

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
NEWTON, KANSAS
Safe Sanctuary Policy
(Revised October 2025)

Purpose: To provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment for children, youth, and adults to learn about the love of God and to grow spiritually. As a community, FMC is committed to protecting the vulnerable, caring for survivors, and holding abusers accountable. Our goal is to prevent and respond appropriately to abuse by becoming a community that is educated on various forms of abuse and common dynamics, clarifying appropriate boundaries, and doing the hard work of holding each other accountable.

Vision: Our community seeks to embody Jesus's priority of justice for the vulnerable, especially children. We strive to create a haven that encourages respect, equality, and kinship in Christ, which is free of abuse for all.

Scope: This policy shall apply to all in our church community, including current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who are responsible for supervising the activities of children, youth, and adults, including those who are mentally or physically challenged. This policy states that we all must take ownership of our community as we together walk with God, who loves justice and hates oppression. The administration of this policy is the responsibility of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee with oversight of the Nurture Commission and Church Board.

Definitions of Abuse:

In general, abuse occurs when a person in a position of power and/or trust (e.g. pastor, elder, boss, mentor, supervisor, parent, adult, older child, etc.) uses that position to exploit or violate someone who is more vulnerable (e.g. a child, someone who is sick, elderly, disabled, student, supervisee, intern, immigrant, etc.). That exploitation or violation can take a variety of forms such as physical, emotional and sexual.

- **Physical:** Non-accidental physical injury (ranging from bruises to fractures to death) by way of bodily contact (such as slapping, punching, pushing, beating, kicking, shaking, or striking with an object) or non-injurious contact with the goal or effect of intimidating, humiliating, threatening, or controlling.
- **Emotional:** When a person holding power and trust uses a pattern of controlling and domineering behaviors such as shaming, insulting, degrading, intimidating, threatening, humiliating, and/or domineering. Bullying is a common term for acts that typically constitute emotional abuse.
- **Sexual:** When a person in a place of power and/or trust engages in sexual behavior with a child or an adult under their supervision, authority, mentoring, or spiritual care, including: Sexual Penetration - Any act or attempted act of vaginal or anal penetration, however slight, by a person's penis, finger, other body part, or an object, and/or any oral-genital contact. Sexual Contact - Any intentional touching of a person's breasts, buttocks, groin, genitals, or other intimate parts. Touching may be over or under clothing and may include the touching of the other person's body, or making the person touch their own body. This also includes contact with non-sexual areas of the body for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator (such as with certain paraphilic disorders).
- **Non-Contact Sexual Acts:**
 - observing a person's nudity or sexual activity or allowing a person to observe sexual activity;
 - recording, photographing, transmitting, showing, viewing, streaming, or distributing intimate or sexual images, audio recordings, or sexual information of persons; or

- exposing one's genitals or inducing a person to expose their own genitals
- communicating sexual desire or sexually stimulating content toward a person within a power dynamic (boss-employee, pastor-congregant, adult-child, older child-younger child).

A child cannot consent to any sexual behavior with an adult or older child. An adult under the authority, care, or mentorship of a leader cannot consent to sexual activity. Even when both people are adults and the contact is not forcible, any crossing of sexual boundaries within a power structure is not an “affair” or a “relationship” but an egregious abuse of power. Adult sexual abusers often develop an emotional and spiritual connection and then exploit it. While not always recognized as a crime according to state laws, this is a serious violation and FMC will treat it as such. If any staff person wishes to pursue a consensual romantic relationship with someone under their spiritual care or a power hierarchy within FMC, they must contact the Church Board for the sake of transparency and to discuss any appropriate boundaries given the power dynamics.

Other definitions:

- **Policy:** The Safe Sanctuaries Committee is responsible for equipping the community of FMC for effective prevention and response. Currently, our Safe Sanctuaries Committee is comprised of a group of 4-6 members and includes women and men.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. High school students who turn 18 are considered minors for policy purposes.
- **Manipulation:** Behaviors used by someone who intends to harm a child or vulnerable adult and may include:
 1. Gaining the youth or vulnerable person’s trust (maybe offering special gifts or outings).
 2. Breaking down their defenses (saying things like “You’re safe with me.” “Your parents gave you permission to be with me.”).
 3. Manipulating them into sexual activity (saying things like “This is our secret time, things just the two of us do because you’re so special to me.”).
 4. Gaining access to the youth or vulnerable person **by gaining the parents’ and church’s trust. A person who manipulates is known by the child and is part of the child’s “safe world.”**

This document has been created for no other purpose but to best meet the safety and well being of our most precious assets, our children and vulnerable adults.

Policy for the Prevention of Abuse

All forms of abuse are forbidden. FMC takes seriously all policy violations and all concerns related to respect and safety.

Persons aged 18 or younger who are still in high school who assist with children and/or youth shall work under direct adult supervision.

All persons who work with children and youth shall be required to complete an educational orientation, provide an unrelated reference, sign an agreement, and have a background check completed (including checking publicly available sources and the sexual predator list).

1. New children's ministry workers must get the full in-person training, or view a recorded version of the training via zoom, allowing opportunity for discussion.
2. On an annual basis, trained workers will be expected to read a written refresher and sign that they have read the material.
3. Trained workers need to retake the orientation class every 4 years.
4. New/renewing participants will have the opportunity for training 2 times each year, in the Fall and Spring.

Any persons who have been convicted of a person felony or sex crime, or are admitted or known abusers, including but not limited to: assault, sexual abuse, rape, incest, indecency with a child, possession or promotion of child pornography, abandonment or endangerment of a child, as well as misdemeanor battery, shall not be eligible to work with children or youth. Persons who have been accused of such incidents shall not be permitted to work with children or youth until they have been exonerated, at which point consideration will be given to their eligibility to work with children or youth.

All regular attendees of FMC will receive a current copy of the Safe Sanctuaries policy via email or in church mailboxes. It will also be available on the church website. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Nurture Commission and the Safe Sanctuaries committee. Revisions and edits will be made as needed. A formal revision will be conducted every 5 years. Updated/revised copies will be provided to regular attendees every 5 years. Any new attendees will receive a copy of the policy upon creation of a church mailbox.

Anyone who wishes to regularly attend this church, who has pleaded guilty to or was convicted of a sex crime, must inform the Pastor and Church Board Chair that he/she is a registered sex offender. Such an offender can only attend FMC if found to not be a present danger to others, and an accountability plan for the sexual abuser and for the safety of the congregation will be developed by the Caregiving and Membership Commission in accordance with the Caregiving and Membership policies: "Policy for the Care of Survivors of Sexual Abuse" and "Policy for the Care and Accountability of Sexual Abusers."

Policy for Risk Management

1. Appropriate Interpersonal Boundaries - Adult leaders of children and youth shall set good examples of appropriate ways to relate to each other for our children and youth, including respectful and nurturing behaviors that do not interfere with another's privacy, attention to appropriate dress and language, and appropriate demonstrations of affection and encouragement. Any appropriate physical touch must be:

- **Welcome.** Any physical touch, whether toward an adult or child, must be welcome by the recipient and always allows the recipient a choice. (e.g. "Would you like a hug, high five, or nothing?"). Non-verbal communication must be respected, such as leaning away and stiffening up, as these cues count just as much as a spoken "no."

- **Observable.** Touch within a significant power difference (e.g. between an adult and a child, or an older and younger child) should be observable to others.
- **Interruptible.** Stay in visible and accountable spaces: No one should be alone with a child who is not their own child. Two youth should not be alone together.

2. Two-Adult Rule - No fewer than 2 approved adults will be present during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and/or youth, including the supervising of the nursery. If 2 adults cannot be present at a church-based event due to a last-minute emergency, the door is to be always left open and an adult roamer will move in and out of classrooms and recreation areas at irregular times.

3. First Aid/CPR - The Safe Sanctuaries Committee will be responsible for the First Aid kits. First Aid kits will be available in the kitchen and the work room where Sunday school supplies are stored. The kits are to be checked 2 times annually by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee for outdated or unsterile materials and restocking. Blank Accident Report forms should be stored with First Aid kits. A list of persons certified in CPR will be posted in the sanctuary by the sound booth, in the church office, and in the kitchen, and this list will be reviewed and updated annually by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee.

4. Five-Years-Older Rule - To protect both the worker and the children/youth, adult workers should be at least 5 years older than the oldest child/youth in the group. A somewhat younger person who is not related to the adult workers may be a helper for the adult workers in charge of the group. However, the younger person shall not be given sole responsibility for the group. Exceptions may be made to encourage college age and young adult leadership, with attention given to careful training and supervision.

5. Six-Month Rule - A volunteer who wants to work with children or youth shall have regularly attended First Mennonite Church for at least 6 months prior to volunteering. This gives both the volunteer and the church time to learn to know each other.

6. Windows in All Classroom and Office Doors - All classrooms, offices, accessible closets, and other areas used by children and youth shall have a door with a window in it or a half-door. Windows should never be covered or obscured. Workers and roamers should be aware of blind spots in rooms to prevent children from being isolated. If neither is present, the door must be left open during use.

7. Open-Door Meetings - Individual meetings with youth are to be scheduled at a time and place when others are nearby. The door shall remain open for the entire session.

8. Advance Notice to Parents - Parents will always be given advance notice and full information regarding the church sponsored event(s) in which their children will be participating. A signed consent form for participation in "off-campus" activities shall be obtained from each parent for each instance for children Pre-K through Jr. High. A signed consent form for participation in "off-campus" activities shall be obtained from parents for Senior High Youth Group at the beginning of the school year. (See example consent form attached). If a spontaneous "out-of-classroom" event takes place, the leaders will notify the Nurture Commission of the location of the event, and/or notices will be posted on the classroom door with details about the destination and expected time of return.

9. Youth Overnight Events/Trips - Sponsors will strive to always keep the youth in a safe environment and will monitor situations to preserve the youth's integrity and safety (from within and without the group) and will inform the parents about the itinerary and activities of any overnight event or trip and will secure permission for the youth to participate. Health release forms should be secured for overnight trips and parents will be given contact information. At least 2 male and 2 female sponsors will be required for adequate supervision of

the youth. Youth shall keep sponsors informed of their whereabouts. An agreement signed by all youth and sponsors is essential for overnight trips. Respect regarding physical touch, space, and visibility will be expected and upheld on such trips.

Additional policies for lock-ins: Boys and girls will be separated to sleep; nightclothes shall include a shirt and pants; there will always be some light on; and parents will be informed in advance of any media shown and all planned activities.

10. Transportation - On outings or trips all participants shall wear seat belts. No adult shall transport a child or youth alone in a vehicle unless it is their child. It is permissible for 1 adult to transport 2 or more youth to an event where they will meet the second youth sponsor and additional youth.

11. Parent and Family Education - Educational opportunities shall be provided regularly to learn the facts about abuse and this policy for the prevention of abuse. Events shall be held for the congregation, for parents and children, youth, and other groups as needed. Copies of this policy shall be made available for any member of the church and be given to new members when they join.

12. Child Registration - A parent/guardian will receive a registration form for each child in child ministries (to include, but not limited to Sunday school, Church Community Nights, VBS, church childcare). This registration form shall include emergency contact information as well as any health/allergy concerns for each child participant. All registration information will remain confidential and only given to those on a need-to-know basis.

13. Security Procedure/Identification - A parent/guardian bringing a child to the nursery or church childcare will register the child on a sign in log. The parent/guardian will need to sign-out the child at pick-up time.

Procedure For Reporting Violations of Risk Management Policies

Repeated violations of risk management policies by an individual can indicate a pattern of manipulation.

Violations of risk management policies must be reported to the Safe Sanctuaries Committee or Church Board Chair. The violation will be recorded on an "Incident Report" form and kept on file in a secure place on the church premises by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee. When a violation of policy is occurring, observers should interrupt the activity and provide correction according to our Risk Management Policies. After the interruption and correction, the incident can be recorded and submitted to the Safe Sanctuaries Committee.

When needed, the Church Board Chair or Safe Sanctuaries Committee will address the violation with the individual(s) responsible and take measures to reinforce boundaries and prevent repeated violations.

Incident Reports will be reviewed regularly by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee to check for repeated violations by an individual that could indicate a pattern of manipulation.

Repeated violations of Risk Management Policies by an individual are grounds for removing an individual from their role working with youth.

Suggested Training

Basic training for Sunday school teachers and helpers, Church Community Night workers, children's choir directors, Nurture Commission members, pastors, Church Staff Committee, youth and junior high sponsors, VBS directors and workers, and nursery and church childcare workers should include these components:

1. Discussion of child sexual abuse including definitions and statistical information.
2. Discussion of why the church is vulnerable to child sexual abuse.
3. Tactics abusers use to manipulate and abuse.
4. Action steps to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. This should include our church policy.
5. Learn to analyze the risk factors of isolation, accountability, and power and control, with discussion of how our church policies can be used to manage risk.

This training can be accomplished in a number of ways, including:

- A presenter from our church (with guidance and support from GRACE, Western District Conference or other expert related service) will provide the training (tailoring the information to our particular church policy).
- A recorded version of the training to be shown at church during a scheduled time, either in-person or via zoom, to allow for questions and discussion.

Training should be conducted in person to allow for clarification, questions/answers as well as reflection. Trainings can be offered via zoom when necessary as long as the format allows for follow up discussion.

The following policies were developed and reviewed by the pastors in cooperation with the Nurture Commission. These are included in the Safe Sanctuaries policy for your information. It's a topic that everyone should be aware of. Please review the policies with your children.

Policies for electronic communication between adults and children/youth: Virtual Contact

1. Continue to apply the 2-adult rule.
2. Use platforms that allow multiple adults to log in at the same time.
3. Meetings must be initiated by a church sponsored virtual account for any remote meetings involving youth/children.
4. Keep a log of attendance and all virtual meeting dates. This log needs to be available upon request.
5. In the event that you cannot follow the 2-adult rule, the virtual meeting must be recorded.
6. Youth and adults will maintain respectful courtesy during virtual meetings.

Appropriate content:

1. When you text or message or email children or youth, do not say anything that you would not say to them in person or would be unwilling to say in front of their parents.
2. Do not send pictures of yourself.
3. Build relationships via face-to-face contacts (following Safe Sanctuaries Policies for Risk Management) rather than relying too much on electronic media.
4. Ask yourself, "Is this communication drawing the child/youth into fuller engagement with others in the church, or is it facilitating isolation?"
5. Be careful to avoid language or content that builds an inappropriate intimacy.
6. Remember that you are not the child/youth's peer: you are an adult. Your communication should reflect that difference.
7. Inform parents of any ongoing and/or troubling conversations (unless they relate to parental abuse—in that case, see next point).
8. Your legal responsibility is to report any evidence of abuse as directed in the Safe Sanctuaries policy.

Appropriate levels:

- Be aware of the frequency with which you are communicating electronically. While some back and forth conversations may be important, communicating with multiple messages each day is a red flag.

Appropriate timing:

- Avoid texting or messaging at night.
- Avoid texting or messaging during times when a child/youth is in school or in church.

Regarding public posting:

When posting, ask yourself whether you are conveying the values and attitudes that you want to nurture in the children/youth you are leading or mentoring.

Policies: Birth to Age 4

The primary purpose of the nursery, Beginners and Preschool rooms is to provide a safe place for small children until they are developmentally able to participate in a classroom or in worship with the congregation.

Nursery Policies:

- Do not enter the nursery unless you are a parent gathering your child.
- Only nursery workers and parents should be in the nursery and handle infants.
- Once a child enters the nursery, they are to stay in the nursery until their guardian comes for them.
- If an older sibling or someone else will be picking up your child, please let nursery workers know in advance.

Nursery Location & Check In

Nursery care is provided for children from birth until age 2 during worship services and Sunday school. The nursery is located just behind the sanctuary. Children 2 to 5 years of age have church childcare and Sunday school in Rooms 223 and 234.

In order to provide the best care for the children of these ages, we need to know information about the child and the whereabouts of parent/guardian in the church building while the child is in the nursery. To facilitate this, the parent/guardian is asked to fill out an Information Card and to write the child's name on the "Sign In" sheet each time the child is brought to the nursery/church childcare.

Sick Children

Do not bring your child to the nursery/church childcare if he or she is ill. To do so would risk exposing other children to communicable diseases. If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will use the information on the child's card to locate you. We cannot give medicine to children in nursery care and/or during church childcare.

Supplies

Please bring whatever your child will need while in our care. While we have a few spare diapers for emergencies, you will want to bring the following items if you feel they will be needed: diapers, change of clothing, bottles, pacifiers, or any other things that your child normally uses. Mark all items with your child's name.

Picking Up Your Child

Children will be dismissed to their parent/guardian. If for some reason an older sibling or someone else will be picking up your child, please let us know in advance. Please be prompt in picking up your child after the worship service.

Diapering/Toileting

Diapering or assisting a young child with toileting requires the presence of 2 trained childcare workers. The door to the diapering area is a divided door. The top half must be left open when a childcare worker is diapering babies or helping young children with toileting, where a second adult must stand while the first is assisting the child. If 2 adults cannot be present at the changing area, the child's parents will be called in to assist. In the children's Beginners and Preschool rooms, if a child needs help with toileting the bathroom door will be left partly ajar with a second adult at the door, or parents will be called to assist with their child.

Symptoms of Child Abuse

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of child abuse, as well as any behavioral signs that a victim may exhibit. While you may or may not see physical signs, we want you to be aware of the physical signs, should you have reason to become aware of them. Some of the signs are summarized as follows:

Physical Signs

- Lacerations and bruising
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Behavioral Signs

- Anxiety when approaching church or nursery
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- “Acting out” of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Note that some behavioral signs can be rooted in situations other than abuse.

Verbal Signs

- (A particular person) does things to me when we are alone
- I don't like to be alone with (a particular person)
- (A particular person) fooled around with me

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF CHILD NEGLECT (from Social Care Institute for Excellence www.scie.org.uk)

- Excessive hunger
- Inadequate or insufficient clothing
- Poor personal or dental hygiene
- Untreated medical issues
- Changes in weight, excessively under or overweight
- Low self-esteem; attachment issues
- Poor relationships with peers
- Inappropriate self-soothing behaviors for age
- Changes to school performance or attendance

Reporting Obligation and Procedure

1. All workers are to be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse (see previous section) and shall report directly to the Kansas Dept. for Children and Families (DCF) to “Report Child or Adult Abuse or Neglect.” The number is 1-800-922-5330. If the child or adult appears to be in immediate danger, workers should call the police at 911. After that report has been made, the reporter shall contact the Church Board Chair, or pastor. All adults, not just church workers, should know how to report.
2. With any suspicion of abuse, the following steps are to be followed:
 - Report first to DCF (Kansas Dept. for Children and Families at 1-800-922-5330) or the police at 911, including if the allegation involves a pastor, before reporting within First Mennonite Church.
 - Do not interview the child regarding the suspected abuse. Trained personnel must handle the interview process. However, when a child makes a disclosure, it is OK to ask open-ended questions in general: “What happened?”/ “Who?”/ “Do you want to tell me anything more?” When you have enough information to report, you do not need to keep asking questions, but be sensitive to the child’s need or desire to talk.
 - Do not discuss the suspected abuse. It is important to do everything in your power to protect the privacy of victims.

A NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY

It is wise to handle any sensitive information related to potential abuse with great discretion rather than confidentiality, as the word “confidential” is likely to be taken by many as information that is rarely disclosed. There may, in fact, be times when it is necessary to disclose the alleged abuser’s name and actions for the sake of safety, transparency, or other reasons. Abusers thrive on secrecy, and when there is a potential risk to the vulnerable, informing others increases the level of safety within the community. Leadership may also wish to inform the congregation in cases where there may be other victims besides the reporting victim. Thus, rather than promising confidentiality, communicate that all information will be handled with great discretion and care. At the same time, if leaders deem information needs to be shared for the sake of accountability, safety, or transparency, this will be done. Before doing so, however, it is imperative that the alleged abuser *not* be told about the report until *after* they have been contacted by outside authorities. This means that informing others may need to wait for a time. Document all reports and all contact information so that you can follow up with authorities to see if, and when, they will contact the alleged abuser.

Action Plan for Handling Allegations of Abuse

1. When a suspicion of abuse has been reported in any setting, data concerning the child's name, address and other pertinent information will be obtained through discussions with the initial reporter and other staff. No one from the church shall attempt to interview the victim further. Support and empathy can be offered, but trained interviewers must do the interviewing.
2. The church's legal counsel shall be advised of the allegation *after* the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or local law enforcement have been contacted. The church shall cooperate fully with DCF and law enforcement.
3. The church shall maintain discretion and care of the investigation as much as possible.
4. The accused individual shall immediately be relieved of all their duties until the investigation has been completed. Sometimes the alleged abuser will need to be removed quickly, without being told that a report has been made concerning them. This is sometimes difficult for pastors and leaders, since withholding the information may feel wrong. Leaders must assess what boundaries, accountability, or discipline is appropriate given the information they have. In instances where child abuse is confirmed, the church will immediately dismiss the individual from their position.

Another thing to consider when there has been a disclosure against a leader or congregant is the safety of the victim. A trauma-informed response includes acknowledging that a victim's safety is not just about their physical safety from the alleged abuser but also about their perceived safety. This means that if a victim chooses to continue to come to church services and events, then the alleged abuser should not be present. Refer to our "Policy for the Care of Survivors of Sexual Abuse."

5. In instances where there is a lack of factual clarity, the church must take action depending on the strength of the evidence available and after consideration of the victim, and if appropriate, the victim's family. In such circumstances, you are best served to consult with an independent organization with more expertise who can help guide you in processing possible responsible courses of action.
6. The congregation shall be informed of the investigation with respect to matters that are discretionary, so that the congregation will hear about the investigation from within the church rather than from the news media, if possible. In general, investigations are not public. It is typical that when an investigation results in charges, then it becomes public, because filing charges is typically in the public record. There are times when it is better for the sake of an investigation that the broader community is not informed. And there are times when sharing this information is important for the sake of safety as well as transparency. It is good to build in discretion so that there is some ability to maneuver depending on the circumstances.
7. The Church Board shall plan a response to the media and speak to the media through one appointed contact person. It is important that the church emphasize concern about the evil and harm of child abuse and about the church's care and concern for the victim and family. Naming the steps the church is taking with regard to the present circumstance, and the steps the church will take to reduce the risk of a recurrence, will be important, as the church continues to seek to provide a safe environment for children.
8. For further guidelines, please see the "Policy for the Care of Survivors of Sexual Abuse" and "Policy for the Accountability of Sexual Abusers."

Safe Sanctuaries Committee

A committee of 4 persons, named Safe Sanctuaries Committee, will report to the Nurture Commission. Those 4 members will be as follows:

- One member from Nurture Commission to serve at least 2 years
- One member from Church and Staff Relations committee to serve at least 2 years
- Two members will be appointed by the church board from the congregation at large. These 2 members will serve 3-year terms that are renewable once. One of these 2 will be elected as chair of the committee.
- The Safe Sanctuaries Committee will make every effort to include at least one survivor, primary or secondary, of sexual abuse at all times.

Confidentiality is extremely important to this committee, and assignments must be made with that in mind.

Responsibilities of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee:

1. Provide training as needed to include (but not limited to) all Sunday school teachers, Church Community Night workers, children's choir directors, Nurture Commission members, pastors, Church Staff Committee, Youth Sponsors, Jr. High Sponsors, VBS directors and workers, Nursery supervisors and workers, church childcare supervisors and workers.
2. Conduct post-training interviews with new volunteers to verify that the individual understands and upholds Safe Sanctuaries policies and is overall a good candidate for working with youth.
3. Contact one reference provided by an applicant before they are cleared to volunteer.
4. Complete background checks on all of the above mentioned workers, plus check publicly available source (i.e. social media), and the sexual predator list for those who work with individuals 17 years of age or younger.
5. Maintain confidential files in locked file cabinet including Accident Report forms, Incident Report forms, Volunteer Participation Agreements for all workers, background check results for all workers, parental consent forms for children and youth, medical release forms for children and youth, overnight youth activity consent forms, and summer trip consent forms.
6. As a team, review Incident Reports and address any violations of Policies for Risk Management with the individual(s) responsible and take measures to reinforce appropriate boundaries.
7. Maintain a list of approved workers with children and youth (workers who have been trained, have agreed to follow church policy and guidelines, and who have completed a clear background check). This list will be published in the church directory.
8. Check First Aid kits in kitchen and church office two times a year and replace any outdated or unsterile supplies.

First Mennonite Church
Newton, Kansas
Child Registration

(Includes child ministries such as Sunday school, Church Community Night, church childcare, and Vacation Bible School)

Personal Contact Details

Parent/Guardian Name/s: _____

Name of Child: _____

Child's date of birth: _____ Preferred Name: _____

Address: _____

Parent Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Alternate emergency contacts:

1. Name: _____ Relationship to child: _____ Phone: _____

2. Name: _____ Relationship to child: _____ Phone: _____

Food Allergies/Health Concerns: _____

Other Important Information: _____

We always need volunteers! Would you be willing to help? We will contact you!

☐ Sunday school teacher ☐ Sunday school helper ☐ Church Childcare ☐ Nursery

Permission to View Media

I consent to my child viewing videos and other media rated (G) General. I understand that all material will be previewed by a leader to check suitability.

Signed _____ Date _____

Permission to be Photographed or Filmed I give my permission for my child to be photographed or videotaped. I understand that the image may be displayed in church publications, church buildings or website. Names will not be displayed.

Signed _____ Date _____

**First Mennonite Church
Newton, Kansas
Off-Campus Activity Request**

Activity: _____

On _____ (date) we will be taking a

trip to _____ (location). Children will be gone from the church

from _____ (beginning time) and return by _____ (ending time).

To attend this event please fill in the form below and hand it to your leader at the beginning of the event.
Without a permission slip you cannot attend. *(any further details here)*

Permission Slip

Name of Child: _____

Emergency Contact name: _____

Contact phone #: _____

Alternate Emergency contact name: _____

Contact phone #: _____

Allergies/Disabilities? _____

I give permission for my child to attend

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Printed Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____

First Mennonite Church
Newton, Kansas
Participation Agreement for Volunteer Workers With Children and Youth

First Mennonite Church is committed to providing a safe, secure and healthy environment for all children, youth, and adults who participate in its ministries and activities.

The Safe Sanctuaries Policy reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience God's love, healing, and hope through relationships with others.

As a volunteer in this congregation, I agree to the following:

1. I will promptly report any abusive behavior to the Dept. of Children and Families (DCF) at 1-800-922-5330 or the police at 911, then to the Church Board Chair or Pastor. I will report other behavior in violation of the Safe Sanctuary Policy to the Safe Sanctuaries Committee, Church Board Chair or the pastor.
2. I will complete an educational orientation or other training event provided by the church.
3. I will submit to a brief interview with Safe Sanctuaries Committee members to ascertain my suitability to work with youth in the church.
4. I will provide the name and contact information of reference (unrelated) to the Safe Sanctuaries Committee.
5. If age 18 or younger and still in high school, I will work under adult supervision at all times.
6. I will observe and abide by the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and guidelines regarding working with children and youth.

I have read the Safe Sanctuaries Policy of First Mennonite Church and this Participation Agreement, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth therein. I also understand that by signing this agreement I have agreed to participate in a background check conducted by a member of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee, and I agree to complete all said paperwork necessary for this action.

Signature

Date

Print Full Name

Volunteer Position

**First Mennonite Church
Newton, Kansas
Parental Medical Consent Form**

Child's name: _____

Parent's Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Father's Work Number: _____

Mother's Work Number: _____

If my/our child _____ requires treatment by a physician or hospital, while attending _____ in _____, please make every effort to contact me/us at the above phone numbers. If I/we cannot be reached to authorize treatment, I hereby authorize youth sponsors _____ or _____ to consent for treatment of my/our child.

Insurance Company: _____

Contract/Group No. _____

Person's name insurance is in: _____

Health information: Please list any allergies, medications and any special instructions that sponsors should be aware of:

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Signature of Parent of Guardian

Date

**First Mennonite Church
Newton, KS
Accident Report Form**

Date of Injury: _____

Name of Injured: _____

Where did injury occur (classroom, nursery, etc.)? _____

Nature of injury (cut, bruise, scrape, etc.): _____

Location of injury on body: _____

Action taken (band-aid, ice, etc.): _____

Name of youth worker1: _____

Signature of youth worker1: _____

Date: _____

Name of youth worker 2: _____

Signature of youth worker 2: _____

Date: _____

First Mennonite Church
Newton, KS
Incident Report Form

Use this form is to report a violation of the Safe Sanctuaries Risk Management Policies

Date of Incident: _____

Name(s) of adults and/or children involved: _____

Location where the incident occurred: _____

What happened? _____

Action taken? _____

Is further action required?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Further action: _____

Submit this form to a member of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee.

Submitted by (print name): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

First Mennonite Church

Report of Sexual Abuse Investigation Form

Section 1: Incident Details

Date(s) of Alleged Incident(s): _____ Time(s): _____

Location(s): _____

Description of Incident: *(Include specific behaviors, words, actions, and any physical evidence)*

- Was medical attention sought? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, where, and when: _____

- Was law enforcement contacted? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, agency name and contact: _____

Section 2: Evidence Collected

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Physical evidence (clothing, objects, etc.) | ☐ Witness statements |
| ☐ Photographs | ☐ Electronic communications (texts, emails, etc.) |
| ☐ Medical records | |
| ☐ Other: | |

Section 3: Witness Information

Name(s): _____

Contact Info: _____

Statement Summary: _____

Section 4: Investigator Details

Investigator Name (s): _____

Title (s)/Role (s): _____

Date Assigned: _____

Investigation Start Date: _____

Investigation End Date: _____

Section 5: Findings and Recommendations

Summary of Findings: _____

Conclusion: _____

Recommended Actions: *(e.g., disciplinary action, referral to law enforcement, counseling support)* _____

Section 6: Signatures

Investigator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator Signature: _____ Date: _____

KANSAS LAW SUMMARY (Revised May 25, 2016)

The following is a summary of Kansas law about reporting and other requirements relating to child abuse. This is not a quotation of noted statutes and is only a summary.

1. Who Must Report? According to Kansas State Law (K.S.A. 38-1522) when there is reason to suspect a child has been injured as the result of physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse, a report must be made by the following persons: "Persons licensed to practice the healing arts or dentistry; persons licensed to practice optometry; persons engaged in postgraduate training programs approved by the state board of healing arts; licensed psychologists; licensed professional or practical nurses examining, attending or treating a child under the age of 18; teachers, school administrators or other employees of a school which the child is attending; chief administrative officers of medical care facilities; registered marriage and family therapists; persons licensed by the secretary of health and environment to provide child care services or the employees of persons so licensed at the place where the child care services are being provided to the child; licensed social workers; fire fighters; emergency medical services personnel; mediators appointed under K.S.A. 23-602 and amendments thereto; juvenile intake assessment workers; and law enforcement officers."
2. Staff Pastors must report when they are responsible for the care or supervision of children. Kansas law does not say clergy must report simply because they are clergy.
3. What Requires A Report? A report must be made when a person has reason to suspect that a child has been injured through physical, mental or emotional abuse, or neglect or sexual abuse.
4. Summary of Legal Definitions:

"Child" refers generally to any person under 18 years of age.

"Abuse" minimally includes any or all of the following:

 - a. physical, mental or emotional injury inflicted on a child;
 - b. sexual contact or intercourse;
 - c. sexual exploitation of a child.
5. To Whom Must the Report Be Made: Reports - oral or written - are made to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). When this department is not open for business, the report is made to the appropriate law enforcement agency. (K.S.A. 38-1522 (c)). The person reporting may speak with the church attorney beforehand.
6. Willful and knowing failure to report by mandatory reporters is a Class B Misdemeanor. (K.S.A. 38-1522 (f)) Preventing or interfering with the making of a report required by the law is also a Class B Misdemeanor. (K.S.A. 38-1522 (g)).
7. Under Kansas law (K.S.A. 38-1526), anyone participating without malice in the making of an oral or written report on the abuse of a child, or in any follow-up investigation of the report shall have immunity from any civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Such a participant has the same immunity with respect to participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from the report.

8. Kansas law (K.S.A. 60-429) recognizes as privileged what the statute defines as a "penitential communication."

"A person, whether or not a party, has a privilege to refuse to disclose, and to prevent a witness from disclosing a communication if he or she claims the privilege and the judge finds that (1) the communication was a penitential communication, (2) the witness is the penitent or the minister, and (3) the claimant is the penitent, or the minister making the claim on behalf of an absent penitent." (K.S.A. 60-429 (b))

9. Clergy should keep in mind that Kansas law does not REQUIRE them to report, unless they are functioning in one of the positions listed in K.S.A. 38-1522. See paragraph 1 above. The law clearly protects the clergy/penitent and confessional secrecy.

The statutory definition of penitential communication appears broader in scope, moreover, than a strictly sacramental and confessional communication: it protects a broader class of communications from disclosure. Nevertheless, a minister may well be subpoenaed to testify about cases of child abuse. He can legitimately be asked for all information obtained outside the embrace of a "penitential communication" as defined by the statute. For questions regarding whether a particular communication is privileged, pastors should consult legal counsel.

Approved by FMC Church Board, December 14, 2017.

Reviewed and updated by Nurture Commission; reported to Church Board, 2018.

Reviewed and updated by Safe Sanctuaries Committee; approved by Church Board, 2025.