

Safe Church Policy
of the
First Congregational Church of Hampton
(Created November 2021)

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First Congregational
Church of Hampton

Safe Church Policy

Revised November 2021

As a community of Christian faith, The First Congregational Church of Hampton of New Hampshire, Inc (herein after “FCCH”) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which friends, Clergy, employees, and volunteers can worship, learn, and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. FCCH supports the principles of our Safe Church Policy, which include individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the congregation in fulfillment of the standards set by our Christian faith. FCCH strongly opposes and prohibits “sexual exploitation”, “sexual harassment” or any form of exploitation or abuse of others regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identification, or mental capacity. It is the intention of our congregation to affirmatively nurture good behavior, and to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and as necessary, discipline those persons who violate this policy.

All persons engaged in the ministry of FCCH are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in ministering to the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Because the minister and elected, appointed, or hired leaders often deal with emotionally and psychologically fragile individuals, it is imperative that those engaged in this church’s ministry maintain their health and have adequate preparation and education to help those who seek to serve. Therefore, it is the policy of FCCH to encourage its leaders, minister, employees, and volunteers to nurture safety within ministerial relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. It is also required that those engaged in providing ministry on behalf of the church will complete the “Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form” that accompanies this policy. The church will contact the agencies and personal references listed on the disclosure document to determine if those references are concerned about the person’s suitability for working safely with those in their care. The Church may also request a criminal background check on persons providing ministry in its name or a certified copy of a current background check.

Although this policy is primarily oriented toward the safety of church youth, it is equally

applicable to vulnerable adults and all members and friends of FCCH.

Child and Youth Protection

Jesus welcomed and included children and warned against putting anything in their path that would cause them to stumble. FCCH is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. We require that all people applying to be volunteers who work with minors will have been members or friends of FCCH for one year and to rely on the "Code of Conduct" & "Policies for Working with Youth" to guide them in their actions at all times. The church will provide adequate supervision for all youth activities. During such activities, there will be at least one adult for every six minors present, with a minimum of two, non-related adults always present. The gender diversity of the adults will match that of the group as much as possible. One-on-one situations between an adult and a minor will be avoided. Activities with children and youth will be always observable by others.

Adults ministering under this policy shall receive training in Safe Church Policy and practices before beginning the program in which they're involved. In the case of minors, permission slips (and health forms for camp/outside events) must be received by proper church personnel before any program or event where the parents are not present. These forms should clearly state any participant's restrictions and list persons to be contacted in case of emergency and the insurance carrier's name. A copy of the child's Health form will be secured in the church's office for emergency contact.

When minors are transported to and from an event in a volunteer's vehicle, the church will have on file a copy of the "Volunteer Driver Qualification Form & Agreement" and all drivers will be 21 years of age or older. It is expected that all church boards and committees are responsible for seeing that this policy is implemented in all programs under their charge and that practices and procedures will be reviewed annually. Any persons having knowledge or suspicion of a violation of this policy, especially regarding abuse of minors, elderly or handicapped persons, shall immediately and directly notify a governing board member of the church and follow the "NH legal mandate for reporting abuse".

This Safe Church Policy shall be available to every parent whose child is a participant in church activities.

Safe Church Procedures

- 1..Each employee and authorized volunteer will be required to complete and submit a “Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form” before the employee or approved volunteer is hired or elected. The church may require updates of these forms periodically. Forms will be kept in a locked, confidential file in the church.
2. Criminal background checks on all employees and authorized volunteers who minister to children and youth under eighteen will be conducted when authorized by the Christian Education Committee. The results of such reviews will be kept in a locked, confidential file in the church.
3. If the results of either the Disclosure Form or criminal background check indicate a serious cause for concern regarding the applicant/participant’s safety in administering church activities, the applicant/participant will be interviewed regarding areas of concern. The applicant/participant may be asked not to serve in a leadership capacity or will be required to work under trained supervision. At no time will the applicant/participant be allowed to lead or participate in any activity that includes minors until the area of concern has been satisfactorily resolved. The person may be required to enter a signed covenant “The Limited Access Agreement”, setting limitations on the person's activities in and around the church. The covenant will also reference the discipleship support that the church will offer.
4. Ministries involving children and youth under the age of eighteen require that two adults be always present, except in emergency or unavoidable circumstances. Ministries involving children and youth under eighteen include, but are not limited to, Sunday School, Nursery, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Classes, Coffee Hour, Worship, non-Worship evening workshops & off-site trips.
5. All doors to offices and rooms where ministries of the church occur will contain clear windows in the upper half of the doors. If not, doors will be left ajar when the rooms are occupied.
6. When unable to have two (2) adults teaching Sunday school in each classroom a “Roving Ambassador” will be used to act as the second adult present. This RA will circulate amongst all classes to assist the teachers as needed.
7. An usher will lock all the exterior doors to the church at 10:10am. Entrance after that time may only occur at the sanctuary door by the discretion of the head usher.
8. Responsibility for monitoring the adherence to the “Safe Church Policy” and these procedures will be the responsibility of the authorized minister and members of the Boards of Deacons and Wardens. Reports of violations of either the Safe Church Policy or these procedures should be reported to the authorized minister or the chair of either board, who will notify the other two parties.

Response Procedures

1. When a concern is raised about an authorized minister in the employ of the church, the chair of either the Wardens, Deacons or the Moderator will notify the Committee or Ministry Chair of the Rockingham Association of the United Church of Christ. The church will cooperate with the procedures of that body for hearing complaints.
2. When concerns are raised about an employee or volunteer of the church, a response team will be activated. The team will gather statements or other information from individuals involved in the alleged harassment or exploitation. All parties will be treated with compassion and sensitivity and given every opportunity to present their perception of the event. The team will present its findings to the Wardens and Deacons, who will determine the response needed.
3. Insofar as possible, all person's identities in a report will be maintained in confidence on a strict need-to-know basis.
4. If it is found that no harassment or exploitation has occurred, parties involved will be notified, with explanation, and efforts to reconcile and communicate healing will be made.
5. If it is found that harassment or exploitation has occurred, action may include one or more of the following:
 - a. A growth program requirement, which may include education or counseling before the opportunity to minister within the church is resumed.
 - b. The close supervision of all ministries in the context of church life.
 - c. The dismissal from a ministry or volunteer leadership position.
 - d. Notification of legal authorities if an allegation involves criminal behavior or abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly, or handicapped person.
6. No person who brings a concern or complaint forward will be adversely affected in employment or church membership.
7. A written account of the actions and procedures taken due to any allegation will be placed in a confidential file in the church.

II. Definitions

Authorized Clergy includes any person who is admitted to ministry by The United Church of Christ (UCC), who serves the congregation in any capacity whether called as pastor or serving in a retired, emeritus, administrative, or volunteer capacity.

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury to a youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

Mandated Reporters are those persons required by state law to report suspected abuse to police or child welfare agencies. In NH, anyone may be a mandated reporter of abuse to the church and state.

Minor is anyone under the age of eighteen (also referred to as youth throughout this policy)

Neglect is the failure to provide for a youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a youth from harm.

Ombudsman is a person the church will engage as a mediator or attorney to investigate and mediate any concerns or complaints.

Physical Abuse is injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a youth.

Responsible Board are individuals appointed to conduct the hiring process.

Sexual Abuse is any conduct of a sexual nature that occurs between a youth and an adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.

Sexual Exploitation: Sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a minister engaged in the church's work takes advantage of a participant's vulnerability by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the minister.

Sexual harassment: Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person, contrary to their wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the other person or subject the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term, condition, or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity.
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual.
3. Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly: written communications such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations; verbal contact such as sexually suggestive or lewd comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, sexual propositions; physical contact such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body; impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and visual contact such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

Roving Ambassador: A congregant who has worshiped at the FCCH for more than a year, has on file a background check and is trained in the Safe Church Policy who continuously moves throughout the Sunday school observing and engaging with the classes as a second adult to the SS teachers and the nursery.

Vulnerable Adult is anyone aged eighteen or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation.

III. Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adults

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

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

No form of abuse will be tolerated and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from FCCH. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth and vulnerable adults or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously. FCCH will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adult outlines specific expectations of the Clergy, employees, and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Youth and vulnerable adults will be always treated with respect.
2. Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated fairly, regardless of race, sex, age, or religion.
3. Clergy, employees, and volunteers:
 - a) Will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by the FCCH.
 - b) Will avoid affection with youth and vulnerable adults that cannot be observed by others.
 - c) Will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions.
 - d) Will not stare at or comment on youth and vulnerable adults' bodies.
 - e) Will not date or become romantically involved with youth and vulnerable adults.
 - f) Will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth and vulnerable adults.
 - g) Will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography on FCCH's property.
 - h) Will not have secrets with youths and vulnerable adults and will only give gifts with prior permission.
 - i) Will comply with FCCH policies regarding interactions with youth and vulnerable adults outside of our programs.
4. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communications with youth and vulnerable adults
5. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth and vulnerable adults in a private setting. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will use common areas when working with youth and vulnerable adults.

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

Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints.

Verbal abuse: degrading, threatening, cursing.

Sexual abuse: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations.

Mental abuse: shaming, humiliation, cruelty; and

Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter

7. FCCH will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth or vulnerable adult by another youth or vulnerable adult. In addition, FCCH will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- a. **Physical bullying:** when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- b. **Verbal bullying:** when someone uses their words to hurt another by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- c. **Nonverbal or relational bullying:** when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- d. **Cyberbullying:** the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures, or website postings (including blogs).

Cyberbullying can involve:

- * Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
- * Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
- * Pretending to be someone else to make that person look bad.
- * Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- * Hazing- an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
- * Sexualized bullying- when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples: behaviors include sexting, exposures of private body parts, and verbal sexualized language or innuendos.

8. All Clergy, employees, and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. They should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. They will:
 - a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
 - b. Know and follow organizational policies and procedures that protect youth and vulnerable adults against abuse.
 - c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
 - d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
9. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, adults, or youth to the FCCH supervisor.
10. FCCH shall cooperate fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any Clergy, employee, or volunteer shall fully cooperate in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or person given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.
11. Clergy, employees, and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of youth and vulnerable adult abuse, indecency with a youth and vulnerable adult, or injury to a youth and vulnerable adult.

IV. Policies for Working with Youth

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

A. Physical Contact

FCCH physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youths, Clergy, employees, and volunteers. FCCH encourages appropriate physical contact with youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by Clergy, employees, and volunteers towards youth in the organization's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

FCCH policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

Appropriate physical interactions

Side hugs

Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs

Pats on the shoulder or back

Handshakes

High Fives and hand slapping

Verbal praise

Pats on the head when culturally appropriate

Touching hands, shoulders, arms

Arms around shoulders

Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)

Inappropriate physical interactions

Full frontal hugs

Kisses

Showing affection in isolated areas

Lap sitting

Wrestling

Piggyback rides

Tickling

Allowing a youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg

Any type of massage given by or to a youth

Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer

Compliments to physique or body development

B. Verbal Interactions

Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youth in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Clergy, employees, and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youth. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with youths.

FCCH's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

Appropriate verbal interactions

Positive reinforcement

Appropriate jokes

Encouragement

Praise

Inappropriate verbal interactions

Name calling

Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of Clergy, employees, and volunteers

Secrets

Cursing

Off color or sexual jokes

Shaming

Belittling

Derogatory remarks

Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate youths

Derogatory remarks about the youth or their family

C. One-on-One Interactions

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth. FCCH aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the organization administrator.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, Clergy, employees, and volunteer should observe the following guidelines to manage risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse.

- When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affections to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can easily be seen by others passing by.
- Inform other Clergy, employees, and volunteers that you are alone with a youth and ask them to randomly drop in.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

Tutoring/Private Coaching

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

1. Clergy, employees, and volunteers must have supervisor approval for any tutoring or private coaching sessions.
2. Tutoring and coaching sessions with FCCH youth may not occur outside of the organization.
3. Supervisors must keep a schedule of private tutoring and coaching sessions, which should include times, youths involved, and location of sessions.

D. Off-site Contact

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and FCCH at increased risk. FCCH prohibits interactions outside of regularly scheduled program activities unless approved by FCCH's administration.

Appropriate Outside Contact

Taking groups of youths on an outing

Attending sporting activities with groups of youths

Attending functions at a youth’s home with parent present

Inappropriate Outside Contact

Taking one youth on an outing without the parent’s written permission

Visiting one youth in the youth’s home without a parent present

Entertaining one youth in the home of staff or volunteers

A lone youth spending the night with staff or volunteers

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

1. Supervisors should identify for Clergy, employees, and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
2. Ensure that the staff or volunteers have the parent’s permission to engage in outside contact with the youth. Consider requiring the parents to sign a release-of-liability statement.

E. Electronic Communication

Any private electronic communication between staff and youth, including the use of social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, etc.) is prohibited. All communication between staff and youth must be transparent.

The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

Appropriate Electronic Communication Inappropriate Electronic Communication

Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youths ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth’s parent

Communicating through “organization group pages” on Facebook or other approved public forums

“Private” profiles for Clergy, employees and volunteers which youths cannot access

Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating comments

Sexually oriented conversations

Private messages between Clergy, employees, and volunteers with youths

Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites

Posting inappropriate comments on pictures

“Friending” participants on social networking sites

In addition, provide this information to your participant's parents so that they know what is appropriate and inappropriate from your staff.

Cell Phone Use:

While assigned to work with youth, staff are not permitted to use electronic communication devices except during approved breaks and emergency situations. Internet use, text messaging and/or emailing pictures while assigned to work with youth is strictly prohibited regardless of the type of device used and whether for business or personal reasons. Employees need to ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy.

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) organization members and/or program participants for personal and/or inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

There are occasions in which staff will need to use personal or organization issued electronic communication devices. In these cases, staff will have explicit direction from supervisors governing use. Situations which may require use of organization issued or personal electronic communication devices include: field trips, off-site programs, emergencies.

F. Gift Giving

Molesters routinely groom youths by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the youth. They might instruct the youth to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the youth to keep secrets from parents. For this reason, Clergy, employees, and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youths. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift and parents must be notified.

V. Screening and Selection

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

Standing of "Authorized Clergy": Each denomination served by the Insurance Board has a process of granting professional standing to clergy. Employment of clergy who do not fulfill denominational requirements may have an impact on insurance programs. Consult your insurance agent if there are concerns.

The following screening and selection procedures are strongly recommended for all Clergy and paid employees of the Church. A separate screening procedure has been established for all volunteers (see section F below.)

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

A. Standardized Application

All applicants should be expected to complete an application prior to working at FCCH. The application should be reviewed by the responsible board for completeness, high risks and fit with position requirements. If the application is not 100% complete, the applicant may be screened out, the applicant may be asked to complete the application, or the missing information may be obtained during an interview. However, FCCH should endeavor to follow a consistent approach to applications missing information.

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

B. Interviews

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

The Responsible Board and Director of the program being applied for, shall employ behavioral interviewing techniques to assess suitability for working with children, and specifically discuss the church's commitment to protect children and other vulnerable persons from abuse.

The Responsible Board should take notes as to applicant responses to the interview questions, and the interpretive guide should be used to evaluate applicant responses. After the interviews are completed, the applicant may be screened out or the applicant may continue in the Screening process. The information recorded will be kept in the personnel file if the applicant is hired or selected.

C. Reference Checks

Reference checks should be conducted for all applicants prior to employment. A minimum of three references is recommended, including two professional and one personal reference. If the person responsible for screening the applicant does not believe the references are appropriate, he or she can ask for different ones. References should be conducted by telephone. The person responsible for the screening should inform the referent that the applicant is applying for a position with the organization and will explain that the applicant will have access to a vulnerable population. The Responsible Board will use standard reference questions and will record the responses of the referents on the reference question form. The high-risk checklist will be used to help evaluate referent responses.

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

See Appendix B. for Sample Reference Check Questions.

D. Background Checks

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

The background check(s) should include the following:

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

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

E. Employment Decisions

When hiring the pastor, the Search Committee will review the candidate's background check. For all others, the Pastor shall review each background check and inform the Responsible Board of their eligibility for employment.

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

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

Conviction for the following crimes shall be considered barriers to employment or volunteer work with children:

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

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

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

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

OR

*"We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant is **not acceptable** for the position."* This may be destroyed after 6 months

F. Procedures for Volunteer Applicants

Volunteers may or may not be members of FCCH, but must be active within the FCCH community for a minimum of six months before being permitted to work in youth-oriented programs. There should be **no exceptions** to this policy, even when volunteer candidates come from another church with similar programs.

See Appendix F for Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application & Disclosure Form and Volunteer Statement of Consent

VI. Training

The mission of FCCH is first to prevent abuse of children and other vulnerable adults. We wish to identify and nurture the FCCH Safe Church Policy and provide guidance through a formal training program offered by Armatus by Praesidium Inc. It is difficult to comprehend that those among us may commit acts of abuse but persons who have been presented no behavior standards and do not understand boundaries may unwittingly engage in behaviors that may be perceived as predatory. Their personal reputations and that of FCCH are then at risk.

To fulfill our leadership obligation, each new employee and new volunteer shall complete a specific program of training within 30 days of assuming duties. Completion of training should be documented by the Director of the FCCH department.

If possible, training should be repeated annually and records should be maintained and reviewed by the FCCH pastor.

Abuse prevention curriculum shall include:

1. Organization level
 - a. Review of expected conduct and boundaries defined in this policy.
 - b. Review of standards applicable to ministry.
 - c. Explanation of procedures for reporting violations of standards of conduct and suspected child abuse.
 - d. Explanation of individual statutory reporting obligations.
 - e. Identifying and managing high-risk situations such as bathroom use, transition times, and free times.
 - f. Physical security procedures.
2. Abuse prevention education:
 - a. Effects of sexual abuse.
 - b. Types of child molesters.
 - c. Characteristics of abusers.
 - d. How child molesters operate: access, privacy, and control.
 - e. Protecting oneself from false allegations.
 - f. Examples of child-on-child sexual abuse, even among young children.
 - g. Characteristics of children more likely to act out sexually.
 - h. Characteristics of children more likely to be abused.
 - i. High-risk activities and circumstances.
 - j. Specific monitoring and supervision activities to prevent child-on-child sexual activity.
 - k. How to respond to incidents of sexual activity between children.

The Director of each FCCH department shall assure that each employee and volunteer as applicable has familiarized themselves with the requirements and provide additional supervision and guidance as required to assure required conduct.

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

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

VII. Monitoring and Supervision

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

A. Facility Monitoring

Building architecture can increase or mitigate the risk of an incident or accident. Because most incidents of sexual behavior occur in private, the extent to which privacy is managed, risk is managed. In order to ensure that all of the locations are properly and consistently monitored, designate a staff member who must complete a site inspection checklist.

This checklist must be completed for any activity involving minors. When Sunday School classes are in session, the Roving Ambassador will complete the checklist. FCCH reserves the right to require this checklist for any group. The Sunday School Superintendent will designate an adult for any other youth activities.

B. General Supervision

General supervision procedures:

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

C. Monitoring Youth in Facilities

We recommend implementing the following practices:

1. Require a parent or legal guardian to complete a registration form which includes identifying information, any special medical or behavioral circumstances, any legal indemnifications, the youth's date of birth, and emergency contact information. So that the program has a record of the youth who are in the facility at all times, classroom rosters will be kept.
2. At the beginning of each Sunday School year, the Superintendent shall review with all the children the Code of Conduct. All parents will be given a copy and are required to sign this Code of Conduct so that they are aware of the program's policies and progressive disciplinary procedures. Parents or guardians of children not attending Sunday School will be responsible for the safety of their child or children while they are in the facility
3. While a parent orientation may not be feasible in all circumstances, we recommend encouraging parents to attend an information session with a program representative. This meeting will provide an opportunity to review expectations and requirements, and the chance to establish a relationship with the parents. This can be helpful if any problems arise in the future.
4. While in the facility, youths can be supervised directly, indirectly, or with a combination of the two techniques.
 - a. For direct supervision, the program may offer structured, scheduled activities like Sunday School, rehearsals, arts and crafts, and social gatherings. These activities should have one or more staff assigned to lead and supervise.
 - b. For indirect supervision, the program must designate certain building areas as authorized areas. Authorized areas could include Fellowship Hall, the Chapel, or classrooms. Authorized areas must be easily visible and routinely and systematically checked by staff. Youths should know that they will be supervised by staff at all times, and all staff should know which areas are authorized and which are not.
5. Develop supervision standards for the authorized areas. For example:
 - a. Authorized areas should be monitored by staff at all times.
 - b. Assign staff specific supervision responsibilities over authorized areas.
 - c. Require staff to record when they monitor authorized areas: this may be accomplished by using checklists.
6. All program staff should wear nametags so that the youth can easily recognize them as staff.
7. Train all staff:
 - a. To greet youths that enter the facility; to direct youths to the structured activities or authorized areas; and, to redirect youths who are not in an authorized area or who are not participating in a structured activity.
 - b. To be aware of the risks involved with mixing age groups and how to monitor activities involving mixed age groups.
 - c. To routinely monitor high risk areas (such as bathrooms and unused rooms). Designate specific staff to supervise these areas (i.e., Managers on Duty). This staff should document the scheduled and periodic sweeps of high-risk locations.

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

D. Monitoring High Risk Activities

Bathroom Activities

Most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in the bathrooms. Therefore, the following supervision guidelines are recommended:

When supervising restroom use, adult staff members should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing youths to enter.

- a. For “Group Bathroom Breaks”:
 - Require staff to take groups of two or more youths to the bathroom – following the “rule three” or more.
 - If the bathroom only has one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff.
 - If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many youths as there are stalls.
 - Minimize youths of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.
 - Require staff to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.
- b. For single use restrooms:
 - Require youths to ask permission to use the bathroom.
 - Require all staff to frequently check bathrooms.
- c. Prohibit staff from using the bathroom at the same time as youths.
- d. If assisting young youths in the stalls, the staff should keep the door to the stall open.

Locker Room Activities (off site)

The locker room procedures include:

- a. Requiring staff to stand within earshot of the locker room when in use by youths.
- b. Requiring staff to intermittently and briefly check inside the locker room so users know the locker room is monitored
- c. Discouraging the use of locker rooms by youths of different ages at the same time.
- d. Prohibiting the use of locker room horseplay such as towel snapping.
- e. When possible, arrange lockers to minimize unnecessary privacy

Shower Activities (off site)

Staff and youths must shower at different times. Create shower schedules that will permit supervision of the youths while staff shower.

While the youths shower, at least one staff member should stand in the bathroom doorway and within earshot of the youths. Ensure that only one youth is in each shower (Consider utilizing shower curtains that do not go all the way to the floor, so that staff can easily see how many youths are in each shower stall).

Transition Times and Free Times

Transition times and free-choice times (or free times) pose a high risk for incidents because during these times, Clergy, employees, and volunteers may not be assigned a particular group of youths to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following procedures:

- a. Require youths to remain in line-of-site of staff at all times.
- b. Specify the staff-to-youth ratio.
- c. Specify narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
- d. Ensure that all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise (“zone monitoring”).
- e. Include bathroom procedures.
- f. Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
- g. Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

Playground Activities (off site)

The playground procedures require:

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

Transportation Activities

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

General transportation guidelines:

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

When public transportation is used:

- a. In addition to the transportation procedures listed above, youths should remain in one area of the bus, if possible.
- b. Clergy, employees, and volunteers that are assigned to a group should remain with that group on the bus.
- c. Take a head count or call roll immediately after entering and leaving the bus.

In situations where staff transport youths in non-organization vehicles, a Volunteer Driver Qualification Form & Agreement (Appendix D) shall be on file in the church office.

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

Off-Site Activities

The off-site procedures include:

- a. Requiring supervisor approval for all off-site activities.
- b. Requiring parental approval.
- c. Specifying staff-to-youth ratios for the activity.
- d. Requiring staff and youths to be easily identifiable.
- e. Including specific bathroom and locker room procedures as applicable to outing.

- f. Including transportation procedures.
- g. Including instructions for a supervisor to observe the off-site activities at scheduled times and random intervals.
- h. Considering specific recommendations based on the location and type of activity (for example, amusement parks, water parks, arcades, etc.).

See Appendix C. for Sample Field Trip Preparation Checklist.

Overnight Activities

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

Supervision Guidelines:

- a. All overnight activities must be documented and approved in writing by the Program Director.
- b. Administrators are expected to regularly and randomly observe overnight activities on a scheduled and periodic basis.
- c. The Director should appoint a “lead” staff to supervise the overnight. A meeting with all staff is conducted to discuss the unique risks of overnight trips, unique elements of the specific overnight trip and to review the specific policies and procedures.
- d. Provide parents with written information about the overnight activity. All parents must sign a permission slip for their youths to attend the overnight.
- e. Determine the appropriate staff-to-youth ratios before the event and schedule staff accordingly.
- f. Meetings with the group should be hosted in open and observable areas; meetings should not be hosted in staff or youth rooms.

Overnights at the Facility:

- a. Physical boundaries within the organization must be clearly defined and explained to the youths.
- b. Assign each staff to a specific group of youths to supervise. Each staff should then maintain a role sheet that lists all of the youths in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the evening.
- c. Assign staff to high risk areas in FCCH’s facility, such as the bathrooms, entrances and exits, hallways, etc. If it is not possible to assign specific staff to these areas, assign specific staff to conduct periodic facility “walk-throughs”.
- d. With regards to sleeping arrangements, separate the male and female youths into separate rooms and post staff at the entrances and exits to these rooms. If this is not feasible, separate males and females by as much space as possible.
- e. When performing room checks, staff should always go in pairs.
- f. At least one staff must stay awake overnight.

Overnights Away from the Facility:

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

Teen Leadership Program

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

Create a screening process for teen leaders which includes

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

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

- Appropriate and inappropriate physical and verbal interactions and the importance of maintaining behavioral boundaries between teen leaders and younger youths and between teen leaders and Clergy, employees, and volunteers.
- Prohibiting teen leaders from being one-on-one with youths.
- Prohibiting teen leaders from escorting youths to the bathrooms.
- Prohibiting teen leaders from assisting youths with changing their clothes.

Create a system to monitor the teen leaders.

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

E. Supervisors and Administrators Monitoring On-Site and Off-Site Programs

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

VIII. Responding

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

A. Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations

Because FCCH is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone actively participates in the protection of youths. In the event that a Clergy member, employee, or volunteer observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of others, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations.

Remember, at FCCH, the policies apply to everyone.

Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Youth

- Violation of the abuse prevention policies described above
- Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youths
- Buying gifts for individual youths
- Making suggestive comments to youths
- Picking favorites

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

i. Employee and Volunteer Response:

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

- Interrupt the behavior.
- Report the behavior to a supervisor, director, or other authority.
- If you are not comfortable making the report directly, make it anonymously.
- If the report is about a supervisor or administrator, contact the next level of management.
- Document the report but do not conduct an investigation.
- Keep reporting until the appropriate action is taken.

ii Supervisor and Administrator of the Policy Response:

In the event that a supervisor or an administrator receives a report of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from a staff member or volunteer, the supervisor is instructed to do the following:

- Report to the next level of administration and determine the appropriate administrator to respond to the concern.
- Determine the appropriate response based on the report.

- Speak with the employee or volunteer or volunteer who has been reported.
- Review the file of the employee or volunteer to determine if similar complaints were reported.
- Document the report on the appropriate form.
- If at any point in gathering information about a report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises about possible abuse, contact the state authorities and file a report.
- If appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians.
- Advise the person who reported the behavior that the report is being taken seriously.

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

- a. Increase monitoring or supervision of the employee, volunteer, or program.
- b. If policy violations with youths are confirmed, the employee or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and prosecution. Disciplinary action will follow the Progressive Disciplinary Process as outlined below.
- c. If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other Clergy, employees, and volunteers or youths.

iii. Organizational Response:

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

B. Responding to Suspected Abuse by an Adult

i. Employee or Volunteer Response to Abuse:

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

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

- a. Immediate supervisor
- b. Directors
- c. Administrators

- If you witness abuse, interrupt the behavior immediately.
- If abuse is disclosed to you, assure the individual disclosing that he or she was correct to tell to you.
- Protect the alleged victim from intimidation, retribution, or further abuse.
- Immediately report the allegation or incident to the proper organization authorities (based on mandatory reporting requirements) and the designated authority.
- Be sure to document the incident, disclosure, or any circumstances causing your suspicion of abuse. State only the facts.
- It is not your job to investigate the incident but it **IS** your job to report the incident to your supervisor in a timely manner.
- Check back to make sure appropriate steps were taken. If not, report again to your supervisor or the designated organization authority.

ii. Supervisors and Administrators Response to Abuse:

In addition to the above response procedures, supervisors and administrators should ensure the following:

- First, determine if the youth is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm.
- Gather as much information about the allegation as you can. For example, who made the report, who was allegedly abused, who was the alleged abuser, what was the nature of the alleged abuse, where and when did the alleged abuse occur, etc.
- Accurately record everything you learn in as much detail as you can. Remember your notes may be read by others. Stick to the facts.
- Contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by your mandatory reporting procedures. Make sure you get a case number and the name and contact information of the person with whom you speak at the reporting agency.
- If the alleged abuse involves an employee or volunteer, notify your crisis management team and follow your crisis management plan.
- Suspend the accused employee or volunteer until the investigation is completed.

C. Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Abuse and Sexualized Behaviors

The thought that one youth may sexually abuse another youth does not occur to many people. Unfortunately, abuse between peers has increased 300% in the past few years. Youth-to-Youth sexual activity and sexualized behaviors often remain unreported in organizations because Clergy employees, and volunteers are not comfortable documenting these situations, or may not know how.

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

- Hazing
- Bullying
- Derogatory name-calling
- Games of Truth or Dare
- Singling out one child for different treatment
- Ridicule or humiliation

In order to adequately respond to and track incidents within the organization, all sexual activity between youths and sexualized behaviors of youths must be consistently documented.

i. Employee and Volunteer Response:

Youth-to-youth sexual behaviors can include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity, and similar types of interactions.

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

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

ii. Supervisors and Administrators Response:

In the event that a supervisor or administrator receives a report of a youth's sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the supervisor should do the following:

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

- Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the children involved.
- Notify the proper authorities. • Develop a written corrective action or follow-up plan in response to the incident

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

- a. Review the need for additional supervision.
- b. Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- c. Review the need for additional training.
- d. Alert others in the organization.

iii. Organizational Response:

After the internal review of the sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the organization will determine what can be done to prevent a reoccurrence, such as:

- Review the need for additional supervision.
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- Review the need for additional training.
- Alert others in the organization.

D. Responding to Victims

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of FCCH is to be responsive to the needs of victims within the constraints or obligations imposed under insurance contracts. In general, we will attend to the immediate needs of victims by providing support and pastoral care.

E. Notification of Parents

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

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

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

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

F. Responding to Media

Media publicity following an incident of abuse or exploitation may be detrimental to the reputations of individuals, the congregation and FCCH. Without intending ever to evade the media, contacts with media must be managed and conducted only by the Moderator. No other person(s) may speak on behalf of the church.

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

IX. Congregational Awareness

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

This entire policy is available on request and may also be viewed in the church office during church office hours.

At the time children or vulnerable adults are enrolled in FCCH programs, parents or legal guardians shall be provided:

- A copy of the FCCH Code of Conduct.
- A copy of the FCCH Policies for Working with Youth.
- Information regarding the means to report violations of policy or suspicions of abuse.
- Information regarding their personal obligation to report suspected abuse as it may exist under the laws of the State of New Hampshire.
- An invitation to visit programs in progress at any time at their convenience.

Children and vulnerable adults shall be provided an orientation covering the following subjects:

- Age-appropriate information about boundaries (with reference to the Code of Conduct):
- How to protect themselves from abuse; and
- How to report boundary violations or incidents of abuse.

The orientation shall be provided:

- Individually at the time a child or vulnerable adult begins participation in a ministry of the church; or
- As a group at the opening of a school term, event or league; and
- Annually when a program, event or league is perpetual.

Parents and guardians shall be invited to receive the same “abuse prevention” training as provided to Ministers to be taken at their option.

Parent’s/guardian’s concerns shall be reported to the Pastor unless the Pastor is the recipient of the complaint in which case should be directed to either the Head of the Wardens/Deacons.

If for any reason, parent/guardian believes that the primary contacts have failed to respond or have not given credibility to the parent’s/guardian’s concerns, the latter may contact the church Moderator until such time as an Ombudsman is appointed to report those concerns.

X. Registered Sex Offender Policy

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

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

We shall consider limited participation or membership of a sex offender in our congregation with utmost care which shall include the following elements:

- a. Document understanding of the statutory limitations applying in the State of NH to the movement and activities of a sex offender, taking into account the programs of the church or the operations of tenants. (Examples: Sunday school, day care, pre-school, sports leagues, seasonal camps and associations which serve children and vulnerable adults.)
- b. Consider and understand the character of the crimes which have resulted in requiring an individual to register as a sex offender, the passage of time without repeated conduct or behavior and the risk and opportunity of re-offending that is presented by the particular programs of our congregation.
- c. Document understanding of limitations and prohibitions placed upon the offender by courts and probation authorities. The opinion of a mental health professional regarding the suitability of the person to participation in the life of the church shall be obtained. In all cases where probation is in force, we shall obtain the explicit approval of and conditions of participation specified by the probation officer. A recommendation by law enforcement or mental health professionals to deny participation to an offender shall be honored in all cases.

Understanding that, with respect to a person who is an employee, volunteer or in a position of church leadership, who has previously been convicted for acts of sexual misconduct as defined by insurance contracts, knowledge by church leaders and managers of such prior conviction will have the effect of voiding coverage for the individual employee, volunteer or church leader and for the church for future acts of sexual misconduct by that person.

Given that criminal convictions are a matter of public record, there shall be no expectation of secrecy on the part of the offender. As a condition of participation in our faith community, the offender must agree that the leadership of the church shall make it known to the members, constituencies and customers of the church that we have accepted among us a registered sex offender. The conditions and limitations that apply to participation in the life of the church shall be known to all.

With the advice of legal counsel, and in all cases, the conditions of participation by a registered offender shall be defined by a “limited access agreement” executed by the offender and church. Such agreement shall be approved by probation authorities as may be necessary according to paragraphs a-c above. The agreement shall be reviewed annually to validate ongoing eligibility. Violation of the agreement by the offender shall be considered as grounds for immediate cancellation of the agreement.

The following additional considerations shall apply:

Victims in the congregation – In such case as the victim of a RSO (registered sex offender) is a member of the congregation, employee or is a client of other services provided by the congregation, the RSO shall not be permitted to attend the church or church activities.

Clergy-penitent privilege – “Clergy-penitent privilege” is a “Rule of Evidence” defining or limiting information which clergy may reveal in a court of law only. “Clergy penitent privilege” does not prevent clergy from informing the congregation of matters which may be relevant to their safety; it does not require clergy to hold information in secrecy.

Ordained clergy shall assume responsibility and take extraordinary care to understand the scope and limitations of clergy-penitent privilege in the State of NH, and the parameters of confidence and privilege as defined by our denomination. Authorized clergy shall inform the leadership of the church of the general principles of confidence and privilege under which (s)he performs his/her clerical duties.

Escorts (Parish Associate) – Conditions of limited access for a RSO will commonly require that the offender have an escort while on the church premises or at church events elsewhere. A person serving as an escort shall not be a spouse, partner or relative of the offender.

Approval & Supervision –

With the advice and prior approval of the Church Cabinet, a Limited Access Agreement with a Petitioner (known RSO) may be signed only by the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor, in association with other “authorized clergy” and parish associates (escorts), who shall be named in the Limited Access Agreement, shall be responsible for the general supervision of the Petitioner in all of the latter’s activity in relation to the church. Elements of supervision shall include the following:

- Knowledge of the terms of the Limited Access Agreement, including activity limitations placed upon the Petitioner.
- Knowledge of the Petitioner’s offense history sufficient to understand the risks of association with the church and its ministries.
- Willingness to assert activity limitations and to report any violation of restrictions placed upon the Petitioner.
- Willingness to intervene in any onset of a risky or problem behavior.
- Willingness to report all cases of non-compliance to the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor shall assess, prior to selection, whether a proposed parish associate is willing to fulfill the above elements of supervision.

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

Juveniles – While the criminal record of a juvenile is ordinarily concealed by the courts, the church may come to know the juvenile's history by other means. Honest disclosure by a juvenile and parents in the volunteer application and screening process may reveal that a record exists without knowing the specifics. While a limited access agreement will be required for the juvenile, as for others, every precaution will be taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality which the law affords a juvenile.

See Appendix E. for Sample Limited Access Agreement.



XI. Acknowledgment of Safe Church Policy and Procedures

I have read and agree to comply with FCCH's policies regarding sexual abuse prevention.

Signature of Employee or volunteer

Date

Printed Name

XII. Appendices

- A. Employment Application
- B. Reference Check Questions (Professional and Personal reference forms)
- C. Field Trip Preparation Checklist
 - C1. Permission Slip for SS Off site Trips
- D. Volunteer Driver Form and Agreement
- E. Limited Access Agreement
- F. Procedures for Volunteer Applicants
 - F1. Volunteer Statement of Consent
 - F2. Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form
- G. Reporting Neglect and Abuse Instructions and Reporting Form
- H. 911 Notification
- I. Certificate of Training
- J. Facility Monitoring Checklist
- K. FCCH Site Map-floor plan



A. Employment Application

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____

How long at current address: _____

If applicable, please list your addresses for the past five years:

Driver License: State Issued: _____ Number: _____

Have you ever previously worked for FCCH? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please complete the following: Dates: From: ___/___/___ To: ___/___/___

Position: _____

For what position are you applying? _____

What interests you about this position? _____

What has prepared you for this position? _____

Employment History (list most recent first)

1. Company Name & Address: _____

Position: _____ From: ___/___/___ To: ___/___/___

Immediate Supervisor Name & Phone: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

2. Company Name & Address: _____

Position: _____ Date: From: ___/___/___ To: ___/___/___

Immediate Supervisor Name & Phone: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

3. Company Name & Address: _____

Position: _____ Date: From: ___/___/___ To: ___/___/___

Immediate Supervisor Name & Phone: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

Education History (list most recent first)

1. School Name, City, State, Zip: _____

Type of School: _____ Program or Degree: _____ Date Completed _____

2. School Name, City, State, Zip: _____

Type of School: _____ Program or Degree: _____ Date Completed _____

3. School Name, City, State, Zip: _____

Type of School: _____ Program or Degree: _____ Date Completed _____

References: Please list 3-5 references including **name, type** (professional/civic, personal or family member), **address, daytime phone, how long you have known this person, and if this personal has agreed to provide a reference.** (Use back if needed.)

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

- 4. _____

Volunteer experience: Please list your volunteer experiences with non-profit organizations, listing the **organization, your duties, dates served, contact person and phone number.** (Use back if needed.)

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

FCCH appreciates your willingness to share your skills. Providing safe and secure programs for our members is of utmost importance to us. The information gathered in this application is designed to help us provide the highest quality programs for our congregation. Please initial each of the statements below.

_____ I declare that all statements contained in this application are true and that any misrepresentation or omission is cause for rejection of my application or dismissal from my position.

_____ I understand that I may withdraw from the application process at any time..

_____ My signature indicates that I have read and understand the above.

[Do not sign until you have read and initialed the above statements.]

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** ___/___/___

Code of Ethics

- Our staff will exhibit the highest ethical best practices and personal integrity.
- Our staff will provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Our staff will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a youth or adult.
- Our staff will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their supervisor or administrator.
- Our staff will report any suspected abuse or neglect of a youth to the state authorities.
- Our staff will accept their personal responsibility to protect youth and adults from all forms of abuse.

Please print:

Date: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

I have reviewed this application and have noted any missing information.

Signature of Screening Manager of Responsible Board

___/___/___

Date

High Risk Indicators for Applications

- o Application has gaps in dates for employment, education or residence.
- o Application includes conflicting or incorrect information.
- o Application has omitted or incomplete information.
- o The applicant has an unstable work history.
- o The applicant provides vague reasons for leaving previous jobs.
- o The applicant is unwilling to use former supervisors as references.
- o The applicant is overeducated or overqualified for this or other positions with youth.
- o The applicant is moving to a lesser-paying job.
- o The application shows a pattern of work and volunteer positions with the same type of youth.
- o The work pattern shows themes of problems with authority.
- o The applicant found out about the position through dropping in on the program.
- o The applicant describes youth as helpless, vulnerable or perfect.

B. Reference Check Questions (Phone)

These forms are for use in dealing with youth, adults and vulnerable populations.

Professional Reference Form

Name of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Address: _____

Phone Numbers: _____

(Phone script) Hello, my name is <your first and last name> with FCCH. <Applicant's name> has applied for a position with us and said you might be able to tell us about his/her previous work with youth and/or adults. Is this a good time for you to talk with me? I would like to start by letting you know that the applicant has applied for a position at our church, so it is extremely important for us to make sure that every applicant is suitable for this type of position. I appreciate your help with this.

1. How long have you known the applicant? _____
2. How do you know the applicant? _____
3. How would you rate the applicant's ability to learn new information and skills?
____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory

Can you give me an example of when the applicant was able to learn something new and use it in his/her work?

4. We are looking for someone who will adhere to the best practices of our organization. How would you rate the applicant's ability to follow policies and procedures?
____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory
5. How would you rate the applicant's ability to work with and relate to other adults?
____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory
6. Have you observed the applicant working with youth &/or adults? ____ Yes ____ No

7. If yes, how would you rate the applicant's ability to relate to youth?
____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory

Can you give me an example of how the applicant relates to youth?

8. In what types of situations have you observed the applicant working well with youth &/or adults (enjoying the work, being effective)?

9. In what types of situations have you observed the applicant not working well with youth &/or adults (becoming frustrated, angry, resentful or non-productive)?

10. How would you rate the applicant's ability to use good judgment in normal conditions?
____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory

11. How would you rate the applicant's ability to maintain appropriate boundaries (physical & emotional) with youth?
____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory

12. How would you rate the applicant's ability to use good judgment in stressful conditions?
____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory

Can you give me an example of when the applicant used good judgment?

13. Are you aware of any reason why we should not allow the applicant to work with the youth we serve? Adults? _____

14. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Thank you very much for your time.

____/____/____

Signature of Screening Manager of Responsible Board

Date

Personal Reference Form (Phone)

Name of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Address: _____

Phone Numbers: _____

(Phone script) Hello, my name is <your first and last name> with FCCH. <The applicant's first and last name> has applied for a position with us and said you would be a good person for us to talk with about him/her. Do you have a few minutes to talk with me now? I would like to start by letting you know that <The applicant's first and last name> has applied for a position working with youth / vulnerable adults, so it is extremely important for us to determine that every applicant is suitable for this type of position. I appreciate your help with this.

1. How long have you known the applicant? _____
2. What is your relationship to the applicant? _____
3. How would you rate the applicant's ability to work with and relate to youth? Adults?
____Above satisfactory ____Satisfactory ____Below satisfactory

Can you give me an example of how the applicant relates to youth? Adults?

4. We are looking for someone who can stay calm and control frustration even under very frustrating conditions with youth. How would you rate the applicant's ability to be patient and stay calm?
____Above satisfactory ____Satisfactory ____Below satisfactory

5. Have you ever known the applicant to use harsh or abusive discipline with a youth? Adults?

6. Would you be comfortable placing one of your own loved ones in the care of the applicant? Why or why not?

7. What are the applicant's hobbies and recreational activities?

8. We need a person who can be supportive and understanding of a youth's needs. How would you rate the applicant's ability to be genuinely supportive and understanding to a person in need?

____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory

9. Think of a time when the applicant was able to show genuine concern for another person who needed comfort. Tell me about that time.

10. How would you rate the applicant's ability to maintain appropriate boundaries with youth? (physical and emotional)

____ Above satisfactory ____ Satisfactory ____ Below satisfactory

11. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Thank you very much for your time.

Signature of Screening Manager of Responsible Board

____/____/____

Date

High Risk Indicators for References

- References were reluctant.
- References did not know the applicant well.
- References have short term relationships with the applicant.
- References refused to answer particular questions.
- Reference information differed from the applicant's account.
- References described applicant as having high-risk characteristics.
- References provided evasive responses.
- References reported specific concerns about the applicant.

C. Field Trip Preparation Checklist

1. Specific location of the off-site activity

2. Name and number of primary contact(s)

3. Address and Telephone # for location _____
4. Parent permission sheet attached to this document for review YES NO
5. Names of adults who will attend off-site trip _____

6. Employee to child ratio for trip _____
7. Required attire for employee and child during trip _____
8. Estimated time of departure and return times _____
9. Method of transportation _____
10. Volunteers for driving _____
11. Volunteer Driver Qualification Form and Agreement attached YES NO
Approved? YES NO
12. Cost of activity _____
13. Location of rest rooms/ locker rooms at off-site location _____
14. Overall supervision guidelines for location (how employees will be assigned to youth,
employees will monitor children in "zones")

15. Names of attendees: _____
- _____
- _____

C1. Permission Slip for Sunday School Off-site Trips

I _____ give my permission for my
PARENT /GUARDIAN NAME

child _____ to travel on _____
CHILD'S NAME DATE OF TRIP

to: _____
NAME OF OFF-SITE DESTINATION

DROP OFF INSTRUCTIONS: _____

PICK UP INSTRUCTIONS: _____

I understand my child may travel accompanied in a vehicle, with at least two (2) unrelated adults, which is insured and registered with one of whom has a current valid license.

Leader & contact info: _____
NAME OF TRIP LEADER CELL PHONE TO BE USED ON SITE

Parent/Guardian contact info: _____
PARENT NAME CELL PHONE

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

***I can be a chaperone if needed YES _____ NO _____
*** I can drive if needed YES _____ NO _____

D. Volunteer Driver Qualification Form & Agreement for Use of Personally Owned Vehicles

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Cell Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____ Years of Driving Experience _____

Driver License No. & State _____ Expiration Date _____

Insurance Carrier _____ Expiration Date _____

Liability Policy Limit-Bodily Injury _____ Property Damage _____

- 1. Are all licensed vehicles you own covered by insurance as required by law? YES NO
- 2. Have you ever been denied a driver’s license or had one suspended or revoked? YES NO
- 3. Have you had any moving traffic violations or accidents in the past three years? YES NO

If the answer to questions 2 or 3 is YES, explain. Give dates and details of violations and accidents on the back of this form.

I AGREE to the following as a condition of being permitted to function as a Volunteer Driver:

- 1. The vehicle owner’s insurance is the primary liability insurance coverage in the event of an accident.
- 2. The owner of the vehicle which I am driving is responsible for keeping the vehicle in safe working order.
- 3. The owner of the vehicle is responsible for all damage to the owned vehicle however caused.
- 4. The owner of the vehicle shall maintain liability insurance in the amount of at least:
 - Bodily Injury- \$50,000 per person and \$100,000 per accident or \$200,000 combined single limit: and
 - Property Damage- \$25,000 per accident
- 5. The church’s insurance shall apply in excess of the vehicle owner’s liability insurance limits in the event the primary limits are exhausted, and only to the extent the church is legally obligated to pay damages.
- 6. **I will not receive or initiate texts or phone calls while operating a vehicle for church activities.**
- 7. I will indemnify and hold the church harmless from liabilities and damage resulting from my operation of a Motor vehicle not owned by the church.
The church will indemnify and hold harmless the volunteer driver for liabilities and damages resulting from acts or negligence of the church.

I hereby AFFIRM that the information I have given is stated truthfully and that I shall abide by the terms of the church’s Vehicle Use Policy.

Driver Signature _____ Date _____

APPROVED _____ Date _____ Expiration _____

Attach a copy of Driver’s License and current Insurance ID Card

E. Limited Access Agreement

This Limited Access Agreement is executed between:

FCCH, referred to below as “we”, “the congregation” and “clergy”, and
(Petitioner Name), referred to below as “you” and “your”

FCCH is a welcoming congregation and as such affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshiping with us, especially in times of distress and serious personal troubles. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and them of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our congregation and our membership but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children, youth and vulnerable adults and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in worship services, coffee hour, meetings, adult education, and all adult social events. Do not enter the classrooms or nursery. You are to avoid all contact with children and youth on church property or congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- Do not talk with children.
- Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone, or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
- You will remain in the presence of a Parish Associate who knows your situation at all times. You must meet that person before coming onto church property (or before arriving at any church-sponsored event), always remain with him/her, and depart with him/her.
- If a child or youth in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- Avoid being in the church or any church-owned building or church-rented space at any time without a Parish Associate present with you at all times.
- Do not ask for, seek access to, nor remove from the church any materials, files, directories, etc., listing members and friends of the church.
- We ask that you limit your time in coffee hour to ten minutes.

As a part of this agreement, it is understood that you will have three (3) members of this congregation, approved by the clergy, who know thoroughly your history and are willing to serve as your Parish Associates. You will be welcome on church property and at church sponsored events but must be accompanied at all times by one of the Parish Associates named below:

(Named Parish Associate 1)

(Named Parish Associate 2)

(Named Parish Associate 3)

To engage your integration into the congregation and to assist you in maximizing your experience with the church, it is agreed that you will meet on a bi-monthly basis with the Parish Associates and a member of the clergy together or separately to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. These meetings will also serve as an ongoing review of the implementation of this agreement.

Implementation of this agreement is based upon a review by the clergy of the most current supporting documents as follows:

- A statement from the court as to the nature of the conviction.
- A risk assessment from a qualified therapist.
- A report from a certified treatment provider indicating that you are not at too high a risk for recidivism.

Any change in the above must be reported immediately to a member of the clergy.

REASONS FOR EXCLUDING A PERSON FROM ALL CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Refusal to allow the clergy to contact the treatment provider and parole officer.
- Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
- Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high a risk for recidivism.
- Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
- Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.

This agreement will remain in effect until/unless:

- You fail to honor the terms of the agreement, thus nullifying it.
- It is superseded by any policies and procedures put in place by the church's Safe Church Committee. The Safe Church Committee, in consultation with the clergy, is the body responsible for providing you with guidelines, support and counsel for your participation in the life of the congregation.
- You, the clergy, and the Safe Church Committee mutually agree to change the terms of this agreement.

ATTEST: I have reviewed the terms of the above limited access agreement and agree to abide by its provisions. Failure to honor its terms will result in my being denied access to church property and all church events.

Signature

Date

Petitioner Name-(Please print)

Address

WITNESS FOR THE CHURCH:

Signature

Date

Name (Please print)

Church Official Title

FCCH

127 Winnacunnet Road

Hampton, NH 03842



F. Procedures for Volunteer Applicants

F1. VOLUNTEER STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend ministry. God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry on behalf of the church. The primary goal in sharing ministry is to build up the body through relationships, which require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. In that spirit, I agree to complete the following questions to the best of my knowledge. I understand that misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of my position.

I authorize the Christian Education Committee to make inquiries regarding all the statements I make below. I also authorize former employees, courts, or other public agencies or entities to respond to inquiries concerning me and to supply verification of the information provided below. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice.

I understand that any information that becomes known about me by the Christian Education Committee will be dealt with prayerfully and respectfully and will be shared with me if requested by me to do so.

The Christian Education Committee

Date signed _____

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

I have never been found guilty, or pled guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge. True Not true
If not true, give a short explanation of the charge. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the charge; where the charge was filed; and the precise disposition of the charge.)

No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgement being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired. True Not true

If not true, give a short explanation of the lawsuit. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the lawsuit; where the lawsuit was filed; and the precise disposition of the lawsuit.)

I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct. True Not true

If not true, give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination; name, address, and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor; and nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)

Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

State where driver's license issued _____ **Driver's license ID** _____

With respect to my driving record, I have not had my license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance. True Not true

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying? True Not True

The covenants between persons seeking employment or sanctioned volunteer positions in the church require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate. Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees or volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end I authorize The First Congregational Church of Hampton and/or its agents to make inquires regarding all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement, and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background and character. To encourage such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses, comments and statements made in good faith and without malice.

The First Congregationl Church of Hampton's hiring and authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the distribution of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise the position I am seeking to fill. To that end, I authorize The First Congregational Church of Hampton and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these stated purposes. I understand that The First Congregational Church of Hampton will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

(SIGNATURE)

(DATE)



First Congregational
Church of Hampton

F2. Authorized Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form

NAME: LAST FIRST MIDDLE

ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP CODE

PHONE: CELL HOME

My previous experience in the past five years (paid or volunteer) related to the ministry I am seeking to fill includes: (Attach additional page(s) as necessary.)

1. _____
AGENCY NAME

ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP CODE

CONTACT PERSON PHONE

2. _____
AGENCY NAME

ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP CODE

CONTACT PERSON PHONE

3. _____
AGENCY NAME

ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP CODE

Name of church where I am currently a friend or member: _____

I have been a member of this church since _____

I have been a friend of this church since _____

G: Reporting Neglect & Abuse

Public Health Issue

Neglect and abuse is a serious issue that health officers can help to resolve. If you suspect a problem, use the form and phone numbers at the end of this chapter to report the situation.

For adults, call 603-271-7014 to speak with the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) and discuss assistance with any adult over the age of 18.

For children, call 603-271-6562 to speak with the Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Child Protection Services and discuss children, youth, and their families.

Role of the Health Officer

- Know the signs of abuse or self-neglect.
- Report any suspected abuse or self-neglect to police or NH DHHS.
- Gather evidence of abuse or self-neglect within the limits of your authority. This could include gathering first-hand reports, photos, or physical evidence of unsanitary conditions.
- Notify the property owner or landlord that any unsanitary conditions related to self-neglect need to be corrected in order to protect public health in your community. In addition, you may need to enforce any applicable State health laws or municipal health codes.
- Collaborate with State agencies & community partners to resolve the problem. If a Health Officer makes a report to BEAS or DCYF, the Agency may ask you to accompany them on a site visit. This is not always the case and is dependent on the nature of the report

Laws and Regulations

It is the law that you must report adult and/or child abuse if you believe it is happening. New Hampshire Law mandates that any person who has reason to suspect that a person is being abused or neglected must make a report to BEAS or DCYF, respectively. Adult and child abuse and neglect is addressed by the following two laws:

RSA 161-F, 42-57 Adult Protection Law:

<https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/NHTOC/NHTOC-XII-161-F.htm>
Persons 18 years old and over.

RSA 169-C, Child Protection Act:

<https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/NHTOC/NHTOC-XII-169-C.htm>
Children under 18 years old.

As a health officer, part of your job is to assess conditions related to health and sanitation that may relate to neglect, including and not limited to: 1) rental housing standards under RSA 48-A, 2) public health nuisances under RSA 147, and 3) hazardous and dilapidated buildings under RSA 155-B

Background

Any family can encounter difficult life challenges and may need help. Families can experience overwhelming frustration raising their children or taking care of their elderly, especially when they are facing physical, emotional or financial stress. Although they may only want to do what is best, challenges may lead to situations that can harm and endanger family members. This guidance document is a step in protecting New Hampshire's most vulnerable citizens and strengthening our state's families. Prevention and identification of child and/or adult abuse and neglect is a community responsibility that depends on the cooperation of all community members. We must work together to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

Adults – Signs of Neglect and Abuse

Signs of Self-Neglect

- Frequent falls
- History of fires or burns from smoking or cooking
- Hoarding that interferes with safety
- Inability to manage finances or pay bills
- Noncompliance with or inability to take medication as prescribed
- Unclean physical appearance, soiled clothing, inappropriate clothing for the weather, fecal/urine smell
- Unsanitary conditions in the home
- Untreated medical conditions
- Wandering or getting lost

Signs of Abuse or Neglect By Others

- Being left alone for long periods of time without supervision or assistance when it is needed
- Experiencing malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Fear, anxiety or agitation around certain household members or caregivers.
- Increasing withdrawal and isolation
- Lack of routine medical care
- Misusing or stealing money or possessions
- Physical contact of a sexual nature
- Threats or intimidation or unwanted remarks
- Unexplained bruises, welts, or burns
- Unexplained changes in health status

Children – Signs of Neglect and Abuse

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Bruises, welts, burns that cannot be sufficiently explained
- Injuries on places where children don't usually get hurt (the back, neck, back of legs, face)
- Repeated injuries
- Withdrawn, fearful or extreme behavior

Signs of Emotional Injury

- Inability to play as most children do
- Sleep problems
- Antisocial behavior
- Behavioral extremes
- Lags in emotional and intellectual growth
- Self destructive feelings or behavior

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Frequent complaints of stomachaches or headaches
- Chronic depression
- Withdrawal
- Feeling threatened by physical contact
- Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex
- Running away from home

Signs of Neglect

- Chronically dirty
- Chronic school absences
- Dress inadequate for weather
- Left alone at home or without supervision
- Left in the care of siblings too young or unable to baby-sit
- Often fatigued or falling asleep in school
- Hunger
- Self destructive feelings or behavior

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When Should I Report My Concern?

If you suspect someone is being abused or neglected, state law requires that you immediately report your concerns to DCYF (children under 18 years old) or BEAS (adults 18 years old and older). Proof of abuse or neglect is not required before reporting. Reports can also be made directly to the police. A sample reporting sheet is provided at the end of this document.

Can I Remain Anonymous?

Yes. We understand that reporting your suspicions is a big step to take. We also understand that you may be concerned about possible retaliation if they discover you reported your concerns.

Should I Tell the Family That I Have Called?

It depends on the situation. It is important to be honest with families. If you have concerns that family members may be abusing or neglecting someone, it is acceptable to talk with them if you feel comfortable doing this. As your relationship with most of these families is professional, you should explain to them your obligation to report your suspicions. There are situations where you should not talk with the family. Do NOT inform families prior to DCYF involvement when allegations consist of physical or sexual abuse. Informing the family of your report prior to an assessment may put the child at risk of harm and/or impede DCYF's ability to do a thorough investigation. Please carefully review the situation and consult with DCYF prior to informing families.

Will I Be Asked Many Questions?

Yes, you will be asked for certain specifics on the case. The Intake Workers at both DCYF and BEAS will ask questions about the situation and your knowledge of the family/person involved. The questions are intended to give a clearer picture of the event and the family. You will not be expected to know all the answers. A sample set of questions are provided at the end of this chapter.

Do I Need to Provide a Written Report?

Not necessarily. Current state law (RSA 169-C and RSA 161-F) requires that only an oral report to be made immediately, although the laws also allow DHHS to request a written report within 48 hours.

What If a Report is Not Referred for Assessment?

The decision whether to forward a report for further assessment is made by the Central Intake Unit in accordance with definitions of abuse and neglect within RSA 169-C and RSA 161-F. Some reports do not meet the criteria for DCYF or BEAS involvement and may not be accepted for assessment; however, they may be referred to other agencies. When you call you will be told whether the report will be accepted or not. If you disagree with the Central Intake Unit's decision, you may contact the Central Intake Unit Supervisor to discuss your concerns further.

Can I Call Back for Information or Updates?

Yes, with some limitation. A family's personal life is highly sensitive and confidential and needs to be protected by DCYF and BEAS staff. State and federal laws restrict both agencies as to the information it can discuss with individuals outside the immediate family. However, if you have further information about a family/person that you know is involved with a Case Worker, contact the appropriate agency immediately.

Does Law Enforcement Get Involved?

Yes, in certain cases. Current State law requires DCYF and BEAS to report allegations of sexual abuse and severe physical abuse to law enforcement (RSA 169-C and RSA 161-F).

What Happens Next?

When the report is forwarded to the District Office for assessment, a Case Worker will meet with the family/person and interview any household members. The discussions will focus on eliminating danger, identifying strengths and the resources of the family, and how to partner with the family to meet the needs of NH DHHS, DPHS May 2019 Page 5 of 6 Health Officer Manual the person of concern. When an assessment is completed, it may result in: 1) a decision is made to close the assessment without action, 2) close the assessment with referrals to community services, 3) open a non-court case or 4) file a petition of abuse or neglect in the Court. If abuse and/or neglect did occur, DCYF and BEAS shall take action deemed necessary to assure the safety of the children, youth, or adult. The Case Worker will collaborate with families to develop a plan and find appropriate community programs to connect them with to address their needs. Community based services will be utilized to help families make positive change and help prevent abuse and neglect.

Where Else Can a Family Get Help?

Family Resource Centers are located in many communities throughout the state. They offer a wide range of services, which can help partners learn skills to more effectively parent and prevent the situations that could lead to abuse and neglect. A list of these centers can be found at <https://www.nhchildrenstrust.org/>.

How Do I Make a Report in an Emergency?

Call the local police if you believe someone is in immediate danger, or if you have concerns about abuse or neglect on weekends, holidays, or outside of work hours (8AM to 4:30 PM)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For children, refer to the DHHS Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) website to learn more about their protective programs on behalf of New Hampshire's children and youth and their families. DCYF website is located at: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/index.htm>

For adults, refer to the DHHS Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) website to learn more about the variety of social and long-term support to adults age 60 and older and to adults between the ages of 18 and 60 who have a chronic illness or disability. BEAS 'website can be located at: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/beas/index.htm>

For more information

For children aged 0-18, call the Division for Children, Youth & Families Central Intake (DCYF)

1-800-894-5533 24-hour hotline (in-state calls only)

603-271-6562 24-hour hotline (out of state calls)

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/cps/index.htm>

For adults aged 18 or older, call the Bureau of Adult & Elderly Services (BEAS)

1-800-949-0470 (in-state calls only)

603-271-7014 (out of state calls only)

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/beas/adultprotection.htm>

Or email us at: apscentralintake@dhhs.nh.gov

G1. Sample Worksheet to Report Abuse or Neglect to the NH DHHS

You can report cases to the two agencies listed on the prior page. When you contact DHHS, you will be asked for some information. You may not have all the answers, so just tell them what you know regarding:

Information Needed

Response

The name(s), address, phone number, gender, and estimated age of the incapacitated child or adult.

The name, address, and phone number of a guardian or someone who is legally responsible for the individual.

The full nature and extent of the individual's current injuries, maltreatment, or neglect and where the incident/situation occurred.

Any information about previous injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.

The type of living arrangement for the individual (rental tenant, owner, unknown, etc.).

How great a risk you believe this may be to the individual (life-threatening or not).

How you learned of this situation.

Any action that has been taken to treat or assist the individual.

The name, address, phone number, sex, and relationship of the person believed responsible for the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the individual.

Your name, address, and phone number.

Any other information that could be helpful

For adults, call 603-271-7014 to speak with the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) and discuss assistance with any adult over the age of 18.

For children, call 603-271-6562 to speak with the Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Child Protection Services and discuss children, youth, and their families.

H: 911 Notification

- Stay calm.
- Give your location, phone number and address, if possible.
- Give clear answers about what is happening, and type of responder(s) needed.
- Follow directions from dispatcher.
- Remain on the phone with 911 dispatcher until you are told it is safe to hang up.



I. Certificate of Training

I have read the following sections and understand the “Safe Church Policy,” “Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adults” and “Policies for Working with Youth” which can be found in the “Safe Church Policy” manual in the church’s office.

(Signature)

(Date)

I have attended an in-session meeting with the “Safe Church Policy” leaders and understand all that was presented to me. (A copy of the itinerary shall be affixed to this page).

(Signature)

(Date)

(Signature of training personal)

(Date)



J. Facility Monitoring Checklist

Building architecture can increase or mitigate the risk of an incident or accident. Because most incidents of sexual behavior occur in private, the extent to which privacy is managed, risk is managed. To ensure that all the locations are properly and consistently monitored, designate a staff member who must complete a site inspection checklist.

Create a facility monitoring checklist for each location which identifies that location’s high-risk areas. Daily, make sure that staff complete this checklist at various times during the daily activities. So for example, during summer programs, if the facility monitoring checklist is completed at 10:00 AM on Monday morning, schedule Tuesday’s morning check to occur at 11:00 AM. For summer activities, the following checklist should be completed multiple times throughout the day.

- All unused rooms, offices, storage areas, and closets are locked. Stairwells are consistently monitored.
- All windows permit observation into program areas and offices (i.e., artwork on windows should not prevent informal monitoring by passersby; all blinds on windows should be open).
- All staff are identifiable and dressed in the appropriate uniforms.
- All program activities are within the designated ratios. (Insert your program ratios here)

- Staff are spread out in the activity area and actively supervising the youth.
- All youth remain in facility areas that are easily viewed by staff, (i.e., youth are not wandering off by themselves without adults present to supervise them.)
- Youth are checked into and out of the facility according to policy.
- The grounds around the location are free from hazards.

Bathrooms:

- The bathroom is clean.
- Neither youth nor adults are just “hanging out” in the bathrooms.
- There is only one youth per stall.

Comments: _____

K. FCCH Floor Plan (Site Map)

Floor plans are kept in church office.