

Sanbornton  
Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ (UCC)

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SafeConduct™  
Policy & Procedure  
V2.0  
December 30, 2019

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*No longer will violence be heard in your land, not ruin or destruction within your borders.*

*You will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.*

*Isaiah 60:18 (NIV)*

## Change Control Log

<b>Version:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Changed By:</b>	<b>Description of Change:</b>
V1.0- V1.14	3/31/2018 – 10/14/2019	Safe Church Task Force	Revisions made per the 14 meetings of the Safe Church Task Force
V1.15	11/19/2019	Safe Church Task Force & Church Council	Revisions made per presentation of this policy to the Church Council on 10/16/19 and Safe Church Task Force review meeting on 11/17/19. V1.15 document closed out and new V2.0 with clean change control created with approval to present for vote.
V2.0	12/30/2019	Safe Church Task Force & Church Council	Approved for release at Annual Meeting, January 26, 2020 for congregational vote to implement.  Informational sessions to held for boards, committees, and the church congregation as a whole on 1/5, 1/8, 1/11/2020.

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## I. Mission Statement

*The avowed purpose of the Sanbornton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ shall be to worship God, to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to grow in Christian fellowship and unity within the Church and the Church Universal; to render caring service to all people and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.*

As part of this mission, the Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC goal is to provide a safe environment for our church members, visitors, and the community who participate in our programs and use our facilities. A safe environment is one that provides for the protection of the physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being of each person. More than simply offering the protection from danger, the church sees itself as a sanctuary, where one finds protection, security, support, guidance and the presence of God. This atmosphere is to be free of exploitation, intimidation, verbal or physical abuse or any type of sexual misconduct or harassment.

While no policy can anticipate and prevent all misfortune, it can state a purpose and provide guidelines to achieve that purpose. The guidelines express Sanbornton Congregational Church's interest in protecting all who participate in our church community. To achieve this mission, the Safe Church Committee of Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC has developed a SafeConduct™ Policy, included in our by-laws, outlining expectations and guidelines for staff, members, and volunteers. The implementation of prudent policies should safeguard all those who participate within our church (including but not limited to ministers, teachers, leaders, children, youth, adults, visitors and community volunteers who use our facilities). The policies also function to protect the individuals, as outlined above, from false accusations, provided the SafeConduct™ policy has been followed. In the unfortunate event that an incident occurs, the Safe Church Committee has policies and procedures in place to address any allegations and the processes for necessary federal, state and local regulation filings.

The policies, which follow this mission statement, have been designed to prevent any type of abuse, misconduct or harassment from occurring in our church and at church sponsored activities.

*The "Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC" will be referenced as "The Church" where appropriate herein.*

## II. Safe Church Committee

**Purpose:** The Safe Church Committee is to develop, implement and guide policy and procedures regarding church safety issues. These issues include but are not limited to physical and sexual harassment and abuse. It is not the Committee's job or purpose to investigate any allegation of abuse or harassment, but to notify the responsible parties to do so, including but not limited to the Church attorney, insurance agency, department of social services and local law enforcement. The Committee is formed to work as a liaison between the Church Council, boards, committees, outside agencies, and UCC personnel to assist in any necessary investigation involving church members, volunteers, friends of the Church, or employees.

**Members:** The Safe Church Committee shall be made up of the following and serve a two-year term per the By-Laws of the Church:

- One representative from the Church Council
- One at-large member from the congregation, which must be approved by Church Council
- The Pastor

**Meetings:** Meetings of the Safe Church Committee shall be held as needed, no less than once per year, prior to The Church Annual Meeting. The meetings will be held to familiarize all committee members with the policies and procedures formulated in the "SafeConduct™ Policies and Procedures" manual, to plan trainings, to review and make any suggested or necessary changes to the policies and procedures, and to develop additional policies, guidelines and procedures as needed.

The first SafeConduct policy was developed by the "Safe Church Task Force" and approved by the Church Council. The current task force will dissolve when the more formal "Safe Church Committee" described above is in place; or, may continue at the direction of the Church Council for the purpose of writing additional guidelines, procedures, and necessary training materials as needed.

The "Safe Church Task Force" members involved in the development of the SafeConduct™ Policy & Procedures:

- Adele Bausor
- Judy D Hernandez
- Rev. Ruth Martz
- Cliff Mills
- Jen Timmons
- Marg Whedon

In addition, the following person attended at least one Task Force meeting to give feedback and provide input:

- David Henderson, Moderator

### III. Statement of Policy

As a community of Christian faith, Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, clergy, employees, visitors and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. The congregation of the Church supports principles of SafeConduct™. These principles guide the congregation in fulfillment of the values set by our Church Constitution and the UCC Statement of Faith. Individuals are responsible for their personal conduct toward others. The Church 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, physical or mental capacity. It is the intention of our congregation to nurture affirmatively good behavior, and to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and those persons who violate this policy. Every person in the Congregation has a role to lead those who look to them individually for guidance, to monitor their behavior and redirect them if they cross boundaries of SafeConduct™.

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, all Authorized Clergy, employees, elected and appointed lay leaders, and authorized volunteers are all Ministers to the congregation. It is important that every Minister to the Church be adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of the Church to encourage its Ministers to nurture safety within Ministerial Relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment of parishioners or others by anyone engaged in ministry on behalf of the Church is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministry of the Church.

- We expect that those who volunteer to work with minors will have been members of Sanbornton Congregational Church for at least six months or, if not members, regularly and frequently associated with Sanbornton Congregational Church for at least six months.
- All volunteers and employees who regularly work with children and youth will receive orientation training regarding SafeConduct™ policy and procedures along with signing the Safe Conduct Compliance form located in Section XIII.

- All volunteers and employees will receive access to Praesidium Training per the access request form and program provided in Appendix E.
- All prospective employees and volunteers who work in our Sunday school, Nursery and Youth programs will undergo a background check, including but not necessarily limited to inquiries of references and a criminal history verification by a third-party vendor. See Appendix E for Background Check form.
- It is the policy of this church to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for youth activities. In situations where participants are not readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two unrelated adults present with children.
- Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off the Church property, and any overnight activities. See Appendix C for Parental Permission form.



#### IV. General Definitions

1. Authorized Clergy includes any person who is admitted or recognized as ministers by the United Church of Christ, who serves the congregation in any capacity whether called as pastor or serving in a retired, emeritus, administrative, or volunteer capacity.
2. Emotional abuse is the debasement of a person's feelings that causes the individual to perceive himself or herself as inept, not cared for, and worthless.
3. Mandatory Reporters are those persons required by New Hampshire law to report suspected abuse to police or child welfare agencies.
4. Minister is a person who participates within our church community to carry out its ministry. Ministers include elected or appointed leaders of the Church, employees, visitors and community volunteers, as well as Authorized Clergy.
5. Ministerial Relationship is the relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the Church and the one being served by that ministry.
6. Minor is anyone under the age of 18 (also referred to as youth throughout policy).
7. Molestation is the crime of sexual acts with children up to the age of 18, including touching of private parts, exposure of genitalia, taking of pornographic pictures, rape, and various sexual acts with the molester or with other children. Incest by a relative with a minor family member and any unwanted sexual acts with adults short of rape may also constitute molestation.
8. Molester a person who sexually assaults or abuses someone, a person who pesters or harasses someone in an aggressive or persistent manner
9. Neglect is the failure to provide for basic needs or the failure to protect from harm.
10. Parent is anyone who is the legal guardian of a minor.
11. Physical abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person by way of bodily contact.
12. Registered Sex Offender is defined as a person who exhibits characteristics showing a tendency to victimize or injure others and has been convicted of a sex crime listed in the relevant state statutes, has been convicted of attempting to commit one of those crimes, or has been found guilty except for insanity of one of those crimes
13. Sexual abuse, also referred to as molestation, is usually undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another. When force is immediate, of short duration, or infrequent, it is called sexual assault. The offender is referred to as a sexual abuser or molester. The term also covers any behavior by an adult or older adolescent towards a child to stimulate any of the involved sexually. The use of a

child, or other individuals younger than the age of consent, for sexual stimulation is referred to as child sexual abuse or statutory rape.

14. Sexual Exploitation means taking the advantage of sexuality and attractiveness of a person to make a personal gain or profit. It is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes.
15. Sexual Harassment occurs when a person is subject to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature to such an extent that it alters the conditions of the person's worship or employment and creates an abusive worship or working environment. Sexual harassment may include touching, feeling, groping and/or repeated unpleasant, degrading and/or sexist remarks directed toward an employee or church member, implying that employment status, promotion or favorable treatment depends upon the employee's or church member assent.
16. Sex Offender is a person who is convicted of a sexual offense. Sexual offenses include such crimes as rape, sodomy, and sexual abuse. Most states have laws, which vary by state, on registration of sexual offenders.
17. Sexual Predator is defined as a person who is an adult or juvenile who has been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, committing a sexually oriented offense and who is likely in the future to commit additional sexually oriented offenses. Many sexual predators attack only a particular type of victim, such as children of a certain age, sex or race. Sexual predators are usually friendly, self-assured individuals who target their victims carefully, rather than choosing at random.
18. Vulnerable Adult is a person 18 years of age or older who, because of incapacity, mental illness, mental deficiency, physical illness or disability, advanced age, chronic use of drugs, chronic intoxication, fraud, confinement, or disappearance, is unable to protect himself from abuse, neglect or exploitation due to physical or mental impairment which affects the person's judgment or behavior to the extent that he lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate or implement decisions regarding his person.

## V. Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct is intended to assist clergy, employees, visitors and volunteers in making decisions about interpersonal relationships within our church community, especially concerning youth and vulnerable adults. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact the Safe Church Committee.

The Church is committed to creating an environment for the Church community, youth and vulnerable adults that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success. No form of abuse will be tolerated and all reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously. The Church will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Code of Conduct outlines specific expectations of the clergy, employees, visitors and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

As a church community everyone:

1. Will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Will be treated fairly regardless of race, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, ethnicity, economic class, or religion.
3. Will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by the Church.
4. Will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by the Church.
5. Will not stare at or comment on individual physical attributes.
6. Will not date or become romantically involved with youth and vulnerable adults.
7. Will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during church activities.
8. Will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on Sanbornton Congregational Church's property or during off-site Church sponsored activity or transportation.
9. Will not have secrets with youth and vulnerable adults and will only give gifts with prior permission.
10. Will comply with Sanbornton Congregational Church's policies regarding interactions with youth and vulnerable adults outside of our programs.
11. Will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth and vulnerable adults.
12. Is prohibited from working one-on-one with youth and vulnerable adults in a private setting.

13. Will use common areas when working with individual youth and vulnerable adults.
14. Will not tolerate abuse of one youth and vulnerable adult by anyone 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
15. Will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth or vulnerable adult by anyone in any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we 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 by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- b. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful name.
- 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. *Cyber bullying* – 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 images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyber bullying can involve:
  - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
  - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
  - Pretending to be someone else in order 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 of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos. Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth and vulnerable adults, clergy, employees, and volunteers.
16. Must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. We should be trained to be aware of and understand the legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. We will:
    - a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
    - b. Know and follow Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC SafeConduct 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.
  17. Will report concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, adults, or youth to Safe Church Committee of Sanbornton Congregational Church or the Praesidium's Anonymous Helpline at 855-347-0751.
  18. The Church cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Everyone shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the Safe Church Committee or persons given investigative authority by the church.

## VI. Policies for Working with Youth and Vulnerable Adults

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in our church. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to youth, 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. General Supervision

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. **Ratios** - Each program will follow the ratio requirements that are directly related 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 youth with special needs. There shall be at least two approved adults present, of at least 18 years of age for the activity (Nursery Exemption see Section B i.#4). It is preferred that one volunteer be a man and one be a woman if both boys and girls are participating in the activity.

Refer to the ratios below for larger groups of youth and maintain the ratios by adding additional adults based on the stated ratios (i.e.: if you had 14 Youth you would have 3 adults but if you had 20 Youth you would have 4 adults).

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number of Youth</i>	<i>Number of approved adults required</i>
Nursery - Up to Age 3	1-3	2
Pre-School - Age 3 - 5	1-4	2
Primary – Grades 1 - 5	1-6	2
Youth – Grades 6 - 12	1-6	2

NOTE: Additional example - if the adult has their children in the mix of the numbers, they are to be excluded. Example: 3 unrelated kids in Primary grade Sunday school class with 2 kids that belong to the teacher for a total of 5 kids, only 2 adults required but if all 5 kids were not related to the teacher then 1 additional adult would be required.

3. **Mixed Age Groups** - In most incidents involving one youth abusing another youth, the youth are from different age groups. Each program is responsible for establishing specific guidelines for additional monitoring and supervision of activities that involve youth 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.

## **B. Monitoring High Risk Activities**

### **i. Nursery Protection Guidelines**

The nursery of the Church is designed to provide a place of safety and caring for our youngest church participants, while allowing their parents to participate in worship or activities. As such, the following policy is designed to protect the children, parents and volunteers who participate:

1. Parent/Guardian will complete a Registration form when a child first enters nursery care and parents will also receive a copy of the Safe Conduct Policy sections I thru VII which includes this “Nursery Protection Guidelines” which is also posted in the Nursery. Parents will be asked to sign a statement that they have received the guidelines and have had the opportunity to ask questions about them.



Sunday School  
Registration Form 21

2. Parents should sign children in and out in attendance sheet each time children are delivered to care, and children will only be released to those listed on the emergency contact form.
3. Parents should label all bottles, juices, blankets, toys and any other personal belongings. Pacifiers should be attached to the child. Only dry food snacks are allowed in the nursery. Snacks containing nuts are never allowed due to allergies. Small snack items that can be choked on, such as grapes, are not permitted.
4. There shall be no fewer than two volunteer nursery workers (one must be at least 18 years of age and the other at least 14 years of age depending on Ratio of Nursery Workers to child(ren) at all times, unless the only child(ren) in the nursery belong(s) to the volunteer. The two volunteers should be unrelated, if possible, and at least one of them must have been a member/friend in regular attendance of Sanbornton Congregational Church for at least six (6) months.

5. No volunteer shall change any child's diaper. If diapering is needed, parents will be contacted. There is a diapering station, including changing table, wipes and extra diapers available for parents' use in the nursery.
6. Discipline Plan: Limit setting is directed toward maximizing the growth and development of the children and is for protecting the group and the individuals within it. Positive reinforcement is the major tool of appropriate discipline. Volunteers will verbalize to the child when she/he is behaving in an inappropriate manner. Volunteers will redirect a child who appears to be "headed for trouble". If a child is repeatedly displaying inappropriate behavior and redirecting has not worked, parents/guardian will be asked to come to the nursery. Nursery volunteers WILL NOT:
  - Use corporal punishment, including spanking
  - Subject children to severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse
  - Deny any child food as a form of punishment
  - Punish any child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet
7. If a child needs to proceed to the bathroom, an approved volunteer shall accompany him/her. Stay outside the door and let the child use the toilet. If help is needed with wiping or dressing, help the child while keeping the door to the bathroom open. Encourage the child to wipe him/herself. Let the parent know that the child used the toilet and whether or not assistance was needed. Help the child wash his/her hands thoroughly with soap and running water. Wash your own hands. If a problem arises when a child needs to use the toilet, a parent will be contacted.
8. Children must be picked up immediately following service or church activities and checked out on the attendance sheet by a parent or a person designated on the emergency contact form.
9. At least one parent/guardian shall remain in the undercroft while the child is in the nursery after worship or other official church activities have ended.
10. New volunteers will obtain Nursery Guidelines and participate in orientation and ongoing training.
11. During non-worship hour's childcare may occasionally be provided (for example, during congregational meetings). During these times parents will be informed if there is only one caregiver available and can then choose whether or not to leave their child in nursery care.
12. Should an incident occur that results in physical injury, parent(s) will be notified and an incident report will be completed.



## **ii. 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 youth to enter.

- a. For “Bathroom Breaks”:
  - Require youth to ask permission to use the bathroom.
  - Only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff.
  - Require staff to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.
  - Require all staff to frequently check bathrooms.
- b. Prohibit staff from using the bathroom at the same time as youth.
- c. If assisting younger youth in the bathroom, the staff should keep the door open.

## **iii. 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 youth to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following procedures:

- a. Require youth 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 is assigned specific areas to supervise (“zone monitoring”).
- e. Include bathroom procedures.
- f. Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

### C. Physical Contact

Sanbornton Congregational Church’s physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth, clergy, employees, and volunteers. The Church 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 church’s programs will result in disciplinary action.

Sanbornton Congregational Church’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and fist bumps</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a youth to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul>

**D. 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 or discuss their own sexual activities with youth.

Sanbornton Congregational Church’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Appropriate jokes</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name-calling</li> <li>• Secrets</li> <li>• Cursing</li> <li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li> <li>• Shaming</li> <li>• Belittling</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks</li> <li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</li> <li>• Discussing sexual encounters of the adult</li> <li>• Comments relating to physique or body development</li> </ul>

**E. One-on-One Interactions**

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

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, clergy, employees, and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

<i>Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.</li> <li>• Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, handshakes and fist bumps.</li> <li>• If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.</li> </ul>

- 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.

**i. Tutoring / Mentoring:**

One-on-one situations, such as tutoring and mentoring sessions, introduce additional risks for false allegations. Clergy, employees, and volunteers should be aware of our policies regarding tutoring and mentoring:

- a. Must have supervisor approval for any tutoring or mentoring sessions.
- b. Tutoring and mentoring sessions with the Church's youth may not occur outside of the church.
- c. Supervisors must keep a schedule of tutoring and mentoring sessions, which should include times, youth involved, and location of sessions.

## **ii. Teens placed in a leadership role**

Older youth who participate in teen leadership roles are still youth participants and not staff or volunteers. Therefore, even though they are often given more responsibility, teens in the leadership roles 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 youth and not their peers. Therefore, the following guidelines are recommended for teens placed in a leadership role:

- a. 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.)
- b. 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 youth and between teen leaders and clergy, employees, and volunteers.
  - Prohibiting teen leaders from being one-on-one with youth.
  - Prohibiting teen leaders from escorting youth to the bathrooms.
  - Prohibiting teen leaders from assisting youth with changing their clothes.
- c. Create a system to monitor the teen leaders.
  - Designate a specific employee or volunteer who is in charge of the teen placed in leadership role.
  - Require teen leaders to wear clothing or lanyards that identify them as leaders-in-training and differentiate them from clergy, employees, and volunteers and from younger youth.
  - Require a supervisor to conduct check-ins with teen leaders and their program supervisors during the assignment.
  - Consider requiring teen leaders to keep a log documenting their daily activities and any problems they encounter. The program supervisor should review these logs.

## F. Off-site Contact

Many cases of church abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and the Church at increased risk.

When off-site contacts are unavoidable (such as during mentoring programs), the Church determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

<i>Appropriate Outside Contact</i>	<i>Inappropriate Outside Contact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having written permission by a parent (parents to sign a release-of-liability statement)</li><li>• Taking a youth or group of youth on an outing</li><li>• Attending functions at a youth's home, with a parent present</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taking one youth on an outing without a parent's written permission</li><li>• Visiting one youth in the youth's home, without a parent present</li><li>• Entertaining one youth in the home of staff or volunteer</li><li>• A lone youth spending the night with staff or volunteer</li></ul>

### i. Off-Site Activities

In order for a youth to take part in an off-site activity, his/her parent must sign a permission slip specific to that activity. Parents will be provided details of the venue and the plan.

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 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 Field Trip Preparation Checklist and Parental Permission Form.

## **ii. Overnight Activities**

Overnight stays present unique risks to youth 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. Overnight stays at private homes are prohibited unless approved by the administration.
- b. All overnight activities must be documented and approved in writing by the Program coordinator.
- c. The coordinator 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. Lead staff are expected to regularly and randomly observe overnight activities on a scheduled and periodic basis.
- e. Provide parents with written information about the overnight activity. All parents must sign a permission slip for their youth to attend the overnight.
- f. Determine the appropriate staff-to-youth ratios before the event and schedule staff accordingly.
  - Overnight Activity (both on-site and off-site): In order for a youth to take part in an overnight activity, his/her parent must sign a permission slip specific to that activity. There must be a least two approved adults accompanying the activity who satisfy the two-year rule. It is mandatory that one volunteer be a man and one be a woman if both boys and girls are participating in the activity.
- g. Meetings with the group should be hosted in open and observable areas; meetings should not be hosted in staff or youth rooms.
- h. Physical boundaries at the off-site location must be clearly defined and explained to the youth.
- i. With regards to sleeping arrangements, separate the male and female youth 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.
- j. When performing room checks, staff should always go in pairs.

- k. At least one staff must stay awake overnight.
- l. If in a cabin type setting, the staff should be placed in bunks to maximize supervision around the cabin and in a way that decreases the chances of youth sneaking out (such as by the door).
- m. In hotel rooms, assign youth to rooms based on sex and age. Staff should have their own rooms. If staff must share rooms with youth, they must have their own beds and never change in front of youth.
- n. All staff is to be on duty in the halls or cabins at night until an hour after lights out and all rooms are quiet.

## **G. Transportation Activities**

Transporting youth 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 youth. In addition, transportation activities may provide a time for unsupervised youth to engage in youth-to-youth sexual activity.

The transportation guidelines:

- a. Administrators must be notified of all transportation activities.
- b. Use the “rule of three” when transporting youth: At least two adults must transport a single youth, or at least two youth must be present if transported by a single adult.
- c. Specify staff-to-youth ratios. When possible, do not count the driver in the supervision ratio.
  - Driving to an off-site activity: At least two approved adults must be present in any vehicle used to transport youth to or from an off-site activity. The volunteers should not be partners or spouses, if possible. It is preferred that one volunteer be a man and one a woman if both boys and girls are participating in the activity.
- d. Youth must never be transported without written permission from a parent.
- e. Require written parent permission from all youth on the trip. Staff takes these permission forms and medical releases with them on the trip.
- f. Youth must be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops may be made.
- g. Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with youth while in vehicles.
- h. When possible, staff should avoid engaging in sensitive conversations with youth.
- i. Require staff to sit in seats that permit maximum supervision.



- j. Discourage mixed age groups from sitting together. When possible, high-risk youth are seated by themselves or with a staff member.
- k. 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 youth being transported, and the destination.
- l. Require documentation of any unusual occurrences.

When public transportation is used:

- a. In addition to the transportation procedures listed above, youth 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.

See Appendix D. for Volunteer Driver Qualification Form & Agreement.

## H. Electronic Communication

Any private electronic communication between staff and youth, including the use of social networking websites like - Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, texting, etc. - is prohibited. All communication between staff and youth must be transparent and included other church members.

The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

<i>Appropriate Electronic Communication</i>	<i>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youth ONLY when copying in another church member connected with the topic. (I.E.: Mentor replies to mentee email and cc's another church mentor to see communication)</li> <li>• Communicating through the Church page on Facebook or other approved public forums</li> <li>• Private profiles of clergy, employees, and volunteers which youth cannot access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments</li> <li>• Sexually oriented conversations</li> <li>• Private messages between clergy, employees, and volunteers with youth</li> <li>• Posting pictures of church participants on the Church media sites without prior permission</li> <li>• Posting inappropriate comments on pictures</li> <li>• “Friending” youth on non-Church social media sites</li> </ul>

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

## **I. Cell Phone Use:**

While assigned to work with youth, staff is 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.

There are occasions in which staff will need to use personal or church electronic communication devices. In these cases, staff will have explicit direction from supervisors governing use. Situations, which may require use of church, or personal electronic communication devices include:

- a. Curriculum
- b. Field Trips;
- b. Off-site Programs; and
- c. Emergencies.

## **J. Gift Giving**

Molesters routinely groom youth by giving individual 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 youth, and only under the following circumstances:

1. Authorized clergy must be made aware of and approve the gift.
2. Parents must be notified.

In general, individual gifts for birthdays, special occasions, awards, and the like, follow the same rules as above and are given in public view.

## YOUTH PROTECTION GUIDELINE SUMMARY

Length of time a volunteer needs to attend church before supervising youth:	6 months minimum
Criminal background checks to be conducted for these positions:	Authorized Clergy, paid employees and Sunday School Teachers Nursery Volunteers, Youth Group Leaders, Music Director working with youth Any person seeking to be an approved adult
Application for Approved Adult Forms will be required for:	All of the above Chaperones for field trips and youth events
Statement of Compliance and Child Protection Covenant will be required for:	All of the above, anyone in possession of a physical key or code for church access. Anyone having regular, direct contact with children under the Church's direction
Access Policy	Church access to be approved by Church Council
Two Adult Rule	2 approved adults (not married to each other) must be with a youth (or youths) who is not their own, or a relative, at all times
Medical Release Forms required of:	Youth Group participants and Field Trip participants
Approval of Christian Education Committee needed for:	Field trips and youth events Chaperones for field trips and youth events Drivers for field trips and youth events
Approved Adult to child supervision ratios:	General - minimum 2 approved adults per group
	Day trip off-site, special on-site youth event: Grades 1 thru 12 requires 2 adults up to 6 youths and additional adult every additional 6 youths. 14 youth = 4 adults, 10 youth = 3 adults, 6 youth 2 adults
	(2 approved adults minimum). Girls and boys are to be considered two separate groups with the 2 approved adult rules applied to each group.
Drivers for field trips and youth events:	Must have a valid driver's license. Must have a safe driving record
Discipline:	Positive, non-physical discipline only
Appropriate activities:	No unnecessary physical contact or risky activities

## VII. Facility Monitoring

When clergy, employees, and volunteers are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they face detection. When youth are adequately supervised, they too are less likely to engage in inappropriate interactions with others. Similarly, the facility must be monitored, particularly out-of-the-way locations or locations that might permit an offender undo 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. Access Policy

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 an usher or volunteer member who will complete the Usher Duties during any Church event.



USHER DUTIES 2019  
Nov20.pdf

The Church has four entry doors as follows:

- A. Front Narthex door, keyed, limited number of keys issued.
- B. Undercroft door, combination lock.
- C. Organ Room (Chamber), keyed, no keys issued.
- D. Sanctuary EXIT door, keyed, no keys issued.

Any person who seeks possession of a physical key and/or combination (hereby referred to as “Access”) to Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, Sanbornton, NH will have a clearly stated reason for needing access and will be approved by the Church Council.

1. Certain people are authorized by virtue of their position in the church to have access. These people include, but are not limited to; paid employees, officers of the church, committee chairmen and youth group leaders. Others must receive the approval of Church Council to be in possession of access.
2. Physical keys shall be of a type that cannot be duplicated, in order to eliminate unauthorized reproduction.

3. The Property & Finance (P&F) Board Chair, following approval of the recipient by the Church Council, will assign access. The P&F Board Chair will distribute or arrange for the distribution of physical keys once they are assigned. If there is a need for additional physical keys, the P&F Board Chair will obtain new keys with Church Council approval.
4. Records of access holders will be maintained by the church's P&F Board Chair and kept on file. Physical keys shall be returned when the holder no longer needs them, and the return will be documented.
5. It will be the responsibility of the P&F Board Chair to monitor who is in possession of access and request the return of physical keys from persons no longer authorized to hold them. Physical 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 Access Receipt Form and the Statement of Compliance. Authorized Youth leaders may share a key as long as each leader has signed the Access Receipt Form and the Statement of Compliance.
6. Access holders will be required to follow the Youth Protection Guidelines, sign a Statement of Compliance, and submit an Access Receipt Form.
7. No access holder will use his/her access to the Church with a child or children not his or her own (or of whom the access holder is not a legal guardian or foster parent) at a time when there is no church related activity being held in which the child and the key holder are involved. This is intended to prevent a situation where an adult key holder is alone with a child in the facility. In the rare case an exception is to be made to this provision, a written note from the child's parent or legal guardian must be submitted to the Church office and approved by the pastor or Safe Church Committee prior to entry.
8. All access holders will be required to complete required clearance forms.
9. The Church Council shall determine on an "as needed basis" to change the Undercroft combination or Narthex key, or update access authorizations.

## B. Safe Kitchen Policy

Sanbornton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, maintains a kitchen for usage by internal boards and committees for the purpose of promoting and supporting the mission of our church. Additionally, outside groups with permission from the Church Council will be able to use this facility under the criteria as defined in this document and the Undercroft Rental Agreement.

We have taken great efforts to establish guidelines for its use that will serve to keep the Kitchen a healthy environment for all. We recognize that many groups and individuals of our church will use the Kitchen as a support for their ministries. We recognize all ministries are important and all may use the Kitchen to aid in their programs.

### Kitchen Scheduling

- Kitchen facilities are available to church ministries, members and any non-members who agree to abide by the following defined guidelines. Ministry Team events will have priority over private events scheduled by members or non-members.
- To schedule use of our facilities, please contact the Church Office to fill out forms necessary to schedule this resource.

### Kitchen Policy & Procedure

- To avoid any misunderstandings about policy and procedure, the Kitchen will be following the standard health safety rules, as well as keeping the Kitchen clean and safe for all.
- An informational 3-ring binder kept in the Kitchen will provide Kitchen guidelines, equipment operation instructions, and other information you might need to make your Kitchen experience a positive one. A master copy of the Kitchen Policies & Procedures will be kept there as well as to be available in the church office.

### Board of Hospitality Chair (BHC)

- The BHC is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Kitchen and Undercroft
- The BHC role is to assure that health and safety guidelines are followed as required.
- Volunteers assisting the BHC in the Kitchen must be properly trained in advance in the use of the equipment and in food preparation procedures.

- It is the responsibility of the BHC to train and oversee the volunteer staff.
- BHC may supervise their own affiliate or group event.
- All activities requiring use of these areas will be approved by the appropriate Ministry Team Leader in conjunction with the BHC.

The following areas fall under the supervision of the BHC:

- Maintain the sanitation and upkeep of the Kitchen in accordance with the regulations noted in church by-laws
- Maintain perishable and non-perishable food inventory necessary for the proper function and maintenance of the Kitchen.
- Maintain and update current inventory of all food-related equipment in the Kitchen.
- Enforce policies for the Kitchen.
- Train and supervise all personnel utilizing the Kitchen. Maintain a current listing of all food handlers who have been trained and certified to use the Kitchen.
- Coordinate with lay leaders, members and nonmembers regarding food preparation for events.
- Coordinate with Sexton regarding janitorial or maintenance services needed to maintain or repair the Kitchen and Undercroft.
- Inspect facilities following events to ensure all policies and procedures have been followed and rooms have been left in satisfactory condition.
- Other duties as assigned by the Ministers or Church Council

## C. Monitoring Youth in Facilities

Because the Church is responsible for all youth in the facility, we recommend implementing the following practices:

1. Require a parent or legal guardian to complete a membership application, which includes identifying information, any special medical or behavioral circumstances, any legal indemnifications, the youth's date of birth, and emergency contact information. In addition, require all youth to sign-in AND to sign-out of the facilities so that the program has a record of the youth who are in the facility at all times.
2. Require youth to sign a Code of Conduct that outlines the program's behavioral expectations and policies regarding appropriate and inappropriate interactions. This Code of Conduct should also include a systematic disciplinary policy, which explains that youth will be suspended or dismissed from the program for policy violations. Require parents to sign this Code of Conduct as well, so that they are aware of the programs polices and progressive disciplinary procedures.
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, youth 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 movie nights, ice socials, arts and crafts, etc. These activities should have two 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 the sanctuary, the undercroft, a game area, or a classroom for doing homework and so on. Authorized areas must be easily visible and routinely and systematically checked by staff. Youth 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. Determine how frequently authorized areas should be monitored by staff.
  - b. Assign staff specific supervision responsibilities over authorized areas.
6. All program staff should wear nametags or identifying clothing so that the youth can easily recognize them as staff.



7. Train all staff:

- a. To greet youth that enter the facility; to direct youth to the structured activities or authorized areas; and, to redirect youth 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 and periodic sweeps high-risk areas (such as bathrooms, class rooms and unused rooms).

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. Emergency Procedures

The UCC Emergency Procedure Manual here is what we follow and have updated for Sanbornton Congregational Church.



UCC Emergency  
Procedure Manual v

In addition to this manual here are additional policy and procedures we follow for safety:

i. Goals for Fire Hazard include:

Goal #1 (Before): Prevent a fire from occurring in the house of worship.

Goal #2 (During): Protect all persons and property from injury by the fire.

Goal #3 (After): Provide necessary medical attention to those in need.

We hold annual fire drills in coordination with the Sanbornton Fire Department. These drills are unannounced and used to ensure that everyone understands where building exits are, the ushers understand their responsibilities and our congregation knows what to do if a fire breaks out.

ii. Goals for Evacuation Function include:

Goal #1 (Before): Ensure all persons know their evacuation route.

Goal #2 (During): Evacuate the house of worship immediately.

Goal #3 (After): Confirm that all persons have left the building.

Whenever we need to evacuate the church the gathering location is the field behind the church.

iii. Weather

**For Snow Storms:** We send out an all church email announcement if church or church event is cancelled due to weather. We also place a message on the church voicemail system by 7 am on Sundays and at least 2 hours prior to an event.

**For Hurricanes/Tornados:** All individuals on church property are to get to the undercroft and wait it out in the far north back corner (storage area/bathroom hallway) away from windows.

## **VIII. Responding**

How a church 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 church. 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 church. Churches must establish precise, unequivocal requirements for reporting to the authorities and for adhering to a serious-incident response plan.

### **A. Procedures for Handling Allegations of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment**

A subcommittee of the Safe Church Committee with no less than two members, one male and one female, will be established each year in preparation for the possibility of hearing allegations under this policy. The subcommittee, hereinafter referred to as “The Response Team,” will be familiar with the terms of this policy, as well as the established procedures of the Church for dealing with an allegation. From here on, the person bringing the allegation will be referred to as “A” and the person being accused will be referred to as “B”.

Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment:

1. Person “A” can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the person “B”, the individual accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
2. Person “A” can report the incident to an Authorized Clergy, in an effort to resolve the matter informally.
3. If an informal resolution of the allegation does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the person “A” may request that the Response Team institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
  1. The Response Team shall advise the Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator of the receipt of all allegations and shall keep them apprised of ongoing steps and actions taken. If either the Authorized Clergy or Church Moderator is the subject of the allegation, this notice requirement shall not apply as to that person.

2. The Response Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged exploitation or harassment and from others who may have pertinent information, such as qualified professional, and present such information to the Safe Church Committee.
3. The Safe Church Committee shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include:
  - a) Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred, and that the appropriate body of the Church is called upon to take action accordingly; such action may include one or more of the following:
    - (i) A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
    - (ii) Recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;
    - (iii) Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
    - (iv) Dismissal from employment, authorized volunteer position, affiliation with, or membership in the Church.
  - b) Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment did not occur.
  - c) The Response Team may seek the advice of legal counsel or other qualified professional to advise it in performing its functions.
- A. A written summary of the Safe Church Committee proceedings in such cases will be maintained.
- B. The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the person “A”. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse inappropriate behavior. At any time, the Church may initiate or proceed with the formal allegation process.
- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.
- D. Any person bringing a sexual harassment or exploitation allegation or assisting in investigating such an allegation will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.
- E. If person “A” or person “B” is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Safe Church Committee he or she has the right to appeal to the Church Moderator, or to the Vice Moderator if the Church Moderator is the subject of the allegation, who shall refer the matter to the Minister or Associate Minister of the State of NH Conference UCC.

The subject of any such appeal to the NH Conference UCC shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this policy were followed. If the NH Conference UCC determines that the procedures of this policy were not followed, it will refer the matter back to the Safe Church Committee to complete the processing of the allegation in accordance with these procedures.

- Child Abuse: Apart from any legal requirements, the Church will make a report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the NH Department of Children and Family Services, if at any time the Church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any Minister of the Church who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator so that the Church may take appropriate action in a timely manner. The State of NH Division of Children, Youth and Families – Central Intake (Child Abuse Hotline) currently is: 1-800-894-5533.
- Clergy: Apart from any disposition of the matter by the Church, all allegations of behavior which call into question the fitness for ministry of any Authorized Clergy will promptly be forwarded to the Church & Ministry Committee of Merrimack Association of the NH Conference UCC. The NH Conference UCC may be contacted at: 603-225-6647 and/or [nhcucc@nhcucc.org](mailto:nhcucc@nhcucc.org).

## **B. Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations**

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

Remember, at Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, 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 youth
- Buying gifts for individual youth
- Making suggestive comments to youth
- Picking favorites

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth 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 witnesses suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from another employee or volunteer, they are instructed to do the following:

***Guidelines for Employees/Volunteers Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations***

- Interrupt the behavior.
- Report the behavior to the Authorized Clergy or Church Moderator
- If you are not comfortable making the report directly, make it anonymously.
- If the report is about the Authorized Clergy or Church Moderator, contact the Safe Church Committee.
- Document the report but do not conduct your own investigation.
- Keep reporting until the appropriate action is taken.

**ii. Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator Response:**

In the event that the Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator receives a report of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from a staff member or volunteer, the Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator is instructed to do the following:

***Guidelines for the Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations***

- Advise the person who reported the behavior that the report is being taken seriously.
- Report to the next level which is the Safe Church Committee
- Determine the appropriate response based on the report.
- Document the report on the appropriate form.
- Speak with the employee or volunteer who has been reported.
- Review the file of the employee or volunteer to determine if similar complaints were reported.
- If appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians.
- 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.

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

- a. Increase monitoring or supervision of the employee, volunteers, or program.
- b. If policy violations with youth are raised to the state authorities, the employee or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action.
- c. If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other clergy, employees, and volunteers or youth.

**iii. Safe Church Committee Response:**

<i>Guidelines for Safe Church Committee Response</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the need for increased supervision.</li><li>• Review the need for revised policies or procedures.</li><li>• Review the need for additional training.</li><li>• Communicate any revision to the church.</li></ul>

**C. 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 church 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.

In addition to reporting to state authorities, clergy, employees, and volunteers are required to report any suspected or known abuse of youth 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. Authorized Clergy
- b. Church Moderator
- c. Safe Church Committee

<i>Additional Guidelines for Employee/Volunteer Response to Incidents or Allegations of Abuse</i>
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- 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 you.
- Protect the alleged victim from intimidation, retribution, or further abuse.
- Immediately report the allegation or incident to the proper authorities (based on mandatory reporting requirements).
- 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 in a timely manner.
- Check back to make sure appropriate steps were taken. If not, report again to the Safe Church Committee.

#### **ii. Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator Response to Abuse:**

In addition to the above response procedures, Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator should ensure the following:

##### *Guidelines for Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Abuse*

- 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 others may read your notes. 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 Safe Church Committee and follow your SafeConduct™ Policy & Procedures.
- Suspend the accused employee or volunteer until the investigation is completed.

#### **D. 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 churches 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 roughhousing, name-calling, or taunting whether it be face-to-face or through social media. Interrupting these interactions early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can keep the program environment safe.

Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC recognizes that the following interactions are high risk and should be prohibited:

***Prohibited Youth-to-Youth Interactions***

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

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

**i. Employee and Volunteer Response:**

Youth-to-youth sexual behaviors can include: inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, sharing inappropriate images, using sexualized language, sexting, 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:

***Guidelines for clergy, employees, and volunteers Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity***

- If you observe sexual activity between youth, you should immediately separate them.
- Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted.
- Notify another adult who is present.
- Complete the necessary paperwork including what you observed and how you responded.
- Follow the SafeConduct Policy and Procedures 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. Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator Response:**

In the event that an Authorized Clergy or Church Moderator receives a report of a youth’s sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, they should do the following internal review:

***Guidelines for Authorized Clergy and Church Moderator Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity***

- Meet with the adults who reported the sexual activity to gather information.
- Confirm that the youth involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
- Review the steps taken by the adults on duty.
- Review the incident report to confirm it is accurately and thoroughly completed.
- Meet with parents or guardians of the youth involved.
- Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the youth involved.
- Notify the proper authorities.
- Develop a written corrective action or follow-up plan in response to the incident

**iii. Safe Church Committee Response:**

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

***Guidelines for Safe Church Committee Response***

- Review the need for additional supervision.
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- Review the need for additional training.
- Communicate any revision to the church.

**E. Responding to Victims**

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC 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.

An incident of alleged abuse that requires medical or psychological care for a victim or family shall be reported to the Insurance company by the (Treasurer). The latter shall discuss with the Insurance company Claims Department whether the circumstances warrant initiation of Crisis Management, which may include psychological counseling. Upon approval, counseling services may be offered to a perceived victim(s), which may include family members.

#### **F. Notification of Parents or Guardians**

A minor youth may be party to an incident either as an initiator, a witness or the victim. The role of the youth may not be clear in all circumstances, such as a youth-on-youth incident. A 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 or guardian, and **being mindful of the importance of timely communication**, care shall be given to assessing:

- The specific facts;
  - Whether a disciplinary action is required;
  - Whether a youth 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/guardians;
  - Whether the Authorized Clergy 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.

#### **G. Responding to Media**

Media publicity following an incident of abuse or exploitation may be detrimental to the reputations of individuals, the congregation and the Church. Without intending ever to evade the media, contacts with media must be managed and conducted only by a person specifically designated by the Church Council to represent the Church. No other person(s) may speak on behalf of the Church. Unless designated differently by the Council in a particular circumstance, the exclusive spokesperson for the Church shall be the Church Moderator.

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

Church Moderator shall give immediate consideration to securing Insurance company crisis management and Lawyer for media relations resources. Considering the speed of news cycles, a prompt determination is required, erring on the side of seeking help.

## **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 shall be posted on the Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC website, <http://www.uccsanbornton.org/SafeConduct Policy-Procedures.html>

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

- A copy of the Sanbornton Congregational Church UCC Safe Conduct Policy calling out the following sections: Code of Conduct and Policies for Working with Youth and/or Vulnerable Adults
- 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.
- The orientation and training shall be provided as noted in section XI below:
  - Individually at the time a youth or adult begins participation in a ministry of the Church; or
  - As a group at the opening of a Christian education or confirmation program and prospective member meetings.

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

Parents/guardians shall be encouraged to report violations of policy, boundaries or suspected abuse to the Chair of the respective ministry at which an incident has occurred. Alternatively, they may report incidents to the Safe Church Committee. Anonymous reporting is permitted in the same manner and with the same precautions as reporting by Ministers or other observers.

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 Safe Church Committee to report those concerns.

## **X. 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”:** United Church of Christ has a process of granting professional standing to clergy.

This policy provides the following screening and selection procedures for all church employees and church volunteers.

*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/volunteers should be expected to complete an application prior to working at the Church. The application should be reviewed by Personnel Committee 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, the Church 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.

Volunteers must be active members of the Church or, if not members, regularly and frequently associated with Sanbornton Congregational Church 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 A. for a Sample Application.

## **B. Interviews**

All applicants/volunteers should be interviewed during the selection process and prior to employment/engagement. 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 Personnel Committee and/or Chairs of the related program of each candidate shall interview whether formally or informally. Each 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 Personnel Committee and Chairs 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 volunteer approved.

## **C. Reference Checks**

Reference checks should be conducted for all applicants prior to employment / engagement. A minimum of three references is recommended, including two professional and one personal reference for employment and a minimum of two references for volunteers. The Personnel Committee / Chairs will work with applicants to develop a good reference list. 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 Church and will explain that the applicant will have access to a vulnerable population. The Personnel Committee 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 / engagement 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 / engaged.

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, the Church could have the applicant start the position and remain in the position until the criminal background results are obtained and reviewed. New employees and volunteers should not be left unsupervised with youth until the criminal history results are returned. Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check.

**Confidence Package.** The Confidence Package, starts with a social security number trace to identify all names and related aliases known to be associated with the social security number provided to you. We then conduct a Multi-State Criminal Records and National Sex Offender Registry Database Search for every name identified by the social security number trace. This gives the added protection of checking the criminal history for all known names.

In addition, all applicants responsible for transportation should have a driver's license check performed to identify past driving concerns.

**Motor Vehicle Records Search.** The Motor Vehicle Records Search is an essential search for all Settled Pastors and Interim Pastors and volunteers who will regularly or occasionally be driving on behalf of the Church. By obtaining motor vehicle information you will be able to determine if an individual has a valid driver's license, any restrictions, and in most states, derogatory driving history for a minimum of three years.

**Credit Check.** The Credit Report provides address history, employment history, social security fraud and public records search, along with a financial summary. Public records can include bankruptcies, liens, judgments and collections. This credit report is required for these specific roles (*Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Bookkeeper*) for financial protection purpose only and complies with FCRA. A separate signed agreement is required and a signed consent form from the applicant is required and a site visit required and an \$60.00 one-time fee credentialing fee will apply.

See Appendix E. for Background Checks Program



## **E. Employment Decisions**

A committee of three, consisting of 2 members from Personnel Committee and 1 Chair of the related program shall review each background check and agree that the applicant is eligible for employment as clergy, employee or volunteer.

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
- 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.

Before an offer of employment is made, screening managers involved in the Screening process should review all information obtained. The employment process should last a sufficient length of time to allow Personnel Committee to carefully collect and evaluate information about applicants and to allow the applicant time to self-select out of the process if they have concerns about the position.

Following the review, each committee member shall sign and date one of two documents that becomes part of the applicant 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."*

## **XI. Training**

The mission of the Church is first to prevent abuse of youth, elderly and other vulnerable adults. We wish to identify and nurture SafeConduct™, to lead and to guide through adequate training. It is difficult to comprehend that those among us, our friends and family, would commit such acts willingly.

Nevertheless, persons who have been presented no behavior standards and do not understand boundaries may unwittingly engaged in behaviors that may be perceived as predatory. Their personal reputations and that of the Church are then at risk.

To fulfill our leadership obligation, each new employee and new volunteer shall complete year one specific program of training as listed in Appendix E within the first 60 days. Fulfillment of training requirements shall be documented by the (Training Administrator – Armatus program) and respective program Director (Christian Education; Youth Choir; etc.).

Training shall be completed for years 2 and 3 annually as listed in Appendix E. Records shall be maintained by the (Training Administrator – Armatus Program) and respective program Directors. Training records shall be audited annually by the (Chair, Personnel Committee).

Training – The Administrator will register individual Armatus training Users according to the Users' Guide provided by Praesidium.

See Appendix E. for Training Program

## XII. Sex Offender Policy

*Brothers, if someone is caught in sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently....Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2 (NIV)*

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 re-offend 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:

Document understanding of the statutory limitations applying in the State of New Hampshire to the movement and activities of a sex offender, considering the programs of the Church or the operations on Church property. (Examples: Sunday school, youth activities, and any program that serves children and “vulnerable adults”.)

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.

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 for 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 about insurance contracts, with respect to a person who has previously been convicted for acts of sexual misconduct that a 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 congregation of the Church that we have accepted among us a registered sex offender. All shall know the conditions and limitations that apply to participation in the life of the Church.

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 covenant” executed by the offender and church. The covenant shall be reviewed annually to validate ongoing eligibility. Violation of the covenant by the offender shall be considered as grounds for immediate cancellation of the covenant.

The following additional considerations shall apply:

**Victims in the congregation** – In such case as the victim of an 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 New Hampshire and the parameters of confidence and privilege as defined by our NH UCC Conference. Authorized Clergy shall inform the leadership of the Church of the general principles of confidence and privilege under which (s)he performs his/her pastoral responsibilities.

**Escorts (Church Member)** – Conditions of limited access for an 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 the prior approval of the Church Council, only the Pastor may sign a Limited Access Covenant with an RSO.

The Pastor, in association with other “Authorized Clergy” and church member (escort), who shall be named in the Limited Access Covenant, shall be responsible for the general supervision of the RSO 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 Covenant, including activity limitations placed upon the RSO.
- Knowledge of the RSO 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 RSO.
- Willingness to intervene in any onset of a risky or problem behavior.
- Willingness to report all cases of non-compliance to the Pastor.
- The Pastor shall assess, prior to selection, whether a proposed church member (escort) is willing to fulfill the above elements of supervision.

**Professional privacy** – Church Members and Friends 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 courts ordinarily conceal the criminal record of a juvenile, 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 covenant 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 F. for Sample Limited Access Covenant.

### XIII. Acknowledgment of SafeConduct™ Policy and Procedure

#### Statement of Compliance

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ THE SafeConduct™ POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL OF SANBORNTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (UCC), SANBORNTON, NH AND I AGREE TO COMPLY WITH ALL ITS PROVISIONS.

I further indicate my understanding and compliance with the following specific conditions set forth in that manual:

I will become familiar with the location of telephones, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and fire exits, and with the Emergency Procedures outlined in the SafeConduct™ Policies and Procedures manual.

If I become aware of an injury, accident, or mishap at any property and/or facility of Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC or at a Church activity at any location, I will make certain that the incident is reported immediately to a member of the Safe Church Committee. The names of Committee members will be posted on the bulletin boards in the Narthex and the Undercroft.

While at a property and/or facility of Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC or at a Church activity at any location, I will not be alone with a child or youth (through age 18 years) other than my own.

- If I become aware of an inappropriate relationship involving children, youth, or a child or youth and an adult, or a vulnerable adult, any one of whom is associated with Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, I will report it immediately to a member of the Safe Church Committee.
- When the activity that I am supervising has ended, I will make sure that the lights are out and the doors are locked before I leave, or I will notify other Church representatives who are still in the building that I am leaving.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone, if different: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Member, Employee or Volunteer

Date



## Appendices

The following are all the forms to support and administrate this policy.

### A. Sample Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

How long at current address: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver License: State Issued: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever previously worked for (insert organization)? Yes  No

If yes, please complete the following. Dates: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your addresses in the past five years:

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*For what position are you applying?* \_\_\_\_\_

*What interests you about the position for which you are currently applying?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*What has prepared you for the position for which you are currently applying?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Employment history

Dates of Employment (Start with most recent)	Company Name and Address (City, State Zip)	Immediate Supervisor Name and Phone Number	Position Held	Reason for Leaving Position
Started ___/___/___ Ended ___/___/___				

**References**

Reference Name	Address (City, State, Zip)	Daytime Phone	How long have you known this person?	Has this person agreed to provide a reference?
Professional/Civ ic				
Professional/Civ ic				
Personal				
Personal				
Family Member				
Started ___/___/___ Ended ___/___/___				
Started ___/___/___ Ended ___/___/___				

**Educational history**

School Name	(City, State Zip)	Type of School	Name of Program or Degree	Program completed?

**Volunteer experience**

*Please list your volunteer experiences with non-profit organizations (use back if needed.)*

Organization	Duties	Dates	Contact Person	Phone Number

Our organization 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 the people of our community. 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 can 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:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## 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. Sample Reference Check Questions**

Professional Reference Form

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reference: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is <your first and last name> with Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC and <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. 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 working with youth, 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.

How long have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you know the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

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? \_\_\_\_\_

We are looking for someone who will adhere to the best practices of our church. How would you rate the applicant's ability to follow policies and procedures?

\_\_\_Above satisfactory \_\_\_Satisfactory \_\_\_Below satisfactory

How would you rate the applicant's ability to work with and relate to other adults?

\_\_\_Above satisfactory \_\_\_Satisfactory \_\_\_Below satisfactory

Have you observed the applicant working with youth?

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

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?

In what types of situations have you observed the applicant working well with youth (enjoying the work, being effective)?

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

How would you rate the applicant's ability to use good judgment in normal conditions?

\_\_\_\_Above satisfactory \_\_\_\_Satisfactory \_\_\_\_Below satisfactory  
How would you rate the applicant's ability to maintain appropriate boundaries with youth?

\_\_\_\_Above satisfactory \_\_\_\_Satisfactory \_\_\_\_Below satisfactory  
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?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Are you aware of any reason why we should not allow the applicant to work with the youth we serve?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Do you have any additional comments or questions?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thank you very much for your time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Screening Manager

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Personal Reference Form

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reference: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is <your first and last name> with Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC. <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.

How long have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship to the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the applicant's ability to work with and relate to youth?

\_\_\_\_Above satisfactory \_\_\_\_Satisfactory \_\_\_\_Below satisfactory

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the applicant's hobbies and recreational activities?

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the applicant's ability to relate to adults?

\_\_\_\_Above satisfactory \_\_\_\_Satisfactory \_\_\_\_Below satisfactory

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the applicant's ability to maintain appropriate boundaries with youth?

\_\_\_\_Above satisfactory \_\_\_\_Satisfactory \_\_\_\_Below satisfactory

Do you have any additional comments or questions?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Screening Manager

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
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. Sample Field Trip Preparation Checklist

### Field Trip Preparation Checklist

1. Specific location of the off-site activity. (Example: The Children’s Museum)

---

2. Name of the primary contact at the off-site location (Example: Mary Smith, Director of Group Sales at the Children’s Museum)

---

3. Address and telephone number for the location.

---

4. Parental permission form attached to this document for review.



2019 PARENTAL  
PERMISSION 072620

5. Name and cell phone number of the supervisor for the off-site activity.

---

6. The employee to child ratio for the trip and names of all who will be attending.

---

7. Required attire for employee and child during the off-site activity.

---

8. Amount of time required for the off-site activity.

---

9. Estimated departure time and estimated return time.

---

10. Method of transportation.

---

11. Completed seating chart attached.

---

12. Overall supervision guidelines for location (employees will be assigned groups of children to monitor throughout the trip, employees will monitor children in “zones,” etc.).

---

13. Location of restrooms/locker rooms at off-site location.

---

14. Cost of the activity.

---

### Last Minute Checklist:

All permission sheets returned and compiled for the off-site activity (children cannot participate without a permission slip). Employees must take permission slips to the off-site activity to ensure correct parent contact information.

Roll sheets printed and distributed to all employees for all children attending the off-site activity.

All required employees present.

All employees and children are in approved attire.



**D. Sample Volunteer Driver Qualification Form & Agreement**

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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 act 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 phone calls while operating a vehicle for church activities, to include receiving or initiating text messages.
- 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.

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

Driver Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_

## E. Background Check and Training Program



Praesidium-Services  
-Training-and-Pricin

The Praesidium form will be completed for those that the church requires a Background Check performed:

The following information will be collected for each user in order to (1) generate a login and password; (2) communicate the login and password to the user; (3) track completion of the training; (5) generate a completion certificate via e-mail; and (4) track overall program utilization:

- Last Name
- First Name
- E-mail address
- Birthday (Month & day = MMDD = Feb 01 = 0201)
- State of residence

## F. Sample Limited Access Covenant

This Limited Access Covenant is executed between:

Sanbornton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ (UCC) referred to below as “we”, “the congregation” and “Pastor”;

And

(Name), referred to below as “you” and “your”

Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC is an “open and affirming congregation” and as such affirms the dignity and worth of all persons as expressed in our Welcome Statement. 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 and youth 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. 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 or youth under the age of 18.
- Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including such things as Sunday school, 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 assigned Escort 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), remain with him/her at all times, 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 assigned Escort 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 arrange your time in coffee hour with your assigned Escort.

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 Escorts. You will be welcome on church property and at church-sponsored events but must be accompanied at all times by one of the Escorts named below:

(Named Escort 1)  
(Named Escort 2)  
(Named Escort 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 Escorts and the Pastor 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 covenant.

Implementation of this covenant, is based upon a review by the Pastor, 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 Pastor.

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

- Refusal to allow the Church Council 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 Covenant.
- Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Covenant.

This covenant 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 Pastor is the body responsible for providing you with guidelines, support and counsel for your participation in the life of the congregation.
- You, the Church Council, 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 Covenant 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC  
21 Meeting House Hill Road,  
P.O. Box 126  
Sanbornton, NH 03269

## G. Access Receipt Form

I understand that, as a person with access to Sanbornton Congregational Church, Sanbornton, NH, I am responsible for maintaining the safety of the Church environment while any property and/or facility of Sanbornton Congregational Church is unlocked by the key or combination I hold.

I agree to be entirely responsible for the security of the key or combination and to:

- Not lend the key or combination to anyone, unless authorized by Church Council and the person signs this form;
- Not duplicate the physical key for any reason;
- Not tag or otherwise identify the physical key as providing access to any property and/or facility of the Church;
- I understand that I am not to be alone in any room or secluded area on the Church property at any time with a child or youth that is not my own or a relative without parental permission.

Return the physical key when I no longer have the responsibility that created a need to have the physical key or when an authorized representative of the Church requests such return.

If any property and/or facility of the Church is unlocked by the key or combination that I hold,

I will be the last one out of the building and will check that ALL doors are locked,

OR

I will notify other church representatives who are still in the building that I am leaving.

I understand that failure to comply with any of the provisions set forth in the SafeConduct™ Policies and Procedures manual or this Access Receipt Form may result in the loss of my privilege to be an access holder.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone, if different: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

An additional holder of a single key assigned, which might be shared for reasons only after approval by Church Council, must sign below and adhere to the same direction as outlined above. It is understood that failure to comply with any of the provisions set forth in the SafeConduct™ Policies and Procedures manual or this Access Receipt Form may result in the loss of my privilege to be an access holder.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone, if different: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Date physical Key Returned:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of physical Key holder:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Authorized Representative of Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC:

\_\_\_\_\_