

Safe Church Policy for Parents, Guardians, or Volunteers - What You Need to Know

- The FCC Safe Church Policy is available [online](#).
- The Safe Church Response Team—comprised of the minister, CE Director, and moderator—is responsible for implementing the policy. If you have questions or concerns, please contact them at safechurchresponseteam@loveandjustice.org.

For Parents:

- Please complete the “Authorization to Share Youth Contact Information and Photo Release” (attached)

For Volunteers:

- Volunteers must have attended FCC for at least 6 months
- Please fill out the volunteer application form (attached) and return to CE director
- The FCC Safe Church Policy is available [online](#). Please read, review, and sign the “Acceptance of Safe Church Policy” (attached) and return to CE director

We use the following guidelines to promote a safe and respectful environment:

General Rules:

- Adults should not give gifts to individual youth or children.
- One-on-one meetings in private settings should be avoided.
- Volunteers should use the safe numbers, ages, transportation, and communication guidelines below in their volunteer role. If circumstances make this difficult, they should contact the minister or CE director for further guidance.

Safe Numbers:

- **Sunday School/Joyful Sound:** One adult or one adult and one youth helper (Preschool-2nd grade). Classes with only one child will join another group. A floater will check in periodically.
- **Middle School Youth Group:** Two unrelated, unmarried/unpartnered adults must be present. If not, the event is canceled.
- **High School Youth Group:** Follow the "two adults or two children/youth" rule. Preferably, adults should be unrelated and unmarried/unpartnered.
- Volunteers or church leaders should not meet one-on-one with a child except with the parent or guardian's prior knowledge and approval, such as a mentor and confirmand meeting.

Safe Environment:

- **At Church:** Doors should be kept open during meetings unless privacy requires them to be closed; then use rooms with windows.
- **Outside Church:** Meetings should be held in public places unless written parental/guardian approval is given. Parents must be aware and give prior approval for meetings and transportation.

Overnights:

- At least two adult chaperones (one male, one female) and written parental approval are required.
- Separate sleeping accommodations for male and female youth and private changing/bathroom facilities.
- No single adult and youth are in the same room.

Safe Ages:

- The minimum age for youth volunteers is 13, with adult supervision.
- Volunteers should be at least five years older than the oldest youth they supervise.

Safe Transportation:

- Children/youth only transported with parental approval and while maintaining safe numbers
- Drivers must have a valid license and insurance and be 21 or older.

Safe Electronic Communication and Social Media:

- No communication between 9:00 pm and 7:00 am or on staff days off, unless an emergency.
- Parental permission is required for holding youth contact information.
- Group messages are preferred; avoid lengthy personal communications.
- No "friending" or "following" youth on social media or private communication on these platforms.
- Report child protection concerns to the Safe Church Response Team.
- Youth images cannot be used without written parental consent.
- Misconduct by volunteers requires the removal of youth contact information from their devices and no further contact.

These guidelines ensure a safe, respectful, and protected environment for all involved.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Appendix H: Authorization to Share Youth Contact Information and Photo Release

My child is high school age (14 or older) and has my permission to share their phone number with the following church staff and/or volunteer(s):

- Pastor
- CE Director
- Youth Group Leader(s)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

First Congregational Church of Christ may share my child's photo on social media and/or the church's public website.

- Yes
- No

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

VOLUNTEERS

Appendix B: Volunteer Application Form

First Congregational United Church of Christ intends that our church buildings and programs be safe places for children and youth. In keeping with this mandate, we ask those who work with children and youth to complete the following self-disclosure form.

Name: _____

Current Address: _____
Address City State Zip

Cell Phone: _____

Volunteer position (e.g., Sunday School teacher, mentor, etc) _____

Are you currently a member of this church? (check one):

- Yes
 No

I have been a member of this church since _____

I have been participating in the life of this church since _____

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

- 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, 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. (*check one*)

- 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.)

Volunteer Application Form (continued)

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, misconduct, physical abuse, child abuse, or financial misconduct. *(check one)*

- 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 the nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)

If your position will involve driving children, do you have a valid driver's license?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

State where driver's license issued : _____

Driver's license number : _____

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

- True
- Not True

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

- True
- Not True

If yes, please provide a brief explanation.

I understand that in signing this form, I affirm that the information I have given is true and correct.

Signature

Date

Parent's or guardian's signature for applicants under 18

Date

VOLUNTEERS

Acceptance of Safe Church Policy Form

I have received a copy of the Safe Church Policy of First Congregational United Church of Christ. I agree to abide by the rules and recommendations therein, including those recommendations concerning the reporting of known or suspected abuse.

Name

Signature

Position

This employee/volunteer is a mandated reporter according to Illinois law (applies to clergy only):

- Yes
- No