



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
Child & Youth Protection Policy

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## Theological Foundation for Child Safety

We believe that each person is created in the image of God<sup>1</sup> – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because of the fact that man is created in God’s image (a little lower than the angels) each person deserves care, respect, and honor.<sup>2</sup> As those of us who are in the Body of Christ, the Church, we are tasked to live together in peaceful unity and mutual edification,<sup>3</sup> valuing, loving, and caring for each person – particularly the weak.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, we at Hope Church, want to make every effort to establish a community of peace and refuge for all. Specifically, Hope seeks to be a place where we advocate and protect the weakest and most vulnerable among us – the children. Throughout scripture, God has shown love and care for children, but we see his heart most clearly when Jesus Christ, God’s Son and Messiah, came to earth and showed honor and care for children. He did this when he said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”<sup>5</sup> As followers of Jesus, we seek to welcome and care for children and other vulnerable people God has created.

We recognize that our sinfulness can blind us and cause us to intentionally or unintentionally deny the importance of others, particularly the weak and vulnerable. We can easily overlook these young ones, ignoring their voices, even when they are crying out for help. That is why it is essential for Hope to strive by every means possible to uphold the cause of the weak and vulnerable and protect them from those who seek to do them harm. We want Hope’s rented facility to serve as a sanctuary – a place of refuge for all people and a place where grace is extended to everyone. Jesus invites all people to come and follow him in an intimate relationship; then, he invites everyone to join his family, the Church, where they can find a home among God’s people. At the same time, we will take drastic measures to protect the flock against ravenous wolves masquerading in sheep’s clothing.<sup>6</sup> As Jesus even said regarding children: “And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea”<sup>7</sup>. This is one of the harshest statements Jesus said, revealing his heart of justice in regard to children. As Christ’s ambassadors,<sup>8</sup> the Church serves as a representation of God’s Kingdom: establishing and ensuring peace and protection.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:27; Genesis 9:6

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 8:4-6; Romans 12:10

<sup>3</sup> Romans 12:18; Romans 14:19

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 82:3

<sup>5</sup> Luke 18:16

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 7:15

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 18:5-6

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:20

Yet the Church is not a building but God's People. As such, we seek to be the Church – bringing the good news and the Kingdom of God to all people. Our message of hope found in Jesus Christ is our primary purpose. And we carry out this purpose through the mission of building a community to reach a community. This community must be a safe one – full of healing and hope. Hope is a place where we desire the Holy Spirit transform people. In order for this to happen effectively, safety and security are essential. Not only do we seek to preach the Word but to live it out by demonstrating the love of Christ to all people by creating a space and culture of love and care, particularly in the children / youth departments.

Thus, Hope will not tolerate any kind of abusive words or actions in our midst. We will strive by all God's provision to ensure the safety of everyone. In the case of the children who come to Hope, we will seek to provide a safe place where there is no hint of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. In addition to the safety of our children, we will seek to protect any staff or volunteers who desire to serve with children from false or wrongful allegations. In every way, we will seek to create the kind of environment that brings honor to God – Father, Son, and Spirit – and edifies the Body of Christ.

## Definitions

1. Terms related to abuse:
  - i. Emotional / Spiritual Abuse: Emotional/Spiritual abuse is intentional mental, emotional, or spiritual abuse inflicted upon a minor resulting in an observable and material impairment in that child's growth, development, and/or psychological functioning. These include but are not limited to verbal slanders, defamation, "put-downs", and/or obvious and manipulative displays of favoritism.
  - ii. Child/Minor: A minor is any child or youth under the age of 18.
  - iii. Neglect: Neglect is the failure to provide for a minor's basic needs and/or protect a minor from harm.
  - iv. Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is non-accidental injury which is intentionally inflicted upon a minor.
  - v. Sexual Abuse, Adult-to-Minor: Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs by and between an adult and minor that is meant to arouse and/or gratify the sexual desires of the adult at the expense of the child. This abuse occurs when the adult exerts his/her power over the minor and forces, manipulates, coerces, or convinces the child to perform sexual acts.
  - vi. Sexual Abuse, Minor-to-Minor: Sexual abuse perpetrated by a minor is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and another minor where there is no consent given or consent is not possible. This abuse occurs when one minor

exerts power and force over another child and is meant to arouse and/or gratify the sexual desires of the minor acting against the second.

2. Terms related to church in general:

- i. Employee: Any person who works for Hope Church for a salary or wage (Full-Time, Permanent Part-Time, or Part-Time status).
- ii. Volunteer: Any person not employed by Hope Church but who, at any time, teaches, supervises, or helps with children or youth (minors) at any Hope-sponsored activity/event.
- iii. Church-Sponsored Activity/Event: Any activity or event or gathering that is organized and executed by Hope Church staff and/or key volunteers who have permission from Hope. These events are to be designed for specific purposes that relate to Hope's vision and values.

## Selection of Workers

All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities shall meet the following requirements:

1. **Six Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with children until he or she has been regularly attending Hope Church for six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation of the applicant's suitability for working with children. However, this requirement may be waived by Hope's session.

2. **Written Application**

All persons seeking to work regularly with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file with Hope Presbyterian Church.

3. **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be performed by the pastor or his designee with the applicant to discuss his or her suitability for the position.

4. **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an

institutional nature, if possible, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Family references are not permitted. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence with the church. Persons with three or more years of membership at Hope Presbyterian Church may be exempted from the reference check requirement.

## **5. Criminal Background Check**

- a. Clearances are required for all employees (regardless of position) and for all volunteers 14 years of age and older who will have direct contact with, be responsible for, or who will be supervising children, which includes but is not limited to the following:
  - i. Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
  - ii. Those counseling children;
  - iii. Those who volunteer as nursery and Sunday School workers/teachers.
- b. All other prospective volunteers must obtain the following clearances (we will provide instructions on how complete these):
  - i. Report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP);
  - ii. and Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse).
  - iii. Additionally, a fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police or its authorized agent is required if the volunteer has lived outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years.
- c. What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the session on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions of an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, and indecency will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. Depending upon the crime and situation, a person's involvement in Hope's programs, including worship services, may also be restricted or limited.
- d. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file with Hope Church and must be renewed every five years (60 months).

## **6. Training**

- a. Approved volunteers must participate in an initial training which covers recognizing and responding to child abuse, mandated reporting requirements and child protection best practices and guidelines unique to Hope Church.
- b. Other online training through approved third-party organizations (like Protect My Ministry) may be deemed acceptable for much of the training, but a personal meeting with the nursery coordinator or pastor is still required. Training will include, but is not necessarily limited to:
  - i. Behavioral signs of child sexual abuse
  - ii. How to appropriately respond to disclosure of abuse by a child
  - iii. How to recognize the grooming behaviors of sexual offenders
  - iv. A review of the Child & Youth Protection Policy of Hope Church
  - v. Best practices to ensure the safety and care of the children of Hope Church
  - vi. Mandated reporting laws, requirements and forms

## Church Monitoring & Supervision

### General procedures for staff and volunteers supervising children birth to 6th grade:

- a. **Supervision**
  - i. Two Adult Rule
    1. It is the policy of Hope that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities.
    2. Nurseries with children younger than age four require an adult female volunteer. Doors may *never* be locked while a childcare worker is in a room with children.
    3. Some classes for older children may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors and sidelights to the classroom *must* remain unobscured and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher.
  - ii. Check-in/Check-out Procedure
    1. A security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a “child check” similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the “child check” in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present

the “child check,” the Nursery Coordinator will be contacted. He/she will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

iii. Restroom Guidelines

1. Children six years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort children to the hallway bathroom. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child’s name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he or she assists the child.
2. For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and *never* be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class or worship service.
3. Adult female volunteers will handle diaper changes when necessary in the nursery. Male volunteers and youth workers are not permitted to change diapers with the exception of a father, grandfather, or legal guardian changing his own child’s diaper.

b. **Appropriate Interactions**

It is encouraged to show love and care for the children, even in physical ways. It is completely appropriate for staff and volunteers to do the following toward a child/minor:

- Give side hugs, high fives, handshakes, pats on the back/shoulders
- Exercise firm but loving discipline
- Praise, encourage, provide positive reinforcement
- Hold hands with young children in order to escort / guide them
- Allow preschool-aged children (and younger) or special needs children to sit on a leader’s lap and/or knees for solace as required (as long as it is not prolonged, forced, or habitual)



- Talk one-on-one with a child (If there is some reason for a private discussion with a child, this should be done in full view of others AND with the knowledge of another adult)

**c. Inappropriate Interactions**

It would be inappropriate for any of the staff or volunteers to do the following toward a child/minor:

- Give extravagant or exclusive gifts; demonstrate unwanted affection or invade personal space
- Spend undue time or attention to one individual
- Speak about sexual topics in a vulgar manner (i.e. telling coarse jokes or making innuendos)
- Touch a child/children in a sexual manner (on the buttocks, genitals, or areas covered by a swimsuit) or in any way that brings discomfort (i.e. massaging, tickling, caressing, etc.)
- Show crude, obscene, or pornographic materials; send any obscene pictures (sexting)
- Discipline in an unloving/belligerent way, including shaming, threatening, cursing, yelling uncontrollably, belittling, or intentionally harming in a physical manner

**General procedures for staff and volunteers supervising children 7th to 12th grade:**

**a. Supervision**

- At a regularly scheduled meeting of the youth, adults must be involved with the large group at all times – not seeking out opportunities to be alone with a student in a room out of the visibility of the rest of the group. If there is a case when students are waiting for rides, more than one leader must remain with that group so that no student is left alone with one leader.
- A leader must provide a safe environment for any small group Bible study he/she hosts and/or leads. For example, most small group studies should be conducted in a public space or – if necessary – at a home with others in the house present (like parents of one of the students).
- When transporting any students, parents of those students must consent to their children being in the vehicle with the leader. If at all possible, the leader should always drive more than one student at a time. If there are

extenuating circumstances, that leader must notify the parents and a Hope staff member of this arrangement to provide accountability and safety.

**b. Interactions**

i. Communication/Electronic Communication

- Texting/IM's should only be done with parental consent
- Any communication on social media must be kept public and appropriate

ii. Physical contact

- The guidelines for children apply to older students as well.
- In addition, it is not appropriate for any leader to have an exclusive relationship with any student at any time (regardless of the age difference or if the youth in the program has turned 18).

**c. Appropriate attire**

Adults and youth workers should wear modest clothing while in the presence of children

**General procedures for staff and volunteers supervising children 7th to 12th grade off-site:**

**a. Supervision**

i. If there cannot be 2 trained volunteers available to supervise, any/all off-site meetings should be held in public space so that all interactions can be witnessed, and Hope's pastor should be notified in advance.

ii. Privacy

- No adult should be allowed to be alone with a minor, whereby that leader may observe a minor changing or showering (i.e. at retreats, conferences, etc.).
- No adult should lie in the same bed as a student/minor alone (one-on-one) – regardless of gender.

**b. Interactions**

There should be no inappropriate interactions between any staff member, volunteer, or youth acting in a leadership role and the youth they lead. It would be inappropriate for any of the staff or volunteers to do the following toward a teenager/minor (same as listed above for children):

- Give extravagant or exclusive gifts; demonstrate unwanted affection or invade personal space
- Spend undue time or attention to one individual
- Speak about sexual topics in a vulgar manner (i.e. telling coarse jokes or making innuendos)
- Touch a minor in a sexual manner (on the buttocks, genitals, or areas covered by a swimsuit) or in any way that brings discomfort (i.e. massaging, tickling, caressing, etc.)
- Show crude, obscene, or pornographic materials; send any obscene pictures (sexting)
- Discipline in an unloving/belligerent way, including shaming, threatening, cursing, yelling uncontrollably, belittling, or intentionally harming in a physical manner

## Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

1. In order to maintain a safe environment at Hope, it will be the responsibility of staff and volunteers to be vigilant in the protection of its children. Therefore, if any of the abuse mentioned above is observed or suspected, it is essential to report it. However, all states impose a reporting mandate, or requirement, on any individual who comes into contact with children in the course of his or her work or professional practice and has "reasonable cause to suspect" that the minor has been abused. These individuals are known as mandated reporters.
2. Under Pennsylvania law, 23 Pa. C. S. A. §6311, there are sixteen categories of “mandated reporters” including the following:
  - i. An employee of a child-care service who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
  - ii. A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization.
  - iii. An individual, paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual’s role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, is a person responsible for the child’s welfare or has direct contact with the children.
  - iv. An individual supervised or managed by a person listed under paragraphs a., b., or c. who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
  - v. Church staff that should be considered mandated reporters are those who routinely come into contact with children, including ministers, youth directors and

any other paid staff expected to come into contact with children on a regular basis. **Volunteers are also considered mandated reporters under Pennsylvania law.**

3. A mandated report under Pennsylvania law shall make a report of suspected child abuse if the mandated reporter has “reasonable cause to suspect” that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:
  - i. The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
  - ii. The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
  - iii. A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
  - iv. An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.
4. The mandate (requirement) to report applies not only to those children with whom the mandated reporter comes into contact through church related activities/work, but those children that the reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training, or affiliated with a church or religious organization that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
5. Whenever a person is required to report in the capacity of a staff member or volunteer, that person shall report immediately and thereafter notify the person in charge of the institution, school, facility, church, or religious organization. Upon notification, the person in charge shall facilitate the cooperation of the church with the investigation of the report.
6. Examples of children considered by some state laws to be under the care or supervision of a church would include pre-school or other students, children enrolled in child-care programs, children being "babysat" during worship services or gatherings, children participating in educational, sports, music, recreational or other church ministries such as Vacation Bible School and youth group.
7. The mandate to report applies to all suspected child abuse, not just abuse that has been perpetrated by someone within the church. Possible abusers could include, for example, parents, relatives, older siblings, neighbors, coaches, schoolteachers, family friends and other children who may or may not attend the congregation.

8. A mandated reporter need not make a first-hand observation of the suspected child abuse victim. Second-hand reports of abuse must be reported to the proper authorities if the mandated reporter has "reasonable cause to suspect" that child abuse has occurred.

## Internal Guidelines for Reporting Suspected Abuse

1. Anyone who is not a mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect that a minor under their care, guidance or supervision, or a minor not directly under their care, guidance or supervision but involved in any church program or activity, has been abused by anyone (including but not limited to the minor's family, guardians, an approved adult or volunteer) shall immediately inform one of the Pastors and he will document the suspected abuse by following the state's specific reporting procedures.
2. The church is not responsible for investigating or determining whether or not abuse has occurred. The standard under the law for reporting is that "a reasonable person has cause to believe the child has been abused." It may be necessary to ask the child or person alleging the abuse has occurred for some clarification in order to determine if there is reason to believe abuse may have occurred.
3. Detailed interviews and extensive questioning with the child and/or the alleged abuser, however, should be conducted by legal authorities, not the church.
4. If a child is injured or in pain, call 911 for an ambulance.
5. If abuse within the church is founded, the church should check with local detectives and ask that they conduct an investigation upon the church. This serves two very important purposes:
  - i. If church did not know that a child/children were being abused by someone in the church, a thorough investigation clears all church staff of covering up abuse. This is on record and protects the church from a civil suit. It also clears the church's reputation with the public and demonstrates that the leadership is cooperative and trustworthy.
  - ii. If persons within the church did know that a child/children were being abused but remained silent, an investigation would reveal the guilty persons and criminal charges could be sought. There is never a good excuse for remaining silent when it is known that a child is being abused.
6. The Pastor will immediately make an oral report by calling the **Pennsylvania Childline and Abuse Registry Intake Unit at 1-800-932-0313**. They may also call Delaware County Children and Youth office and follow up after a report has been made. Delaware County Children and Youth (610) 447-1000.
7. **This is a legally required report.**

8. The volunteer or staff person who reported suspected abuse must be notified by the Pastor who reported the suspected child abuse of the date the report was made. Anyone who is not a mandated reporter may also report reasonable suspicions directly to their state's hotline (at 1-800-932-0313); however, such a report does not relieve the obligation to inform the Pastor and complete an Incident Report.
9. The church staff and elders will cooperate fully with government authorities investigating allegations of abuse. The initiative for investigating alleged abuse resides with the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and shall not be carried out by the church.
10. As a required reporter, the minister can request certain information about a child who was the subject of a report of suspected child abuse that was made. Information can be requested verbally or in writing from the county agency. The information that can be released to the mandated reporter is limited to:
  - i. the final status of the child abuse report; in other words, whether it is founded or unfounded
  - ii. any services provided, arranged for or to be provided by the county agency to protect the child.
11. All allegations of minor abuse or serious physical neglect will be taken seriously by the Pastor(s) and elders. These allegations will be treated in strict confidence. All communications regarding the report of suspected child abuse shall attempt to protect the dignity and privacy of those persons affected by the report including the alleged minor victim and the person suspected of child abuse, while at the same time ensuring that persons in responsibility and law enforcement authorities remain fully informed.

## Follow-up, Investigation, Documentation

1. Following placement of the call to report suspected abuse to the abuse hotline, the Pastor will inform the parent (provided that neither of the custodial parents is suspected of abuse). **If a custodial parent is the alleged abuser, his or her first contact about the allegation should come from either Child & Youth Services or the police, not the church.**
2. The church should not enter into discussion with the alleged abuser after a report has been filed and during the course of the legal investigation about the details of the complaint. The alleged abuser will be removed from any position at the Church in which he or she has supervisory authority over children pending the completion of the investigation.
3. The insurance company should be contacted after the report is filed as a matter of routine practice if the alleged abuse involves a staff person. The alleged abuser will have his or her ministry restricted to exclude contact with children immediately; and may be placed on paid leave for a designated period of time during the investigation. If an incident is reported that does not rise to the level of making a mandated report but still causes

concern, the Pastor will inform the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) of the concern and document the meeting.

4. The extent to which information will be shared with the congregation will be determined by the Pastor and elders. All necessary parties will cooperate with the investigations made by the police. The Pastor is to act as the official spokesperson for the Church. He may designate another individual(s) to speak on behalf of the Church. Only the authorized person or persons may speak on behalf of the Church to the news media, government agencies, attorneys, or others.

## Violations & Accusations

1. Persons who admit to, plead guilty to, or are convicted in a court of law of any form of physical or sexual abuse of a child or youth will be immediately, permanently, and completely disqualified from working with the children or youth of Hope Church.
2. Persons who admit to a minister or elder that they have committed any form of physical or sexual abuse but who have not appeared in a court of law will also be disqualified from working with the children or youth of Hope.
3. Allegations of sexual or physical abuse shall disqualify any person from working with children or youth at Hope Church until the investigation by the authorities is completed.
  - i. Upon the completion of the investigation, if the allegation is considered valid by the authorities, the individual will remain disqualified from children or student ministries until the incident is decided in court.
  - ii. If the allegation is considered invalid by the authorities, Hope's pastor in consultation with the session will consider reinstating the individual to children or student ministries. It is at the discretion of the session to temporarily or permanently disqualify any person from working with the children or youth of Hope Church, as the session deems appropriate for the safety and protection of the children and youth of Hope.
4. Alleged violations of the Child & Youth Protection Policy of Hope (other than abuse which will be directly reported to the state governing body for child protection) shall be immediately reported to the pastor and/or elders. The pastor will investigate the allegations (other than abuse which must be reported to an outside child protection agency) along with select members of the session.
5. If a person is found to be in violation of Hope's Child & Youth Protection Policy, the session will determine what disqualifications or disciplinary actions, if any, are necessary and in line with the Child & Youth Protection Policy of Hope Church. The ultimate decision for removing or reinstating an individual from ministry service will reside with the Hope's session.

6. While any allegation is being investigated, whether of abuse and therefore investigated via an outside agency, or of a non-abuse matter, and therefore being investigated internally, an elder should be assigned to serve and counsel the accuser and a separate elder should be assigned to serve and counsel the accused.

## Youth Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for youth workers (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers who regularly assist in caring for children:

- a. Youth workers must be at least age 12.
- b. Youth workers will be screened as specified in section 3 above.
- c. Youth male workers must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children. Youth male workers are also prohibited from serving in nursery for children under age 6.

## Sick Child Policy

1. It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be brought to church:
  - a. Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
  - b. Green or yellow runny nose
  - c. Eye or skin infections
  - d. Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease
2. Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be taken home.

## Medications Policy

It is the policy of Hope Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy *may* be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions) upon parental request.



## Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Hope Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with our pastor or nursery coordinator if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

- a. For minor injuries, scrapes and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
- b. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to a ministry supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
- c. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed for injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

## Policy for Known Sex Offenders

1. Hope Church affirms the need for all men and women to come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hope is committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshiping within community, especially in times of serious personal troubles. However, due to the nature of sexual crimes, Hope reserves the right to limit, restrict, and/or prohibit attenders who have been convicted of such a crime from any contact with children, vulnerable adults, and youth within the congregation. We are called as a church to be shepherd of souls, but we are also called to protect the flock. The church is a place of hospitality; we embrace the Gospel's mandate to protect, particularly children, vulnerable adults and teens. In recognition of the fact that sins against children are especially heinous and vile, and incur a greater judgment (see Luke 17:2), the session will enact any guidelines it deems appropriate to reduce any risk to children, disabled, or vulnerable adults.
2. Each sexual offender / Megan's Law offender wishing to be involved in worship within Hope Church will be handled on a "case-by-case" basis, due to the sensitive nature and possible complexity of each case.
3. The session will be responsible to research and recommend how each of the following factors is handled for known sexual offenders:
  - a. Notification to the congregation of any known sex offender / Megan's Law offender.

- b. Escorts while walking around church grounds
  - c. Access to various locations / programs in the church
  - d. Whether Connect Groups are appropriate
  - e. Safeguards to be set up for the congregation's safety
  - f. The session may seek recommendations outside the church body from professional counsel as deemed necessary
4. It will then be the responsibility of the session (or their designees) to determine how to execute these recommendations.