**Summary statement**
Hope Community Church (HCC) has always been a place for people to connect with God no matter what their past. We believe everyone deserves a second chance. We tell people we are not concerned with where they have been, but with where they are now in their relationship with Christ.

As well, “Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” (Matthew 19:14) Caring physically emotionally and spiritually for children is central to the mission of God.

People on the Sexual Offender Registry (SOR) present a unique challenge for a church, particularly Hope. We have an excellent Family Ministry, with 1800 minors each weekend. The mere presence of those on the SOR could put those minors at risk.

While the church desires to serve all people, believers and unbelievers, there exists the potential for the exposure by the church generally, and minors specifically, to sexual abuse and exploitation. When such abuse occurs the consequences are devastating to all involved, including the church.

As Christ followers we are called to love, care for, protect, and teach all people. The challenge of doing this with the presence of those who potentially are not safe is complex. This policy statement seeks to balance the desire to minister to all while keeping everyone safe.

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Scripture
Some verses that guide these policies include:

Rom 3:10-12 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

1Co 6:9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Pro 3:7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Mat 10:16 Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Pro 22:3 The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.

Protecting Minors
Safety is one of the values for our KidCity and student ministry. Having a clear, effective, and consistent set of policies to protect minors is imperative. This system builds confidence in our ministry and demonstrates our values. In light of the size of the church, and the reality of our culture, we take many steps to keep children safe while in our care.

• All KidCity classrooms have windows in the doors.
• A computerized check-in system has been instituted for all minors up through 12th grade.
• No adult is allowed into KidCity areas without a parent or volunteer badge.
• Dedicated KidCity areas have electronic locks on hall doors.
• Every staff member and volunteer in our student ministries or KidCity has a criminal background check and reference check.
• Children’s and student’s areas have been designed with the intent of providing a safe and secure environment minimizing the risk of abuse and endangerment.
• No minor is accepted into a room unless 2 workers are present.
• All KidCity volunteers are trained annually in our policies and procedures to ensure minor safety and quality experiences.
• All KidCity volunteers practice emergency procedures to protect children annually.
• Security volunteers are present during all services to ensure that the premises are safe.

Ministering to Sex Offenders
Hope’s desire is to effectively minister to all people. In order to minister to sex offenders, the following steps will be taken
• Offender will meet with church leadership first. If an offender is discovered to be attending the church, the Executive Pastor will initiate a meeting to review this policy
• Church staff, in cooperation with the offender’s parole or probation officer, will determine if state law allows the offender to attend any or all church activities depending on campus location
• The offender is expected to comply fully with restrictions and requirements placed on him or her
• The offender must agree to abide by all agreements as well as Hope’s Sexual Offender policy completely
• The offender will agree to meet once every 3 months, or more often if needed, with his or her supervising pastor, and accountability partners, to review progress made and requirements of this policy
• The offender will sign agreements related to this policy, including the form stating they have been given a written copy of this policy
• The sexual offender may participate in worship services, spiritual formation events, (including Life Groups), provided that participation would not violate any aspect of this policy

Approval Process for Sex Offenders
• Meet initially with Executive Pastor and supervising pastor to discuss possible attendance at Hope. This meeting will include discussion of:
  o The nature of the conviction(s) that got them on the sex offender registry
    ▪ The original charge and charge(s) where there was conviction
    ▪ Discuss ages and locations of the victims of these crimes and their families
  o Other incidences of inappropriate sexual behavior, regardless of arrest or conviction
    ▪ Nature of criminal activity, particular areas of temptation, and known problems
  o Any pending legal or criminal charges in the State of North Carolina and any other state
  o Willingness to discuss same issues with accountability partner
    ▪ Church staff will follow up to ensure there was full disclosure on both sides (accountability partners and church staff)
  o Agree on label for past activity (pedophile, child sexual offender, violent offender, sexual offender)
  o Agree to connect staff members with probation/parole officer
  o Agree to be photographed so security team can identify the offender
• Get accountability partners who will help the offender integrate into life of the church and hold them accountable for their behavior (see Accountability Partner Agreement)
• If on parole or probation, provide Hope Community Church the following items in writing from parole or probation officer
  o Statement as to what actions would violate the offenders parole or probation in regard to church activity, attendance, and/or involvement
  o Statement showing evidence of compliance with all restrictions placed upon him or her by the courts
Provide these statements to the Family Ministry Director who will distribute to appropriate ministry leaders including security

• Where appropriate, participate in a recognized professional counseling program as required by the court, or if not by the court, as deemed necessary by Hope Community Church.
  o Hope Community Church must be satisfied with the professional counseling program
  o The Offender shall give a detailed outline of his/her counseling program to the Family Ministry Director for approval
• Participate only in activities that are appropriate to their stage of life, marital status, age and assigned campus
• Specific actions the offender agrees not to engage in (Restrictions):
  o Approaching or engaging any victim of this offender or known victims of other offenders
  o Entering any area of the facility that are deemed off limits to the offender
• Specific requirements that the offender agrees to meet (Requirements):
  o Cooperate with security staff and pastors whenever there may be a question about location, activity, or concerns
  o Find 2-3 accountability partners who will help the offender integrate into life of the church and hold them accountable for their behavior

Limitations & Requirements
In addition, offenders in the following categories agree to the following limitations and requirements.

Violent Sex Offender: an offender who has this label agrees to all restrictions and requirements for sex offenders, and the following:
• Never entering any Hope facility for services or ministry events without first having met an accountability partner at the door. The door will be defined as within 8 feet of the inside of the front door of the facility.
• Stay physically with an accountability partner when at church
• Meet at least monthly with accountability partners to discuss spiritual life, desires to offend, relationship with parole officer, etc.

Child Sexual Offender (under 13): an offender who has this label agrees to all restrictions and requirements for sex offenders and violent sex offenders, and the following:
• Never entering any Hope facility when minors may be present without first having met an accountability partner at the door. The door will be defined as within 8 feet of the inside of the front door of the facility
• The offender is never to be more than a few feet away from the accountability partner, and always within visual sight if minors are in the building
• Never enter any private place, including bathrooms, without accountability partner if minors are in the building
• Never approach, talk to, touch, engage, look at or go near children or teens
• Remain away from any area where children and teens are located, checked in, or ministered to (see building maps)
• Enter the building via the front door only. Never enter buildings where the sole focus is ministry to teens and or children (see maps)
Never attend any event aimed primarily at teens or children. This includes any and all student ministry events, Kidcity sponsored events. If in doubt seek written clarification from the Family Ministry Director

May never serve in areas or ministries aimed at teens or children. Offering, applying, or attempting to serve in any of these areas will be a violation of this policy

May serve (with accountability partner) in areas where contact with minors is only incidental to serving

**Pedophile**: An offender designated a pedophile by the state, or the church, agrees to all previous restrictions for sex offenders, violent sex offenders, and child sex offenders, as well as the following:

- May never serve in areas or ministries where even incidental contact with minors may occur

**Offenders with Minors in the Home**

If a sexual offender who has **children under the age of 13** in his or her home wishes to attend Hope Community Church, special steps may need to be taken to allow his or her children to safely participate in KidCity without violating other parts of this agreement.

Since all child sexual offenders and pedophiles are barred from being in the Kidcity area, and the check-in area, someone else will need to check in the children (under the age of 13), escort them to their classroom, and pick them up.

This person could be a spouse, friend, relative or accountability partner. If it is an accountability partner, there needs to be a second partner who remains with the sexual offender in other parts of the building when this is occurring. The offender may request an HCC staff person or volunteer check-in the children (under the age of 13), but arrangements need to be made at least a day in advance (preferably earlier). It may happen that no volunteer or staff member is available at a given service, and the offender will need to make other arrangements.

**Victims of Sexual Offenders**

Priority to access to Hope ministries and services will be given to the victims of sexual offenders. If any victim of a sexual offender is known to attend Hope Community Church, the offender’s attendance will be conditioned on approval of all victims and their families.

If any identified victim of a sexual offender is known to attend Hope Community Church, the Executive pastor, or his designee, will approach the victim, or if a minor, the victim’s parents, to discuss the possibility of the offender attending the church. That conversation should cover how the victim would feel with the offender in attendance, church policy, implications of the decision, and their options.

If the victim(s) or their parents feel the offender’s presence would be detrimental emotionally, physically, or spiritually, the offender agrees to find another church. If the victim(s) are open to the offender attending the church, they will sign a statement saying the specified offender may attend some HCC activities and be on HCC property for the appropriate reasons

If an offender is already in attendance at Hope, and a victim of that offender begins to attend afterward, priority will be given to the offender due to already being established in the church and the difficulty of a known offender transitioning to a new church home.
Accountability Partners
These same gender non-relatives agree to meet regularly with the offender and accompany him or her when they attend HCC functions, as specified by this policy.

They will do the following:
• Monitor church attendance as well as spiritual life of the offender
• Pray for, counsel, teach, encourage, and disciple the sexual offender for a specified period of time
• If necessary, accompany offenders to church and ministry events and supervise them while there
• Notify supervising pastor of any concerns of violations of the policy

Violations
The following actions will be deemed a “violation” of this policy
• Any failure to fully meet all requirements or abide by all restrictions placed on the offender in this policy, or written addendums
• Any failure to answer questions of accountability partners honestly, or attempts to deceive an accountability partner
• Refusal to cooperate with church staff or security team in enforcing this policy
• Attempting to enter any restricted area, or any attempt to serve in ministries that are prohibited

If an offender violates this policy, the following actions may be taken.
• Removal of the privilege of attending any and all HCC functions, or any event held on church property.
• Any and all legal steps to prevent the offender from being on church property up to and including:
  o Seeking a trespass notice against the offender, whereby coming onto church property, would be grounds for arrest on trespassing charges
  o Getting a restraining order against the sexual offender
  o Notification of actions/violations to parole or probation officers
  o Pressing legal charges against the individual for all violations of law

Changes to the Policy
No staff member, volunteer, or pastor may alter this policy. The Executive Team of Hope Community Church must approve all changes to this document.
€ Adopted by Executive Team on _____________, ______, 2011
Resources
US Dept of Justice Sex Offender Registry http://www.nsopw.gov/Core/Conditions.aspx
North Carolina Department of Corrections Offender Registry http://www.doc.state.nc.us/offenders/
Probation & Parole 919.733.2826
Wake County Sheriff’s office 919.856.6900
Wake County Sex Offender Registry Unit 919.856.6965 919.856.6851

Definitions
Accountability partner – a same-gender adult (non-family member) who knows the offenders past and agrees to keep them accountable for their behavior, thoughts, life, and attendance. This person will meet with the offender regularly (monthly) and attend services with the offender to ensure no inappropriate behavior occurs at Hope Community Church and all policies of the church are followed.

Child Sex offender (under 13) – any individual who is on any state or federal sex offender registry (SOR) currently, or in the past ten (10) years, who was convicted of a crime involving a child 13 years of age or younger at the time of the offense.

Pedophile – any teen or adult labeled as a “pedophile” by the state of North Carolina, the federal government, or any other state government or Hope Community Church staff. Generally this applies to people who have been involved in any type of sexual contact with a pre-adolescent.

Sex offender – any individual on any state or federal sex offender registry (SOR) currently, or at any time in the previous ten (10) years.

Supervising Pastor – the pastoral staff member of Hope Community Church who will be the primary point of contact and supervision for a specific sexual offender. This person will be identified and assigned responsibility by the Family Ministry Director.

Violent Sex offender – any individual on any state or federal sex offender registry (SOR) currently, or at any time the previous ten (10) years) who was convicted of a crime where coercion, weapons, or threat of physical force were involved commission of their crime.

Forms & Agreements
The following pages list the forms and agreements to be used in implementing this policy.
Sexual Offender Agreement

Because I desire to be a part of Hope Community Church, and because my criminal past has made my participation a challenge for other members and families, I, ___________________________ do agree to abide by the following agreements as conditions of my participation and attendance at any Hope Community Church event. The following items will all be completed before I attend any scheduled church activity, including weekend services, life groups, classes, etc.

€ I will recruit 2-3 accountability partners who will help me integrate into the life of the church and hold me accountable for my behavior

As an offender, I have been classed by the government, or Hope, as:
€ Sex Offender  € Violent Sex Offender  € Child Sexual Offender (under 13)  € Pedophile

€ I will provide to the supervising pastor the following items in writing from my parole or probation officer
  o Name, email, and phone number of my parole/probation officer
  o Statement as to what actions would violate my parole/probation in regard to church activity, attendance, and/or involvement

€ I will participate in a recognized professional counseling program as required by the court, or if not by the court, as deemed necessary by Hope Community Church.
  • Hope must be satisfied with the professional counseling program.
  • I will give a detailed outline of my counseling program to the Family Ministry Director.
  • Name of the program & counselor _________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________________________

I will only participate in activities that are appropriate to my stage of life, marital status, age and assigned campus. Age: ______ Gender: ______ Campus  € Raleigh  € Holly Springs
I am:  € Married  € Divorced  € Separated  € Single

€ I have children under the age of 13 living in my home. If so, I agree to abide by the rules regarding minors check-in as well.

I agree to not do the following (Restrictions):
• Approaching or engaging any victim of this offender or known victims of other offenders
• Entering any area of the facility that are deemed off limits to the offender

Further, I agree to do the following (Requirements):
• Cooperate with security staff and pastors whenever there may be a question about location, activity, or concerns

A person labeled Violent Sex Offender, will agree to the following additional conditions:
• Get approval from pastor or ministry leader before being involved in life groups, classes, etc.
• Never to enter building without first meeting an accountability partner at the door. The door is defined as within 8 feet of the front entrance to the building.
• Stay physically with an accountability partner when at church or ministry functions
• Meet at least monthly with accountability partners to discuss spiritual life, desires to offend, relationship with parole officer, etc.

A person labeled a **Child Sexual Offender (under 13)**, will agree to the following additional conditions:
• Stay physically with an accountability partner when at church when minors are present. The offender is never to be more than a few feet away from the accountability partner, and always within visual sight
• Never enter any private place, including bathrooms, without accountability partner if minors are in the building
• To not approach, talk to, touch, engage, look at or go near children or teens
• Remain away from any area where children and teens are located, checked in, or ministered to and not to enter buildings where the sole focus is ministry to teens or children (see restricted areas map)
• Enter the building via the front door only
• Never attend any event aimed primarily at teens or children. This includes any and all student ministry events, Kidcity sponsored events. If in doubt seek written clarification from the supervising pastor
• May never serve in areas or ministries aimed at teens or children. Offering, applying, or attempting to serve in any of these areas will be a violation of this policy
• May serve (with accountability partner) in areas where contact with minors would only be incidental to serving

A person labeled a **pedophile** will agree to all previously stated conditions for sexual offender, violent sexual offenders and child sexual offenders (under 13) AND the following additional conditions:
• Never to serve in areas or ministries where incidental contact with minors may occur.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the sexual offender policy and will abide by it fully.

Additional agreements, limitations, or alterations: _______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

I, __________________________________ agree to abide by this agreement during all my time attending Hope Community Church, or until this agreement is rescind or modified in writing by the executive pastor.

_________________________________ ___________________________ __________________
Signature                      Print Name                  Date
_________________________________ ___________________________ __________________
Executive Pastor signature     Print Name                  Date
_________________________________ ___________________________ __________________
Supervising Pastor signature   Print Name                  Date
Sex Offender Victim Notification

It has been notified to me that ____________________________ has requested to be allowed to participate in the life of Hope Community Church as an attendee.

This form has been brought to me because I have been identified as a possible victim of the offender’s previous criminal activity. I am being offered a chance to object to the offender’s presence at any Hope Community Church service or event.

€ I agree

By agreeing to the offender attending Hope, I am stating that I do not believe I will be harmed physically, emotionally, or spiritually by this person’s presence in the church. I am willing to lay aside the ability to refuse to allow the offender the benefit of fellowship, teaching, and discipleship offered by the church.

Further, I am stating that I know of no legal reason why this person should not be allowed to attend the church.

€ I do not agree

By refusing to agree, I am saying I believe I may be harmed emotionally, physically, or spiritually by this person’s presence in the church. For my own protection, or that of my family, I do not believe it would be acceptable for the named offender to attend the church in any way.

Conditions: __________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________  ___________________________  _______________
Signature          Print Name          Date
Accountability Partner Agreement
For a Sex offender

In order for those who are known sex offenders to participate in the life of the church, accountability partners are crucial in helping the offender avoid problems and to keep all attendees, especially minors, safe.

Accountability partners agree to do the following things:

• Meet regularly (minimum 1x/month) with the offender, in conjunction with any other accountability partners, and/or alone, to provide encouragement, accountability, spiritual insight
• To counsel, teach, correct, rebuke and provide spiritual direction and pray for the sexual offender
• Expect the offender to be honest in answering all questions and in all discussions
• Never verbally or via inattention condone any behavior by the offender that is in violation of this sex offender policy
• Agree that I do not have the authority to alter, change, or ease any condition of the sex offender’s agreement. That can only be done by the executive pastor, in writing.
• Authorize a criminal background and reference check as if I were working in KidCity, if a current background check is not on file
• Share any information I deem relevant to the safety of any and all minors at Hope Community Church with the designated supervising pastor
• Report any violations of this agreement by the offender to the supervising pastor immediately

For violent sexual offenders, child sex offender (under 13), and pedophiles:
• Meet the offender at the front door of the church building at agreed upon times to escort the offender while they attend the church, and supervise their movements in the building.

If I ever become concerned that a person at Hope might be endangered by the offender’s actions, attention, or intentions, I will refuse to cooperate with them attending any Hope event. If I believe it would be in the best interest of the offender or the church, I will immediate report my concerns to the supervising pastor, and recommend the suspension of privilege of attendance for the offender.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Sex Offender Policy manual, and agree to abide by it fully

I am agreeing to be an accountability partner for _________________________ (sexual offender) for the period of _____________________________________________________.

_________________________  __________________________  ___________________
Signature   Printed Name     Date

_________________________  __________________________  ___________________
Signature supervising pastor   Printed Name     Date
**Restricted Areas**

All highlighted areas are off limits to any child sexual offender or pedophile.