

**SafeConduct Policy & Procedure**  
**Hiram Christian Church**  
**(adopted by the Board of Hiram Christian Church on August 4, 2020)**

**Statement of Policy**

As a community of Christian faith, Hiram Christian Church is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, clergy, employees, and volunteers can flourish. Therefore, it is the commitment of the congregation to ensure that all programs, facilities, and community life are free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation and intimidation.

The congregation of Hiram Christian Church supports principles of SafeConduct, which include individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the congregation in fulfillment of the standard set by our Christian faith's commitment to love one another.

Hiram Christian Church strongly opposes and prohibits sexual exploitation, sexual harassment or any form of exploitation or abuse of others regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or ability (mental/physical) It is the intention of our congregation to affirmatively nurture good behavior, and to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, as necessary, discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Every member of the congregation, whether authorized clergy, leader, lay staff, volunteer, or parent, is expected to abide by healthy practices of relationship and community, as defined through this SafeConduct policy. Our congregation shall nurture good conduct as demonstrated by personal behaviors that are consistent with our Christian values. As one might conduct an orchestra, the church shall guide and lead in ministry.

**Policies for Working with Youth**

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to youths, when staff know and understand policies, they can identify, interrupt, and report policy violations. Simply interrupting a policy violation can prevent a false allegation of abuse or put an offender on notice that no one works in private, that the rules apply to everyone, and that violations will be detected.

Any organization using the church's education building must present a written policy on abuse to the church Board or must agree to the policy of the church.

## General Definitions

1. Physical abuse is injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a youth or vulnerable adult.
2. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between an adult and a youth or vulnerable adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.
3. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a youth or vulnerable adult that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth or vulnerable adult's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
4. Neglect is the failure to provide for a youth or vulnerable adult's basic needs or the failure to protect a youth or vulnerable adult from harm.
5. A minor is anyone under the age of 18 (also referred to as youth throughout policy).
6. A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over, who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or physical disability, age, or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.
7. Mandatory reporters are those persons, such as authorized clergy, who are required by Ohio law to report suspected abuse to police or child welfare agencies.
8. Authorized clergy includes any person who is admitted to ministry by commission or ordination and serves the congregation in any capacity whether called as pastor or serving in a retired, emeritus, administrative, or volunteer capacity.

## Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adults

The following Code of Conduct is intended to assist clergy, employees, and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with youth and vulnerable adults. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your clergy or moderator.

Hiram Christian Church provides our youth and vulnerable adults with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth and vulnerable adults that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes flourishing.

No form of abuse will be tolerated; and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from the role of clergy, employee or volunteer with youth and/or vulnerable adults at Hiram Christian Church. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth and vulnerable adults or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. Hiram Christian Church will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated with respect at all times.

Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, gender identity, ability, age, or religion.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will adhere to legal and appropriate standards of displaying affection as outlined in this document.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will avoid affection with youth and vulnerable adults that cannot be observed by others.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not objectify by gaze, photography, or remarks or comment on youth and/or vulnerable adults' bodies.

Clergy, employees, and adult volunteers may not work in isolation with another youth/vulnerable adult.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth and vulnerable adults.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth and vulnerable adults.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on Hiram Christian Church's property, on personal devices while on church property and/or while engaging in church programming.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not have secrets with youth and vulnerable adults unless in a counseling relationship requiring confidentiality.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will comply with Hiram Christian Church's policies regarding interactions with youth and vulnerable adults outside of our programs.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communications with youth and vulnerable adults.

Parent/guardian permission must be obtained prior to establishing any electronic communication with youth/vulnerable adults.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth and vulnerable adults in a private setting, unless in a counseling relationship (with permission from parent/guardian).

Clergy, employees and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youth and vulnerable adults.

Clergy employees, and volunteers will not abuse youth and vulnerable adults in any way including (but not limited to) the following:

Physical abuse: Hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints

Verbal abuse: Degrading, threatening, cursing, or shaming

Sexual abuse: Inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations

Mental abuse: Shaming, humiliation, cruelty

Neglect: Withholding food, water, shelter

Hiram Christian Church will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth or vulnerable adult by another youth or vulnerable adult. In addition, Hiram Christian Church will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

**Bullying** is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

Physical bullying:

- when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.

Verbal bullying:

- when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another with hurtful names.

Nonverbal or relational bullying:

- when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

**Cyber bullying:**

- the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital picture or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyber bullying can involve:
  - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
  - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
  - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
  - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group

**Hazing:**

- an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.

**Sexualized bullying:**

- when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposure of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth and vulnerable adults, clergy, employees, and volunteers.

## Reporting

All clergy, employees, and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. (<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/2151.421>). They should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse.

- a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
- b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youth and vulnerable adults against abuse.
- c. Report suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
- d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, adults or youth to the pastor, Hiram Christian Church's moderator, the regional minister and/or Praesidium's anonymous helpline at 855-347-0751.

Hiram Christian Church cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any clergy, employee, or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for removal from leadership, volunteer positions, and forfeiture of membership.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers shall not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of youth **or** vulnerable adult abuse, indecency with a youth or vulnerable adult, or injury to a youth **or** vulnerable adult. This is directly connected to the background check.

### **Physical Contact**

Hiram Christian Church's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth, vulnerable adults, clergy, employees, and volunteers. Hiram Christian Church encourages appropriate physical contact with youths and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by clergy, employees, and volunteers towards youth or vulnerable adults in the organization's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, turning over accusations to proper enforcement entities and ensuring the full cooperation of the church with any and all procedures.

Hiram Christian Church's policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

#### **Appropriate Physical Interactions:**

- Side hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder
- Pats on the shoulder or upper back
- Handshakes- if and when acceptable
- High-fives and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate
- Touching hands, shoulders, and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)

#### **Inappropriate Physical Interactions:**

- Full-frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Showing affection in isolated area
- Wrestling
- Piggyback rides
- Tickling
- Allowing a youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg
- Any type of massage given by or to a youth or vulnerable adult
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth, vulnerable adult, staff or volunteer
- Compliments relating to physique or body development
- Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas\*.
  - \* Diapering may be done by (or under supervision of) employees who have been background checked. Parent permission must be obtained in order for this to take place.

### **Verbal Interactions**

Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youths or vulnerable adults in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Clergy, employees, and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented

conversations with youths or vulnerable adults. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with youths.

Hiram Christian Church's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

### **Appropriate Verbal Interactions**

- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes
- Encouragement
- Praise

### **Inappropriate Verbal Interactions**

- Name-calling
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths or vulnerable adults in the personal problems or issues of clergy, employees, and volunteers. Exceptions exist for conversation among high school youth groups and also within counseling.
  - Boundaries are specified. It is inappropriate to share private and personal information and language should reflect a willingness of the church to host/facilitate age-appropriate conversation on human sexuality.
- Secrets
- Cursing
- Off-color or sexual jokes
- Racist or ethnic jokes or comments
- Exclusion
- Shaming
- Belittling
- Derogatory remarks
- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths or vulnerable adults.
- Derogatory remarks about the youth or vulnerable adult or his/her family

### **One-on-One Interactions**

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth or vulnerable adult. As such, Hiram Christian Church aims to eliminate or reduce one-on-one situations unless approved in advance by the organization administration, and with permission from the guardian/parent.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, clergy, employees, and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

- When meeting one-on-one with a youth or vulnerable adult, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes (when acceptable).
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other clergy, employees, and volunteers that you are alone with a youth/vulnerable adult and ask them to randomly drop in.

- Document and immediately report to clergy, guardian/parent (if appropriate) and moderator any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

### **Tutoring, Counseling/ Private Coaching**

One-on-one situations, such as tutoring, counseling, and private coaching sessions, introduce additional risks for false allegations. Clergy, employees, and volunteers should be aware of our policies regarding tutoring, counseling and private coaching:

- Clergy, employees, and volunteers must have guardian/parent approval for any tutoring, counseling, or private coaching sessions.
- Supervisors must keep a schedule of private tutoring, counseling and coaching sessions, which should include times, youths involved and location of sessions.

### **Sunday School/ Children's Church**

Every Sunday School and Children's Church teacher must be background checked and trained.

If a teacher is working one-on-one with a youth in the Sunday School/ Children's Church, the door must remain open.

Volunteers must be background checked if regularly scheduled. (more than once per month)

### **Off-site Contact**

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site or outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and Hiram Christian Church at increased risk.

Hiram Christian Church strongly recommends that staff do not have outside contact with youths/vulnerable adults from the organization. However, if off-site contacts are unavoidable (such as during mentoring programs), Hiram Christian Church has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

#### **Appropriate Outside Contact**

- Taking groups of youths and/or vulnerable adults on an outing
- Attending sporting activities with groups of youths and/or vulnerable adults
- Attending functions at a youth's and/or vulnerable adult/s home, with parents/ guardian present

#### **Inappropriate Outside Contact**

- Taking one youth/vulnerable adult on an outing without the parent's/guardian's written permission
- Visiting one youth/vulnerable adult in the youth's/vulnerable adult's home, without a parent/guardian present
- Entertaining one youth/vulnerable adult in the home of staff or volunteers
- A lone youth/vulnerable adult spending the night with staff or volunteers

In addition, when outside contact is unavoidable, ensure that the following steps are followed:

- Clergy, employees, and volunteers must be knowledgeable of what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
- Ensure that staff or volunteers have the parent/guardian's written permission to engage in outside contact with the youth/vulnerable adult.

## Electronic Communication

. All communication between staff and youths/vulnerable adults must be transparent.

### Appropriate Electronic Communication

- Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youths/vulnerable adults only with approval of the youth's/vulnerable adult/s parent/guardian.
- Communicating through "organization group pages" on facebook or other approved public forums

### Inappropriate Electronic Communication

- Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, degrading or humiliating comments
- Sexually oriented conversations
- Private messages between clergy, employees, and volunteers with youth/vulnerable adults
- Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites unless permission has been granted
- Posting inappropriate comments on pictures

This information will be provided to participants' parents/guardians so that they know what is appropriate and inappropriate.

## Cell Phone Use:

While assigned to work with youth/vulnerable adults, staff are not permitted to use electronic communications devices except for the purpose of instruction, appropriate discussion, or emergencies. Employees need to ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy.

There are occasions in which staff will need to use personal or organization issued electronic communication devices to make parents/youth/vulnerable adults/guardians aware of ongoing programming. Other situations which may require use of organization issued or personal electronic communication devices include:

- a. Field trips
- b. Off-site programs
- c. Emergencies

## Gift Giving

Molesters routinely groom youths by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the youth. They might instruct the youth to keep the gifts in secret, which then starts teaching the youth to keep secrets from parents. For this reason, clergy, employees, and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youths, and only under the following circumstances;

1. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift
2. Parents must be notified

## Screening and Selection

The process of screening and selecting employees and volunteers is an essential element of management due diligence. There are several elements required which serve a number of purposes. Criminal background checking by itself is inadequate simply because very few predators, or people who would become predators, have been through the penal system. A would-be predator requires three things: access, privacy & control.

**Standing of “Authorized Clergy”:** Each denomination served by the Insurance Board has a process of granting professional standing to clergy. Employment of clergy who do not fulfill denominational requirements may have an impact on insurance programs. Consult your insurance agent if there are concerns. The following screening and selection procedures are strongly recommended for all clergy, employees and regular volunteers.

*Note: Each employee or volunteer now serving and regardless of length of service must be willing to set an example for all others who follow in their ministry. Therefore, at the time this policy is first adopted, employees and all incumbent regularly scheduled volunteers who work with children shall execute the following procedures.*

### **A. Application for Employment**

An employment committee will be created. The committee will consist of the Spiritual Formation Team chair and another member or pastor. Employment by Little Village will be handled by their board. Hiring of a Little Village Administrator must be approved by the church board. All employees will complete an application or submit a resumé prior to working at Hiram Christian Church and/or Little Village. The application/resumé will be reviewed by the employment committee and/or Little Village board for completeness, high risks and fit with position requirements. If the application is not 100% complete, the applicant may be screened out, the applicant may be asked to complete the application, or the missing information may be obtained during an interview. However, Hiram Christian Church/ Little Village should endeavor to follow a consistent approach to applications missing information.

Offers should not be made until an application is 100% complete. Applications will be kept in the personnel file.

Volunteers at Hiram Christian Church must be active members of the church for a minimum of three months before being permitted to work as regular leaders of youth-oriented programs. Exceptions to this policy can be made if volunteer candidates come from another church with similar programs and have references. These volunteers must be background checked.

### **B. Interviews**

All applicants will be interviewed during the selection process and prior to employment. The purpose of the interview is to determine whether the applicant possesses the skills needed to perform the job requirements and whether the applicant demonstrates characteristics of a potentially abusive person. The interview should also provide the applicant with information about job responsibilities and expectations.

The employment committee/ Little Village board will review each appropriate candidate. Each shall assess suitability for working with children/vulnerable adults, and specifically discuss the church’s commitment to protect children and other vulnerable persons from abuse.

The employment committee/Little Village Board interviewer/interviewers should take notes as to applicant responses to the interview questions. After the interviews are completed, the applicant may be screened out or the applicant may continue in the screening process. The information recorded will be kept in the personnel file if the applicant is hired or selected.

### **C. Reference Checks**

Reference checks will be conducted for all applicants prior to employment. A minimum of three references is recommended, including two professional and one personal reference. The employment committee/Little Village Board may work with applicants to develop a good reference list. If the person responsible for screening the applicant does not believe the references are appropriate, he or she can ask for different ones. References should be contacted by telephone. The person responsible for the screening should inform the referent that the applicant is applying for a position with the organization and will explain that the applicant will have access to a vulnerable population. The employment committee/Little Village Board will record the response of the referents.

Offers of employment should not be made until references are contacted. Completed reference check notes should be kept in the applicant's personnel file if the applicant is employed.

### **D. Background Checks**

Criminal history and sexual offender registry checks should be conducted for all applicants who will be working directly with youth/vulnerable adults. Generally, the information should be obtained prior to employment of the applicant; however, if the length of time needed to receive the results of these checks is unduly long, Hiram Christian Church could have the applicant start the position and remain in the position until the criminal background results are obtained and reviewed. New employees and volunteers should not be left unsupervised with youths/vulnerable adults until the criminal history results are returned.

The background check(s) should include the following:

- a. National multi-state criminal records search;
- b. National sex offender registry search;
- c. Social security number trace and alias search; and
- d. County criminal records search for every county where the applicant has lived or worked for the past 7 years.

Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check.

All applicants (employees) are subject to random drug screening. If an employee is using prescription drugs that may affect his/her performance, the church must be informed in writing.

In addition, all applicants responsible for transportation should have a driver's license check performed to identify past driving concerns.

### **E. Employment Decisions**

The employment committee/Little Village Board shall review each background check and agree that the applicant is eligible for employment as clergy, employee or volunteer.

Where a criminal record exists, consideration shall be given to:

- a. Seriousness of the crime;
- b. Statutes that may legally disqualify the person from working with minors/vulnerable adults;
- c. Length of time since the last offense;
- d. Pattern of criminal activity; and
- e. Activities the applicant has been involved in since the offense(s) occurred.

Conviction for the following crimes shall be considered barriers to employment or volunteer work with children/vulnerable adults;

- a. Violent crimes;
- b. Sexual assault;
- c. Sexual abuse or neglect of a child; and
- d. Drug offenses or driving offenses (depending upon position requirements)

Arrest data are not grounds for disqualification, only convictions. The status or relevance of other crimes will be considered individually.

Before an offer of employment is made, the committee involved in the screening process should review all information obtained. The hiring process should last a sufficient length of time to allow the employment committee/Little Village Board to carefully collect and evaluate information about applicants and to allow the applicant time to self-select out of the process if they have concerns about the position.

Following the review, each committee member/board member shall sign and date one of two documents that becomes part of the applicant's or employee's permanent personnel file:

"We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available this time, the applicant would be **acceptable** for the position"

or

"We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant is **not acceptable** for the position"

## Training

The mission of Hiram Christian Church has no place for abuse, and therefore includes proper training for staff and volunteers responsible for programming with children and vulnerable adults. We wish to identify and nurture SafeConduct, to lead and to guide through adequate training. It is difficult to comprehend that those among us, our friends and family, would violate parameters of this policy willingly. Nevertheless, persons who have been presented no behavior standards and do not understand boundaries may unwittingly engage in behaviours that may be perceived as predatory. Their personal reputations and that of Hiram Christian Church are then at risk.

To fulfill our leadership obligation, each new employee and regular volunteer shall complete a specific program of training within 30 days of assuming duties. Fulfillment of training requirements for employees and volunteers of Hiram Christian Church shall be documented by the Team Chair of the respective program. The Director of Little Village will be responsible for training of his/her employees and volunteers.

Training shall be repeated annually. Records shall be maintained by the Team Chair/Director of the program.

Abuse prevention curriculum shall include

- a. Review of expected conduct and boundaries defined in this policy.
- b. Review of standards applicable to ministry.
- c. Explanation of procedures for reporting violations of standards of conduct and suspected child abuse or abuse of a vulnerable adult.
- d. Explanation of individual statutory reporting obligations.
- e. Identifying and managing high-risk situations such as bathroom use, transition times, and free times.
- f. Physical security procedures.
- g. Abuse prevention education.
- h. Effects of sexual abuse.
- i. Information on types of child molesters.
- j. Characteristics of abusers.
- k. Information and data on how child molesters operate; access, privacy, and control.
- l. Information on how to navigate a report of abuse within your department.
- m. Information on how to navigate an allegation of abuse against you.
- n. Examples of child-on-child sexual abuse, even among young children.
- o. Characteristics of children more likely to act out sexually.
- p. Characteristics of children more likely to be abused.
- q. High-risk activities and circumstances.
- r. Specific monitoring and supervision activities to prevent child-on-child sexual activity.
- s. How to respond to incidents of sexual activity between children.

The Team Chair/Little Village Director shall assure that each employee working with youth has mastered requirements and will provide additional supervision and guidance as required to assure required conduct.

*NOTE: The Insurance Board, a not-for-profit ministry, believes so strongly in training that it provides FREE training services to all churches and camps of the denominations it serves, whether or not your church or camp is participating in the Insurance Board insurance program.*

*The **Armatus** training suite by **Praesidium, Inc.** is a robust on-line training program that you administer at your church/camp. It is completely paperless and provides a perpetual record of training. The program covers all curriculum outlined *below*, except for: 1.) the specifics of your policies and 2.) your reporting procedures. Information about the training program can be found in the Administrator's Guide at our website: [www.InsuranceBoard.org](http://www.InsuranceBoard.org). Click on Safety Solutions, the SafeConduct™ Workbench.*

## **Monitoring and Supervision**

When clergy, employees, and volunteers are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they face detection. When youth/vulnerable adults are adequately supervised, they too are less likely to engage in inappropriate interactions with others. Similarly, the facility must be monitored, particularly out-or-the-way location or locations that might permit an offender undue access to or privacy with a youth/vulnerable adult. Effective supervision and monitoring require that a variety of methods be used frequently, at both scheduled and random times.

### **Facility Monitoring**

### **General Supervision**

1. **Administrative and Supervisory visits to Youth Programs-** Youth supervisors and administrators will regularly visit all youth programs to ensure that all activities are well-managed and that youth policies are observed by all in attendance.
2. **Ratios-** Each program will follow the ratio requirements that are directly related to the goals of the program and the design of the program area. The employee or volunteer-to-youth ratio should be adjusted for programs that serve youths with special needs. Refer to local licensing requirements and general best practice guidelines for establishing adult-to-youth ratios.
3. **Mixed Age Groups-** In most incidents involving one youth abusing another youth, the youths are from different age groups. Each program is responsible for establishing specific guidelines for additional monitoring and supervision of activities that involve youths from different age groups. Clergy, employees, and volunteers must be aware that close line of sight supervision is required when monitoring programs that mix age groups.

### **Monitoring Youth in Facilities**

Because Hiram Christian Church is responsible for all youths in the facility, the following policy shall exist.

1. All parents or legal guardians must complete a membership application which includes identifying information, any special medical or behavioral circumstances, food or other allergies, any legal indemnifications, the youth's date of birth, and emergency contact information.
2. All youths or parents must sign in and sign out of the facilities so that the program has a record of the youth and parents who are in the facility at all times.
3. If photographs are to be used, permission must be granted to publish.

Ultimately, all youth must be supervised at all times, regardless of age. The key to remember is that they can be supervised directly in structured activities and indirectly when they are in authorized areas.

### **Monitoring High Risk Activities**

#### **Bathroom Activities**

Most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in the bathrooms. When supervising restroom use, adult staff members should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing youths to enter. The following supervision guidelines are recommended:

#### **Group Bathroom breaks**

- Staff will accompany two or more youths to the bathroom.
- If the bathroom has only one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff.
- If there are multiple stalls, only that many youths may enter.
- Limit the number of different age youths entering the bathroom at one time.
- Staff will stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.

#### **Single Use Restrooms**

- Youths must ask permission to use the bathroom.
- Staff will frequently check the bathroom.
- If assisting young youths in the stalls, the staff should keep the door to the stall open.

### **Transition Times and Free Times**

Transition times and free times pose a high risk for incidents.

- Require youths to remain in line-of-site of staff at all times.
- Specify the staff-to-youth ratio.
- Specify narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
- Ensure that all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise.
- Include bathroom procedures.
- Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
- Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

### **Playground Activities**

The playground procedures require:

- Youths to remain in line-of-site of staff at all times.
- Definition of specific and narrow geographic boundaries around the playground area.
- Specific instructions on how to monitor barriers of supervision (such as storage sheds, playhouses, tunnels, and shrubs).
- That all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise.
- Specific bathroom procedures.
- Staff to conduct periodic roll calls for each age group.
- Supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and assessments of the activity period and of the entire activity area.

### **Transportation Activities**

Transporting youths/vulnerable adults may increase the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse because clergy, employees, and volunteers may be alone with a youth or may make unauthorized stops with youths. In addition, transportation activities may provide a time for unsupervised youths/vulnerable adults to engage in youth-to-youth or other inappropriate sexual activity.

Transportation requirements

- a. Require written parent/guardian permission from all youths/vulnerable adults on the trip. Staff take these permission forms and medical releases with them on the trip.
- b. Require staff to have a list of all participants on the trip. The staff take roll when boarding the bus, when leaving the bus, periodically throughout the trip, and then again when boarding the bus.
- c. Specify staff-to-youth ratios. When possible, do not count the driver in the supervision ratio.
- d. Require staff to sit in seats that permit maximum supervision.
- e. Discourage mixed age groups from sitting together.
- f. When possible, high risk youths/vulnerable adults are seated by themselves or with a staff member.
- g. Prohibit drivers from making unauthorized stops.
- h. When applicable (such as in mentoring programs), require staff to document the beginning and ending time of the trip and the mileage, names of the youth/vulnerable adults being transported, and the destination.
- i. Require documentation of any unusual occurrences.

When public transportation is used:

- a. In addition to the transportation procedures listed above, youths/vulnerable adults should remain in one area of the bus, if possible.

- b. Clergy, employees, and volunteers that are assigned to a group should remain with that group on the bus.
- c. Take a head count or call roll immediately after entering and leaving the bus.

In situations where staff transport youths/vulnerable adults in non-organization vehicles:

- a. Administrators must be notified of all transportation activities.
- b. At least two adults must transport a single youth, or at least two youths must be present if transported by a single adult.
- c. Youths/vulnerable adults must never be transported without written permission from a parent/guardian.
- d. Youths/vulnerable adults must be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops may be made.
- e. A staff member must document beginning and ending times and mileage, the names of youth/vulnerable adults, and other clergy, employees, and volunteers who are involved in transportation, purpose of the transportation, and destination.
- f. Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with youths/vulnerable adults while in vehicles.
- g. When possible, staff should avoid engaging in sensitive conversations with youths/vulnerable adults.

### **Off-Site Activities**

The off-site procedures include:

- a. Requiring parental/guardian approval.
- b. Specifying staff-to-youth ratios for the activity.
- c. Requiring staff and youths/vulnerable adults to be easily identifiable.
- d. Setting specific bathroom procedures as applicable to outing.
- e. Stating transportation procedures.
- f. Providing instructions for a supervisor to observe the off-site activities at scheduled times and random intervals.
- g. Considering specific recommendations based on the location and type of activity (for example, amusement parks, water parks, arcades, etc.)

### **Overnight Activities**

Overnight stays present unique risks to participants and staff. They often involve changing clothes, groups of both genders and different ages in a more intimate atmosphere than usual, more unstructured activities, and increased supervision demands for staff.

Supervision Guidelines:

- a. There shall be a designated Program Director for all overnight activities.
- b. The Director is expected to regularly and randomly observe overnight activities on a scheduled and periodic basis.
- c. The Director should appoint a "lead" staff to supervise the overnight. A meeting with all staff is conducted to discuss the unique risks of overnight trips, unique elements of the specific overnight trip and to review the specific policies and procedures.
- d. Provide parents/guardians with written information about the overnight activity. All parents/guardians must sign a permission slip for their youths/vulnerable adults to attend the overnight.
- e. Determine the appropriate staff-to-youth ratios before the event and schedule staff accordingly.
- f. Meetings with the group should be hosted in an open and observable area.

### **Overnights at the facility.**

The director of any program planning an overnight must submit documentation to the Spiritual Formation Chair in advance. The documentation must include plans for the following:

- a. Physical boundaries within the organization must be clearly defined and explained to the participants.
- b. Assign each staff to a specific group to supervise. Each staff should then maintain a roll sheet that lists all of the youths/vulnerable adults in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the evening.
- c. Assign staff to high risk areas in Hiram Christian Church's facility, such as the bathrooms, entrances and exits, hallways, etc. If it is not possible to assign specific staff to these areas, assign specific staff to conduct periodic facility "walk-throughs".
- d. With regard to sleeping arrangements, separate the male and female participants by as much space as possible.
- e. When performing room checks, staff should always go in pairs.
- f. The staff on duty will rotate so that one adult is awake at all times.

### **Overnights Away from the Facility**

- a. Overnight stays at private homes are prohibited unless approved by the administration.
- b. Physical boundaries at the off-site location must be clearly defined and explained to the participants.
- c. Assign each staff to a specific group to supervise. Each staff member should then maintain a sheet that lists all of the participants in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the event.
- d. If in a cabin type setting, the staff should be placed in bunks to maximize supervision around the cabin and in a way that decreases the chances of participants sneaking out.
- e. In hotel rooms, assign participants to rooms based on gender and age. Staff should have their own rooms. If staff must share rooms with youths or vulnerable adults, they must have their own beds and never change in front of others. Staff are to be on duty in the halls or cabins at night until an hour after lights out and all rooms are quiet.

### **Teen Leadership Program**

Older youths who participate in teen leadership programs are still youth participants and not staff or volunteers. Therefore, even though they are often given more responsibility, teens in the leadership programs must be provided with guidelines regarding appropriate behavior, and then supervised accordingly. In addition, clergy, employees, and volunteers must understand and recognize that these teens are still youths and not their peers. Therefore, the following guidelines are recommended for teen leadership programs:

Create a screening process for teen leaders which includes

- A standard application
- An interview with behaviorally based interview questions
- References (from teachers, counselors, family friends, etc.)

Train teen leaders in their role in programs and on program policies about appropriate and inappropriate interactions. This training should include the following information:

- Appropriate and inappropriate physical and verbal interactions and the importance of maintaining behavioral boundaries between teen leaders and younger youths and between teen leaders and clergy, employees, and volunteers.
- Prohibiting teen leaders from being one-on-one with youths/vulnerable adults.
- Prohibiting teen leaders from escorting youths/vulnerable adults to the bathrooms.

- Prohibiting teen leaders from assisting youths/vulnerable adults with changing their clothes.

Create a system to monitor the teen leaders.

- Designate a specific employee or volunteer who is in charge of the teen leadership program and its participants
- Require teen leaders to wear clothing or lanyards that identify them as leader-in-training and differentiate them from both clergy, employees, and volunteers and from younger youths.
- Require a supervisor to conduct daily check-ins with teen leaders and their program supervisors.
- Consider requiring teen leaders to keep a log documenting their daily activities and any problems they encounter. The program supervisor should review these logs daily.

### **Supervisors and Administrators Monitoring On-Site and Off-Site Programs**

- **Keep a record.** Document your supervision visits. Include information like your arrival and departure times, which youths/vulnerable adults and parents/guardians were present, and a summary of the information collected. Provide staff with feedback about visits.
- **Vary your observation times.** Do not develop a predictable pattern of observation. Drop in at different times each day. Occasional leave and come back immediately.
- **Arrive before staff.** Check punctuality and the routine that staff follow to prepare for the participants to arrive.
- **Survey the physical environment.** Is this a suitable location for the activity (e.g. size of area for number of youths, ability to supervise all areas used by participants, landscaping that may inhibit supervision)?
- **Watch activities.** Are they planned and organized/ Are the staff actively involved? Ask to see the schedule of activities and compare with what is actually going on at a given time.
- **Observe bathroom activities.** Observe bathroom activities to ensure that the staff are complying with the established policies and procedures.
- **Observe Interactions.**

### **Responding**

How an organization responds to suspicious or inappropriate interactions, policy violations, and incidents or allegations of abuse can dramatically affect the harm to the individuals involved and the damage to the organization. Once a clergy member, employee, volunteer, youth, vulnerable adult, or parent has expressed a concern or made an allegation about the treatment of a youth/vulnerable adult, swift and determined action must be taken to reduce any subsequent risk to the youth/vulnerable adult, to the accused staff member or volunteer, and to the organization. Organizations must establish precise, unequivocal requirements for reporting to the authorities and for adhering to a serious-incident response plan.

### **Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations**

Because Hiram Christian Church is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone actively participates in the protection of youth/vulnerable adults. In the event that a clergy member, employee, or volunteers observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of others, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations.

Remember, at Hiram Christian Church, the policies apply to everyone.

### **Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Youth/Vulnerable Adults**

- a. Violation of the abuse prevention policies described above.
- b. Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youths/vulnerable adults.
- c. Buying gifts for individual youths/vulnerable adults without parent permission
- d. Making suggestive comments to youths/vulnerable adults.
- e. Picking favorites.

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youths/vulnerable adults will be taken seriously. Our procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected.

### **Employee and Volunteer Response**

If an employee or volunteer witness suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from another employee or volunteer they are instructed to do the following:

- a. Interrupt the behavior.
- b. Report the behavior to the team chairperson, clergy or moderator.
- c. If you are not comfortable making the report directly, make it anonymously.
- d. Document the report but do not conduct an investigation.
- e. Keep reporting until the appropriate action is taken.
- f. Report to the police if church leadership has not responded

### **Administrative Response (Chairperson, Clergy, Moderator)**

- a. Determine the appropriate response to the concern.
- b. Speak with the employee or volunteer who has been reported.
- c. Review the file of the employee or volunteer to determine if similar complaints were reported.
- d. Listen to the victim document in a written report
- e. If, at any point in gathering information about a report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises about possible abuse, contact the local and state authorities and file a report.
- f. If appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians.
- g. Advise the person who reports the behavior that the report is being taken seriously. The interview will be documented by the person receiving the complaint

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

- a. Increase in monitoring or supervision of the employee, volunteer, or program.
- b. If policy violations with youths/vulnerable adults are confirmed, the employee or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and prosecution. Disciplinary action will follow.
- c. If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other clergy, employees, and volunteers or youths.
- d. Re-education/ growth may be desired in circumstances of behavior that are unacceptable but do not reach a degree of violation

### **Organization Response**

- a. Review the need for increased supervision.
- b. Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- c. Review the need for additional training.

### **Responding to Suspected Abuse by an Adult Employee or Volunteer:**

As required by mandated reporting laws, clergy, employees, and volunteers must report any suspected abuse or neglect of a youth/vulnerable adult--whether on or off organization property or whether perpetrated by employees, volunteers, or others--to state authorities. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith and without malice. (Refer to state-specific mandated reporting requirements for definitions of abuse and more specific reporting information.)

In addition to reporting to state authorities, clergy, employees, and volunteers are required to report directly to leadership any suspected or known abuse of youth/vulnerable adults perpetrated by employees or volunteers, so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims and others who may be at risk. Reports of suspected or known abuse may be made confidentially to the following:

- a. Chairperson
- b. Clergy
- c. Moderator

### **Additional Guidelines for members of the organization**

- a. If you witness abuse, interrupt the behavior immediately.
- b. If abuse is disclosed to you, assure the individual disclosing that the or she was correct to tell you.
- c. Protect the alleged victim from intimidation, retribution, or further abuse.
- d. Immediately report the allegation or incident to the proper authorities.
- e. Be sure to document the incident, disclosure, or any circumstances causing your suspicion of abuse. State only the facts.
- f. It is not your job to investigate the incident but it IS your job to report the incident to a supervisor in a timely manner.
- g. Check back to make sure appropriate steps were taken. If not, report again to your supervisor

### **Clergy, Moderator, Supervisor, Chairperson Response to Abuse**

In addition to the above response procedures, clergy, supervisor, moderator and/or chairperson should ensure the following

- a. First, determine if the youth/vulnerable adult is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm.
- b. Gather as much information about the allegation as you can. For example, who made the report, who was allegedly abused, who was the alleged abuser, what was the nature of the alleged abuse, where, and when did the alleged abuse occur, etc.
- c. Accurately record everything you learn in as much detail as you can. Remember your notes may be read by others . Stick to the facts.

- d. Contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by mandatory reporting procedures. Make sure you get a case number and the name and contact information of the person with whom you speak at the reporting agency.
- e. If the alleged abuse involves an employee or volunteer, suspend the employee or volunteer until the investigation is completed.

### **Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Abuse and Bullying Behaviors**

The thought that one youth may sexually abuse another youth does not occur to many people.

Unfortunately, abuse between peers has increased 300% in the past few years. Youth-to-Youth sexual activity and sexualized behaviors often remain unreported in organizations because clergy, employees, and volunteers are not comfortable documenting these situations, or may not know how.

Most serious incidents of youth-to-youth abuse are preceded by more subtle incidents such as name-calling, taunting, or roughhousing. Interrupting these interactions early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can keep the program environment safe. Hiram Christian Church recognizes that the following interactions are high risk and should be prohibited

#### **Prohibited Youth-to-Youth Interactions**

- Hazing
- Bullying
- Derogatory name-calling
- Singling out one child for different treatment
- Ridicule or humiliation
- Youth -to-youth sexual behaviors can include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity, and similar types of interactions..

#### **Employee and Volunteer Response**

If employees or volunteers witness youth-to-youth sexual behaviors, they are instructed to follow these guidelines;

- a. If you observe sexual activity between youths, you should immediately separate them.
- b. Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted.
- c. Notify a supervisor.
- d. Document what you observed and how you responded.
- e. Follow your supervisor's instructions regarding notifying the authorities and informing the parents of the youth involved.
- f. In some cases, if the problem is recurring, discipline may be required, including not allowing one or both youths to return to the program.

#### **Guidelines for Clergy, Moderator, Supervisors, Chairperson Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity**

- a. Meet with the staff who reported the sexual activity to gather information.
- b. Confirm that the youths involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
- c. Review the steps taken by the staff on duty.
- d. Review the documentation to confirm it is accurately and thoroughly completed.
- e. Meet with parents of the youths involved.

- f. Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the children involved.
- g. Notify the proper authorities.
- h. Develop a written corrective action or follow-up plan in response to the incident.
- i. Review the need for additional supervision.
- j. Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- k. Review the need for additional training.
- l. Alert others in the organization.

### **Responding to Victims**

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of Hiram Christian Church is to be responsive to the needs of victims within the constraints or obligations imposed under insurance contracts. In general, we will attend to the immediate needs of victims by providing support and pastoral care. We are also committed to third-party care if/when clergy are entwined within the abuse.

*Insurance Board clients only:* An incident of alleged abuse that requires medical or psychological care for a victim or family shall be reported to the Insurance Board by the moderator or clergy. The latter shall discuss with the Insurance Board Claims Department whether the circumstances warrant initiation of Crisis Management services, which may include psychological counseling. Upon approval, counseling services may be offered to a perceived victim(s), which may include family members.

### **Notification of Parents/Guardians**

A minor child may be party to an incident either as an initiator or as the victim. Whether a child is the initiator or victim may not be clear in all circumstances, such as a child-on-child incident. Any violation of policy does not necessarily create a victim. While notification of parents/guardians in such circumstances may be warranted, utmost care in communication is required.

While communicating with a parent/guardian and being mindful of the importance of timely communication, care shall be given to assessing:

- a. The specific facts.
- b. Whether a disciplinary or termination process is required.
- c. Whether a child should be dismissed from a program (requiring notification of other parents/guardians).
- d. Whether "mandatory reporting" is a factor.
- e. Who shall and in what manner communicate with the parents/guardian.
- f. Whether the pastor should be involved in the communication.
- g. Tentative remedial steps to prevent a further incident.

Notification of parents/guardians shall not be delayed when immediate medical care is required.

### **Responding to Media**

Media publicity following an incident of abuse or exploitation may be detrimental to the reputations of individuals and the congregation of Hiram Christian Church. Without intending

ever to evade the media, contacts with the media must be managed and conducted only by a person/persons specifically designated by the Church Board to represent the church. No other person/(s) may speak on behalf of the church. Unless designed differently by the Board in a particular circumstance, the exclusive spokesperson for the church shall be the Church Moderator.

Prior to speaking to the media, the Moderator shall contact and consult with Regional (DOC), Legal Counsel, to obtain an understanding of appropriate statements or admissions and issues of privacy that may apply to the situation.

*Insurance Board clients only:* The Moderator shall give immediate consideration to securing Insurance Board media relations and crisis management resources. Considering the speed of news cycles, a prompt determination is required, erring on the side of seeking help.

### **Congregational Awareness**

We are dedicated to a policy of open communication and education for the benefit of the children, parents, vulnerable adults and guardians we serve. They are entitled to know what to expect of our ministries, the ministers who serve them, and to know the related policies and procedures created to protect the respective ministry constituencies. Constituencies include the children, the parents, the vulnerable adults, the guardians, and the ministers.

This entire policy shall be posted on the Hiram Christian Church website, [HiramChristianChurch.org](http://HiramChristianChurch.org).

At the time children or vulnerable adults are enrolled in Hiram Christian church programs, parents, or legal guardians may be provided:

- a. A copy of this Code of Conduct.
- b. An invitation to Abuse Prevention training.
- c. An invitation to visit programs in progress at any time at their convenience.

### **Registered Sex Offender Policy**

As a community of faith, serving by the example of Jesus Christ, we also seek to attend to the needs of all who seek healing, redemption and fellowship among us. We shall be prepared to accept in our midst those who have violated the most sacred mores of our society at large, in order to provide them refuge, peace, example and support in their recovery and penitence. We commit to doing so with utmost care for the welfare of our congregation, collectively and individually, and the community we serve.

We accept that there are risks to be born in our deliberate association with and ministry to sex offenders who are considered pariahs among the community-at-large, as evidenced by the many constraints placed upon their interaction with the community. We agree to honor the needs of the congregation and our community to have reasonable assurance that a sex offender in our care will not have an opportunity to re-offend as a result of lapses in our management of the offender.

We shall consider limited participation or membership of a sex offender in our congregation with utmost care. In doing so, we shall::

1. Document understanding of the statutory limitations applying in the State of Ohio to the movement and activities of a sex offender, taking into account the programs of the church or the operations of tenants. (Examples: Sunday School, Children's Church, Little Village, youth groups, and associations which serve children and vulnerable adults.)
2. Consider and understand the character of the crimes which have resulted in requiring an individual to register as a sex offender, the passage of time without repeated conduct or behavior, and the risk and opportunity of re-offending that is presented by the particular programs of our congregation.
3. Document understanding of limitations and prohibitions placed upon the offender by courts and probation authorities. The opinion of a mental health professional regarding the suitability of the person to participate in the life of the church shall be obtained. In all cases where probation is in force, we shall obtain the explicit approval of and conditions of participation specified by the probation officer. A recommendation by law enforcement or mental health professionals to deny participation to an offender shall be honored in all cases.
4. Understand that, with respect to a person who is an employee, volunteer or in a position of church leadership, who has previously been convicted for acts of sexual misconduct as defined by insurance contracts, knowledge by church leaders of such prior conviction will have the effect of voiding coverage for the individual employee, volunteer or church leader and for the church for future acts of sexual misconduct by that person.
5. Given that criminal convictions are a matter of public record, there shall be no expectation of secrecy on the part of the offender. As a condition of participation in our faith community, the offender must agree that the leadership of the church shall make it known to the members, constituencies and congregants of the church that we have accepted among us a registered sex offender. The conditions and limitations that apply to participation in the life of the church shall be known to all.
6. With the advice of legal counsel, and in all cases, the conditions of participation by a registered offender shall be defined by a "limited access agreement" executed by the offender and church. Such agreement shall be approved by probation authorities. The agreement shall be reviewed annually to validate ongoing eligibility. Violation of the agreement by the offender shall be considered as grounds for immediate cancellation of the agreement.

The following additional considerations shall apply:

1. **Victims in the congregation-** In such case as the victim of a RSO (registered sex offender) is a member of the congregation, or an employee or is a client of other services provided by the congregation, the RSO shall not be permitted to attend the church or church activities.
2. **Clergy-penitent privilege-** "Clergy penitent privilege" is a "Rule of Evidence" defining or limiting information which clergy may reveal in a court of law only. "Clergy penitent privilege" does not prevent clergy from informing the congregation of matters which may be relevant to their safety; it does not require clergy to hold information in secrecy. Ordained clergy shall assume responsibility and take extraordinary care to understand the scope and limitations of clergy-penitent privilege in the state of Ohio, and the parameters of confidence and privilege as defined by our denomination. Authorized clergy shall inform the leadership of the church of the general principles of confidence and privilege under which (s)he performs his/her clerical duties.
3. **Escorts-** Conditions of limited access for a RSO will commonly require that the offender have an escort while on the church premises or at church events elsewhere. A person serving as an escort shall not be a spouse, partner or relative of the offender.
4. **Approval & Supervision**
  - a. With the advice and prior approval of the Church Board, a Limited Access Agreement with a Petitioner (known RSO) may be signed only by the pastor.

- b. The pastor, in association with other “authorized clergy” and parish associates (escorts), who shall be named in the Limited Access Agreement, shall be responsible for the general supervision of the Petitioner in all of the latter's activities in relation to the church. Elements of supervision shall include the following:
- c. Knowledge of the terms of the Limited Access agreement, including activity limitations placed upon the Petitioner.
- d. Knowledge of the Petitioner's offense history sufficient to understand the risks of association with the church and its ministries.
- e. Willingness to assert activity limitations and to report any violation of restrictions placed upon the Petitioner.
- f. Willingness to intervene in any onset of a risky or problem behavior.
- g. Willingness to report all cases of non-compliance to the pastor, if applicable.
- h. The pastor shall assess, prior to selection, whether a proposed parish associate (escort) is willing to fulfill the above elements of supervision.

**5. Professional privacy-** Members who are employed in certain occupations may have a statutory obligation to maintain privacy around the criminal history of their clients who may also be parishioners. Such members shall decline to accept leadership roles which may put them in a position of decision-making regarding individuals who may be their professional clients.

**6. Juveniles-** While the criminal record of a juvenile is ordinarily concealed by the courts, the church may come to know the juvenile’s history by other means. Honest disclosure by a juvenile and parents and/or guardians in the volunteer application and screening process may reveal that a record exists without knowing the specifics. While a Limited Access Agreement will be required for the juvenile, as for others, every precaution will be taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality which the law affords a juvenile.

**Acknowledgment of Hiram Christian Church’s SafeConduct Policy and Procedure**

(version dated 8-4-2020)

I have read and agree to comply with my organization’s Safe Conduct Policy and Procedure, including policies regarding sexual abuse prevention.

Employee or Volunteer’s Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee or Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor / Chairperson

# Office Copy

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Signature of Employee or Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor / Chairperson