



Policy for Use of Church Property and Facilities

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POLICIES

Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church recognizes that providing its physical facilities in support of other compatible Christian organizations and programs can increase our outreach and ministry in service to God and our community. At the same time, it is necessary that such use of facilities and equipment be controlled in the best interest of the church. The intent of this statement is to establish consistent requirements for any group use of our church facilities.

The Trustees and Church Council have determined that permission to use church facilities shall be granted ONLY under the following conditions:

- Each organization using the facilities has adequate liability insurance- (Please submit certificate of insurance with application);
- Trustees and Church Council shall be held harmless by the user for any liability that arises from the use of the church facilities by any organization or individual not connected with Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC;
- Users shall be financially liable for damage to the facilities/equipment and for proper chaperonage;
- Suggested donations are contained herein and appropriate usage fees are charged where applicable.
- If any children or youth under the age of 18 are involved, users will comply with Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC's Child Protection Policy and Safe Sanctuary policy (a copy of which will be included with the Facility Use Package).

Groups desiring to use church facilities must confirm acceptance of the terms herein specified. All required application forms must be completed and approved by the church. Further, all usage fees, etc., must be paid not less than ten days before use of the facilities shall begin. An exception to this timeline is use of the facilities on a recurring basis, for which payment of usage fees is due on the 1st of each month. Payment of usage fees or donations for use of our facilities may be paid in cash or by check. If a check is used, it shall be made out to Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church. Renewal of permission to use stated church facilities depends, in part, on satisfactory compliance with requirements during the previous period of use. Groups that use the facilities on a year-round basis must renew their application each September 1st.

The Trustees and Church Council of Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church reserves the right to accept or deny requests for use of church facilities and to cancel or modify established agreements in the church's best interest regarding property management, requirements for use of the facilities for church activities (*which shall always have priority*), and church relationships with governmental regulations.

Requests for use of the facilities and/or equipment are to be processed through the church office. Requests will be honored on a first-come, first-serve basis as recorded on the church calendar. Regularly scheduled activities of Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church have priority over all other requests. A refundable damage deposit of \$150 must accompany this application. Checks are payable to Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church. It is understood that this deposit will be returned if permission is denied, but not if user changes plans without notifying Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC by 10 days prior to scheduled event. The balance of the total usage fees due by 10 working days prior to the

event. If the usage fees are not paid within seven (7) days, the reservation is not considered firm and may be superseded. Suggested additional donations may be made at any time prior to or after the event.

TERMS

The terms “single event” and “recurring use” are used throughout this policy package. “*Single event*” is defined as one event a year. “*Recurring use*” is defined as use of specific rooms/areas more than once a year for regularly scheduled programs or activities.

REGULATIONS

1. All persons and groups desiring use of the church facilities and/or equipment for purposes that are not church related must sign an agreement with Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church. The agreement acknowledges the group’s intent to abide by these policies and to accept responsibility for any damages to the facilities and/or equipment.
2. The using group must be an organization whose purposes and activities contribute to the welfare of the community. Further, the using group’s practices and beliefs must be compatible with the practices and beliefs of Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church.
3. The objectives of the using group and the activities conducted on church property must not be in conflict with the mission of this church.
4. Individuals or members of the organization named on the application for using the church facilities shall be responsible at all times for the conduct of the guests/participants. At least one pre-designated person must remain on the premises until all guests/persons involved in the event have left the premises. We ask that you list on the contract which person(s) will be responsible to stay on the premises until all the guests have left.
5. Unless specific exception to this rule has been granted in writing by the Trustees or Church Council, outside groups using church property or facilities may not charge a fee or receive monetary remuneration for services rendered on church property, except to defray:
 - a) Church usage fees
 - b) Instructional expenses for materials and leadership
 - c) Organizational dues or assessments to meet group operating expenses.
6. Alcoholic beverages, liquors, or other non-physician-prescribed drugs will not be permitted on church property at any time.
7. Smoking will not be permitted on church property.
8. Decorations used must be flameproof and shall not be attached to fixed portions of the facilities without specific approval in writing. The sanctuary/fellowship hall may not be permanently decorated using any signs, symbols, etc., except as specifically approved by the Trustees of Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church. However, floral arrangements may be used. Decorations must not damage the facilities or furnishings in any way. Pew ribbons only may be used to attach decorations to the pew ends. The user group must remove all decorations when finished using the facilities. No taping of any type, adhesive, staples or tacks are to be used on any wall surface or furnishings.

9. Candles are not permitted unless for ceremonial use. If used, lit candles must be “dripleless” and must not be placed on the sound system, organ, piano, and any other instruments or audio visual equipment. Lit candles must be placed on a plate or in a holder.
10. Building use hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Evening events will be concluded and the building closed by 8:30 p.m., unless special arrangements have been made.
11. User groups will be responsible for leaving the facilities in a condition that is comfortable for the next using group. For example, all furniture and equipment must be returned in its customary position, the kitchen left in clean condition, dishes washed and put away, floors swept, waste baskets emptied into the outside commercial trash bin, etc.
12. The using group shall be held responsible for all loss or damage to church property during periods when they are using the facilities.
13. No facilities, equipment, furniture, or kitchen items shall be added moved or removed without prior approval from the Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC Trustees. Due to church policy no equipment, furniture, or kitchen items are permitted to be loaned out or used outside the building in which they are found.
14. At no time shall equipment or facilities other than those covered by prior approval be used.
15. Permission to use church facilities or equipment shall not include liability on the part of the church for property damage or personal injuries resulting from user-group activities.
16. The communion table may not be used for any purpose other than its primary symbolic function.
17. Youth groups (including our own Youth), using the facility and/or equipment must have adequate adult supervision. All children on church property must be under adult supervision and adhere to the policies included in the facility use agreement.
18. Use of the sound system, organ, piano, and any other instruments or audio visual equipment in sanctuary is permitted only under the supervision of persons authorized by the Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC Trustees. If a group has a long-term agreement for use of the church facilities, arrangements may be made for training select individuals. Only after proper training will select individuals be authorized to operate the sound system and keyboard.
19. User groups with a long-term agreement will be given training on how to properly open, close and secure the facilities.
20. No sale of merchandise on church property, including parking areas, may be conducted without prior approval.
21. No food or beverage is allowed in the Sanctuary. Use of the Sanctuary will be reserved for acts of Christian worship and practice, subject to the discretion of the Pastor.
22. Church policy prohibits the use of games of chance or gambling on the church premises. This includes such activities as raffles or lotteries.

23. Supervision of children and youth is required. No fewer than two adults must be present at all times during any program or event involving children. Every group requires adherence to the church safe sanctuary guidelines.

24. All switchable lights must be turned off upon the departure of the group. All doors, interior and exterior, must be locked upon the departure of the group.

25. Every group including catering services is expected to leave the kitchen and its equipment clean and in place as it was found. In case of breakage or damage to kitchen materials, the responsible party is expected to correct or pay for the damage, with building damage deposit applying.

26. Parking will be in authorized areas only. Blocking of any driveway is not permitted. Handicapped spaces must be observed.

27. Excessive outside noise is prohibited.

FEES

All persons/groups approved for use of church facilities are required to pay applicable usage fees as stated in this policy package. The Trustees may consider waiving or discounting some usage fees. Any discount or waiver granted represents an assumption of these usage fees by Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC in support of the activities of the user groups.

A deposit is required to reserve a wedding date on our church calendar. ***The remaining fees must be paid at 10 days prior to the wedding rehearsal date. The marriage license should be presented to the wedding coordinator at that time as well.***

A refundable damage deposit of \$150 must accompany this application. Checks are payable to Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church. This deposit will be returned if permission is denied, but not if user changes plans without notifying Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC by 10 days prior to scheduled event. The balance of the total usage fees is due by 10 working days prior to the event. If the usage fees are not paid within seven (7) days, the reservation is not considered firm and may be superseded. Suggested additional donations may be made at any time prior to or after the event.

Current donations and usage fees are stated in the "Usage Fee Structure," found in this package.

INSURANCE

By signing this application, applicants are agreeing with the following liability release statement. This statement releases the Trustees and Church Council from any liability whatsoever prior to permission to use the facility.

The Certificate of Insurance shall include the following clauses:

THE INDIVIDUAL(S)/ORGANIZATION APPLYING HEREIN SHALL INDEMNIFY AND SAVE HARMLESS, SANDBRIDGE COMMUNITY CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, THE TRUSTEES, THE CHURCH COUNCIL, THE MINISTERS, THE STAFF, AND ALL OTHERS WHO MAY ACT ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH FROM ALL SUITS AND ACTIONS OF EVERY NATURE AND DESCRIPTION ARISING OUT OF THE USE/OR RENTAL OF CHURCH FACILITIES AS DESCRIBED AND AGREED TO HEREIN.

SANDBRIDGE COMMUNITY CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, ITS TRUSTEES AND EMPLOYEES ARE NAMED AS ADDITIONAL INSURED ON ALL LIABILITY POLICIES (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY) AS REQUIRED BY WRITTEN CONTRACT & THE COVERAGE PROVIDED TO THEM WILL APPLY AS PRIMARY AND NONCONTRIBUTORY BEFORE ANY OTHER INSURANCE MAINTAINED BY THEM. GENERAL LIABILITY PROVIDED TO THE ADDITIONAL INSURED WILL INCLUDE COMPLETED OPERATIONS COVERAGE. WAIVER OF SUBROGATION IN FAVOR OF SANDBRIDGE COMMUNITY CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, ITS TRUSTEES, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES IS PROVIDED ON ALL POLICIES. "IN THE EVENT OF CANCELLATION BY THE INSURANCE COMPANY (IES) THE POLICY (IES) HAS BEEN ENDORSED TO PROVIDE 30 DAYS NOTICE OF CANCELLATION (EXCEPT FOR NON-PAYMENT) TO THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER SHOWN BELOW."

The Trustees may consider waiving the above requirement upon written request.

WEDDING POLICY

The officiating minister and pre-martial counseling sessions with the minister typically begins two months prior to the wedding date. The actual fee is at the discretion of the minister.

Your rehearsal will be scheduled for 5:00 pm the day before your wedding, unless other arrangements have been made with the minister and wedding coordinator. Please remind your wedding party of the importance of being on time. The rehearsal should last no longer than one hour.

If your wedding party includes a flower girl, we ask that you would please be sure to pick up the petals from the aisle after the ceremony.

Please do not use an aisle runner. It can become a "trip hazard" for you and your guests.

There are minimal guidelines in place for wedding photographers and videographers. Please remind those who record your special day to speak with our wedding coordinator about our photography guidelines.

Most Specifically:

1. NO FLASH photography is permitted during the wedding ceremony **after** the bride enters the sanctuary. The photographer **may take flash photos** as grandparents, parents, attendants and the bride enter the sanctuary during the processional.
2. Photographers must remain at the rear of the sanctuary (no closer than three pews up from the back) during the processional and wedding ceremony. It is not permitted for photographers to "wander" up the center aisle or in the chancel area during the ceremony.
3. Photographers and videographers may move around **the balcony** freely during the ceremony; but, again, no flash.
4. Videographers must remain in one location if recording on the main floor, usually in the choir loft or behind the organ (at the front or rear of the sanctuary), during the ceremony. Please confirm the location with the wedding coordinator.
5. Do not use birdseed or rice on the church grounds.
6. Use of the Fellowship Hall/Kitchen includes a separate cleaning fee of \$150 and evening events will be concluded and the building closed by 8:30 p.m., unless special arrangements have been made.
7. No alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property.
8. Please remember to retrieve all of your belongings from the church prior to your leaving. Place all trash in the appropriate receptacles.
9. A deposit is required to reserve your wedding date on our church calendar. The remaining fees must be paid at least 10 days prior to the wedding rehearsal date. Your marriage license should be presented to the wedding coordinator at that time as well.

Application for Use of Church Facilities

Name of Group: _____

Date of Application: _____

Single Event Description of event: _____

Recurring use of specific rooms/areas for regularly scheduled program

Specific Times Facilities Required: _____

(Circle) Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Specific Date(s) Required: _____

Estimated Number of Attendees: _____

Rooms/areas to be used: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone #: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Please note the name of the responsible party who will remain on the premises until all guests/persons involved in the event have left the premises and who will accept responsibility for directing the proper use for the facilities:

Responsible Party: _____ Phone #: _____

The applicant, its officers, directors, agents and employees (collectively "the Applicant Group") and the individual executing this application hereby waive and release any and all claims, demands, and causes of action that they may have or that may arise against Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC and its officers, trustees, agents, Ministers, employees, Church Council, and members (collectively "Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC Affiliates") as a result of the use of church facilities pursuant to this application. The applicant and the individuals executing this application shall indemnify and hold harmless Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC and Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC Affiliates from and against any and all damages, losses, claims, lawsuits, costs and expenses including attorney fees arising out of or associated with the use of church property. Further, the user group will provide a certificate of liability insurance in favor of Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC in the amount of at least \$500,000. Agreement for use of church facilities is subject to Trustee and Church Council approval. Staff representatives of Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC shall have authority to act on the Trustees and Church Council's behalf.

We have read and agree to comply with the "Policies and Regulations Regarding Use of Church Facilities" and the attached Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

Printed Name and Signature of Applicant: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

E-mail Address: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Approved: Yes No Trustee/Minister Approved: _____

Date of Approval: _____

Donations/Usage Fees Paid \$ _____ Receipt No.: _____

Note: Copy to be given to applicant after approval. Original application to be retained in the church files.

Usage Fee Structure

	Location	Single Event
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sanctuary (non-wedding)	\$300
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fellowship Hall	\$200
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fellowship Hall & Kitchen	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 nd Floor Classrooms	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disciples Classroom	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/>	Library	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Classroom	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Security Deposit	\$150
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ministerial Fees <i>Fee is reduced by \$100 if not using the services of SCCUMC pastor.</i>	\$375
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facility rental for the rehearsal & wedding ceremony - Sanctuary.	\$300 (for non-members)
<input type="checkbox"/>	The facility rental for the Fellowship Hall for a wedding reception.	\$200 (for non-members)
<input type="checkbox"/>	The services of the Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC musician	\$150
<input type="checkbox"/>	The services of a Sound Technician/AV operator for wedding. <i>The fee is \$75 if attending rehearsal prior to wedding.</i>	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/>	The services of the Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC wedding coordinator. <i>You must use the services of our church-provided wedding coordinator.</i>	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/>	The services of the Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC Custodian – Sanctuary Use	\$150
<input type="checkbox"/>	The services of the Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC Custodian – Fellowship/Kitchen	\$150
<input type="checkbox"/>	A deposit is required to reserve your wedding date on our church calendar. <i>Final payment due 2 weeks prior to wedding rehearsal date.</i>	\$250

TOTAL

\$

Signature of Trustee or Authorized Staff Representative: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

The availability of the Nursery is determined by availability of staff and approval by Director of Children’s Ministry. Usage fees for recurring events are negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Hold Harmless Agreement

I/We, the undersigned, in consideration of being allowed to use the property and facilities of Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist Church in Virginia Beach, VA, do agree to hold the said church, its agents, members and employees harmless from any claims, damages or injuries resulting at any time, heretofore or hereafter, arising out of usage of said property and facilities.

Executed on this _____ day of _____, 20____

Signed _____

On behalf of (organization): _____

Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Protecting Our Children and Youth

Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist welcomes everyone and is committed to helping individuals and families grow in faith. Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC recognizes that Christian service is a necessary and fulfilling part of each person's faith journey and offers many different ministry opportunities. Among these are opportunities to serve with the children and youth of our parish. As much as possible, we want everyone who feels called to be able to serve in ministry with our children and youth.

We also recognize that the church is not immune from the painful reality of child abuse. We understand the devastating damage done to a child's growth when abused within a church setting. As a church, we must take intentional measures to protect our children.

This policy is designed to provide safety and openness: to provide protection for our children and youth while maintaining an atmosphere that welcomes all seekers. By providing many avenues of service with varying levels of supervisory responsibilities and screening requirements, we are striving to meet the spiritual needs of all congregational members. By developing and implementing safety procedures and precautions, we are trying to ensure that the spiritual growth and development of our children and youth is not disrupted by the preventable evil of child abuse.

This policy will:

- Establish a procedure for reducing the risk of child abuse which is consistent with scripture, the Social principles of the United Methodist Church and civil law;
- Establish minimum guidelines for educating our members and staff about child abuse through training;
- Establish a procedure for reporting and responding to allegations of abuse;
- Do everything reasonable to assure a caring, loving, open environment where everyone can worship, study, serve, and continue his/her spiritual journey.

This comprehensive plan presents procedures for [Screening](#), [Supervision](#), and [Response](#).

These procedures are the minimum necessary precautions for protecting children. Sandbridge Community Chapel United Methodist and Sandbridge Chapel Day School will endeavor to monitor updates and recommendations by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, by the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, by the State of Virginia and may modify these procedures.

DEFINITIONS:

"Abuse" means harm or a threat of physical or emotional harm to a child or vulnerable adult or by a parent, guardian, or other person. Abuse includes: (a) the infliction of physical or emotional injury by other than accidental means; (b) the creation of a risk, or allowing the creation of risk, to a child by other than accidental means; (c) committing or allowing to be committed an act of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or prostitution upon the child.

"Child " or "children" or "youth" means any person who has not reached his/her eighteenth birthday.

"Exploitation" means obtaining or using another person's resources, including but not limited to funds, assets, or property, by deception, intimidation, or similar means, with the intent to deprive the person of those resources.

"Sexual abuse" includes, but is not necessarily limited to, any contacts or interactions in which the parent, guardian, or other person uses or allows, permits, or encourages the use of the child for the purposes of the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person.

"Sexual exploitation" includes, but is not limited to, a situation in which a parent, guardian, or other person allows, permits, or encourages the child to engage in an act which constitutes prostitution under Virginia law; or a parent, guardian, or other person having custodial control or supervision of a child or responsible for his/her welfare, allows, permits, or encourages the child to engage in an act of obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child as provided for under Virginia law.

"Supervision" means to oversee or direct a ministry or activity.

"Vulnerable Adult " means a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who, because of a mental or physical dysfunction, is unable to manage his/her own resources, carry out the activity of daily living, or protect himself/herself from neglect, exploitation, or a hazardous or abusive situation without assistance from others.

Safe Sanctuaries Screening Procedures

Careful screening is one way to reduce the abuse of children. We recognize that screening of children's workers is a morally complex and controversial issue. Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC requires screening of all paid Staff persons and for all individuals 18 years of age or older who apply for an unpaid position as a volunteer children's worker responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children.

The decision to screen is based on criteria inherent to the position and is not based on the personal qualities of the volunteer. In all cases, screening must be accompanied by careful application of safe operating procedures.

An employer or individual who intentionally fails to require an applicant for employment or volunteer service to submit the required certifications commits a misdemeanor of the 3rd degree.

All visitors and unpaid youth aged 14 thru 17, who participate in children's activities, shall be required to provide:

- Standard contact information

All paid staff persons, and volunteers 18 years of age or older must obtain:

The Virginia Conference has partnered with [ScreeningOne](#) to conduct volunteer and staff background checks for the conference and United Methodist churches in Virginia. Through this agreement, the conference has established a preferred product package that combines various criminal background searches for an industry-best, pre-employment, criminal history report. Failure by employee or volunteer to disclose information that would be a basis for denying employment or volunteer status is a third degree misdemeanor.

Parents and guardians are always welcome to accompany their children in all children's activities. These persons will be considered "visitors." A visitor must sign in/out and is **not** counted in the Two-Adult rule.

Persons with pending Criminal/Child Abuse Clearance/FBI Criminal History Report or Affidavit applications may serve in Children's Activities when a cleared, non-related adult is present. No outside group may use Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC's facilities where children will be involved (either as participants or childcare) unless they follow Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC's policies, which include background clearances, the Two-Adult rule, etc.

Individuals who have been convicted of child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, or ritual) or whose name appears on Megan's List, may not work in any church-sponsored activity or program for preschoolers, children and youth.

Safe Sanctuaries Operational/Supervision Procedures

Providing a holy place of safety for children requires conscientious and intentional supervision. These procedures are designed to reduce the possibility of abuse to children and to protect persons from unwarranted accusations. These are minimum standards. Each Children's Activity may adopt more stringent standards as necessary.

1. Training is a requirement for all staff persons and volunteers working with children in Children's Activities.
 - The Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC or Virginia Annual Conference Safe Sanctuary training must be taken every three years. Clergy and Directors must take required training to be considered Mandated Reporters.
 1. All training documentation for all staff/volunteers will be maintained by the Day School Director, Chair of SPRC and the Chair of Trustees.
 2. All new staff are required to attend a Safe Sanctuaries training within their first 6 months of employment and meet annually with Clergy to receive a revised/updated copy of the Safe Sanctuaries policy and have a time of review, questions and answers.
2. Minimum supervisory standards include the "Two-Adult Rule." No matter the size of the group, **two non-related** adult employees or volunteers shall be present with the ministry or event participants at all times. The "Two-Adult Rule" standard not only helps provide a safe and loving environment for the children, it also provides volunteers with more encouragement, creativity, and flexibility. No child or youth will be left unsupervised while attending a Sandbridge Community Chapel UMC sponsored ministry or event.
 - In the event that child care/supervision services are not provided by the church for a church sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.), the parents or legal guardians shall be fully responsible for their children during the ministry or event. In the event that supervised programming for youth is not provided by the church for any church sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.), the parents or legal guardians shall be fully responsible for the supervision of their youths during the ministry or event. Said children or youth shall remain in the presence of their parents or legal guardians, and shall at no time be left alone and unsupervised. Should the parents or legal guardians arrange for their own child care/supervision of their children or youth for a church sponsored ministry or event to occur within the event facility, said child care/supervision shall be in compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries Policies. If parents/legal guardians refuse to comply with the Safe Sanctuaries Policies, they and their children and/or youth will be asked to leave the ministry or event.
3. No person shall serve as a Children's Minister or a Teacher unless he or she is at least 18 years old (unless the current insurance of SCCUMC requires the age of 21) and at least 5 years older than the children they will be supervising.
4. Each room or space where children are being cared for shall have a window(s) left uncovered in the door or the door shall be left open. All Children's Activities shall occur in open view.
5. Whenever possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs, but should a child require assistance, the outer bathroom door will remain open while an employee or volunteer assists the child, with an additional employee or volunteer also being present.

6. If the Children's Activity is an outdoor program or in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this Policy, the staff person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure the setting suits the activity and the children are properly supervised.

Safe Sanctuaries Responding To and Reporting Plan

All Clergy and Day School Directors are official Mandated Reporters. All church staff (employees), and all volunteers who, as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child or have direct contact with children are responsible to report any suspicion of abuse to those Mandated Reporters. Mandated Reporters must immediately communicate to each other any reported incident. If you have reasonable cause to suspect a child is a victim of child abuse, a report must be made, without exception. This includes situations where

- i. you come into contact with a child that has been abused,
- ii. an individual makes a specific disclosure to you that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse or
- iii. an individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to you that he/she has committed child abuse.

The goals of immediate reporting of incidents of suspected child abuse are to ensure the safety and welfare of the victim, provide protection for children from further abuse and facilitate the prompt involvement of appropriate legal authorities in responding to incidents of suspected abuse.

Once an incident of child abuse occurs or an allegation is made, it is crucial that it be dealt with speedily and in a clearly outlined manner. A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in a Children's Activity, the entire staff of that activity shall be at the service of all official investigating agencies.

Responding to incidents of suspected child abuse or suspected abuse:

In the event that an employee or volunteer suspects that a child is the victim of abuse, the employee or volunteer should reassure the child that their safety and well-being is of paramount concern, following which the suspected abuse should be immediately reported to the appropriate legal authorities, as set forth below.

The child should be calmly moved to another safe place onsite in view of at least two other **non-related** adults. Someone safe and familiar should stay with the child or at all times.

The employee or volunteer who suspects that a child is the victim of abuse should inform the child victim in an age appropriate manner that a report will be made, or has been made, to the appropriate legal authorities. Should the child be in need of medical attention, appropriate medical professionals or 911 should be contacted for assistance.

Persons, who are suspected to have engaged in abuse, if on site at a ministry or event, will be immediately removed from the ministry or event setting until further direction is given by the Pastor.

Persons who are the objects of the report shall refrain from all children's activities until the incident report is resolved. The Pastors will take responsibility for informing the person they are to be removed from Children's Activities and inform them of steps to be taken in the investigation. In any removal of a person from any Children's Activities, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.

Once the Clergy has received the report, they will immediately contact the Department of Social Services and the District Superintendent. The Department of Social Services ONLY will inform the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Reporting of suspected child abuse:

As caring Christians, we are committed to protect and advocate for children/youth participating in the life of the church. The church is entrusted to provide an emotionally safe, spiritually grounded, healthy environment for children, youth, and adults in which they are protected from abuse. It is our legal and moral responsibility to report suspected abuse whenever it comes to our attention regardless of where that abuse takes place. We shall report suspected abuse to stop potentially existing abuse and to prevent further abuse. To report abuse is to witness to the world of the love and justice of God. Reporting abuse is a form of ministering to the needs of those crying out for help. If abuse occurs, it is our intention to act as an advocate for all affected persons, providing support, information, assistance and intervention. We seek to provide a supportive atmosphere, offering both objectivity and empathy as we seek to create a climate in which healing can take place.

If abuse is suspected by, observed by or disclosed to a volunteer and/or paid staff member of the church, that person shall report the incident immediately to the pastor or designee. (If the accused is the pastor, see information below.) Be prepared to do the following:

- A. Ensure the protection of and tend to the immediate needs of the child, as the situation requires.
- B. IMMEDIATELY contact the senior pastor or pastor on call.
- C. IMMEDIATELY notify the proper authorities (immediate supervisor, designated church child protection representative or the adult in charge of the event.) This person will:
 - 1. provide written documentation concerning the incident on the designated form
 - a. (Note: Do not attempt an investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.)
 - 2. notify the pastor in charge. If the pastor is the accused party, the designee will notify the chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent.
 - 3. give written documentation to the pastor and/or Chair of the Staff Parish Committee.
- D. The pastor will notify DSS immediately and DSS will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- E. After having reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the incident is to be reported immediately to the church's attorney, the church's insurance company, and the district superintendent. The district superintendent will report the allegation to the bishop's office. Do not try to handle this without professional assistance. If the accused is a clergy (deacon or elder) member of an annual conference, local pastor, or diaconal minister, provisions of The 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church must be followed.
- F. A list of emergency numbers will be available to the staff at all times.

G. If the accused is working in a volunteer or paid position with children or youth in the church, immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the person, remove the accused from further involvement with children and/or youth.

H. Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the child or youth is secured, the pastor or other designated person may tell the accused that a report has been made. If the accused is a volunteer or paid staff of the church, that person shall be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished if the accused is a paid staff person of the church, arrangements should be made to either maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

- I. Any contact with the media should be handled by a pre-determined spokesperson. Care will be taken to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved. The spokesperson should generally convey that the matter is under investigation and any comments made prior to the conclusion of the investigation would be premature.

J. A written report of the basic information shall be kept to ensure on-going ministry to, and advocacy for, victims and others involved. A form for this purpose shall be available in the church office. The report shall be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. It shall be filed in a secure place in order to ensure confidentiality. It shall be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed. The church must also file a copy of the report with the bishop's office of the Virginia Annual Conference where it shall remain confidential.