

FRIEDBERG MORAVIAN CHURCH

Child Protection Policy

A. Background and Purpose:

The Moravian Church has a long standing history of concern for the conduct of its members. The Brotherly Agreement was adopted in 1727 as a set of principles by which the earliest Moravians agreed to live. Over the years that document has been revised and updated into what is now known as The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living – a set of principles by which Moravians today agree to conduct their lives.

Yet, even with such a covenant for living in place, the great changes in the moral standards of our society and increased sensitivity to questions of appropriate sexual conduct by persons in positions of leadership make necessary the adoption of specific policies regarding allegations of sexual misconduct and the establishment of safeguards to prevent such misconduct from occurring.

Churches offer a loving and caring environment; however, sexual abuse is a potential source of liability for churches as they can be institutions where molesters are placed in immediate contact with potential victims. To protect its integrity and ability to carry out ministry in the spirit of Jesus Christ, the church must act to prevent abuse from causing harm to its members or the community at large.

It is with these things in mind that the Board of Elders sets forth the following plan for response to allegations of abuse and establishes measures to safeguard against such abuse. Every report of sexual misconduct involves unique circumstances therefore; this plan merely describes the general approach the Board of Elders will follow in responding to reports of sexual abuse.

B. Scope:

This policy is applicable to all paid and volunteer staff of Friedberg Moravian Church.

C. Responsibility:

Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of the Board of Elders. Training and education of staff and volunteers is the responsibility of the Christian Education Board and the pastor(s).

D. Safeguards and Preventative Measures:

1. Volunteers who work with youth are required to be members in good standing of this congregation for six months, and must be approved by appropriate church leaders before they may begin working directly with children in these areas.
2. Background checks must be obtained for potential volunteers who work with children. Paid staff members are required to have background checks performed through the Southern Province as a condition of their employment.
3. All volunteer information is kept confidential.
4. All workers with children should observe the "two person" rule which means that workers must avoid one-on-one situations with children whenever possible.
5. Individuals who have been convicted with physical or sexual abuse may not work in any church-sponsored activity or program for children.
6. Workers should immediately report to the pastor or administration any behaviors or other incidents which seem abusive or inappropriate. Upon notification, appropriate actions will be taken and reports made in compliance with the operating procedure of these policies.
7. Guidelines for volunteers who work with youth and children will be provided to each volunteer. (see attached)
8. A circulating adult is required to observe and offer assistance when only one adult is present to supervise children and youth.

E. Responding to Allegations of Abuse:

1. Secure the safety of the child and other children by relieving the accused of his or her duties.
2. Report to Child Protective Services / Social Services (telephone 725-8351) immediately by telephone. If there is no answer use the 911 emergency numbers. File a written report within 36 hours.
3. The pastor(s) and church representatives will take allegations seriously and show care and support to prevent further harm. Pastoral resources should be offered to the victim(s) as needed.
4. The accused should be treated with dignity and support. The accused must be notified of the suspension of duties until after the investigation clears or substantiates the allegations. If the accused is a paid employee, the Joint Board will give specific guidance for continuance of compensation during the period of investigation. This decision will be communicated to the employee.

5. If there are media inquiries, the senior pastor and/or Vice Chair of the Board of Elders should consult with the Provincial Elders Conference of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America. Confidentiality and privacy of all involved, especially the victims and their families, must be safeguarded.
6. All efforts to handle allegations must be documented.
7. Any church (private) investigation is generally delayed until any police investigation is complete. Private investigation is affected by the results of any police investigation.
8. Within 48 hours of being notified of the incident, the pastor(s) and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders will meet with the person making the accusation. The person making the accusation has the right to have a witness present. The alleged perpetrator will not be present. Friedberg Moravian Church's Child Protection Policy will be reviewed and recommendations for counseling and support will be offered.
9. Within 48 hours of being notified of the incident, the pastor(s) and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders will meet with the alleged perpetrator. The alleged perpetrator has the right to have a witness present. Neither the alleged victim nor anyone from the alleged victim's family will be present. Friedberg Moravian Church's Child protection Policy will be reviewed and recommendations for counseling and support will be offered.
10. In the event that allegations of child sexual abuse are brought against a pastor, also contact the Provincial Elder's Conference of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America (telephone 725-5811) who will follow procedures set forth in the *Policy on Sexual Misconduct of Persons Under Call or Appointment by The Provincial Elders' Conference/District Boards, In The Moravian Church, Northern and Southern Provinces*, established by the Provincial Elders' Conference on January 31, 1998 and adopted by the 1998 Synod of the Southern Province.

**FRIEDBERG MORAVIAN CHURCH
GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS
WHO WORK WITH YOUTH AND CHILDREN**

DO

1. Meet in public places when meeting with minors.
2. Always have another adult when counseling minors.
3. Advise other staff members of activities away from the group: where, when and with whom you meet.
4. Always have two adults taking younger children to the bathroom.
5. Always have two adults present when changing children's clothing.
6. Keep physical contact public and minimal. Simple "hello" hugs are permissible, for example.
7. Always have a minimum of two adults on field trips, especially overnight trips.
8. Keep groups together, perhaps using a buddy system.
9. Be gender sensitive. Little girls may do better with female staff and boys with male staff. If there is a mixed group it is good to have both female and male staff members.
10. Be willing to be cheerfully accountable to parents and staff members.

DON'T

1. Meet one to one with minors behind closed doors.
2. Have secret meetings with minors.
3. Meet alone with minors, especially with the opposite sex.
4. Check a minor for injuries under clothing without another adult present except in serious emergencies.
5. Exchange kisses with children or youth.
6. Allow older children to take younger children to the bathroom.
7. Transport a child or youth by yourself except for real emergencies.