

# KING STREET UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A SAFE CHURCH

### **Mission Statement**

As a part of the Body of Christ, King Street United Church of Christ is called to follow Jesus' example of respect for the integrity and dignity of all persons. This is summed up in Jesus' Great Commandment to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and others as ourselves (Luke 10:27). To follow this commandment is to pursue love, safety, peace and security for all who come within the reaches of our ministries.

The Safe Church Policies and Procedures of King Street United Church of Christ (hereafter referred to as "KSUCC") require its members to provide sanctuary for persons of all ages who are entrusted to its care. They also protect those who have responsibilities as leaders and teachers.

### **Statement of Covenant**

As a Christian community of faith and a United Church of Christ congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the Gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods; and we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law.

### **Communication of Policies and Procedures for a Safe Church**

This policy shall be communicated annually at a meeting required of staff and volunteers. This meeting will be open to all parents and other members. The policy will be posted on the church website and in visible locations within the church building.

### **Definitions:**

**Adult** - any person 18 years of age or older

**Child** - any person under the age of 18

**Youth** - any person between the ages of 13 and 17

**Vulnerable adult** - any person over 18 years of age whose mental, physical, emotional, and/or spiritual condition makes them at risk for abuse.

### **Religious Education Ministry Team Leader/Coordinator**

- any person who is primarily responsible for children's or youth ministries

**Staff person** - any person employed by the King Street United Church of Christ or the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

**Volunteer** - Regular volunteer - a person 18 years of age or older who conducts or assists in conducting activities under the supervision of a staff person and/or Ministry Team Leader/Coordinator on a regular basis, i.e. Sunday School Coordinator, Youth Group, small group class.

- Occasional volunteer - a person 18 years of age or older who conducts or assists in conducting activities during a specific program or event, i.e. Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, etc., under the supervision of the event director or leader.

**Abuse** - any physical, mental, emotional or spiritual injury which is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental; sexual abuse or sexual exploitation; or physical neglect of a child, youth or vulnerable adult

**Accusation** - report of misconduct

**Accuser** - a person who submits an accusation

**Inappropriate behavior**

- when a person's manner of speech, actions or conduct is not deemed prudent, correct, or suitable for use in a particular situation or interaction.

**A. SCREENING**

1. All Staff, Ministry Team Leaders and volunteers who have regular and direct contact with children and/or youth and/or vulnerable adults shall be required to fill out a **Volunteer /Staff Application** that shall include but is not limited to:
  - a. Standard contact information
  - b. Interest and experience for the position
  - c. Voluntary disclosure of past criminal history and allegations of criminal history
  - d. Authorization and request for criminal records check allowing the church to secure background checks necessary for the application.
  - e. For KSUCC children's/youth ministries, persons shall demonstrate an active relationship with KSUCC for at least six months before being allowed to be in a supervisory role in children's/youth activities. In the case of new staff hires, references deemed adequate by the Personnel Committee will replace the six-month waiting period.
2. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) will knowingly or willingly be employed as a staff person or accepted as a volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
3. Persons who have a break in service of one or more years shall submit to screening procedures. KSUCC reserves the option to repeat background checks of persons who have had 5 or more years of service.
4. All forms and reference reports shall be kept, as a part of an applicant's confidential personnel file which the Parish Administrator will maintain. Detailed notes on a designated form shall be kept for all reference checks, which shall also be included in the personnel file. All applications and related forms must be completed.
5. Non-affiliated organizations using church facilities shall maintain their own personnel files. KSUCC reserves the right to obtain an explanation of the organization's record-keeping process and, upon written request of a pastor, to be given copies of documents applicable to programs conducted on the property of KSUCC.
6. The Safe Church Coordinator is responsible for reviewing this policy with each applicant prior to service.

**B. SUPERVISION FOR CHILDREN**

1. All Staff persons, Ministry Team Leaders, and Volunteers working with children in KSUCC activities are required to attend an orientation annually that includes information regarding this Safe Church Policy,

procedures for supervision, as well as information on how to identify and report child abuse. All parents and other church members will be invited.

2. **No child will be left unsupervised** while attending KSUCC's children's activities.
3. **Two unrelated adults** (18 or older) should be present during any church sponsored-program, event, or ministry involving children. A person shall be designated to roam or float and oversee children in various rooms, hallways, and bathrooms.
4. Each room or space where children are being cared for shall have a window in the door. Every door window will remain uncovered. Any windowless door will remain open at all times. A teacher left alone will let the door open when working with a child or children. **All activities shall occur in open view.**
5. Staff persons and/or persons in charge of an off-site activity or event shall always give advance notice and full information regarding an activity(ies) or event(s) to parents or guardians. Parents/guardians **must give written permission**, that includes pertinent health information, for their child's participation prior to the event.

### **C. SAFE CHURCH POLICIES FOR YOUTH**

#### 1. **Two-Adult Rule**

There is more than just one adult present with youth. We recommend 2 or more adults for every 1-5 youth.

#### 2. **Five Years Older Rule**

Adult leaders should be five years older than the people with whom they work and never younger than eighteen years old.

#### 3. **Sleeping Arrangements**

- a. When possible, all adults and children should sleep in the same room.
- b. Adults will not sleep in the same bed as youth. In a hotel-type setting, it is recommended that if possible, an adult room is between two youth rooms. This is also recommended for dormitory settings.
- c. Adults should arrange among themselves to check on the youth rooms on a random schedule during the night.
- d. Minimizing the possibility of danger from within the group as well as from strangers, if possible choose a hotel where the rooms open to the interior of the building rather than to the outside.

#### 4. **Physical safety issues**

- a. Youth workers should be conscious of safety concerns when leading activities and games. Proper equipment and adequate supervision of the activity should always be in place.
- b. No drugs, alcoholic beverages, weapons or fireworks will be allowed. For any off-site activities, youth must have a signed parental consent- medical information form.

#### 5. **Interpersonal boundaries in relationships**

- a. Everyone is expected to be present with the group for all activities.
- b. Adults will provide great leadership by modeling appropriate behaviors.

- c. No profane language.
- d. No practical jokes (especially ones that would be physically harmful)
- e. No permission for boys to enter the room where girls are sleeping.
- f. No permission for girls to enter the room where boys are sleeping.
- g. No permission or opportunity for two youth or one adult and one youth to separate themselves from the group.
- h. No inappropriate touching creating the perception that the personal space and privacy of the individual is being violated.

#### 6. **Transportation Plans**

- a. No drivers under the age of 25 should be used to transport youth and drivers should be covered by adequate insurance.
- b. A youth worker who transports youth should be a safe driver and have proper credentials in the state of residence (including no DUI's or excessive number of speeding tickets)
- c. Each passenger should have a seat belt and the use of them should always be enforced.
- d. Where possible, use caravans of cars as you travel.
- e. If only one adult is taking a car load of youth, they should all meet at the church, travel together and return to the church to be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- f. There should be enough space for the passengers to be reasonably comfortable and for all the luggage and equipment.
- g. If possible, there should be a cell phone or some other way to communicate in an emergency.
- h. Take along a map and/or good directions.

#### **D. REPORTING**

Once an incident of child abuse/inappropriate behavior occurs or allegation of an incident is made, it is crucial that it is taken seriously and be dealt with speedily and in a clearly outlined manner.

1. The Staff person, Ministry Team Leader, Volunteer or Helper who observes or learns of alleged abuse/inappropriate behavior is required **to report the incident immediately to the person in charge of the children's or youth activity.**
2. The person in charge of the children's or youth activity in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed **shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information** such as the name of the alleged victim and his or her address and family information.
3. The person who is the object of the allegation will be **immediately removed from** participation with children/youth in church sponsored activities. This will be handled in a confidential manner recognizing that an investigation will be conducted.
4. Upon receiving the necessary information, the person in charge of the activity will **call the Safe Church Committee** the same day.

5. The presumption of innocence shall be maintained until such time, if any, as the person is proven to be guilty, or admits guilt.

## **E. RESPONSE PLAN**

1. A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse or other inappropriate behavior is expected.
2. All allegations will be taken seriously.
3. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in a children's or youth activity, the entire staff of that activity shall be at the service of all official investigating agencies. A Safe Church Committee member will be present when investigating agencies conduct their interviews with event staff.
4. Information will be forwarded to the Safe Church Committee through the reporting procedures. The Safe Church Committee is responsible for investigating, making appropriate referrals, and authorizing the procedures of the outcome toward a beneficial resolution.
5. The presumption of innocence shall be maintained until such time, if any, as the person is proven to be guilty, or admits guilt.

## **F. SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE**

### **1. Members**

- a. One full-time pastor
- b. One church member active in Children's and/or Youth Ministries
- c. One church member with professional background in Health Services, Legal Services, or Mental Health
- d. These three members will be nominated by the Nominating Committee. One member shall be designated the Safe Church Coordinator.

### **2. Purpose for convening**

- a. Report of abuse or assault, or threat of same, against anyone while participating in a church sponsored event.
- b. Report of suspected or observed inappropriate behavior by any participant church activities.
- c. Response to Pastor's request in the event of a major crisis that has immediate and significant impact on one or more of the church family/friends
- d. Response to knowledge or suspected harm or impending danger for any member of a church family/friend.
- e. To review policy, plan and conduct annual orientation, etc.

### **3. Initial Meeting in response to initial report**

- a. Pastor or Safe Church Coordinator will notify the Regional Conference Minister of the report received, giving the nature of the report and initial meeting date and time

- b. A minimum of 2 members will meet within 24 hours of the initial report; if only one member is available, the available member may ask for attendance of either another Pastor or the Regional Conference Minister
- c. If necessary, a conference call over secure lines (non-cellular) will be acceptable

4. **Safe Church Committee Response**

- a. Review all information. All allegations will be taken seriously. A quick, compassionate and unified response is expected. Any information gathering is not intended to replace a formal investigation by the proper authorities.
- b. Determine the nature of the offense (ex: assault, harassment, over-discipline, etc.)
- c. If the allegation is against a staff person, Ministry Team Leader, Church Volunteer or Helper, the custodial parent should be notified.
- d. In response to all allegations of abuse, we would follow the guidelines of a mandatory reporter.
- e. An oral report will be made to the Regional Conference Minister at the end of any Safe Church Committee meeting; a written report will follow the oral report within three days.
- f. In all cases, pastoral support will be made available to all persons involved with the incident as indicated.
- g. A Safe Church Committee member will be present when investigating agencies conduct their interviews with event staff.
- g. The Pastor or Regional Conference Minister will be responsible for notifying those persons directly affected by the incident. This notification will include the outcome of the investigation, and a plan addressing future church participation of the accused.

## VOLUNTEER/STAFF APPLICATION

Please fill out this application to be an Authorized Volunteer or Staff member to provide services to King Street United Church of Christ. The information given on this application will be reviewed confidentially by Safe Church Committee.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, Middle) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number and Street) (Town, State, Zip)  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Current Employer (name) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Ext \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number and Street) (Town, State, Zip)  
Name and Title of Immediate Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
Employed Since (Mo/Yr) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Employer	Address	Phone	From/To	Reason for Leaving
----------	---------	-------	---------	--------------------

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

### VOLUNTEER HISTORY RELATED TO THIS POSITION (give details)

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

**CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

How long have you been attending KSUCC? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below names, addresses and dates for all other churches you have attended for a significant period of time during the past 10 years:

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

**REFERENCES: please list 3 with addresses and telephone numbers (one family member and 2 non-family members) who can be contacted to serve as references to any of the information given in this application.**

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

**DECLARATIONS**

**I have never been found guilty, or pled guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge.**

True       Not true

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

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

**No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired.**

True       Not true

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

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

**I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct.**

True       Not true

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

---

---

---

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

**State where driver's license issued** \_\_\_\_\_

**Driver's license number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Insurance Company Name and Policy #** \_\_\_\_\_

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

True                       Not true

**Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?**

Yes                       No

If yes, please provide a brief explanation.

---

---

---

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

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

By signing below I am also acknowledging that I have received a copy of the Policies and Procedures for a Safe Church.

---

(SIGNATURE)

DATE

---

(PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE FOR APPLICANTS UNDER 18)

DATE