SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Approved July 19, 2016

As Christians we are called to create churches that are holy, safe and protecting communities for all of God’s children. This Safe Sanctuary Policy is designed to address the safety of everyone at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church (hereinafter “Montview”) with special emphasis on the protection of children, youth, and other vulnerable populations such as the elderly and those who are disabled. This policy’s purpose is to provide guidance and covers all employees; leaders of the church including church officers, session members and deacons; as well as those working or volunteering in church programs that serve these vulnerable populations. All charges and accusations of any person in any capacity will be handled with integrity to support and protect the church and its mission. If accusations or charges against any individual are dropped or proven unfounded, then the guidelines of this policy will no longer apply.

Duty to Self-Report

Knowledge and transparency are the best protections against harm. Accordingly, all individuals interested in working or volunteering at Montview have an absolute duty to report to the pastoral staff, a member of the leadership team (Pastors, Director of Children and Families, Director of Music) or the Executive Director all incidents, past and present, involving child abuse, elder abuse, drug abuse, criminal convictions and criminal charges. If the subject position requires driving, the interested individual must also self-report all past or present alcohol or drug related traffic violations. This obligation is continuing in nature. Failure to self-report will result in the individual’s ineligibility to work or volunteer at Montview.

Who May – And May Not – Work With Children, Youth and Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who have been convicted, charged or accused of offenses against children or the elderly, including child pornography, may not work with children, youth or the elderly.
2. Individuals who have been convicted or charged with crimes of violence may not work with children, youth or vulnerable populations.
3. Individuals who have been convicted or charged with alcohol or drug-related driving offenses within the past ten years may not drive children, youth or vulnerable populations.
4. Survivors of childhood abuse need the love and acceptance of this church family. However, such survivors should discuss their desire to work with children, youth or vulnerable populations with a member of the pastoral staff or a member of the leadership team before engaging in any volunteer service. The conferring member of the pastoral staff or member of the leadership team may disqualify the individual from working with children, youth or vulnerable populations if he or she sees fit.
5. All adult volunteers interested in working with children, youth or vulnerable populations must be a Montview member for a minimum of 12 months before beginning such service. This requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Montview’s pastoral staff or leadership team, upon the recommendation of the pastoral staff or a member of the leadership team of another Presbyterian church, or a Montview member.

6. All staff and volunteers interested in working with children or youth must ordinarily be at least five years older than the children or youth they will be supervising. This requirement may be waived at the discretion of the pastoral staff or a member of the leadership team for good cause.

7. When working with children or youth, all volunteers under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult who is present with the underage volunteer.

Background Checks

1. The Executive Director, a member of the pastoral staff, or a member of the leadership team will inform all prospective paid staff and volunteers that all applicants must undergo a background check, which will include a check of motor vehicle records, prior to beginning work. The Executive Director, a member of the pastoral staff, or a member of the leadership team will also inform all prospective paid staff and volunteers of the duty to self-report.

2. Because Montview’s paid staff members may have multiple occasions to come in contact with children, youth, the elderly, or other vulnerable populations, all paid staff members will undergo a background check before being hired by Montview, and every two years thereafter. Montview staff members who have not had a background check conducted within the past five years on file as of the date of the adoption of this policy will undergo such a check within 30 days.

3. All adult volunteers interested in working with children, youth or other vulnerable populations will submit a written application and undergo a background check before beginning such work, and every five years thereafter. This requirement may be waived for good cause and upon the agreement of two of the following: Executive Director, a member of the pastoral staff, or a member of the leadership team.

4. Montview will pay for all background checks and credit checks.

5. If a written application or background check raises any issues of concern, the Executive Director may, after consulting with a member of pastoral staff or a member of the leadership team, prohibit a volunteer or paid staff member from filling a particular position.

6. The Executive Director may consult with individuals from law enforcement, legal, or other specialized training to provide guidance on any issues of concern raised by a background check. Additional advice or consultation may be sought from Presbytery or trusted congregational leaders.
7. The Executive Director will have primary responsibility for requesting background checks and maintaining all records from those checks.

8. All background checks and accompanying documents will be maintained in a locked filing cabinet or secure digital file for a period of ten years. Only the Executive Director, the Director of Finance, pastoral staff or a member of the leadership team may access or view such records.

9. It is the responsibility of the overseeing member of the pastoral staff or member of the leadership team to notify the Executive Director of any volunteers requiring background checks or credit checks at least three full business days in advance of the volunteer beginning service.

Volunteer Training

Montview will endeavor to provide training for all volunteers and paid staff who work with money, children, youth, the elderly, or other vulnerable populations regarding this policy and any other policy or procedures relevant to their work before they begin work. Training will be coordinated by the Executive Director in conjunction with the Safety Committee and will be required in conjunction with authorization for background checks.

General Staffing Procedures

1. Montview will endeavor to staff all classrooms with at least two volunteers or staff members at all times.

2. Montview will endeavor to follow state childcare standards regarding the proper ratio of children to adults in all classrooms.

3. The interior of all classrooms and offices will remain visible from the outside at all times. This means that the door will be open or the glass window in the door will be unobstructed.

4. If a child needs to be accompanied to the restroom by a volunteer or paid staff member, the restroom door will remain open. If an infant/toddler needs a diaper change, at least two volunteers or paid staff members will be present in the room where the diaper change is occurring.

Away and Overnight Procedures for Children, Youth, the Elderly and Other Vulnerable Populations

1. Montview will endeavor to staff each away event with at least two volunteers or staff members per 12 participants and a copy of the roster of all participants, including emergency contact information, will be filed with the Executive Director. A copy of the roster should accompany the responsible individual traveling with the group.

2. Montview will endeavor to ensure that co-ed overnight activities provide both male and female leaders.
3. Montview will endeavor to staff each event away from Montview with at least one staff member or volunteer who is trained in First Aid and CPR.

4. Prior written parent/guardian permission is required for any events that require driving and/or overnight stay.

5. The leaders of any event requiring driving and/or an overnight stay will confer with the Executive Director for insurance coverage purposes and will certify to the Executive Director that all policies and procedures have been complied with.

6. All necessary background checks should be requested three full business days in advance.

7. Notarized medical powers of attorney are required for each traveling individual minor or others who require such documentation for medical care.

Events Involving Children, Youth and Adults

Special care will be taken when children or youth participate in activities with adults. The staff and volunteers supervising these activities will work to comply with these policies and ensure that children or youth are not unsupervised and not alone with an individual adult.

Sexual Harassment

Montview has “zero-tolerance” for any sexual harassment, abuse or sexual misconduct which impacts or potentially impacts members of the Montview community and pledges to preserve an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or unwanted sexual attention by anyone associated with the church, whether male or female. Harassment may include references to employment status or conditions or may serve to create a hostile, intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Examples of harassment can include, but are not limited to, persistent and repeated verbal abuse, obscene jokes, lewd comments, sexual depictions, touching, staring or other sexual conduct committed either on or off church premises.

All church employees, volunteers or anyone serving the church in any capacity are responsible for helping ensure that our church is kept free of sexual harassment. If you feel you have been a victim or witnessed sexual harassment against others, report the behavior to the Executive Director or the Pastoral Staff.

Procedures and Priorities for an Incident that has Occurred

1. All federal, state and local laws and regulations regarding the reporting of possible child and elderly abuse will be complied with and paid staff and volunteers will cooperate fully with appropriate authorities/agencies.

2. When a paid staff worker or a volunteer suspects that abuse, theft, or another criminal violation is taking place or has taken place, he or she will first secure the safety of the child, youth or vulnerable person, call 911 or the police and then immediately report the
incident to the Executive Director, pastoral staff or member of the leadership team; complete an incident report; and fully cooperate with any subsequent investigation as appropriate to the significance of the infraction.

3. The Executive Director, pastoral staff and/or Program Leader will notify appropriate authorities/agencies and the parents/guardians of the affected individual.

4. If an ordained member of the pastoral staff is involved in the incident, the Executive Director will notify the Denver Presbytery.

5. This policy also applies to any abuse or criminal violations that take place off-site and to which the pastoral staff or Executive Director become aware.

6. The Executive Director will be responsible for all news and media inquiries, notifying the insurance agency, and conferring with the church’s legal counsel and will involve the Director of Communication as needed.

7. All involved paid staff and volunteers will complete an Incident Report which includes the following:
   a. The name of the individual observing or receiving the disclosure of the abuse or theft, including the time, date and place of the observation or disclosure,
   b. The alleged victim’s name, age and date of birth,
   c. Any statement made by the alleged victim,
   d. The names of any other individuals perpetrating or witnessing the incident
   e. A description of the incident observed or received by the paid staff member or volunteer,
   f. Whether the reporting individual contacted law enforcement or reported the incident to a member of the pastoral staff, Executive Director or member of the leadership team and the date, time and recipient of the report.
   g. The Executive Director or pastoral staff will certify that the incident was reported to law enforcement including date, time and law enforcement agency to whom the incident was reported. If the incident was not reported, the failure to report must be explained and signed by two of the following: pastoral staff, member of the leadership team directors, and Executive Director.
   h. The Incident Report will remain confidential and kept in a locked filing cabinet or secure digital file for a period of ten years. The Incident Report may be disclosed to law enforcement, Montview’s legal counsel, Montview’s insurance company, the victim or the victim’s parent/legal guardian.

8. Montview pastoral staff will provide supportive care to all involved.

9. The Executive Director will report all significant incidents to the Chair of the Safety Committee and the Session liaison for the Safety Committee. Those three will consult regarding the need and process for further discreet reporting to the Session and/or others on staff or in the congregation.
Who May – And May Not – Work With Money

1. Any paid staff member or volunteer who has been convicted or charged with theft or other crime may not work with money except with the advance written permission of the Executive Director and the Director of Finance.

2. No paid staff member or volunteer with the Finance Office may handle cash without another paid staff member or adult volunteer being present.

3. No person under the age of 21 may handle cash without a paid staff member or volunteer over the age of 21 being present.

4. All paid staff members or adult volunteers with the Finance Office who handle cash, approve church expenditures, manage congregational funds or authorize transfers of church money will undergo a full background check and a credit check.

5. Volunteers who handle cash on an occasional basis such as sale of merchandise or tickets, collection for appreciation gifts, etc. will make a plan with the Director of Finance or Executive Director to ensure cash is securely handled, to provide second person verification of amounts, and to account for the disposition of the cash.

Safety Documents

The attached Safety Documents are incorporated and made a part of this Safe Sanctuary Policy.

I. Montview Emergency Response Procedures
II. Incident Report Form
III. Medical Release/Permission Form
IV. Abuse Definitions and Reporting Information