

**Safe Church Policies and Procedures
Hancock United Church of Christ
Lexington, MA**



**Approved by Hancock UCC Standing Committee
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A. INTRODUCTION

A.1 PURPOSE

As a community of faith committed to following Jesus Christ, we strive to extend a generous welcome to all who enter our doors and to treat them with the love and dignity that God bestows upon each and every one of us. We want our church to be a safe place for everyone.

Unfortunately, we cannot simply assume that our church is a safe place. We know that we cannot eliminate all risks, but we can strive to reach that goal by taking intentional and direct actions. The Safe Church Ministry Team wants people of all ages to be able to deepen their relationship with God and each other in an environment that is safe and secure. It is in this spirit that the Hancock Safe Church Policies and Procedures was created. We consider this to be a living document which will be amended over time as new issues arise. We hope that although there are sure to be omissions, this document will provide guidelines to create a safer environment at Hancock Church for our members, employees and guests.

What is safety?

Safety means that a person's spiritual, emotional and physical self is protected from injury. For example:

Spiritual safety

- People have the freedom to express their faith appropriately
- People's beliefs are treated respectfully

Emotional safety

- Kindness and civility are the norm
- People refrain from personal attacks and gossip
- Confidentiality is honored

Physical safety

- Door Code holders agree to abide by safe church policies
- Facilities are clean and well lit
- Exits are clearly marked and free of debris
- Fire alarms are kept in working order
- Food preparation areas are clean and health department guidelines for food preparation are followed

A.2 SCOPE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures included in this document apply to all activities which take place within the building and properties of Hancock United Church of Christ in Lexington, MA (Hancock Church), as well as programs, activities, or events scheduled as part of the ministry of this church which take place elsewhere. The policies and procedures apply to all members, friends, volunteers, renters and employees of the church.

A.3 LOCATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A Safe Church Policies and Procedures Manual is provided to each new employee. All volunteers who will be regularly working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will review the manual. Manuals are located in identifiable binders in four locations, as well as [online](#):

1. Church Office
2. Christian Education office
3. Church Library
4. Upper Room

A.4 SAFE CHURCH TEAM DESCRIPTION

The Safe Church team's function is to oversee the implementation of the Safe Church Policies and Procedures.

A.4.1 SAFE CHURCH TEAM COMPOSITION

- The tasks of this team will be conducted by the Human Resources Team. Should the HR Team require assistance, they should approach the ministerial staff and the moderators.

A.4.2 SAFE CHURCH TEAM FUNCTION

The Safe Church Team will:

- Annually review and update Safe Church Policies and Procedures
- Confirm staff and volunteers working with children are trained in Safe Church Policies (Section C.4), including keeping an attendance sheet of who has received training and copies of the Volunteer Participation Covenant (Form C-2) and Acknowledgement of Safe Church Policies and Procedures forms (Form F-2).
- Oversee the completion of Criminal Background Check Authorization Forms (Form C-1)
- Receive Criminal Background reports referred to them by the Background Check processor
- Receive and manage Incident Report Forms (Form A-1)
- Verify that Criminal Background Reports, Incident Reports and other documents are stored in a safe and secure location
- When necessary, report incidents to the State of Massachusetts Department of Children and Families in conjunction with the clergy. (Section G.2.4)
- When necessary, serve on a task force to review formal complaints on adult misconduct (Section H)
- Maintain strict confidentiality

B. BUILDING SAFETY

It is the responsibility of Hancock Church to maintain physical safety of the church building.

B.1 GENERAL

Hancock Church will:

- Maintain the building upkeep to preserve physical safety.
- Maintain the fire alarm system, fire extinguishers and first aid kits.
- Create and post floor plans indicating emergency exits, fire extinguishers, first aid kits and emergency phone numbers.
- Provide users of the building a mechanism to report any safety issues to the Facilities Manager.
- Follow health department guidelines for food preparation

B.2 BUILDING ACCESS

Care will be taken to secure entrances to the church by limiting access to the Door Code to appropriate individuals who:

- Have a documented reason to know the Door Code.
- Abide by all policies and procedures for building use and UCC Safe Church Policies
- Sign a Door Code Receipt Form (Form B-1) which states that the signer will not share the Door Code with anyone and will verify that all outside doors are locked if they are the last person in the building.
- Change the Door Code annually or when otherwise necessitated.

Documentation of individuals who hold keys to exterior and interior church doors will also be kept. Such individuals will sign a form with the same stipulations as the Door Code Receipt Form.

B.3 OUTSIDE GROUPS

All outside groups who rent or use the church facilities will receive a copy of the Safe Church Policies and Procedures. If groups agree to comply with its provisions as pertain to their use of the building, they will sign the Use of Facilities form (Form B-2).

C. SCREENING AND TRAINING

C.1 DEFINITIONS

Criminal Background Check Processor (CBC Processor): a certified Hancock employee who manages the Criminal Background Check process.

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI): Criminal conviction information of persons within the Massachusetts Court System. Regulated by the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) and maintained by the Board of Probation.

National Criminal Background Check (NCBC): A variety of firms provide national criminal background checks. The Criminal Background Check Processor may use any firm of their choosing.

Staff or paid employee: Any individual hired and compensated by Hancock Church on a part-time, full-time, permanent or temporary basis.

C.2 VOLUNTEER SCREENING

Hancock Church in Lexington, UCC welcomes volunteers to become involved in the programs offered as part of our ministries. For those volunteers who work with youth and children on a regular basis, volunteers should generally be at least five years older than the youth or children they work with and have been part of the church community for six months, subject to the discretion of the clergy.

C.3 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND VERIFICATION

C.3.1 POLICIES

Hancock Church uses the Massachusetts CORI verification process and also uses a national criminal background verification service.

Hancock Church requires Criminal Background Checks (both CORI and NCBC) on:

- all prospective employees
- all volunteers who supervise youth or children overnight

Hancock Church requires CORI checks on:

- All other volunteers who work with children or youth

Anyone convicted of any felony or a felony default by the court, with child or elder abuse, whether physical, emotional, or sexual, will not be considered, under any circumstances, for a position at Hancock Church.

C.3.2 PROCEDURES

Ministerial staff, or their designees, will provide Criminal Background Check applications (Form C-1) to volunteers and turn them in to the CBC processor. The CBC processor will submit criminal background check applications and receive reports. The CBC processor will consult the Safe Church Team when there are concerns. The ministerial staff will solicit approval for volunteers from the CBC processor. All attempts will be made to maintain confidentiality.

The Safe Church Team may consult with the church's pastoral staff and an attorney retained by the Church regarding background check findings and reports.

All reports are maintained in a secure/locked location in the Hancock Church office.

Criminal Background reports are repeated at least every three years, and may be done more often.

C4. REFERENCE CHECKS

C.4.1 POLICIES

Hancock Church will conduct a minimum of two reference checks on all employees and volunteers participating in overnight activities involving minors. Reference checks are preferred to be institutional in nature (organization where the applicant worked or volunteered with minors in the past).

C.4.2 PROCEDURES

Reference checks will be conducted by ministerial staff or their designees, using Form C-4, and may be conducted either by telephone or email. Reports will be kept by the CBC Processor.

C5. TRAINING

All staff members, teachers, and youth leaders who work with youth and children will receive training on safe church policies and procedures. They will sign a Participation Covenant (Form C-2) which will be kept on file with the Safe Church Team. Each will be given a copy of the Safe Church Policies and procedures and Procedures and Information for Volunteers (Form C-3) to review and given an opportunity to ask questions. Those individuals who have regular, direct contact with youth will also receive education about child abuse awareness and reporting procedures.

Training procedures:

- Training sessions will be offered at the beginning of each church school term.
- The Safe Church Team will keep an attendance sheet of who has received training.
- Training will include a review of the Hancock UCC Safe Church Policies and Procedures.
- Staff will review the Safe Church Policies and procedures and Procedures prior starting to their position.

D. CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION

D.1 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Hancock United Church of Christ is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which children from nursery to grade 5 can learn about and experience God's love. Therefore we provide supervision for all activities and programs involving children and employ practices that provide for the safety of children and those who care for them.

D.2 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DEFINITIONS

Aide: a volunteer who functions in a non-supervisory role in one of the Sunday school classrooms or nursery/toddler room in the presence of an approved teacher or caregiver. Aides generally should be at least 14 years of age.

Nursery/Toddler Caregiver: a volunteer who supervises activities in the nursery/toddler rooms. The caregiver must be at least 18 years of age.

Teacher: a volunteer who leads classroom activities. Teachers must be at least 18 years of age.

One-time Volunteer: someone who helps with a trip or event but has not committed to a regular role such as aide or teacher.

Generally, all volunteers must be a member of Hancock UCC or part of the church community for six months, subject to the discretion of the ministerial staff.

D.3 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PROCEDURES

D.3.1 TWO TEACHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each class should have at least two teachers.

If a second teacher is not available, the teacher may:

- elect to hold class or continue the activity but keep the door open
- contact the Director of Children's Ministries for assistance

If circumstances dictate that a child must be alone with a teacher, the teacher should contact a parent or guardian and wait with the child in a public space on church grounds.

D.3.2 REGISTRATION FORMS

Ministers will ask the parents or guardians of all children participating in the Children's Ministry program to complete a registration form for each child (Forms D-1, D-2). The registration form includes contact information and information regarding allergies or any other relevant medical concerns. This information will be included in the classroom attendance folder. Welcome forms for visitors are available in the classroom folders (Form D-3).

D.3.3 ATTENDANCE AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

1. Children are dismissed from the Sanctuary to Sunday school at approximately 10:20AM. Parents are not required to leave the sanctuary to escort their children to class. Sunday school begins with a five-minute all school program in the gathering room, followed by dismissal to classrooms.
2. Attendance will be taken at each class.
3. Parents are expected to pick up their children after class.

D.3.4 DISCIPLINE

The purpose of discipline is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect and cooperation.

- Teachers are encouraged to clearly and respectfully communicate expectations of appropriate behavior to their class at the beginning of each school year and on a periodic basis throughout the Sunday school year. In addition, a covenant of conduct including class expectations may be posted in each classroom.

- If a child's behavior is disruptive, the teacher is instructed to address the issue with the child directly. Should the behavior be repeated, the teacher will contact the Director of Children's Ministries, who will follow up with parents/guardians as necessary.
- No child will be disciplined by the use of any form of physical punishment or verbal abuse.

D.3.5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- A first aid kit is available in the nursery and/or Christian Education Office.
- Fire safety information, emergency evacuation routes and meeting place will be clearly posted in every classroom, along with emergency numbers for the church, police and fire departments.
- Emergency procedures, including evacuation plans, will be reviewed at each teacher orientation.
- Incident Reports Forms (Form A-1) are found in each classroom folder and should be filled out when necessary. Forms are filed with the Safe Church Team and given to the parents as warranted.
- If there is a medical emergency, the parents should be found immediately, the Director of Children's Ministries contacted, and 911 called as warranted.
- The importance of hand washing before handling food and after any clean up is emphasized.
- Generally, snacks are not provided in the 2nd through 5th grade classrooms. On occasion, a snack may be offered if it supports the curriculum or the class is celebrating a special event.
- Nursery, Pre-K and 1st grade classes may have a snack supplied by Hancock UCC. Possible snacks include goldfish crackers or cheerios, juice and water.

D.3.6 CONCERN FOR A CHILD'S SAFETY OUTSIDE OF CHURCH

If in the context of a class or other event, a child discloses information that raises concern about his or her safety, the incident should be discussed promptly with the ministerial staff to clarify and determine an appropriate level of response.

E. YOUTH MINISTRY PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION

E.1 YOUTH MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Hancock United Church of Christ of Lexington, MA is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. Therefore we will provide supervision for all ministries and activities involving youth and employ practices that provide for the safety of all youth participants as well as teachers, leaders or helpers who serve in these ministries.

E.2 YOUTH MINISTRY DEFINITIONS

Junior Youth Organization (JYO): a fellowship and Christian education program for students in grades 6-8.

Hancock Youth Group (HYG): a fellowship, worship, and service program for high school students.

Adult: A person 18 years of age or older.

Chaperone/ Driver: A volunteer who helps supervise / transport youth for a special activity. To be a chaperone, an individual should be at least 23 years of age.

HYG Officer: HYG member who is elected or appointed to lead HYG

Helper, Assistant: A volunteer worker for regular youth activities who functions in a non-supervisory role (e.g. high school student who helps in JYO.) Helpers function under the supervision of the leader or teacher and generally should be 3 years older than the oldest youth participating in the program.

One-time Volunteer: an adult who helps with an event (trip, retreat) but has not committed to regularly helping with youth activities

Teacher, Leader: A paid or volunteer adult worker who has direct responsibility for the care of youth under their supervision.

Off-Site Event: A youth event requiring transportation that is scheduled off Hancock UCC property and may or may not include an overnight (e.g. bowling, mission trip, retreat)

Youth: All students participating in the 6th-12th grade programs.

Adult volunteers should generally be at least five years older than the youth, and have been part of the church community for six months, subject to the discretion of the Minister.

E.3 YOUTH MINISTRY PROCEDURES

E.3.1 TWO ADULT POLICY

The Two Adult Policy is intended to protect youth and prevent adults from encountering a situation where they could be wrongfully accused. Therefore, no adult should be alone in the church, or be at a church-approved activity, with a youth that is not related to him or her. It is recommended that there be a ratio of one adult for every six youths at all youth programs or activities. If these ratios are unable to be met, the youth activity may be canceled at the discretion of the minister or lay leader.

At least two chaperones should wait with youth being picked up after an offsite event. In the event that an adult is alone with a youth waiting to be picked up, they should wait in a public space.

It is permissible to have one adult per car carrying youth to an off-site event, but at no time should an adult be alone with a child other than his/her own. Two children and one adult in a vehicle is appropriate.

E.3.2 FIVE YEAR OLDER POLICY

It is recommended that all leaders, teachers, and chaperones / drivers for youth activities or off site events be at least five years older than the oldest participant in the class, group or activity.

E.3.3 PERMISSION, MEDICAL, AND COVENANT FORMS

All Youth participating in youth programs must have a Hancock Church Youth Information Form (Form E-1) and Medication Consent Form (Form E-3) on file. These forms will be kept on file for the year with the church. Completed forms will be brought on all youth off site events by the adult leader. A Hancock Church Trip Permission Form (Form E-2) will be filled out and handed in for any offsite overnight trips.

All youth participating in programs will develop and sign a covenant with their leaders at the beginning of the year. Guidelines for generating a covenant and a sample covenant are provided (Forms E-5 and E-6). Guidelines for the Upper Room are also given (Form E-4.)

E.3.4 OFF-SITE EVENT GUIDELINES

1. Parents or guardians and participating youth shall be given information ahead of time about programs, activities, leaders, chaperones, dates, times, cost, method of transportation, purpose of the scheduled trip or activity and other details whenever possible.
2. All occupants of a vehicle must use an individual seat belt (no multiple belting) at all times during the operation of the vehicle.
3. No cell phone use while driving except for a true emergency, and then the driver is encouraged to pull off the roadway to a safe spot.
4. Appropriate supervision: The two adult policies and procedures applies for all church events including those held off-site. On an overnight trip there will be at least one male and one female chaperone.

E.3.5 DISCIPLINE

All participants are expected to act in a respectful manner toward all others participating in a youth group function. Participants are expected to follow the Covenant developed with the Minister. The purpose of discipline is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect and cooperation. No youth will be disciplined by use of any form of physical punishment.

Mutual respect in communication between youth and leaders, teachers and chaperones is expected. Appropriate behavioral expectations will be clearly communicated.

Disruptive, disrespectful or dangerous behavior will be addressed by the leader, teacher or chaperone in charge. If this behavior occurs on a trip or at a meeting, the leader reserves the right to contact the parent/guardian and send the youth home at the parents/guardians expense.

Adult volunteers must report all infractions of youth rules to the minister or adult leader of the group.

E.3.6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. A first aid kit is available in the Upper Room and the Christian Education Office.
2. Fire safety information, emergency evacuation routes and meeting place will be clearly posted in every classroom, along with emergency numbers for the church, police and fire departments.
1. Emergency procedures, including evacuation plans, will be reviewed at each teacher orientation.
2. Incident Reports Forms (Form A-1) are found in the Upper Room and should be filled out when necessary. Forms are filed with the Safe Church Team and given to the parents as warranted.
3. If there is a medical emergency, the parents and the minister should be contacted and 911 called as warranted.
4. The importance of hand washing before handling food and after any clean up is emphasized.

E.3.7 CONCERN FOR A YOUTH'S SAFETY OUTSIDE OF CHURCH

If in the context of a class or other event, a youth discloses information that raises concern about his or her safety, the incident should be discussed promptly with the ministerial staff to clarify and determine an appropriate level of response.

F. INTERNET SAFETY

The internet and social media are evolving tools which offer great promise for developing and deepening ministries but also pose significant safety challenges.

F.1 DEFINITIONS

Church Sponsored Sites — any group, page or list-serve that is created by a designated member of Hancock Church for the purpose of establishing, maintaining or growing ministries to and with youth and/or adults.

Inappropriate Content — refers both to content that is improper or offensive, but also content that might be suited to the medium but not to the relationship.

F.2 MINOR TO ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

1. Adults should not submit “friend” requests to minors or youth. Youth may request friendships with adults, and adults should discern the level of contact they want to maintain with youth prior to responding to these requests.

2. When and where available, adults may choose to create separate private and professional profiles on networking sites to create a line of privacy.
3. If an adult chooses to accept friend requests from minors or youth that are associated with HYG or JYO, we recommend that other adults (within HYG or JYO) have full access to the correspondent's profile and correspondence.
4. Adults who choose to accept friend requests from youth should use all privacy settings applicable to shield youth from any inappropriate content that may exist within the adult's profile.
5. All youth and adults should be informed that any communication that is sent via digital means (email, social networking site notes or posts, texts, etc.) is not confidential and may be reported or shared with others.
6. Adults should archive or save all email correspondence with youth.
7. We strongly recommend "closed" but not "hidden" groups be used for HYG and JYO. These groups should have both youth and adult administrators.
8. Clergy who work directly with youth are encouraged to use church sponsored digital communications groups to maintain contact with youth members.
9. Members of HYG and JYO should decide within their covenant whether or not their social networking site groups are open to parents of current members.
10. Covenants should be created to govern what is appropriate and inappropriate content to be placed and displayed in the online group for HYG or JYO.
11. Any inappropriate material that is not covered by "Mandatory Reporting" laws should be deleted from the site. Any material that is covered by "Mandatory Reporting" laws should be reported to the Hancock clergy, documented for church records, and then deleted from the site.
12. Any content that details inappropriate behavior (outside of the bounds of the established covenant) during a church sponsored event or activity should be addressed by adults.
13. Adult leaders are not responsible for internet youth pages that are not sponsored by Hancock Church.

F.3 ADULT TO ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

1. Adult members who seek religious or spiritual advice from clergy via digital means (email, social networking site posts, etc.) should be informed that their communication is NOT confidential. Use of digital means to communicate nullifies confidentiality.
2. When and where available, clergy are encouraged to consider creating a personal and a professional account to maintain appropriate boundaries with Hancock members or other members of communities of faith.
3. Clergy should consider the impact of declining a "friend" request from church members. These encounters may create tension in "real world" relationships.
4. Clergy are encouraged to use privacy settings to shield both adult and youth members from viewing content that may be inappropriate.

F.4 COMMUNICATION AND CONTACT

F.4.1 TRANSITIONS

1. Clergy who are leaving Hancock UCC should refrain from offering pastoral care through digital communication after the end date of their contract with Hancock.
2. Former youth members and adult leaders of HYG or JYO, due to departure, removal or loss of eligibility (aged out of a program) should be removed from digital communication youth groups (Facebook groups, list serves, etc.) (See Guidelines for Making Digital Covenants, Form F-1).

F.4.2 DIGITAL COVENANTS

For reasons of education and accountability digital covenants should be made between members of HYG (and JYO, if appropriate) and adult leaders. See Form F-1 for digital covenant guidelines.

F.4.3 VIDEO CHATS, BLOGS OR VIDEO BLOGS

1. Adults should refrain from initiating video chats with youth.
2. Participants in a video chat or blog should consider what will be shown in the video such as their surroundings, their clothing/state of dress, etc.
3. All transcripts of on-line text chats, video chats, blogs or video blogs should be saved when possible.
4. All clergy and youth leaders should consider the content and nature of any post that will be read by or visible to youth because it might be perceived as the voice of the church, and may be misconstrued as church policies and procedures.

F.4.4 PUBLISHING/POSTING CONTENT ONLINE

1. Secure signed Media Release forms from parents/guardians of minors who may participate in activities that may be photographed or videoed for distribution (See Forms D-1, E-1).
2. When video is distributed of services or activities on the web or via other broadcast media, signs should be posted that indicate the service will be broadcast.
3. Photos that are published on church sponsored sites should not include name or contact information for individuals unless otherwise requested.

G. CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE AND REPORTING

Through our Safe Church Policies and educational programs, we seek to prevent abuse occurring at Hancock Church. Allegations or reasonable suspicions of abuse will be responded to seriously and reported to appropriate church and state authorities. All the actions and documentation described below must be held in the strictest confidence and as such as few people as possible are informed. It is the responsibility of all concerned to maintain confidentiality.

G.1 DEFINITIONS

Child: A person under the age of eighteen.

Criminal Background Check (CBC) Processor: Submits and receives CORI and national background check forms. The CBC processor will consult the Safe Church Team (See Section A.4) when there are concerns. The ministerial staff will solicit results from the CBC processor. All attempts will be made to maintain confidentiality.

Department of Children and Families (DCF): The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) manages child abuse and neglect reports.

Incident Report: a written report (Form A -1) of any unusual occurrence at Hancock Church.

Mandated Reporter: a person who, by virtue of his/her profession or position, is required by law to report all reasonable suspicions of child abuse. Church mandated reporters include: clergy, persons performing duties on behalf of the church (e.g. Deacons), church employees who supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel children on a regular basis (Children, Youth and Music positions).

Moderator: The lay Leader of Hancock Church and the presiding officer for all meetings of the Standing Committee.

Standing Committee: The governing body of the church which includes the Senior Pastor, Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, and various committee chairpersons.

G.2 RESPONSE AND REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

G.2.1 STANDARD FOR REPORTING

Hancock Church observes the Massachusetts standard for reporting abuse. Anyone with "a reasonable cause to believe" that a child under age 18 is suffering or has suffered from abuse - or neglect will follow this Response and Reporting Policies and procedures.

"Reasonable Cause" - after examining all the facts in a particular situation, most people with similar training and experience would also suspect abuse. This is the 'reasonable person' standard commonly used in the law - Questions and Answers About Reporting Child Abuse ©: Dayl Hufford. (Appendix)

G.2.2 PREVENTING IMMINENT HARM

To protect children, any circumstance of abuse that poses imminent risk of serious harm will be reported to the Lexington Police Department at 911 or 781-862-1212. Because of the vulnerability of children, their right to our protection supersedes a counselee's right to confidentiality.

G.2.3 REPORTING PROCESS

If in the context of a class or other event, a child discloses information or an adult otherwise has a reasonable cause to believe that a child is not safe, the incident should be discussed promptly with the ministerial staff to clarify and determine an appropriate level of response.

Incident Reports (Form A-1) are required for all unusual occurrences at Hancock Church. They must be submitted to the Safe Church Team or the appropriate staff member even if it is determined that an oral or written report will not be filed with DCF. These forms will be stored in a secure and confidential location.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the Massachusetts agency with responsibility for protecting children from child abuse and neglect. No one is prohibited from making a report directly to DCF, and may do so as either an identified or anonymous reporter. Reporters can file anonymously by calling The Child-at-Risk-Hotline at 1- 800-792- 5200 anytime or contact the Metro Area Department of Children and Families office for Lexington at

(781) 641-8500 to report as an identified reporter. For more information see http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dss/can_mandated_reporters_guide.pdf

An oral / telephone report to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be made within 24 hours as recommended by the Massachusetts Conference, UCC. Written reports will be completed within 48 hours as required by Massachusetts law. Mandated reporters who fail to report suspected child abuse may be subject to criminal prosecution.

G.2.4 PASTORAL STAFF AND SAFE CHURCH TEAM'S ROLES

Any person raising a concern of abuse should contact the Safe Church Team and/or confidentially discuss their concern with a Hancock pastor, or the Director of Children's Ministries.

The role of the Safe Church Team is to receive the allegation, provide leadership and to guide the reporter through the Department of Children and Families (DCF) contact process. Investigation and evaluation of concerns of abuse is the role and obligation of DCF and not the reporter, minister, or the Safe Church Team.

G.2.5 ALLEGATION AGAINST PASTORAL STAFF

If there is an allegation against the pastoral staff, the moderator will contact the Area Minister and the Human Resources Committee. The church will seek the council of the Association Committee on Church and Ministry regarding action to be taken.

H. ADULT MISCONDUCT – HARRASSMENT AND EXPLOITATION

Hancock UCC wishes to create and maintain a community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation.

H.1 DEFINITIONS

Harassment: repeated misconduct, whether verbal or physical, that creates an environment that is uncomfortable, unwelcoming, discriminating, or intimidating, or leads to an atmosphere in which a person's ability to participate in worship and activities at the church is compromised.

Sexual exploitation: activity or conduct of a sexualized nature in which an employed minister engaged in the work of the Church takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the minister.

Sexual harassment: repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones. Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome – and using sexualized behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another.

Vulnerable adult: Any person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of assistance by reason of physical, mental disability, age, emotional illness, and who is unable to take care of or to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation which may be occasioned by the actions or inactions of other people.

H.2 POLICY ON ADULT CONDUCT

The Church is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation and harassment of any kind, and such behavior is prohibited. It is the intention of the church to respond to allegations of behavior that are contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate it and/or report it to the appropriate authorities. Every individual always has the right to report allegations to local authorities.

All persons engaged in the ministry of Hancock UCC (including elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and authorized ministers) are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in ministering to the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Sexual exploitation of parishioner(s) or other individual(s) by anyone engaged in the ministry of Hancock UCC is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated.

Should someone observe that a vulnerable adult is being abused, harassed or exploited, a concerned member may initiate proceedings on their behalf.

H.3 PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO A COMPLAINT OR CONCERN

The utmost respect shall be given to the confidentiality and privacy of all parties. Any person who brings a concern or complaint forward, or who assists in investigation of such a report, will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or Church membership, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged. Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis.

H.3.1 RESPONSE

1. **Informal** - The person with a concern may attempt to resolve the matter directly with the person accused. Alternatively, the person with a concern may attempt to resolve the matter with the assistance of his/her supervisor, a Safe Church Team member, or a member of the Hancock clergy.
2. **Formal** - If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, or possible, or does not succeed, the person with a concern should complete an incident report form (Form A-1) and submit it to a Safe Church Team member and/or Senior Minister. This will lead to a formal proceeding. If the allegation involves the Senior Minister, the person with a concern should contact the Moderator, Human Resources Chair, Head Deacon, the Safe Church Team, or Pastoral Parish Relations Chair.

H.3.2 FORMAL PROCEEDING

When the Safe Church Team is requested to initiate a formal proceeding, the following procedure will happen:

1. A task force will be convened.
 - If the allegation involves the Senior Minister, the task force will be comprised of the Moderator, the Safe Church Team, Human Resources Chair, and Head Deacon. The Moderator will inform the Metro-Boston Area Minister. Hancock Church will cooperate fully in any conference procedures related to the person's ministerial authorization.
 - If the allegation involves another authorized UCC minister, the task force will be comprised of the Senior Minister, Moderator, the Safe Church Team, Human Resources Chair, and Head Deacon. The Moderator will inform the Metro-Boston Association Area Minister. Hancock Church will cooperate fully in any conference procedures related to the person's ministerial authorization.
 - If the allegation involves another Hancock staff member, the task force will be comprised of the Senior Minister, Moderator, the Safe Church Team, and Human Resources Chair.
 - If the allegation involves a lay person the task force will be comprised of the Senior Minister, Moderator, and the Safe Church Team.
2. The person accused will be notified that an incident report form has been filed.
3. Statements will be gathered from individuals involved.

4. The task force will carefully document all activities and meetings and include dates, times, locations, names of the parties present, any decisions, and any further action to be taken. This documentation is to be kept in a secure location determined by the Safe Church Team.
5. The task force will consider all information and determine an appropriate course of action.
6. If the task force determines that no harassment or sexual exploitation has occurred, all affected parties will be notified.
7. If the task force determines that harassment or sexual exploitation has occurred, the task force will inform the individuals and take actions that may include:
 - Formal reprimand with defined expectations for changed behavior;
 - Recommending or requiring a program of growth that may include education and/or counseling;
 - Probation, with the terms of the probation clearly identified;
 - Dismissal from volunteer leadership position or employment and, in extreme cases, membership in, the Church.

H.4 APPEAL

If the person(s) involved is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter, he or she has the right to appeal to the Head Deacon who will appoint a committee to review the complaint.

I. SAFE CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REVIEW

The Hancock Church Safe Church Policies and Procedures were developed by the 2009-2010 Safe Church Task Force:

Ann Boese

Joan Rutila

Martha Sheridan

Duncan Hilton

The Safe Church Policies and Procedures will be reviewed each year by the Safe Church Team. The Team may recommend revisions to be approved by the Standing Committee.

Adopted by: Hancock United Church of Christ in Lexington, Massachusetts Date: _____

Moderator: _____

Edited in 2018 by Joan Rutila and Martha Sheridan

J. RESOURCES

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K. APPENDIX - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT REPORTING CHILD ABUSE: Rights and Responsibilities for Authorized Supervisors and Authorized Volunteers

INTRODUCTION

As an Authorized Supervisor or Authorized Volunteer providing care and programming for the children and youth of XXX Church, you need to be aware of two state departments that are responsible for this area: the Department of Children and Families (D.C.F.) which handles all reports and investigations of child abuse; and the Office for Children (O.F.C.), which licenses all child care facilities.

Because Children are particularly vulnerable, Massachusetts law extends greater protection to them than to adults in certain situations. One of the ways the law protects children is through the child abuse reporting system, As an Authorized Volunteer you are required to report known or suspected instances of child abuse to the Safe Church Commission. After careful review of the report, if the Safe Church Commission deems it necessary to file a Mandated Report, they will direct the Safe Church Advocate to make a formal report to D.S.S.

This pamphlet will describe your rights and responsibilities as a person required to make a report to the Safe Church Advocate.

1. Who is a "Mandated Reporter"?

Mandated reporters include: physicians, medical interns, hospital personnel, medical examiners, psychologists, emergency medical technicians, dentists, nurses, chiropractors, podiatrists, osteopaths, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors, probation officers, social workers, foster parents, firefighters, and police officers.

XXX Church's "*Policies and Procedures for a Safe Church*" include pastors, church staff, Authorized Supervisors, and Authorized Volunteers as mandated reporters within the church administrative structure. Authorized Volunteers are mandated to file an *Incident Report Form* with the Safe Church Advocate. The Safe Church Advocate is mandated by state law to file a formal report with D.S.S.

2. How do I decide whether or not to report?

If you are an Authorized volunteer you are not necessarily a Mandated Reporter; however you are required to file a report the Safe Church Commission if you have a reasonable cause to believe that:

- (a) a child is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him/her, including sexual abuse;
- (b) a child is suffering from neglect, including malnutrition;
- (c) a child is physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth.

"Reasonable cause" means that, after examining all the facts in a particular situation, most people with similar training and experience would also suspect abuse. This is a "reasonable person" standard commonly used in the law. It really is saying you should use your training and/or experience, and your personal knowledge of the child, to make an informed decision. If you are at all unsure of the facts in a particular situation, please consult with one of the Pastors or with any member of the Safe Church Commission.

3. Should I tell the parent/guardian before I report? This is probably the most difficult decision you will have to make.

Of course, if a child is in imminent danger, and you believe the parent/guardian might disappear with the child, call the police immediately and do not tell the parent. More frequently, however, you will be faced with a situation where you know and care for the parent and the child is not in imminent danger. Telling the parent will frequently evoke a hostile, angry display of feelings, and may spur the parent/guardian to remove the child from your care. On the other hand, if you fail to inform a parent/guardian, s/he may feel betrayed or deceived, and this may destroy your relationship with him/her. As a general rule, discuss this with one of the Pastors or any member of the Safe Church Commission before making a decision. When or if a report is ultimately made to D.S.S. by the Safe Church Advocate is the time at which the decision will be made whether or not to inform the parent/guardian.

Filing a report can be described as making a referral to a social services agency to request that help and supportive services be rendered to the child and the family. The reporting process does not always go smoothly, but the ultimate concern is about the child and the family. The process will do everything to see that the child and the family receive help.

The intent of the law is to provide safety for the child and to maintain family unity. Social workers will remove the child from the home only as a last resort. Parents need to know that they are not inherently 'bad' parents, that they can be helped, and that their problem is not unique.

4. To whom must I report?

As an Authorized Volunteer, once you have determined that a report is necessary contact the Safe Church Advocate or a member of the Safe Church Commission within 24 hours. The Safe Church resource person will assist you in completing the *Incident Report Form*. Incident Report Forms and instruction for contacting members of the Safe Church Ministry Team are available in the church library or from any member of the Safe Church Ministry Team.

If a child is in immediate physical danger, call the police and then inform one of the Pastors.

5. What Information must a report contain?

An *Incident Report Form* will ask for all the necessary information. It is extremely important that you provide as much information as possible. Your name will not be indicated on the Mandated Report filed with D.S.S. The Safe Church Advocate will be the identified reporter for these filings.

6. What if the report turns out to be untrue?

All mandated and required reporters are immune by law from civil or criminal liability for filing a report, even if it is not verified by the investigator. This means that even if someone sues you for reporting, the court will dismiss the case when it is revealed that you are a mandated or required reporter.

7. What if I fail to file a report?

If a mandated reporter fails to report known or suspected instances of child abuse, s/he may be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000.00. Failure to report might also result in loss of civil liberty if a child is harmed after the mandated reporter gains knowledge of the abuse and fails to report.

The duty to report is an individual duty. Even if your supervisor or co-workers discourage you or try to prevent you from reporting, if you know or reasonably believe abuse has occurred, you must file an *Incident Report Form*. When two or more co-workers jointly have knowledge of child abuse, only one report must be filed. The name of all the Authorized Volunteers who have information or knowledge regarding the incident must be included on the report form. This will avoid confusion and ensure the process goes smoothly.

8. Do I have a right to know what happens after I report?

The Safe Church Advocate has the right to find out the results of any investigation arising out of a Mandated Report. If a Mandated Report is filed, the Authorized Volunteer(s) named on the Incident Report Form will be kept apprised of this information. If the decision is made not to file a Mandated Report, the Authorized Volunteer(s) named on the *Incident Report Form* will be informed of this and apprised of any subsequent action taken by the Safe Church Commission regarding the report.

If you believe the child continues to be in danger, tell one of the Pastors or any member of the Safe Church Commission who will immediately direct the Safe Church Advocate to file a Mandated Report to D.S.S. You will file an Incident Report Form indicating your continued concern.

9. What if a child shows up with an untreated injury?

If a child is left in your care with an injury which requires immediate medical attention, report it **immediately** to one of the Pastors. The Pastors will follow through based on the Emergency Procedures. If this action must be taken, first make arrangements for the child to be transported by ambulance, then make all reasonable attempts to immediately inform one of the Pastors who will manage conveying appropriate information to the parent/guardian.

An *Incident Report Form* must be completed and filled out as soon as possible and filed with the Safe Church Commission.

10. May I discipline children in my care the same ways their parents do?

No. Massachusetts Office for Children regulations prohibit child care providers from using corporal (physical) punishment, or from interfering for punitive reasons with daily functions of living such as eating, sleeping or toileting.

Note that this standard of behavior for Authorized Volunteers is more stringent than for parents, who are permitted greater leeway in administering 'reasonable discipline.'

If you know or reasonably suspect that an Authorized Volunteer or any other care provider has violated these regulations, you must file an *Incident Report Form* with the Safe Church Commission within 24 hours of the incident.

11. What if I am accused of abuse?

If a complaint of child abuse is filed against you, an inquiry will be conducted by the Safe Church Commission as described in the Policies and Procedures for A Safe Church. If the Safe Church Commission determines the need to file a Mandated Report the Safe Church Advocate will be directed to do so. This complaint will be investigated by the Department of Children and Families. The investigator may want to talk to parents of the other children in our care, and may ask for a list of current registrants. It is possible that if you are one of the people most knowledgeable about a child, you may become involved in a larger investigation, even if there has been no specific complaint against you. If the Department substantiates the report after investigation, the Department may report the matter to the District Attorney's Office for possible criminal investigation. If you believe you are a suspect, don't panic, but you should probably consult a lawyer about your rights.

12. How can I be involved in prevention?

A sensitive, perceptive Authorized Volunteer may note early warning signs of a potentially abusive or neglectful situation. This is, of course, the best time to act. Your training as an Authorized Volunteer will include signs and symptoms of potential abuse. You will also be informed about local service agencies in the community which provide needed support services, such as respite care, counseling, temporary shelter, drug treatment, food stamps, etc. Let parents/guardians know if you recognize signs of stress in their children. Share your concerns with parents/guardians and help them to share their concerns with you.

Early intervention could save a child from harm and maintain a family's integrity. Sometimes the most appropriate early intervention is to file a report. Intervention for prevention is your responsibility as an Authorized Volunteer. Discuss with members of the Safe Church Commission ways to approach parents/guardians. Make it a part of your care of children to get to know parents/guardians and to build a trusting, sharing relationship with them.

L. FORMS

- A-1 Incident Report Form
- B-1 Door Code Receipt Form
- B-2 Use of Facilities for Outside Organizations - Statement of Compliance
- C-1 Criminal Background Check - Authorization
- C-2 Volunteer Participation Covenant
- C-3 Information for Volunteers
- C-4 Documentation of Reference Check
- D-1 Church School Registration
- D-2 Infant and Toddler Registration
- D-3 Welcome for Visitors
- E-1 Hancock Youth Information Form
- E-2 Hancock Trip Permission Form
- E-3 Medication Release Form
- E-4 Upper Room Guidelines
- E-5 Participation Covenant Guidelines for Youth
- E-6 Sample Youth Retreat Covenant
- F-1 Guidelines to Making Digital Covenants
- F-2 Acknowledgement of Safe Church Policies and procedures and Procedures

A-1 INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Complete for all incidents, accidents or unusual occurrences that occur on the church premises or at any church sponsored event. Complete and file this report with the Hancock UCC Safe Church Team within 24 hours of the incident.

Reporter: _____ Date of Incident: _____ Time: _____

Identification of person(s) involved

1. Name: _____ Age: ____ Gender: ____

Address: _____

Relationship to Hancock UCC (Employee, Volunteer, Member, Visitor, etc.): _____

2. Name: _____ Age: ____ Gender: ____

Address: _____

Relationship to Hancock UCC (Employee, Volunteer, Member, Visitor, etc.): _____

3. Name: _____ Age: ____ Gender: ____

Address: _____

Relationship to Hancock UCC (Employee, Volunteer, Member, Visitor, etc.): _____

Specific Location of Incident: _____

Witness(es), if present: _____

Briefly describe the nature and extent of the injury, accident or abuse and circumstances under which you became aware of the incident. Cite the source of any information not observed first hand.

Treatment, shelter or other action /support immediately provided:

Additional action(s) (e.g. 911, family notification, alternative transportation):

Note: **INDIVIDUALS UNDER AGE 18 REQUIRE PARENT NOTIFICATION; INCLUDE TIME OF NOTIFICATION.**

Disposition: _____

Name of person completing this report:

(Please Print)

Signature of person completing this report:

(Signature)

B-1 DOOR CODE RECEIPT FORM

(print name clearly)

Under Hancock Church's efforts to implement UCC Safe Church guidelines, all persons are asked to sign this form and comply with the terms and conditions below.

Please check one of the following:

_____ I am a Member of Hancock Church

_____ I am not a Member of Hancock Church

I am receiving the door code for the following purpose(s):

I acknowledge receipt of the current door code and agree that:

- I will not divulge this code to anyone else
- I will be entirely responsible for the security of this door code.
- If I am the last person to leave the church I will verify that all outside doors are locked.
- I understand that, as a door code recipient, I am required to report child abuse and neglect as set forth by the Department of Children and Families. If I have reasonable cause to believe, or have been told, that abuse and/or neglect of a child or youth has occurred in the Hancock Church building or outside play area, I am required to file an Incident Report Form in accordance with the Safe Church Policies and Procedures.
- I understand that failure to comply with any of the provisions set forth above may result in my loss of privilege to be a door code holder.

Recipient's Signature

Date

Church Office Staff Signature

A copy of this document will be filed with the Hancock Facilities Manager

Form B-1

HANCOCK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1912 Massachusetts Ave
Lexington, MA 02421
781-862-4220

B-2 USE OF FACILITIES FOR OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS - STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Statement of Compliance

I acknowledge that as a representative of the organization below I have read and understand the Hancock Safe Church Policies and Procedures and that we agree to comply with them. Failure to follow the policies may result in the termination of my right and that of the organization that I represent to use church facilities.

The organization I represent is _____

To indicate your understanding of your responsibilities as a guest in our church, please initial each of the following paragraphs, sign this document, and return it to the church office along with your "Application for Use of Facilities."

1. _____ We understand that our organization is required to report to the Safe Church Team (or Director of Children's Ministries, Senior Minister, or Moderator) immediately and file an Incident Report within 24 hours, if I believe, or have been told, that there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused and/or neglected at Hancock Church.

2. _____ When the activity that of my organization has ended, and we are the last people in the church, we will make sure that the lights are out and the doors are locked before leaving.

3. _____ We understand that no adult is to be alone in any room or secluded area on Hancock Church property at any time with an individual child under the age of 18 that is not his or her relative. If we cannot follow these policies and procedures, we will require the parents of program participants to sign permission forms stating that the organization's program is not church sponsored and does not conform to the Hancock Church Safe Church Policies and procedures and Procedures.

On behalf of _____ (organization name)

Signature

Date

Print Name

A copy of this document will be kept on file by the Safe Church Team.

USE OF FACILITIES, page 2

Regulations Governing the use of Hancock Church Property

1. Use only those rooms designated for rental in this contract.
2. Leave all rooms and equipment used in the same condition as they were found.
3. Kitchen appliances may not be used unless approved in advance with the church office.
4. No alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed in any part of the church.
5. Smoking is prohibited in any part of the church building.
6. Nothing may be affixed to walls and ceilings.
7. No raffles or games of chance are permitted.
8. Hancock Church reserves the right to cancel arrangements at any time if the spirit of this agreement is being violated.

HANCOCK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1912 Massachusetts Ave
Lexington, MA 02421
781-862-4220

C-1 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK - AUTHORIZATION

This form will be provided by the Criminal History Systems Board once Hancock Church has been certified to receive CORI reports.

Form C-1

Hancock United Church of Christ
1912 Massachusetts Ave
Lexington, Massachusetts 02421
Telephone: (781) 862-4220

C-2 VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION COVENANT

Hancock United Church of Christ in Lexington is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policies and procedures statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a safe place where people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

- Adult volunteers will read the Safe Church Policies and Procedures manual.
- All adult volunteers involved with children, youth or vulnerable adults of our church should generally have been part of the church community for at least six months before involvement or acceptance of a volunteer assignment, at the discretion of the clergy.
- Any adult who has been convicted of child abuse (physical abuse, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse) will not work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
- Adult volunteers with children and youth shall observe the 'Two-Adult Policies and procedures' whenever possible, to prevent adults from being alone with an unrelated child.
- Adult volunteers shall immediately report any behaviors that seems inappropriate or abusive to one of the ministers or a Safe Church Team member.
- If in the context of a class or other event, a child discloses information that raises concern about his or her safety, the incident should be discussed promptly with the ministerial staff to clarify and determine an appropriate level of response.

I have read this **Participation Covenant**, and I agree to observe and abide by all the policies regarding work in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults, as set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print full name

Hancock United Church of Christ
1912 Massachusetts Ave
Lexington, Massachusetts 02421
Telephone: (781) 862-4220

C-3 INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Two adult policies and procedures

- No adult should be alone in the church, or at a church approved activity, with a child or youth that is not related to him or her.
- At least two chaperones should wait for youth to be picked up for an offsite event. In the event that an adult is alone with a youth waiting to be picked up they should wait in a public space.
- It is permissible to have one adult per car carrying multiple youth to an off-site event.

Discipline

- The purpose of discipline is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect and cooperation.
- No child or youth will be disciplined by the use of any form of physical punishment or verbal abuse.
- If a child or youth's behavior is problematic, the volunteer is instructed to address the issue with the child directly. Should the behavior continue, the volunteer will contact the appropriate staff member, who will contact parents/guardians as necessary.
- If this behavior occurs on a trip or at a meeting, the leader reserves the right to contact the parent/guardian and send the child or youth home at the parents/guardians expense.

Disclosure of Safety Concern

If in the context of a class or other event, a child or youth discloses information that raises concern about his or her safety, the incident should be discussed promptly with the ministerial staff to clarify and determine an appropriate level of response.

Medical Emergency

- If there is a medical emergency, the parents should be contacted immediately, the appropriate staff member contacted, and 911 called as warranted.
- All youth participating in off-site church programs must have a Hancock Church Youth Information form and a Medication Consent form on file. This form will be kept on file for the year with the church.
- Completed Youth Information and Medication Consent forms will be brought on all off-site, overnight events by the adult leader.

Driving

- All occupants of a vehicle must use an individual seat belt (no multiple belting) at all times during the operation of the vehicle.
- No cell phone use while driving except for a true emergency, and then the driver is encouraged to pull off the roadway to a safe spot

Form C-3

Hancock United Church of Christ
1912 Massachusetts Ave
Lexington, MA 02421
781-862-4220

C-4 DOCUMENTATION OF REFERENCE CHECK

Reference Check for Youth/Children Worker or Volunteer

Applicant Name: _____

Reference Name: _____

Date of Contact: _____

Method of Contact

- Telephone
- Email
- Other

Reference Check Type (check one):

- Former employer
- Personal
- Former Volunteer
- Other organization (please specify)

How long have you known the applicant? Under what circumstances?

What is your knowledge of this person's work with children/youth?

How would you describe this person's manner of interaction with children/youth?

Based on your observation, is this person reliable and dependable?

Would you feel comfortable with this person being alone with a small group of children/youth for a period of time? Why or why not?

Do you have any concerns we should know about regarding this person's ability to work with children/youth?

Were you ever made aware of circumstances in which this person's care of children/youth was called into question or criticized? If yes, please describe the circumstances.

Were you ever made aware of any criminal or civil investigations or actions taken against this person concerning youth? If yes, please describe the circumstances.

Do you recommend this person to work with children/youth? Why or why not?

Is this person eligible to work with your organization's children again in the future? If no, why not?

Additional notes or comments:

Signed (person checking reference): _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

1912 Massachusetts Ave
Lexington, Massachusetts 02421
Telephone: (781) 862-4220

D-1 CHURCH SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Child #1 (Please list additional children on the reverse side. For infants and toddlers complete separate registration form.)

Name of Student: _____
(First) (Last) (Goes by)

Student's Date of Birth: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Grade as of 9/1 _____

Parent/Guardian's Name (s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: _____

Parents' Email Addresses: _____

Please list any special needs, allergies, talents or interests that we should be aware of in order to help us care for your child's health and learning: _____

In order to share the good news of the ministries of Hancock Church, we sometimes take photos of children and youth for use on bulletin boards, in our newsletter and on our website. When published on our website we **DO NOT** include any identifying information (name, address, etc.) about the child along with the photo. **Please indicate if you do _____; do not _____ authorize the use and reproduction of your child(ren)'s photo(s) by Hancock Church.**

Additional Information: _____

Please indicate an area in which you are willing to help our program this year:

- *Co-Teach a Rotation Workshop* (8 Sundays) in the Fall/Winter ___; or Winter/Spring ___:
 Storytelling and Drama ___ Food and People ___ Arts and Crafts ___
 Community Service ___ Study and Reflection ___ Fun and Games ___
- *Shepherd a class* (8 Sundays/year):
 PreK-1 _____ Grades 2-3 _____ Grades 4-5 _____
- *Help with childcare during worship:*
 Nursery _____ Toddlers _____

Parent's/Guardian's signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Child #2

Name of Student: _____
(First) (Last) (Goes by)

Student's Date of Birth: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Grade as of 9/1 _____

Please list any special needs, allergies, talents or interests that we should be aware of in order to help us care for your child's health and learning: _____

Child #3

Name of Student: _____
(First) (Last) (Goes by)

Student's Date of Birth: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Grade as of 9/1 _____

Please list any special needs, allergies, talents or interests that we should be aware of in order to help us care for your child's health and learning: _____

Child #4

Name of Student: _____
(First) (Last) (Goes by)

Student's Date of Birth: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Grade as of 9/1 _____

Please list any special needs, allergies, talents or interests that we should be aware of in order to help us care for your child's health and learning: _____

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D-2 INFANT AND TODDLER REGISTRATION

Child's Name: _____
(First) (Last) (Goes by)

Date of Birth: _____ Male ___ Female _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: _____

Parents' Email Addresses: _____

Brothers and Sisters (Names and ages): _____

Please list any special needs or allergies that we should be aware of to help us care for your child's health and safety: _____

Is your child: in diapers _____; working on toilet training _____; toilet trained _____?

Are there special words your child uses for toileting or is there anything else we should know?

Do we have permission to change your child's diaper? Yes _____; No _____

When your child is upset what helps to calm him/her down? _____

Parent's/Guardian's signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Welcome!



To Hancock Church Sunday School!

MY NAME IS



**I AM HERE
WITH**

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E-1 HANCOCK YOUTH INFORMATION FORM

This form requests contact and medical information throughout the school year 2010-2011 for youth participating in the Hancock Youth Group (HYG) or the Junior Youth Organization (JYO). Information provided in this document will be kept on file at the Hancock Church Office, and transported with youth leaders and chaperones to off-site trips. Should any of this information change over the course of the school year, please contact the church office (781-862-4220). Information included on this form may be requested again for overnight trips. This is not a permission form but simply a youth information form.

Youth's Name:	Home Phone #:
Youth's Address:	Youth Cell Phone #:
Youth's Birth date:	School attending:
Parent/Guardian Name:	Cell Phone #:
Parent/Guardian Name:	Cell Phone #:
Emergency name if parents cannot be reached:	Emergency contact #:
Youth's Doctor:	Dr's Phone #:
Insurance Company	Policies and procedures #:
Health concerns, physical limitations and/or allergies:	

In order to share the good news of the ministries of Hancock Church, we sometimes take photos of children and youth for use on bulletin boards, in our newsletter and on our website. When published on our website we DO NOT include any identifying information (name, address, etc.) about the child along with the photo. **Please indicate if you do _____; do not _____ authorize the use and reproduction of your child(ren)'s photo(s) by Hancock Church.**

Additional Information: _____

If there are other concerns or information not included on this form that you wish us to know, please contact a minister.

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E-2 HANCOCK TRIP PERMISSION FORM

Trip Destination:		Trip Date(s):	
Departure Location:		Departure Time:	
Return Location		Estimated Return Time	
Purpose of Trip			
Transportation Provided:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Private Car	<input type="checkbox"/> Rented Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Chartered Bus
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Driver	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Driver	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Adult Driver	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Driver
Trip Leader:		Leader/emergency # (emergencies only):	

Complete form below, detach at dotted line, and return bottom to Trip Leader or the church office

.....

_____ has permission to go with HYG/JYO to

On _____ (date)

My youth has a Hancock Youth Information Form on file in the Hancock Church Office. I understand that every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians in the event of an emergency. In an emergency requiring medical care and treatment, I authorize any physician, hospital or other healthcare provider to give care to this student. I also give permission for the transport of my youth to/from a doctor and/or hospital by a chaperone or ambulance.

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature

_____ Date

E-3 MEDICATION RELEASE FORM

I give my son/daughter _____ permission to have in their possession any medication(s) they may require during the trip to _____. I have reviewed the proper dosage and use of any medication(s) with my son/daughter and give them my permission to self administer their medication(s) as needed.

I understand the chaperones on this trip will not be responsible for holding medications or administering medications.

_____(signature of parent)

_____ Date

I will be bringing my own medication(s) with me on the mission trip to _____. I have been instructed as to the proper administration of my medication(s). I will be responsible for the safe use and storage of my medication(s) during this trip.

_____(signature of HYG participant)

_____ Date

I will not share any medications with other participants during the course of this trip, this includes over the counter medications. (The chaperones will have basic first aid kit available for participants).

_____(signature of HYG participant)

_____ Date

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E-4 UPPER ROOM GUIDELINES

General

- Be respectful
- Leave the room as clean as you found it
- Guests to youth events (including regular meetings in the Upper Room) should provide adult leaders with their parents' contact information in case of an emergency
- When at a supervised event, kids should notify an adult if they have to leave the Upper Room to be in another part of the church (e.g. to use the bathroom downstairs)
- Games (e.g. sardines) may be played in the Upper Room and church building at the discretion of the staff and/or adult supervisors. They must be mindful that
 - a) a single youth is never left alone with an adult
 - b) the game does not disturb other groups in the church
 - c) the game is not a risk to the safety of kids or to church property
- HYG members should notify a leader before leaving an Upper Room event
- JYO members should not leave a church event early without the consent of their parents
- JYO members should not be in the Upper Room without adult supervision or the consent of their parents

HYG Rules for Non-Supervised Time

- There must be at least 6 people
- At least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the group must be HYG kids
- Tell an administrative assistant before using the Upper Room
- Notify a minister or staff member
- Don't use the room outside of normal office hours (M-F, 9-4 pm)
- Call an HYG officer to let him/her know if they are going to use the room
- Turn off all the lights and leave the room as clean as it was found

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E-5 PARTICIPATION COVENANT GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH

Hancock United Church of Christ in Lexington is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following process reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a safe place where people can experience the love of God through relationships with others. The following process will be completed at the beginning of the year for all youth programs (HYG,OWL, Confirmation, JYO). If situations arise during the year (e.g. group trips) which require additional topics to be included in the covenant, it will be amended or another covenant will be created.

1. Post ahead of time a list of the non-negotiable rules that are in the Safer Church guidelines, Section E (e.g. rules about driving, confidentiality, drugs and alcohol, sexual activity, bullying)
2. Ask the group the following question: "What other ground rules can the group adopt so that each person in the group feels comfortable participating?" As participants brainstorm, list their suggestions on newsprint. Try to use positive language. Topics and possible guidelines to discuss include:
 - Expected attendance
 - Be open-minded
 - No put-downs; only pull-ups
 - Start and end on time
 - Keep what is said in the group confidential
 - Use "I" language / speak for yourself
 - Be a team player
 - Participate but share time (Step up/ step back)
 - Have as much fun as possible
 - Cell phones will only be used to help make activities work
3. Once the group has reached a consensus on a list of operating principles, write the principles on newsprint beneath the title Group Covenant. Explain that a Group Covenant is a statement that outlines the rules that the group agrees to follow while they are together. Have participants sign the covenant. Post it somewhere in the room where everyone can see it at all times.
4. Email the covenant to the parents of the youth so they know the rules.

E-6 SAMPLE YOUTH RETREAT COVENANT

Mission Trip and Retreat Covenant Hancock United Church of Christ

I covenant with my God and my fellow Hancock Youth Group members to be open to the surprising work of God on this trip, even when it comes through the unexpected (like bad food, exhausting work, or people who are very different from me). I will live as a part of a short-term experiment in Christian community, showing respect and attentive love to each person in our group.

For the days of this trip, I will seek to follow the example of Jesus who did not come to be served, but to serve. I will participate in all activities that have been planned for me, including any assigned work or chores. I will be hospitable to strangers.

I will avoid actions or attitudes that might detract from the building of Christian community or the mission we have been sent to accomplish (such as complaint, gossip, profanity, making fun of or excluding others, etc.) I understand there will be absolutely no tolerance of the use or possession of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or weapons, including, but not limited to, cigarette lighters and knives.

I will honor the adults who have so graciously given their time in order that this trip might happen. I will respect and obey them without challenge or complaint because I know that they love me and always have my best interests in mind. I will also listen to my elected HYG officers.

I will not destroy or take any property that does not belong to me, but I will instead leave things better than they were before I arrived.

I will put my romantic relationships on hold for the duration of this trip, directing my full attention and energy to spiritual growth, community building, and the mission we have been sent to accomplish. I will refrain from any and all sexual activity, including, but not limited to, any public or private displays of romantic affection.

I will honor the group and the importance of the time we have together by living within these basic behavioral guidelines for the trip:

- I will be ready and on time for all activities.
- I will not wander off from the group, and will stay with at least two friends, being careful that an adult always knows where I am.
- I will let girls' bedrooms be for girls only, and boys' bedrooms be for boys only.
- I will obey the assigned "lights out" instructions.
- I will only use my cell phone for purposes related to the trip or to communicate with my family.

In the event I choose to break this Covenant, I understand that I may be sent home prior to the trip's end at my parents' expense. This decision will be made by the ministers on the trip in consultation with the adult chaperones.

This Covenant is committed to by:

Youth Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

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F-1 GUIDELINES FOR MAKING DIGITAL COVENANTS

1. Digital Covenants should acknowledge that materials posted on Church Sponsored sites (and/or group pages) are not CONFIDENTIAL.
2. Digital Covenants should acknowledge that content deemed inappropriate will be removed from the site or group page.
3. Digital Covenants for HYG and JYO should address the following issues:
 - Appropriate language
 - Eligibility of membership (do you have to be a member of a HYG or JYO, are parents of current members eligible, are their age requirements/ restrictions for participation, etc.)
 - Content that can be posted/published on the site or page (Rule of thumb: post your information and not others)
 - Who, how and when may photos be tagged (members identified by name; for example, individuals may tag themselves in photos but should not tag others)
 - Stipulate appropriate and inappropriate (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, sexual acts, etc.) behavior of members and the consequence for inappropriate behavior
 - Transitions, due to departure, loss of eligibility or removal of youth members and/ or adult leaders
 - Mandatory reporting laws will be followed

Form F - 1

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F-2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SAFE CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND PROCEDURES

I, _____ have received, read and understand the “Safe Church Policies
and Procedures” for Hancock Church.

Signature: _____

Date: _____