

Safe Child Policy and Procedures
First Congregational UCC, Eau Claire, WI

SECTION ONE: RECRUITING EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAM WORKERS:

First Congregational UCC welcomes staff and volunteers who have completed primary or secondary screening to become involved with the Education and Youth Programs at a qualified level of commitment. The Director of Religious Education, or designee, shall be responsible for screening applicants for such volunteer positions. There are two levels of screening: primary and secondary. Primary screening consists of an applicant's completed screening inventory that is verified through primary sources. Secondary screening consists of a completed screening inventory.

PRIMARY SCREENING PROCEDURE: Positions with high levels of responsibility for children and consistent contact with children require primary screening e.g. teachers and youth group leaders. Workers with primary screening review this policy and complete a screening inventory that authorizes a criminal records background check. All volunteers, including current workers and staff members, are requested to complete the screening inventory to signal their support of the steps being taken to the entire congregation. Anyone wanting to receive primary screening authority must include three references.

The Director of Religious Education or designee will review the submitted forms and conduct a personal interview. The Director of Religious Education or designee will arrange for a Criminal Records Background Check and contact references. Once all the information is compiled, the Director of Religious Education or designee, in consultation with the Minister and Personnel Committee will confirm the applicant's suitability to serve in a position requiring primary screening.

SECONDARY SCREENING PROCEDURE: Positions with limited contact with children or youth over the course of a year require secondary screening e.g. an occasional nursery assistant or youth group driver. Those workers are asked to complete a screening inventory that includes an authorization for a criminal background check, review this policy and its code of behavior, and return a signed acknowledgment indicating such a review to the Director of Religious Education.

Staff and volunteer applicants may be refused based on the information provided in the screening inventory:

- Any person who has been convicted of, placed on regular or deferred adjudicated probation for, received pre-trial diversion for, pled guilty or nolo contendere for any Prohibited Offense shall not serve in any capacity involving children or youth. Prohibited Offenses include any offense involving sexual contact, sexual abuse, physical abuse, violence or threatened violence or such other felony or crime involving moral turpitude as determined by the Minister.

- Any person with a conviction resulting from use of alcohol or controlled substances within the past five years will be prohibited from serving our children or youth in a staff or volunteer position requiring Primary Screening.
- Any person with more than two moving violations within the last three years will be prohibited from providing transportation for our children or youth.

All persons will have read and agreed to abide by all policies and procedures herein. Signature upon the appropriate primary or secondary screening inventory denotes a willingness to remain in compliance with these or their successors.

SECTION TWO: EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

The Director of Religious Education or designee will be responsible for the implementation of procedures designed to educate volunteers, staff and congregation members regarding these policies and procedures. As part of each new congregation employee's orientation, each employee will review these policies, procedures and code of behavior.

The Director will insure that the Religious Education Committee define and implement procedures designed to further the intent of these policies, and educate volunteers and staff on these procedures through regular training programs. The Facilities Committee shall design and maintain procedures related to the use of the building that uphold the intent of this policy.

Annual training programs will teach staff and volunteers how and when to report a possible sexual misconduct incident and how to discuss questionable behavior with the Director of Religious Education, Minister and Personnel Committee.

SECTION THREE: MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS: Records of all actions required by this policy and any material pertinent to it, including reports, workers' surveys, inventories and acknowledgment forms, shall be kept for a period of time in compliance with Church policy and in a secure and confidential manner.

SECTION FOUR: ADVOCACY PANEL: The Personnel Committee shall establish an advocacy panel for two purposes. In the event that a volunteer, congregation member or staff member is uncomfortable reporting an allegation of sexual misconduct to the Senior Minister or Director of Religious Education, that person may take the allegation or concern to the Advocacy Panel. The Panel will also serve to support staff members charged with confirming the suitability of volunteers and carrying out the Response Plan.

Safe Sanctuary
Code of Behavior

Staff and volunteers, employed to work with children and youth, who have satisfied the primary or secondary screening process, may assume their positions immediately. All individuals are required to read the code of behavior and sign a statement that they have read the code and shall pay close if not restrictive attention to the code of behavior. As a condition of employment (as staff or volunteer), each person shall receive training and accept the intentions provided by the following code of behavior at the first available offering.

- Rule of Trinity:** The children and youth in both the education and youth fellowship programs of our congregation shall be in the care of appropriately screened supervision. No teacher, advisor, aide or anyone else working with children or youth should place themselves in a compromising situation by being alone with a child or with children out-of-sight of other teachers, advisors, aides, or parents. Finally, no teacher, advisor, or aide shall be alone with a child in the bathroom for purposes of clean up from craft or art projects, or care of illness or injury.

An exception would exist if the activities or classes provide constant visual access (an open door or door with window) and frequent observation by a supervising staff or volunteer staff.

- Teacher, Advisor, Aide /Youth Supervision Ratios¹**

Age Group	Supervisor/Youth Ratio
Infants and Toddlers	ratio of 1 for 3 children. The parent/legal guardian of the child must be reachable and in the building.
3-5 years old	1 per 4 youth
6-8 years old	1 per 6 youth
9-14 years old	1 per 8 youth
15-18 years old	1 per 10 youth
When an activity/trip involves overnights, there shall be at least two adult chaperones in the youth sleeping quarters. The chaperone will be of the same sex as those supervised overnight.	

- Five Year Separation Rule:** When utilizing high school volunteers in CongoKingdom, Youth Fellowship Programs and Off-site Activities, there shall be a five-year separation between the age of these youth volunteers and those they supervise. Volunteers who are not within the five-year separation rule require adult supervision. When utilizing college and young adult volunteers in Youth Fellowship Programs and Off-Site Activities, there shall be at least a two-year separation between the volunteers and those they supervise.

¹ Guidelines reference the Guidelines of the Insurance Board of the UCC and the American Camping Association

- **Regarding Bathroom Supervision of Children:** Teachers, advisors, or aides who accompany a child to the bathroom, should remain outside the bathroom stall while the child is inside. If a child requests assistance with zipping, buttoning, buckling, clean up, wiping, etc., the person providing assistance will report the incident to the Director of Religious Education or Nursery Coordinator and advise the parent that assistance was given. Diapering of infants and toddlers may be done in the classroom when two screened volunteers are present. Parents are invited to observe a room at any time. If a parent is aware that their child (of any age) requires regular, personal assistance with bathroom functions and want that assistance to be given by the church teachers, advisors, or aides, the parent must make the request in writing to the Director of Religious Education or Nursery Coordinator.
- **Parental consent:** Those chaperoning or supervising children and youth shall have a signed, written consent of a parent or guardian before a child is allowed to attend activities or programs away from our facilities.
- **Discipline:** The purpose of discipline with children and youth is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teachings of Jesus, respect and cooperation. No child shall be disciplined by the use of spanking, hitting, slapping, or any form of physical punishment. Verbal reprimands shall not include destructive criticism, insult or shouting. Teachers, advisors, aides and others helping in the classroom are encouraged to listen to the child, communicate expectations of appropriate behavior, use time-outs or give alternate choices. If a child is disruptive, a teacher, advisor or aide may take the child to a place outside the room, but within sight of the classroom until behavior is under control. When necessary to control behavior, a parent may be contacted and brought to the room. In all cases of disciplinary action, the supervising volunteer and Director of Religious Education should be informed of behavior concerns and of actions taken in the situation. The Director of Religious Education or designee should always notify the parent of disciplinary action.
- **Overnight Rule:** All adult chaperones supervising overnight stays at our facilities or on congregational sponsored trips will have completed primary or secondary screening. At least, one adult male will dorm with boys and one adult female with girls; and if these adults are husband and wife, a third adult advisor is to be present. Further, a signed written parental consent form is required, which lists the names of the advisors to be present. Last minute substitute or additional advisors are permissible as long as substitutes are screened volunteers.
- **Youth Activities:** Types of games that create high physical contact such as wrestling or sardines are not appropriate recreational activity. Touching may be used to comfort or affirm a child in an age appropriate manner. Inappropriate physical contact, forced physical contact or sexual/physically aggressive contact is grounds for a volunteer or staff member to be terminated. Setting appropriate boundaries is the responsibility of the adults.

Participants in ministry to youth are expected to remain with the group throughout the advertised times listed for the activity. No pairing or otherwise separating off from the group to other parts of the building or grounds is permitted. Leaving the group or group activity requires disciplinary action.

- **Leaving and/or closing:** When children are finished with classes or activities on Sunday morning and waiting for parents: **Children 0-5 years** of age using our Nursery will use a sign-in procedure with matching name labels to insure the children are released to the parents who brought them. **Children grades K-2** will be supervised in their classrooms by the teachers/shepherds until picked up by a responsible person. On special occasions or holidays another room may be specified for pick up.

When youth ministry activities end and the building will close, the last three people, including the staff, teacher, advisor or aide locking the door, will leave our facilities together. Plan so that the Rule of Trinity can be maintained and a situation where one adult and one youth or child are left alone at the facility's door waiting to be picked up by parents at the end of an activity can be avoided. Parents are encouraged to respect concluding times. Parents may give written permission for consistent exceptions.

- **Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol:** The use of any drugs, tobacco or alcoholic products by youth in congregation facilities or at congregation sponsored events are not permitted. Use by staff or volunteers while supervising youth will be grounds for the volunteer or staff member to be terminated.
- **Transportation:** Staff, teachers, advisors or aides may provide transportation from home to activity and back home when arranged by the church. Teachers, advisors or aides who provide transportation for programs, activities, or events for children, youth or vulnerable adults will:
 - a) Avoid being alone in the car with a child or will have written permission from the parent to be alone with that child.
 - b) Hold a valid driver's license.
 - c) Have no more than two moving violations in the past three years.
 - d) Use a vehicle in good mechanical condition.
 - e) Carry no more riders than can be secured in seat belts or appropriate restraints.
 - f) Provide an insurance card as proof of insurance.
- **Parental Guidelines:** We strongly encourage parents, when on the premises with their children, to know at all times where their children are, who they are with, and what they are doing. It is strongly encouraged that children 10 or under do not play in unsupervised areas.

If you suspect a Violation of the Code: If a suspected case of abuse has either been reported to you or is suspected by you to have occurred at a congregation-related function or program, immediately contact the Senior Minister or the Director of Religious Education and these persons only. If these persons cannot be contacted, call the Northwest Wisconsin Association Minister of the Wisconsin Conference UCC. If the alleged abuser is either the senior Minister or the Director of Religious Education, report the allegation to a member of the Advocacy Panel and Northwest WI Association Minister.

Abuse (as stated in policy Section III Workplace Protection, J child abuse) can include:

Child abuse can include emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Examples of emotional abuse may include but is not limited to:

- Verbal, destructive criticism
- Making demeaning or insulting statements
- Shouting

Examples of physical abuse may include but is not limited to:

- Spanking
- Hitting
- Slapping
- Any form of physical punishment

Examples of sexual abuse may include but is not limited to:

- Fondling
- Sexual remarks
- Watching any sexual activity
- Touching the body on private parts
- Inappropriate kissing
- Sexual Intercourse

Anyone who knows or has reason to suspect that child abuse has occurred or is occurring is mandated to report such suspicions to the appropriate legal or social services authority. If you are unsure whether or not your suspected case falls under this definition, it is strongly recommended that you err to the side of caution and report your suspicion immediately.

Alleged sexual abuse and alleged sexual assault are serious matters requiring an investigation and must be reported to appropriate legal authorities in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes.