

SAFE CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

First Congregational Church of Williamstown Williamstown, Massachusetts

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A INTRODUCTION

A.1 MISSION

As stated in our mission, First Congregational Church of Williamstown (FCC) is committed to being a community of Christian fellowship. Every effort will be made to ensure that all who participate in our church life, including children, adults, and church workers, whether paid or volunteer, will be able to explore their relationship with God and each other as they seek to grow in their faith and faithfulness in an environment that is safe, secure, and nurturing.

A.2 SCOPE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures included in this document apply to all activities which take place within the building and properties of FCC, as well as programs, activities, or events scheduled as part of the ministry of this church which take place elsewhere. The policies and procedures apply to all members, associate members, friends, volunteers, and employees of the church.

A.3 LOCATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Copies of the Safe Church Policies and Procedures will be kept in binders in three locations:

1. the Church Office;
2. the Christian Education office; and
3. the Church Church Website.

All forms referenced in this document are located in Section J.2

B KEY POLICY

Any person who seeks possession of a key to FCC will have a clearly stated reason for needing a key and will be approved by the Stewardship Cluster if necessary.

1. Certain people are authorized by virtue of their position in the church to hold keys. These people include paid employees, officers of the church, etc.
2. Other potential key-holders must receive the approval of Stewardship Cluster to be in possession of a key. These people may include for example committee chairmen, youth group leaders, flower committee members, Meals-on-Wheels volunteers, adult Christian Education leaders, long-term office renters, short-term (e.g. ABC Clothing Sale) and long-term facilities renters (e.g. Girl Scout leaders)..
3. Any non-employee volunteers to whom a key is to be assigned must have been actively and regularly participating as members or friends of the Church for at least one year.
4. The keys will be assigned by the church's Administrative Assistant following approval of the recipient by the Stewardship Cluster. The church's Administrative Assistant will distribute or arrange for the distribution of the keys once they are assigned.
5. Records of key holders will be maintained by the church's Administrative Assistant. Keys shall be returned when they are no longer needed by the holder, and the return will be documented.
6. It will be the responsibility of the church's Administrative Assistant to monitor who is in possession of keys and request the return of keys from persons no longer authorized to hold them. Keys are not to be loaned to unauthorized persons, duplicated, or kept beyond the time that they are needed. Authorized key holders may loan their key to a spouse if the spouse has signed the Key Receipt Form and the Statement of Compliance.

7. *All* key-holders will familiarize themselves with the Youth Protection Guidelines, sign a Statement of Compliance, and submit a Key Receipt Form.

C SCREENING AND HIRING

C.1 APPLICATIONS POLICY

First Congregational Church of Williamstown welcomes potential employees, adult-activity volunteers and youth-activity volunteers from its membership, its friends and external candidates. Each type of position requires a specific set of application and disclosure forms, as well as post-acceptance training for new candidates. In addition, to become an Authorized *Youth* Volunteer with the various programs offered as part of the Youth Ministry, potential volunteers must have been actively and regularly participating as members or friends of the Church for at least six months. Such Authorized Volunteer Youth Ministries positions include, but are not limited to Sunday School Teacher, Youth Choir Director, Youth Group Leaders, Drivers for church sponsored youth events, etc. This policy is not intended to exclude participation in church youth activities by a parent or sibling of one or more children participating in the activity, e.g. Choir parents. However such volunteers should not be granted unsupervised responsibility for children *not* their own until they have met the six month requirement.

C.2 DEFINITIONS

FCC, the Church: First Congregational Church of Williamstown

Authorized (Adult) Volunteer: Any person who offers or is recruited, has completed the appropriate Disclosure Form as outlined in subsection C.3 and has been accepted by the appropriate supervisor, Board, or Committee at FCC to provide unpaid services for any activity at the church that does *not* involve direct supervision of youth or unsupervised access to youth. This may include people to whom keys have been assigned, Meals-on-Wheels, Adult Choir, Coffee Hour, Flowers, church bulletin assembly, cluster participation, adult Christian Education, drivers for church-sponsored senior events, etc.

Authorized Youth Volunteer: Any person who offers or is recruited, has completed the appropriate Disclosure Form as outlined in subsection C.3 and has been accepted by the appropriate supervisor, Board, or Committee at FCC to provide unpaid services to the Youth Ministries programs or any other program that involves children or youth. This may include people to whom keys have been assigned, Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, or drivers for church-sponsored youth events.

External candidate: an applicant for a position, paid or volunteer, who is not a member of FCC and who has not been actively and regularly participating as a member or friend of the Church for at least six months, or has never held a position at FCC previously.

Staff or paid employee: Any individual hired and compensated by FCC on a part-time, fulltime, temporary, or permanent basis.

Direct contact: someone who has the immediate responsibility for the care of children or regular face to face interactions with children, such as Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, youth choir directors, or nursery supervisors.

DCE: The Director of Christian Education, a.k.a. Leader of Youth and Children's Ministries, etc.

CE: Christian Education

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI): Information regulated by the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) and maintained by the Board of Probation regarding criminal convictions of persons within the Massachusetts Court System.

Certification: A process by which an organization is granted legal access to CORI after a review of an application submitted by that organization to the Criminal History Systems Board.

Agreement of Non-Disclosure (AOND): A signed form, submitted by anyone who is certified to have access to CORI, in which they agree to certain terms of confidentiality.

CORI Administrator: The designated coordinator of CORI requests and the information received as a result.

C.3 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. All candidates, whether external or internal, seeking paid employment at FCC; all paid staff; and all ordained staff, whether paid or not, will complete the following:
 - a) Application for Employment;
 - b) Primary Disclosure form;
 - c) Signed Authorization for a CORI check; and
 - d) Signed Statement of Compliance.
2. All authorized volunteers working with youth and children as Sunday School teachers, nursery supervisors, youth group leaders, workers who will accompany youth on field trips outside FCC. workers who supervise youth overnight as a regular part of their responsibilities, or any other position that requires regular direct contact with youth, whether on or off FCC property, will complete the following:
 - a) Primary Disclosure form;
 - b) Signed Authorization for a CORI check; and
 - c) Signed Statement of Compliance.
- 3.
4. Chaperones for overnight events or extended off-site activities may, at the discretion of the Congregation Cluster, be requested to complete the following:
 - a) Primary Disclosure form;
 - b) Signed Authorization for a CORI check; and
 - c) Signed Statement of Compliance.
5. All other chaperones and drivers for field trips will complete the following:
 - a) Secondary Disclosure Form; and
 - b) Signed Statement of Compliance.
6. All applications for paid employment or authorized volunteer positions requiring a Primary Disclosure Form will be reviewed by an appropriate supervisor, Board, or Committee. Before assuming a paid or volunteer position, the applicant will be interviewed.
 - a) Gaps in time, irregular employment patterns, or unexplained absences noted on Application for Employment must be pursued with both former employers and potential employees.
 - b) For candidates for paid positions, references will be contacted for information that may be helpful in determining the applicant's suitability for the position being sought.
 - c) For candidates for volunteer positions, references may be contacted at the discretion of the supervisor or supervisory board or committee.

- d) Interviews will be conducted with those applicants who are deemed suitable following the review of the application and contact with previous employers and references.
- e) If the applicant is deemed suitable for the position being sought, a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check will be conducted if required per sub-section C.4.

C.4 CORI CHECK POLICY

The CORI Administrator's role is to ensure that:

1. anyone who needs to request information has sent in the AOND;
2. anyone who no longer needs to receive information has had their name removed from the Church's certification;
3. all appropriate applicants, in written form, have consented to a CORI investigation;
4. information received as a result of the CORI investigation is reviewed according to the criteria set forth in sub-section C.5; and
5. information collected is held in confidence.

In order to ensure that employees and volunteers are appropriate for their positions, a CORI check will be performed on candidates for the following roles:

1. paid employees;
2. ordained staff, whether paid or unpaid;
3. Youth Group leaders; and
4. certain chaperones at the discretion of the Congregation Cluster.
5. Upon receipt of the Primary Disclosure Form and Authorization to Request CORI, the CORI Administrator will submit a request to the CHSB for investigation. If the CORI investigation determines that a criminal record exists, the CORI Administrator will review the information in accordance with the criteria set forth in this policy, and will consult with the church's attorney and Moderator if necessary. After such review, the Moderator will make a decision regarding the personnel transaction at issue.

C.5 POLICY FOR REVIEW OF CRIMINAL RECORDS

The following criteria should be used by the CORI Administrator in conducting a review:

1. Anyone convicted of, or who admits to, committing child abuse, whether physical, emotional, or sexual, will not be considered, under any circumstances, for a position involving contact with children.
2. There will be a presumption that the applicant is ineligible for any position involving direct contact with children if the background check indicates a felony conviction for a crime which involves the use of force or violence, rape, performing an unnatural act, sodomy, indecent assault, battery, or the crime of attempting any of the aforementioned offenses; or illegally manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any controlled substances or the crime of possession with intent to manufacture, distribute or dispense a controlled substance, or has been charged with any felony listed above and is either awaiting trial or has been defaulted by the court.
3. The CORI Administrator may consider other factors as (s)he deems appropriate that bear on a candidate's suitability for a paid or volunteer position.

D YOUTH PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION

D.1 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

First Congregational Church of Williamstown is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. In order to ensure this, we will provide supervision for all activities and programs involving children and youth, and employ practices that provide for the safety of children, youth, and those who care for them.

D.2 YOUTH PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

Chaperone: a volunteer who helps supervise youth for a special activity, such as a party or field trip. To be an approved chaperone, an individual must be:

1. a parent of one or more children involved in the special activity or
2. a member of FCC for at least six months or
3. have attended FCC regularly for at least six months.

In addition, that individual must be:

4. at least 21 years old and
5. a minimum of five years older than the oldest youth participating in the activity.

Helper, assistant: a volunteer for regular youth activities, such as Sunday school and related activities or youth group, who functions in a non-supervisory role.

Supervisor: a paid or volunteer worker who has direct responsibility for the care of youth, such as a teacher, youth group leader, chaperone, or choir director.

Field trip: a youth event that is scheduled off FCC property, whether for in-town or out-of-town, one hour, one day, or overnight.

D.3 YOUTH PROTECTION PROCEDURES

D.3.1 Two adult rule

Two adults, not married to each other*, should be present with a child or children under 18 years of age at all times. When it is not possible for at least two adults, not married to each other, to be present, a separate supervising adult must be present and circulating through the activity area or classrooms. There shall be observation windows in at least one door of each classroom. When a class activity must be in a room without an observation window, the door must remain open. It is permissible to have one adult per car with each car carrying a group of young people on a field trip. An adult may, however, be alone in the Church, or at a church approved activity, with a child(ren) that is(are) not his or her own or a relative providing the adult has the permission of the child(ren)'s parent(s).

D.3.2 Five year older rule

Classroom and nursery helpers, and youth group assistants must be five years older than the oldest participant in the class, group, or activity. The minimum age to help in the nursery or Sunday School classroom is

* Under Massachusetts Commonwealth law a married person cannot be compelled to testify against their spouse.

thirteen.

D.3.3 Medical Release Forms

1. All youth participating in a youth group or going on a field trip with either a youth group or the Sunday School, must have a Medical Release Form (Appendix 7) on file before their participation.
2. Form must be given to youth or parents/guardians to be completed and returned to the Director of Christian Education for Sunday School events, or the Youth group leader for youth group participation.
3. Completed form will be kept on file in the Christian Education (CE) office.
4. Each time a field trip or overnight event occurs, the original must be taken with an adult leader while a copy remains in the CE office.

D.3.4 Field trip/youth event guidelines

1. One month advance notice: The Congregation Cluster should receive a proposal for all field trips and all evening or overnight functions at the church (with the exception of regular youth group meetings) at least one month in advance.
2. Congregation Cluster Approval: All field trips or events should receive the approval of the Congregation Cluster before the activity can take place and before fundraising for the activity begins.
3. Approval of Chaperones: All chaperones for youth activities will be approved by Congregation Cluster.
4. Parental Consent: Parents or guardians should be fully informed about programs, activities, leaders, chaperones, dates and times, cost, method of transportation, and purpose of the scheduled trip or activity. The appropriate signed Field Trip Consent Form (Appendix 8 and Appendix 9) should be completed and returned before any child or youth can participate in the event.
5. Vehicle rules:
 - a) Drivers for field trips must be 25 years or older and have a copy of their driver's license and registration on file.
 - b) Anyone who has had their license revoked or suspended within the past five years will be ineligible to drive for youth activities.
 - c) If it was revoked or suspended more than five years ago, the Congregation Cluster will make a decision as to suitability.
 - d) All occupants of a vehicle will use a seat belt or car seat as appropriate and required by law unless a medical exception is applied for and granted by the DCE.
6. Appropriate supervision: The two adult rule applies for all church-related events. For overnight events, the boys and the girls will sleep in separate areas with at least two chaperones of the same gender directly supervising each group. If the minimum level of supervision cannot be achieved, the activity must be cancelled; this may result in the loss of deposit fees for which the church cannot be responsible.
 - a) Non-overnight activities on church property: 2 adults for each group.
 - b) Day trips off church property: 1 Adult for 4 youths for grades P-4, 1 adult for 6 youths for all other ages, minimum of 2 adults.
 - c) Overnight activities either on or off church property: 1 adult for 6 youths (that they are not related to) of the same gender, minimum of 2 adults

D.3.5 Discipline

The purpose of discipline with youth is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect, and cooperation.

1. No youth will be disciplined by the use of any form of physical punishment.
2. Supervisors are encouraged to listen to the youth, and clearly communicate expectations of appropriate behavior.
3. If a child's behavior is disruptive, one of the adults in the classroom may leave to return the child to his/her parents or to seek the DCE or the child's parent to come to the classroom.

D.3.6 Appropriate activities

Activities that involve inappropriate physical contact are not suitable recreational activities.

D.3.7 Unhealthy practices:

Unhealthy activities such as smoking, drinking of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, and improper language are not appropriate on the part of participants in youth activities. (This approbation does not apply to representations of such activities in theatrical or educational presentations which often provide valuable cautionary guidance to us all.)

E SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

E.1 REPORTING AND RESPONSE POLICY

Allegations of child abuse will be promptly reported to the Moderator and the Department of Social Services (DSS). Members of the church community, including volunteers working in youth ministry, are morally obligated to report reasonable suspicions of child abuse. All allegations will be investigated with due respect for the dignity and privacy of everyone involved. Activities related to the handling of complaints or incidents will be documented, and documents will be maintained in a secure location determined by the church's Administrative Assistant. When necessary, full cooperation will be given to civil authorities under the guidance of the church's attorney.

E.2 DEFINITIONS

Child: a person under the age of eighteen as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mandated Reporter: a person who, by virtue of their profession or position, is required by law to report all reasonable suspicions of child abuse. As of 5/3/2002, the law applies to three categories of church personnel:

1. clergy (including licensed or commissioned ministers);
2. anyone performing duties on behalf of the church in the role of a pastor (including deacons who serve communion, lay ministers, etc.); and
3. a select group of church employees (not volunteers), such as those who supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel children on a regular basis.

Because of the vulnerability of children, their right to our protection supersedes a counselee's right to confidentiality. Mandated reporters at FCC are:

1. Pastor;
2. Director of Christian Education;
3. Director of Music;
4. Office Administrator
5. Deacons;

Incident Report: a written report that contains all the information necessary to complete a Mandated Report. The Incident Report must be submitted, within 24 hours of making an oral report to the Moderator, by anyone with reasonable cause to suspect child abuse.

Mandated report: a written report that must be submitted to the Department of Social Services within 48 hours of making an oral report of abuse.

E.3 REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

E.3.1 Ensure the child's safety

1. Protect the child and remove the child from the situation if there is an ongoing danger to the child.
2. Call an ambulance if the injury is severe.
3. Make a reasonable attempt to inform the Moderator, the Pastor and the DCE. The Moderator will inform the parent(s). If the Moderator is not available, the Pastor or DCE will inform the parents.

E.3.2 Oral reports

1. The Moderator should be informed immediately, either by the person initially reporting the incident, or by their designee, such as the Pastor or DCE.
2. The Moderator will make an oral report to DSS by means of a phone call if there is reason to believe that child abuse has occurred.

E.3.3 Incident Report

1. Submit an Incident Report within 24 hours of the oral report:
 - a) the Moderator will assist in the completion of the Incident Report.
 - b) an Incident Report must be submitted even if it is determined that a mandated report is not necessary.
 - c) Incident Reports are required for all unusual occurrences.

E.3.4 Mandated Report

1. Submit a Mandated Report within 48 hours of the oral report:
 - a) No one is PROHIBITED from making a report directly to the DSS, and may do so if they wish. An immediate report to the Moderator is still required.
 - b) However, in order to avoid duplicate reports and ensure that proper procedures are followed, it is recommended that official reporters, such as the Moderator, Pastor, or DCE, be designated within the church. The person originally reporting the incident will not be identified on the Mandated Report.
 - c) After reviewing the Incident Report, it may be determined that there is not reasonable cause to contact DSS and file a Mandated Report. This determination must be documented in writing and filed with the Incident Report. If the original reporter disagrees, that person may contact DSS directly; they will be assisted as needed in completing the Mandated Report and will be identified as the reporter.

E.3.5 Follow-up, investigation, documentation

1. The Moderator will inform the accused of the complaint against him or her once the child's safety is ensured.

2. There will be a meeting with the accused to discuss the accusation. One party present will make and sign a record of the meeting, including date and time, location of the meeting, the parties present, and the disposition of the child.
3. The accused will immediately be removed from all contact with children. Paid employees will be suspended with pay or have their ministry restricted to exclude contact with children. Both volunteers and paid staff should be given the recommendation to obtain their own lawyer.
4. The Moderator will inform the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) (if they were not the ones accused) of the concern, whether or not a report is filed with DSS.
5. If the incident occurs during an overnight or longer trip, the parents of all participants in the incident will be called to come pick up their child(ren).

E.4 RESPONSE FOLLOWING A MANDATED REPORT

1. The response following a report of alleged child abuse, including contact with the church's attorney, will be coordinated by the Moderator.
2. If there is an allegation against pastoral staff, a church Deacon, designated by the chairman of the Congregation Cluster, will contact the Area Minister and the Pastor—Pastoral Relations Committee. The church will seek the counsel of the Association Committee on Church and Ministry regarding action to be taken.

E.4.1 Investigation

1. The extent to which information will be shared with the congregation will be determined by the Moderator and others as appropriate. The input of the Area Minister may be sought and, if pastoral staff is involved, the Association Committee on the Ministry may be consulted in making this decision.
2. All necessary parties will cooperate with the investigations made by DSS and the police.
3. If necessary, the Council will appoint a liaison to be the designated contact with the media.

E.4.2 Continuing the ministry of the Church

1. Pastoral support will be offered to all parties involved, including those who have made the complaint, the accused, the families of both, and the congregation. Decisions about how this support will be given will be made by pastoral staff and the Deacons.
2. If the allegations involve pastoral staff, the ministry of the church will need to be maintained while the issue is being addressed. Decisions regarding how this will be accomplished will be made by the Deacons with assistance from the Area Minister or Association Committee on the Ministry.

E.4.3 Documentation

All information obtained during the investigation, all activities related to the issue being addressed, and all findings are to be carefully documented and signed, including dates, times, and locations of all activities and meetings; the names of the parties present; any decisions or conclusions made; and any further action to be taken. This documentation is to be retained in a secure location determined by the church's Administrative Assistant.

F ADULT CONDUCT

F.1 PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND HARASSMENT

FCC wishes to create and maintain a community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. The Church is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation and harassment of any kind, ~~and such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention of the church to respond to allegations of behavior that are contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate it.~~

F.2 POLICY ON MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

All persons engaged in the ministry of FCC (including elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and authorized ministers) 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. Sexual exploitation of parishioner(s) or other individual(s) by anyone engaged in the ministry of FCC is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

F.3 DEFINITIONS

Minister: a person engaged by the church to carry out its ministry. For the purposes of this document, a minister includes elected or appointed leaders of the church, commissioned ministers, employees, and authorized ministers. This does not include substitute or one-time only participants, such as visiting musicians or speakers.

Authorized minister: a person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an association of the United Church of Christ. This does not include substitute pulpit supply.

Church member: a person who has formally joined FCC by confirmation, profession of faith, transfer of membership from another church, or reaffirmation of faith.

Associate member, friend of the church: a person who has not formally joined FCC, but attends regularly and contributes to the support of the Church.

Ministerial relationship: the relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Sexual exploitation: activity or conduct of a sexual nature in which a person participating in the community of the Church takes advantage of the vulnerability of another participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior through strength of ~~their~~ position or ~~their~~ charisma.

Harassment: repeated misconduct, whether verbal or physical, that creates an environment that is uncomfortable, unwelcoming, discriminating, or intimidating, or leads to an atmosphere in which a person's ability to participate in worship and activities at the church is compromised.

Sexual harassment: repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination.

G COMPLAINTS OF MISCONDUCT

The church's Personnel Policies contain informal and formal measures for dealing with complaints of sexual harassment. The church may use those same measures for dealing with complaints of sexual exploitation or harassment from church members, associate members, or friends of the church.

G.1 INFORMAL MEASURES

1. The complainant(s) has the option to resolve complaints using informal measures.
 - a) The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual(s) accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
 - b) The complainant can report the incident(s) to the pastor of the church or their immediate supervisor in an effort to resolve the matter informally.

G.2 FORMAL MEASURES

1. If an informal resolution of the complaint(s) does not seem appropriate or does not succeed, formal proceedings may be instituted. The Moderator will be informed of all formal complaints, and the complainant(s) may request of the Moderator that s/he initiate an investigation, using the following procedure:
 - a) Gather statements from individuals involved and anyone else with pertinent information.
 - b) Consider all information and make a determination of findings.
 - c) Findings that the complaint is verified may result in recommendations to Council for action, such as:
 - **Formal reprimand with defined expectations for changed behavior, including possible public notification**
 - **Recommending or requiring a program of growth that may include education and/or counseling;**
 - **Probation, with the terms of the probation clearly identified;**
 - **Dismissal from employment or volunteer leadership position, and, in extreme cases, affiliation with, or membership in, the Church.**
 - d) Finding that no sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred should be expressed to both the employee or volunteer and the complainant.
 - e) Report these findings to the employee's or volunteer's supervisor or supervisory committee.
 - f) If an accused employee or volunteer is an authorized minister, the chairman of the Congregation Cluster will inform the Area Minister or Association Committee on the Ministry, as well as the Pastoral Relations Committee, of the allegation. FCC will cooperate fully in any procedures of the UCC related to the person's ministerial authorization while retaining the right and the responsibility to employ or designate leadership within FCC as it determines best.

G.3 APPEAL

If the complainant(s) or accused person(s) is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter, he or she has the right to appeal to the Church Council who will appoint a committee to review the complaint.

G.4 DOCUMENTATION

All information obtained during the investigation, all activities related to the issue being addressed, and all findings are to be carefully documented and signed, including dates, times, and locations of all activities and meetings; the names of the parties present; any decisions or conclusions made; and any further action to be taken. This documentation is to be retained in a secure location determined by the church's Administrative Assistant.

H TRAINING AND EDUCATION

H.1 POLICY ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Every effort will be made to train all employees, mandated reporters, and volunteers as deemed appropriate regarding the Safe Church Policies and Procedures. Mandated reporters, as well as staff and volunteers who have regular direct contact with youth should also receive education about child abuse awareness. Anyone who will have regular contact with children in our church and anyone who will have possession of a key to the Church will read the Youth Protection Guidelines and sign a Statement of Compliance.

H.2 PROCEDURES FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Training will be offered at the beginning of each church school semester, and at the start of employment for paid staff. It will be considered a mandatory part of volunteer training and employee orientation. This training will be provided using self-guided, individual-learning materials in small group (e.g. staff meeting, teachers training) or one-on-one situations (e.g. new employee, volunteer) as appropriate. Training will be supported or lead (as appropriate) by the Director of Christian Education.
2. Once an individual has participated in the initial training, a refresher course will be required every year to ensure that the individual's knowledge is current and accurate. This refresher course may be delivered individually or to groups using the self-guided, individual-learning materials listed in (4) below.
3. The church's Administrative Assistant will maintain a record of who has received training.
4. Training will include the use of MACUCC training materials (which include a video regarding child abuse and safe church policies in general), a review of policies and procedures that are specific to FCC and pertinent to the work in which the employee or volunteer will be involved, and instruction in the use and completion of the various forms.
5. A summary of the training required by various individuals is represented in the chart below:

Employee and Volunteer Safe Church Educational Requirements

	Summary of Policies and Procedures	Youth Protection Guidelines	Child Abuse Awareness & Mandated Reporting
Moderator	X	X	X
Ordained staff/volunteers	X	X	X
Director of CE	X	X	X
Director of Music	X	X	X
Youth Group leaders	X	X	X
Administrative Assistants	X	X	X
Sunday School teachers		X	X
Nursery Supervisors		X	X
Deacons		X	X
Cluster Chairpersons	X	X	
Other paid staff		X	
Key holders		X	

I SOURCES

General Laws of Massachusetts, Part I, Title II, Chapter 6: “Criminal Systems History Board,” Section 172: Dissemination of record information; certification; eligibility for access; scope of inquiry; access limited; use of information, Section 177: Violations; civil liability, and Section 178: Violations; punishment. <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/laws/mgl/6-172.htm> [177, 178]

General Laws of Massachusetts, Part I, Title XV, Chapter 94C: “Controlled Substances Act,” Section 31: Classes of controlled substances; establishment of criminal penalties for violations of this chapter. <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/laws/mgl/94C-31.htm>

General Laws of Massachusetts, Part I, Title XVII, Chapter 119: “Protection and Care of Children, and Proceedings Against Them,” Section 51A: Injured children reports. <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/laws/mgl/119-51A.htm>

“The Local Church and Sexual Abuse” produced by The Commission for Educational Ministries and The Commission for Mission, Development and Social Responsibility, Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, One Badger Road, Framingham, MA 01702, 1999.

“Making Our Churches Safe For All: Abuse Prevention Resources for Local Churches,” produced by the Conferences of the United Church of Christ Insurance Board, The Office for Church Life and Leadership, and The United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115, 1999.

Resources for Youth Ministry, Commission for Educational Ministries, Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ, One Badger Road, Framingham, MA 01702, 2001.

“Safety Tips on a Sensitive Subject: Child Sexual Abuse,” Church Mutual Insurance Company, 3000 Schuster Lane, Merrill, Wisconsin 54452, 1989.

“Special Issue: Child Abuse Prevention,” *Massachusetts Conference Christian Educators' Newsletter*, May 2002.

Taylor, Nancy S. “Message From the Minister & President: Mandated Reporters,” *United Church News*, Massachusetts Conference Edition, May, 2002.

Taylor, Nancy S. “Message From the Minister & President: Pastors need to communicate about limits of confidentiality,” *United Church News*, Massachusetts Conference Edition, June, 2002.

J FORMS

The following forms shall be available in the Church office, on the Church website and via email (upon request):

1. Key Receipt Form
2. Statement of Compliance
3. Statement of Compliance for Outside Organizations
4. Application for Employment
5. Primary Disclosure Form
6. Secondary Disclosure Form
7. Agreement of Non-Disclosure
8. Authorization to Request CORI
9. Medical Release Form
10. In-Town Field Trip Consent Form
11. Out-of-Town/Overnight Field Trip Consent Form
12. Incident Report Form
13. Mandated Report Form

K Posted Procedures

1. Youth Protection Guidelines
2. Emergency Procedures
3. Toileting Procedures
4. Diapering Procedures
5. Discipline Policy

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First Congregational Church of Williamstown

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YOUTH PROTECTION GUIDELINES (Summarized)

Reporting of Child Abuse:

The church has a policy that requires anyone using the church facilities for any activity (sponsored by First Congregational Church of Williamstown or by an outside organization) to report to the Moderator (or Director of Christian Education or Pastor) immediately if it is believe that a child has been abused and/or neglected on First Congregational Church of Williamstown properties. A written Incident Report must be submitted within 24 hours. If the adult wishes to contact the Department of Social Services directly, they must make an oral report by telephone immediately and follow up with a written report within 48 hours. The Moderator will assist with the completion of the reports.

Two Adult Rule:

Two adults, not married to each other*, should be present with a child or children under 18 years of age at all times. When it is not possible for at least two adults, not married to each other, to be present, a separate supervising adult must be present and circulating through the activity area or classrooms. There shall be observation windows in at least one door of each classroom. When a class activity must be in a room without an observation window, the door must remain open. An adult may, however, be alone in the Church, or at a church approved activity, with a child(ren) that is(are) not his or her own or a relative providing the adult has the permission of the child(ren)'s parent(s).

Five Year Older Rule:

Classroom, nursery, and youth group helpers must be five years older that the oldest participant in the class, group, or activity.

Key Rule:

Anyone receiving a key to the church must sign the “Key Holder Acknowledgement” card and abide by the Safe Church Policies regarding the possession of a key.

Medical Release Forms:

All participants in the First Congregational Church of Williamstown Youth Groups and anyone participating in a field trip must have a Medical Release Form on file in the Christian Education office.

Appropriate Activities:

Activities that involve inappropriate physical or intimate contact are not suitable recreational activities.

Unhealthy Practices:

Unhealthy activities such as smoking, drinking of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, and improper language are not appropriate.

*Under Massachusetts Commonwealth law a married person cannot be compelled to testify against their spouse.