to see them. These people are the appointed pastors and the Safe Sanctuaries Chair.)

The supervisory entity shall review the application and choose a candidate based on skill, experience and other factors relevant to their ability to perform the tasks outlined by the position description. Upon selection of a candidate, the supervisory entity shall provide a conditional offer of employment or a conditional offer of volunteer status to the selected applicant and notify the CAT of their selection. Upon successful completion of the screening process, the supervisory entity will provide the selected candidate an official offer of employment or an approval of volunteer status for the selected position or positions.
Screening Process

Members of the SPRC or CAT shall recuse themselves from reviewing the application of any member of their immediate or extended family, or in any other situation that may present a conflict of interest.

The SPRC or CAT shall make every effort to verify the information contained in the application, verify employment, and contact references to ascertain the suitability of the applicant for the position to which they applied. The SPRC or CAT shall use information provided by the applicant on the application or information gathered in the verification process as authorized by the applicant. The applicant will be notified of the results of the background check. Applicants will be allowed to provide additional information if a negative report comes to light.

Background screening will be waived for those persons for whom a background screen has been completed within five years of current application. The SPRC or CAT retain the right to update background checks more frequently if needed.

In addition to verifying information contained on the application, the CAT shall check the State of New York to ensure that the applicant is not listed on the New York Sex Offender Registry.

All information obtained during the screening process shall be considered personal and confidential and shall not be released to any person or agency outside of the screening committee except under conditions set forth in NY State Law. Absence of information shall be treated with the same confidence as tangible information.

The CAT shall maintain a written worksheet for each applicant which documents all correspondence obtained in connection with the application. The person conducting the background screen shall verify each entry on the worksheet. The decision on an applicant shall be written on the worksheet and signed by at least two members of the CAT.

Employment and Volunteer Records File

All records related to volunteers or paid staff will be physically secured in the following manner:

- Records will be kept in a locked file cabinet.
- Key access shall be limited to the CAT members. There will be 2 keys and they will be held by pastors and/or the Safe Sanctuaries Chair.
- Each person having key access will maintain confidentiality with regard to all employee and volunteer records.
- The following records will be retained in the Employment and Volunteer Records File for five years. At the end of the required retention period documents must be destroyed by shredding.
  - Completed Applications for Employment and Volunteer Positions.
  - Reference Contact worksheets.
  - Background Check results.
Safety Procedures

Clear physical requirements and logistical procedures can help prevent situations where abuse can take place. It is important to insure that these procedures are understood and followed by all persons in contact with our youth, children, and other vulnerable persons.

Physical

All classrooms will have windows in the doors or have ½ doors that can be kept open during classes. Rooms where a significant portion of the room cannot be seen from the door will have corner mirrors. Firewalls and appropriate filters will be in place for any internet access.

Logistical

Open Door Policy
Only the following people are allowed in classrooms during class sessions. They are: teachers and students, teachers’ children, classroom helpers, church staff, parents/guardians and visiting families.

Appropriate Discipline
Discipline will be handled in a non-physical manner with the exception of physical restraint when there is the possibility of physical harm in the absence of such intervention. All discipline will be handled with respect to all parties involved. Crisis prevention training will be provided to all who work with our children and youth.

Supervision of Classroom Activities
The following education classes will require either a) two adults* or b) one adult and one helper with a minimum age of ninth grade:

- Church School Classes from Babyfold through 7th grade.
- Vacation Bible School
- Kids Together

Two adults must be with Confirmation Class, High School Class, Youth Disciple and any class designated by the Child Advocacy Team.

In addition to the above people, there will always be a floater checking on all classrooms. This person will pay close attention to any classroom where a teacher or helper is absent and doors will be kept open for observation. All children in grade 6 and younger must be in worship with their families or in church school, unless they are in a room where their parent is teaching or providing childcare.

*An adult is defined as anyone age 18 or older.

Supervision of Non-Classroom Activities
With the exception of the circumstances identified under Special Rules for Specific Activities, at least one adult and one helper will be present for all non-classroom activities involving children through grade 5. For Youth in grade 6 and up, all supervision must be done by adults and helpers who are at least 5 years older than the youth involved.
Special Rules for Specific Activities

One-on-one meetings with children or youth: In instances where the need exists for a child or youth to speak with a volunteer or paid staff member on a one-on-one basis, that person may meet individually with the child or youth with the awareness and previous consent of that individual’s parent or legal guardian. If prior consent cannot be arranged, the parent or guardian will be informed at the earliest possible time that a conversation occurred. When possible, the door of the room being used should be kept open and/or another adult should be in the area. If privacy is needed, the meeting should be held in a room where there is a window in the door.

Dismissal time from Group Events: In group events, it may be inevitable that one child or youth’s transportation from the event arrives after all other children/youth’s transportation has arrived. In those circumstances, a child/youth may unavoidably be in the individual presence of an adult. Because this circumstance may be simply unavoidable, the general rule which requires the presence of two adults is suspended and the adult is responsible for exercising his/her best judgment for the child or youth’s well being.

Rides home: It may occur that an adult is providing transportation home for a single youth after a church sponsored event. In this case, the child/youth’s parent or legal guardian shall be informed of the situation with an approximate arrival time.

Trips and Retreats: There shall be at least two adults present for all trips, retreats, and other times children/youth gather at or away from the church building. (Please note that at least three adults are preferable so that in the event of an emergency, there will be adequate supervision). (At special offsite events such as work camp or Excel etc., where there is an umbrella organization in control of the event, their rules and policies may supercede ours.)

There shall be at least one adult of each gender present at co-ed overnight events. At single gender overnight events, at least one of the two or more adults present will be of the same gender as the children/youth.

In situations where two adults are not available per room where children/youth are staying overnight, then no adult shall stay alone in a specific room with the children/youth. In those circumstances where adults are not staying in the rooms with the children/youth, special measures should be taken to assure the children/youth’s safety and supervision, such as adult hall monitors, “taping” doors, and periodic room checks by two adults of the same gender as those being checked. Parents should be made aware of housing accommodations.

Parents or guardians and participants should be informed in writing of plans and schedules for off-site activities. A written participation covenant outlining plans and expectations should be signed by each participant. Permission slips including permission for emergency medical care shall be carried by the person in charge of each trip and/or retreat. Each activity leader will determine a cell phone/camera phone policy for that activity. Each policy will attend to the sensitivity of personal space in accordance with faithful respect for each person and NY State law.
Social Media Guidelines

While we recognize the value of internet technology and its immediate connectivity within our congregation and with the community, we also understand the inherent risk involved. With that in mind, we support the following guidelines:

- All paid and volunteer staff are allowed to interact with youth age 18 and under, utilizing social media which is dedicated for church use/activity only. For example, the Youth Director may communicate with Youth Group through a Facebook page dedicated only to the work and issues of SUMC Youth Group.
- It the responsibility of all paid and volunteer staff to ensure that proper filtering systems are in place with any internet technology and that security is of first concern.
- All paid and volunteer staff are prohibited from having any youth age 18 or under included in their personal internet activity. For example, the Coordinator of Education cannot have a student as a friend on a personal MySpace page. Communication by e-mail is acceptable.
- The church will provide regular training on social media use and security. Paid and volunteer staff must always teach best practice for internet safety to our youth and congregation.
- All children and youth are prohibited from using church computers for any reason.
- The Safe Sanctuaries committee is committed to open communication about this issue and dedicated to remaining proactive in utilizing innovative technology in a safe and informed way.
**Outside groups using the church**

Any groups meeting within the church will follow our 2 adult policy so that no children will be left unattended. Space for childcare will be designated by SUMC upon request from the group.

A child needing to accompany a parent to a church activity not specifically designed for children should be within sight and sound of the parent. Provisions will be made to assist parents in monitoring (i.e. electronic room monitor).

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**Insurance**

The Church Trustees will ensure that liability insurance exists to cover all trips and activities.

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**Transportation**

The church will maintain a list of approved drivers for church events. The leader of the event will verify the information listed below. All approved drivers must:

- Be known to the designated leader of the event.
- Be at least 21 years old.
- Have a valid state driver’s license for the class of vehicle being operated.
- Have proof of insurance.
- Have proof of valid registration and inspection on the vehicle to be used.
- Be accompanied by at least two children or youth, or accompanied by another adult. The only exceptions to this will be a case where a parent is driving his or her own child only or as stated above in dismissal from group events.
- Have read and signed an acknowledgement form indicating that this Safe Sanctuaries policy has been read and will be followed.

We recognize that a duly licensed youth may drive him or herself directly to and from a event with parental permission, and that youth may not drive any other youth (except for siblings) in their car unless all parents involved have made prior arrangements.

Anyone driving for SUMC Preschool events will meet at least the first 5 items above. The preschool director, class teacher or assistant teacher is responsible for personally verifying the above.

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**Education**

Fully understanding abuse and comprehending its impact upon individuals, clergy, and the congregation takes time and education. It cannot be accomplished in one meeting, one article, or one letter. Consequently, teaching the congregation and staff about abuse and the new prevention policies will be an ongoing and long term responsibility shared by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee, Child Advocacy Team, Education Work Area committee, Trustees and Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

**General Awareness:** First, everyone involved in the life of the church will be made aware that a formal Safe Sanctuaries Policy has been written and adopted by Shenendehowa United Methodist Church. The need for the policy will be explained and the different topics addressed will be outlined. The location of the Policy will be identified and copies will be made available.
Information dissemination will occur via articles in the FOCUS newsletter, announcements in the weekly bulletins, announcements during church services, etc. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee, Education Work Area (EWA), Trustees and SPRC.

**Primary Awareness:** Individuals who have direct, regular contact with children, youth, and/or vulnerable persons will receive training regarding the procedures of the policy. They will also receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuaries policy. Participants will certify that they have read and fully comprehend the procedures. Examples of church leaders requiring this level of awareness include but are not limited to all paid staff, Coordinator of Youth Ministries and other youth leaders, Coordinator of Music Ministries and other music leaders, Coordinator of Educational Ministries, volunteer staff and all individuals holding leadership positions in the church. They will be required to periodically attend workshops addressing the topic of abuse once every three years. Materials to use when explaining abuse can be found in the appendices of this document. They include: General Information about Abuse, Types of Abuse, and Indicators of Abuse.

**Additional Training**

*First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)* and babysitting courses: All church school helpers will be strongly encouraged to take a babysitting course. The Babyfold and Toddler Room Coordinators are required to take CPR training. All other paid and volunteer staff will be strongly encouraged to take first aid and CPR courses. These training courses must be appropriate to the age of children in their care.

*Physical Restraint:* Only those individuals who are trained to appropriately provide physical restraint and who are designated by the Child Advocacy Team will be allowed to perform physical restraint to individuals who are a danger to themselves or others. The CAT will keep a list of all trained personnel. Crisis Prevention and Intervention training will be offered.

**Faithful Responses**

The most important response a church can make when abuse is suspected or perpetrated within the church is to report such abuse to the proper authorities. As stated previously, we have a moral obligation to do so whether it is observed or a first-hand account. In addition, we, as a church, shall extend our understanding, love, and prayers to both the victim(s) and accused families during this very difficult period, while also making every effort to respect their privacy.

If abuse is suspected or experienced, the following protocols and procedures shall be followed:

1. Reports shall be made to either Pastor. They will be trained to assess the situation and respond appropriately (notifying the proper authorities, etc.).
2. Any media inquiries and requests pertaining to a report of abuse will be referred to the Troy Conference Communications Director.
3. If the abuse involves one of the pastors, the Chairperson of the Committee on Staff Parish Relations will be available for such reporting and will respond in accordance with the Troy Conference Policy on Clergy Misconduct.
4. The individual making a report of suspected abuse will speak to no one else regarding the incident or observations. This includes co-workers, other staff members, etc.
Once an incident of abuse is reported, it is imperative to act quickly and responsibly by immediately notifying members of the CAT, which will be a standing group of three people trained in the advocacy and support of victims of abuse.

After meeting with the victim(s) and his/her family if appropriate, the CAT shall contact the Committee on Staff Parish Relations and/or Church Administrative Council and communicate any relevant concerns or needs of the victim(s). The church will maintain a list of qualified therapists to be used at the discretion of victims and their families. While this does not imply financial responsibility on the part of the church, the church may offer financial support for this purpose.

A trained resource person will be available to assist the congregation in whatever ways necessary to address their concerns so as to bring about a healing process.

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**Appendices**

**Education Materials**

- Appendix A: General Information about Abuse
- Appendix B: Types of Child Abuse
- Appendix C: Indicators of Child Abuse
- Appendix D: Helping and Healing
- Appendix E: Glossary of Terms & References and Sources

**Hiring and Screening Materials**

- Appendix F: Application for Employment
- Appendix G: Application for Volunteer Position
- Appendix H: Internal Use forms for CAT
  - Interview Form (H-1)
  - CAT Reference Check form (H-2)
- Appendix I: Sample Permission Slips & Policies for Events and Activities
  - Activity Participation and Registration form (I-1)
  - Church School Registration Form (I-2)
  - Choir Participation Code of Conduct (I-3)
  - Church School Policies (I-4)
Appendix A: General Information about Abuse

What Is Abuse?
Child abuse is any action (or lack thereof) that endangers or impairs a person’s physical, psychological, spiritual, or emotional health and development. It can manifest in different ways. All forms of abuse and neglect are detrimental to the person; physical and sexual abuses are crimes. See Appendix B: Types of Child Abuse

Prevalence
Each week, child protective services (CPS) throughout the United States receive more than 50,000 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. In the year 2000, nearly three million reports concerning five million children were made and an average of 2,400 children were found to be victims of child abuse each day. Tragically, an average of three children die every day as a result of child abuse or neglect. On average, one of every three girls and one of every five boys will experience child abuse before the age of 18. No group of children is immune.

Indicators of Child Abuse
As Christians, we are called to be vigilant in protecting the children in our midst and in preventing child abuse in the community of faith. As children suffering abuse will often be reluctant to tell anyone about it, it is important to recognize various physical and behavioral patterns that may be indicative of abuse. These can include inexplicable physical injuries, chronic hunger, inappropriate dress for climate, poor hygiene, untreated medical conditions, advanced sexual knowledge, promiscuous behaviors, somatic complaints, nightmares, sleep disorders, unexplained mistrust or mood swings, speech or eating disorders, low self esteem, fears (dark, adults, clergy, etc.), depression, and hostile/aggressive behavior. See Appendix C: Indicators of Child Abuse for specific behaviors for each type of abuse.

Characteristics of Abusers
Contrary to our expectations, abusers bear no outwardly distinguishing features. They are not easily recognizable as they look just like you, me, our neighbors, and our family members. They come from every walk of life and can be found in every racial, ethnic, economic, and social group. Most likely, they are related to, or at least acquainted with, the vulnerable person. However, they are also people who have greater power in relation to a vulnerable person and they use that power to harm the person.

Safety Procedures
At least two adults will be present in a room with any child, youth, or vulnerable person. All rooms will have windows and/or concave mirrors so activities are visible. Parents, volunteers, or church staff may visit and observe classroom activities at any time. Firewalls and appropriate filters will be in place for any internet access.

What Should You Do?
If you suspect abuse or if a child, youth, or vulnerable person confides to you that s/he has been abused, you should tell one of the clergy unless s/he is involved in the complaint. As a mandated reporter, the person will assess the situation and take appropriate action.
Appendix B: Types of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse
This is 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, etc.), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bone, and a variety of other nonaccidental injuries to a child’s body.

Emotional Abuse
This is abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. It tells the child s/he is bad, worthless, and not only unloved but undeserving of love. Such children may have been locked in a closet, deprived of parental affection, repeatedly told they are bad or stupid, allowed or force to abuse alcohol/drugs. It is very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

Neglect
This is abuse in which a person endangers a child’s health, safety, or welfare through negligence. It may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child’s self worth. It is the most common form of abuse.

Sexual Abuse
This is abuse in which sexual contact occurs between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth). The child is not able to resist or consent to such contact and/or sexual acts because the child is often physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples include fondling, intercourse, incest, exploitation/exposure to child pornography, or prostitution.

Ritual Abuse
This is abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by an individual responsible for the child’s welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. It could include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, or animals. Such reports are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports should never be ignored.
Appendix C: Indicators of Child Abuse

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse
- Hostile and aggressive behavior toward other
- Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
- Destructive behavior toward self, others, and/or property
- Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for person’s developmental state
- Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse
- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Threatens or attempts suicide
- Speech or eating disorders
- Goes to extremes to seek adult approval

Possible Sign of Neglect
- Failure to Thrive
- Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
- begs or steals food; chronic hunger
- Depression
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor Hygiene

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse
- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child’s age and developmental stage
- Depression – cries for no apparent reason
- Promiscuous behavior
- Runs away from home and refuses to return
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
- Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, extreme fatigue
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Possible Signs of Ritual Abuse
- Disruptions of memory or consciousness
- Unexplained mistrust or mood swings
- Flashbacks
- Eating disorders
- Fear of the dark, especially at sundown
- Agitation of despair that seems to occur in cycles
- Fear of ministers, priests, or others wearing robes or uniforms
- Nightmares or sleep disorders
- Any of the symptoms of sexual abuse
Appendix D: Helping and Healing

Guidelines for helping a child who has been abused.

• Remember, children don’t have adult vocabularies to describe what is happening to them. Watch for non-verbal clues such as: nightmares, withdrawal or restlessness, school or home behavioral problems, bedwetting, fear of a particular person, unusual interest or knowledge of sexual matters, blood on underwear, masturbation.
• Children protect themselves by blaming themselves when something is wrong. They believe adults are good and they cannot blame people they trust. Be clear that the abuse is never the child’s fault.
• After the sexual abuse ends, the child may still be an emotional prisoner. Abuse requires coping throughout life to separate the confusion between sex and love.
• When a child states they are being abused, BELIEVE THEM! Don’t get hysterical in front of the child. Just ask and listen. Ask why, where, how and what do you mean. Respect the child’s privacy, don’t tell anyone in the child’s presence but report this incident to the appropriate person.
• Appropriately comfort the child. Say you are so sorry this happened but don’t overreact.
• Control your own anger. Talk about your feelings with the appropriate person, not the child.
• Don’t promise but offer your protection and reassurance that you will do everything you can do to help prevent this from happening again.
• Some sexually abused children show no visible signs, either physical or emotional, while being abused.
• If a child tells you the abuse occurred a long time ago, don’t assume that it isn’t still happening.

The long-term effects of child abuse can be so pervasive that it’s sometimes hard to pinpoint exactly how the abuse affects your being. It permeates everything: your sense of self, your intimate relationships, your sexuality, your parenting, your work life and even your sanity.

REMEMBER: If a child’s disclosure is met with compassion and effective intervention, the healing begins immediately.
### Appendix E: Glossary of Terms and References & Sources

| **Safe Sanctuaries Team Members**  
(Chair appointed by Sr. Pastor) | Pastors  
Coordinator of Educational Ministries  
Coordinator of Music Ministries  
Coordinator of Youth Ministries  
Chair of Education Work Area  
Work Camp Coordinator  
Chair of Administrative Council |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Child Advocacy Team (CAT)** | Pastors  
Safe Sanctuaries Chair  
Chair of Administrative Council  
Coordinator of Educational Ministries |
| **Staff Parish Relations Committee** | Committee of nine, appointed at a Church Conference, whose duties include pastor and staff personnel issues |
| **Supervisory Entity** | Person, Committee, or Ministry Team responsible for the supervision of a paid staff or volunteer position. |
| **Background Screening** | Process by which the screening committee reviews and validates information obtained from an application or other signed affidavits. |
| **Criminal Background Check** | Process by which the screening committee obtains a person’s criminal background information from an authorized state or national law enforcement agency or background check service. This is limited to a criminal and driving record check only. **No financial information is included.** |
| **Paid Staff Position** | Any paid position of employment within the church and supervised by the Committee on Staff Parish Relations. |
| **Vulnerable Person** | Anyone who is capable of, or susceptible to, being wounded or hurt, or one who is open to moral attack, criticism or temptation. This is a broad term, and it could include anyone at any time. |

### References and Sources


Shenendehowa United Methodist Church
Application for Employment

Name______________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
(No. Street / City / State / Zip)

Mailing Address (if different)________________________________________________________________________________________

How long have you lived at your current address? _________

If less than 5 years, please give former addresses for past 5 years__________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: (home)____________ Work______________ Cell ____________ Email__________________________

Have you used other names?   __Yes ___No           Names:_____________________________________

Are you a member of SUMC?____

If hired, can you provide written evidence that you are authorized to work in the U. S.? ___Yes    ___No

What position are you applying for?________________________________________________

**Employment Record** - Please complete for each paid position over the past seven years, starting with the most recent and working backward. If necessary, please attach additional pages in this format.

Employer ____________________________________________________________ □ Full-Time  □ Part-Time
Address__________________________________________________________________Phone _____________

Position___________________________________________________

Supervisor __________________________________________________

Responsibilities ______________________________________________________________________________

Reason for leaving______________________________________________________________

Employer ____________________________________________________________ □ Full-Time  □ Part-Time
Address__________________________________________________________________Phone _____________

Position___________________________________________________

Supervisor __________________________________________________

Responsibilities ______________________________________________________________________________

Reason for leaving______________________________________________________________

Employer ____________________________________________________________ □ Full-Time  □ Part-Time
Address__________________________________________________________________Phone _____________

Position___________________________________________________

Supervisor __________________________________________________

Responsibilities ______________________________________________________________________________

Reason for leaving______________________________________________________________
**Education** (Please complete for each institution)

High School _______________________________________________
City / State ________________________________________________  Date of completion____________

College/Technical School _______________________________________________  Degree__________
City / State ________________________________________________  Date of completion ____________

College/Technical School ________________________________________________  Degree __________
City / State_______________________________________________   Date of completion ____________

**Relevant Professional Development:**
Certifications (Please include CPR, First Aid, babysitting courses etc.) ______________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
Courses taken/Seminars attended __________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Please list additional information that relates to your ability to perform the job for which you have applied, such as professional memberships, hobbies, special skills, familiarity with equipment used on job.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

**U. S. Military Service** (if applicable)
Branch of Service________________________________ From_____________ to ___________________
Rank & Type of Service___________________________________________________________________
Training/Experience received_______________________________________________________________
Personal References
Please list three personal references who are not related to you.

1. Name _______________________________________________________________ Phone__________
   Street _______________________________________________________________
   City / State / Zip _______________________________________________________

2. Name _______________________________________________________________ Phone___________
   Street _______________________________________________________________
   City / State / Zip _______________________________________________________

3. Name _______________________________________________________________ Phone___________
   Street _______________________________________________________________
   City / State / Zip _______________________________________________________

Certifications

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<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Waiver and Consent

I hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct. I authorize Shenendehowa United Methodist Church of Clifton Park, NY, or its authorized agents to verify the information I have provided on this application by contacting the references and employers I have listed, by conducting a criminal and driving background check, or by other means, including contacting others whom I have not listed. I authorize the references and employers listed in this application to provide employment verification and to give you whatever information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the job for which I have applied. I understand that the background check will not include any financial information and that the church receives no information at all unless there is a “flag” indicating that a problem exists.

All information received by Shenendehowa United Methodist Church during verification of application information shall be held in confidence and controlled by the procedures set forth in the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of Shenendehowa United Methodist Church.

Print Name_____________________________________
Signature________________________________________                             Date___________________

Statement on Criminal Convictions / Disciplinary Action

Have you ever been charged with, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence, theft, or motor vehicle violations)?    □ No   □ Yes

If yes, please explain______________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Has any employer ever subjected you to disciplinary action; or have you been suspended, terminated, or asked to leave a job or volunteer position on the grounds that you engaged in sexual abuse or neglect, or other unlawful sexual behavior, or on grounds that you violated an employer’s sexual misconduct or harassment policy?

□ No   □ Yes

If yes, please explain:______________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever resigned, or been offered a chance to resign, from a job working with children/youth, rather than be fired?

□ No   □ Yes

If yes, please explain any/all incidents:_____________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever been disciplined, refused tenure or refused a promotion in a job working with children or youth?

□ No   □ Yes

If yes, please explain any/all incidents______________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix G

Shenendehowa United Methodist Church
Application for Volunteer Positions

Personal Information

Name____________________________________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________________
(No. Street / City / State / Zip)

Mailing Address (if different)___________________________________________________________________

How long have you lived at your current address? _________

If less than 5 years, please give former addresses for past 5 years_____________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: (home)_____________ Work______________ Cell ____________ Email_________________________

Have you used other names?   __Yes ___No           Names:_____________________________________

Are you a member of SUMC?____ How long have you participated in this faith community?_______________

If less than 6 months, please explain your most recent relationship to a faith community_____________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you currently possess a valid driver’s license?    __Yes     __No

Do you own a vehicle on which you maintain current liability insurance?   __Yes   __No

Volunteer Experience: Please complete for each relevant volunteer position over the past seven years.
If necessary, please attach additional pages in this format.

Organization ___________________________________________          □Full-Time   □Part-Time
Street ____________________________________________
City / State / Zip _______________________________________
Phone_______________________      Supervisor________________________
Volunteer Duties _________________________________________________________________________

Organization ___________________________________________          □Full-Time   □Part-Time
Street ____________________________________________
City / State / Zip _______________________________________
Phone_______________________      Supervisor________________________
Volunteer Duties _________________________________________________________________________
Employment Record -
Please complete for each paid position over the past seven years, starting with the most recent and working backward. If necessary, please attach additional pages in this format.

Employer ____________________________________________________________ □ Full-Time □ Part-Time
Address ____________________________________________________________ Phone _____________
Position ____________________________________________________________
Supervisor __________________________________________________________
Responsibilities ______________________________________________________________________________
Reason for leaving____________________________________________________________________________

Employer ____________________________________________________________ □ Full-Time □ Part-Time
Address ____________________________________________________________ Phone _____________
Position ____________________________________________________________
Supervisor __________________________________________________________
Responsibilities ______________________________________________________________________________
Reason for leaving____________________________________________________________________________

Employer ____________________________________________________________ □ Full-Time □ Part-Time
Address ____________________________________________________________ Phone _____________
Position ____________________________________________________________
Supervisor __________________________________________________________
Responsibilities ______________________________________________________________________________
Reason for leaving____________________________________________________________________________

Education (Please complete for each institution)

High School ____________________________________________________________
City / State ____________________________________________________________ Date of completion ____________

College/Technical School ____________________________________________________ Degree__________
City / State ____________________________________________________________ Date of completion ____________

College/Technical School ____________________________________________________ Degree__________
City / State ____________________________________________________________ Date of completion ____________
Relevant Professional Development:

Certifications (Please include CPR, First Aid, babysitting courses etc.) ______________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Courses taken/Seminars attended ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Please list additional information that relates to your ability to perform the job for which you have applied, such as professional memberships, hobbies, special skills.
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

Personal References
Please list three personal references who are not related to you.

1. Name _______________________________________________________________ Phone__________
   Street ____________________________________________________________________________
   City / State / Zip _________________________________________________________________

2. Name _______________________________________________________________ Phone___________
   Street ____________________________________________________________________________
   City / State / Zip _________________________________________________________________

3. Name _______________________________________________________________ Phone___________
   Street ____________________________________________________________________________
   City / State / Zip _________________________________________________________________

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</table>
Waiver and Consent

I hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application for a volunteer position is true and correct. I authorize Shenendehowa United Methodist Church of Clifton Park, NY, or its authorized agents to verify the information I have provided on this application by contacting the references and employers I have listed, by conducting a criminal and driving background check, or by other means, including contacting others whom I have not listed. I authorize the references and employers listed in this application to provide employment verification and to give you whatever information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the job for which I have applied. I understand that the background check will not include any financial information and that the church receives no information at all unless there is a “flag” indicating that a problem exists.

All information received by Shenendehowa United Methodist Church during verification of application information shall be held in confidence and controlled by the procedures set forth in the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of Shenendehowa United Methodist Church.

I understand that I will be working at all times on a voluntary basis without compensation and not as a paid employee. Either Shenendehowa United Methodist Church or I can cancel this agreement at any time.

In the event that I become a volunteer member with Shenendehowa United Methodist Church, I understand that false or misleading statements given in my application or interviews may result in dismissal.

Print Name_____________________________________

Signature________________________________________                             Date___________________

Statement on Criminal Convictions / Disciplinary Action

Have you ever been charged with, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence, theft, or motor vehicle violations)? □ No  □ Yes

If yes, please explain__________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Has any employer ever subjected you to disciplinary action; or have you been suspended, terminated, or asked to leave a job or volunteer position on the grounds that you engaged in sexual abuse or neglect, or other unlawful sexual behavior, or on grounds that you violated an employer’s sexual misconduct or harassment policy? □ No  □ Yes

If yes, please explain:__________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever resigned, or been offered a chance to resign, from a job working with children/youth, rather than be fired? □ No  □ Yes

If yes, please explain any/all incidents: __________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever been disciplined, refused tenure or refused a promotion in a job working with children or youth? □ No  □ Yes

If yes, please explain any/all incidents__________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Appendix H-1

Shenendehowa United Methodist Church
Interview Form for Volunteer or Paid Positions who Work with Children and Youth

Suggested Questions for Interview

Why did you choose, and what contributions do you feel you can make to, the ministry programs of this church?
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

What role do you feel that Christian ministry programs can play in the lives of the persons participating in them?
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

What role has your faith played in your life to this point, and in what ways would you present yourself as a positive
Christian role model?
________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Please describe how you would handle the following situations (attach additional pages if necessary)

A child does not want to participate in a group activity: ______________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

A child is crying during a program and wants his/her parents: ______________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

A teenager physically pushed you aside during class: ____________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

Position Information

| Applicant’s Name ________________________________ |
| Position(s) Applied for ____________________________ |
| Age Level:  ____Nursery  ____Toddler  ____Pre-K  ____K-2  
  ____ 3-5  ____Jr. High  ____Sr. High  ____Adult |

Function | Action | Authorized Signature
--- | --- | ---
Application Received Date _______  
Background Screening Complete Passed____  Flagged_______  
Decision Accepted____  Rejected_____  
Verified Certification

Authorized Signatures

____________________________________  ______________________________________
CAT Member  CAT Member
Hi, my name is __________________________. I am calling you from Shenendehowa United Methodist Church -- may I have a moment of your time? I am calling today because ______________________________ listed you as a personal reference on his/her application form to work with children’s program in our church.

I have three short questions for you to answer and would be glad to hear anything else you would be willing share…

1. In what settings have you participated __________________________ while working with children, or observed his/her interaction with children?

2. Are there any reason we should not have __________________________ participating with children in our program?

3. What are the reasons that this person would be an asset in our program with children?

4. Summary of contact____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Signature ____________________________ Position ____________________________ Date ____________________________
Shenendehowa United Methodist Church
Activity Participation and Registration Form

Activity ___________________________________________________ Date(s)___________

Child or Youth’s name______________________________________________ Phone_______________

Date of Birth__________________ Grade in school_______ Gender (M/F) __________

Home Address_____________________________________________________

City _________________________State____Zip_________  Child’s cell phone (if applicable)________________

Mailing address (if different ) ______________________________________ City__________________State____Zip_______

Parents’ Names______________________________________________Phone:________________

Work Phone:____________________________Cell Phone:_____________________

Other emergency contact(s) and Phones:_________________________________________________________

E-mail: Child or youth________________________________Parent___________________________________

Name of Child’s Primary Doctor____________________________________________ Phone:_____________

Child’s Dentist:_________________________________________________________ Phone:_____________

Preferred hospital (if desired)______________________________

Known allergies, medical and/or emotional problems. Please explain and give details of necessary action -
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Medication child takes_________________________________________________________________________

Child’s Insurance Company _______________________________________________

Company address_______________________________________________________ Phone:________________

Child’s ID # and group number (if applicable)_________________________Name of policy holder______________

I give permission for my child to participate in the above activity. I give consent for the group leaders to secure any necessary emergency medical or dental care for my child.

☐ Please check this box if you do NOT give permission for your child’s photograph to be used in SUMC publicity materials, including the church website. Please note that we will only use first names, if any, in our use of these photographs.

Parent or Guardian’s signature____________________________________________Date________________

For participants: I agree to follow all rules and directions given to me by the leaders and/or chaperones of this activity. I also agree to act in a Christian manner at all times and remember that I am an ambassador of Shenendehowa United Methodist Church.

Child or Youth’s signature____________________________________________Date________________

This page will be kept in confidence by the group leaders. It will only be shared with Emergency Personnel if necessary.
Church School Registration

Year_______

Name of Student______________________________________________________________________________________

Last                             (please print all information clearly)                                 First

Complete Address_____________________________________________________________________________________

Street                                 City                         Zip

Telephone Number__________________________E-mail_____________________________________________

Emergency cell number_______________________________________

Preferred method of contact: _____Email _____Telephone _____USPS

Parents’ Full Names____________________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth______________________  Current Age_________________Grade in School_______

Any Allergies/Medical Conditions?_________________________________________________________________

Does the child require an epipen?_____ If so, we require that you bring one & keep it with you on Sunday mornings

Which class does student usually attend?        9 a.m.______________  10:45 a.m._____________

In which other church groups does this child participate? (Choirs, bells, etc.) _______________________________

If your child is 4 years old or younger, who is authorized to pick him/her up at dismissal?

____________________________________________________________________________________________

Please list specific names and relationship to the child

☐ Please check this box if you do NOT give permission for your child’s photograph to be used in SUMC publicity materials, including the church website. Please note that we will only use first names, if any, in our use of these photographs.
Choir Participation Code of Conduct

In accordance with our Safe Sanctuaries policy

In an effort to be sure that all of our children feel safe and are safe at church, we have our Safe Sanctuaries policy in place. While most children always demonstrate their best manners and behavior, in accordance with Safe Sanctuaries, this is our formal Code of Conduct.

Choir members are expected to be members in good standing at all times as representatives of the church family and as leaders in worship. Members are expected to act with proper manners and a good attitude. Failure to demonstrate a good Christian attitude toward all others in rehearsal and/or worship services will result in removal of a child’s cross until such time as he or she has complied with expectations.

In addition, for more serious infractions, the following consequences will also apply:

1. **For any temper tantrums, threats of physical harm to others, fighting or angry “hands on” physical contact with another person, either child or adult:**
   The child will be immediately suspended from the group and parents will be contacted to take the child home immediately. The suspension will be for a time to be determined by the specific choir director and the Coordinator of Music Ministries. Following the suspension, the child must have a re-entry meeting with the director, a parent and a pastor before returning. If the infraction occurs on a Sunday morning, the child will not be permitted to sing/play with the choir on that day.

2. **For swearing or other inappropriate language, screaming at others, arguing, refusing to follow directions, belligerence or running out without permission:**
   The child will be given up to 2 warnings and if the actions do not change, the child will be asked to leave to go to a place where he or she can calm down. If the child is able to regain control, he or she may return to the group. An apology to those involved will be expected. If the child refuses to leave the room, or if a second infraction occurs, the child will be sent home as in #1 above.

3. **All members are expected to be in the choir room to warm up and line up at the announced time for either or both services.** Unless there are extenuating circumstances, anyone who is late may be asked to sit out that service at the discretion of the director. Most members are great about being on time and especially about getting back after coffee hour, but if it becomes a problem, we will enforce this rule. We cannot be looking for people when it is time to go into the sanctuary. On the days we sing/play, children grade 5 and under should either be with their parents, choir parents and directors or church school teachers at all times. Children in grade 5 and younger will be escorted to Sunday School class after they sing/play unless a parent comes to the choir room to pick them up. Youth in grades 6-12 will not be escorted, but will need to sign out of the choir room letting us know where they will be and they must be where they say. No one will be allowed to wander around the church unsupervised. Again, this is for every one’s safety.

We want everyone to feel safe in all aspects of our church and most children abide by these rules anyway. We thank everyone for their help and support of our programs.
Appendix I-4

Shenendehowa United Methodist Church
Church School Policies
As approved by Administrative Council
November 19, 2007

Church School

All Children and youth:

- Children and youth may not roam the church halls during worship services.
- Children and youth should not be alone in a room at any time.

3 year olds through 3rd grade:

- Parents/guardians/surrogates are responsible for escorting children to Church School class rooms. That is, they may personally escort children or make arrangements with another adult to escort the child.
- Parents/guardians/surrogates must pick up children from the Church School classroom when the worship service ends.
- Children should not be in any Church School classroom before or after the class is in session.
- Parents/guardians/surrogates must be aware of where their child(ren) is/are in the church building at all times.

4th grade through Confirmation:

- Youth may go to and from Church School classrooms unescorted.
- Youth should not be in any Church School classroom before or after the class is in session.
- Parents/guardians/surrogates must be aware of where their child(ren) is/are in the church building at all times.

High School

- Parents/guardians/surrogates are not required to directly supervise their children.

Sunday Choirs

Kindergarten through 3rd grade:

- Children leaving the choir room after singing/playing during service will be escorted by choir parents back into worship or to the Church School classroom.

4th grade through high school:

- Youth may leave choir room unescorted after singing/playing during service to go to their designated destination.