

SAFE CHURCH

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**First Congregational Church of Rockport, Massachusetts
United Church of Christ**

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**As Amended through November
15, 2015**

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MISSION

The First Congregational Church of Rockport, Massachusetts of the United Church of Christ (FCCR) is committed to being a community of Christian fellowship. The church's goal is to ensure that all who participate in its church life, including children, adults, and church workers, whether paid or volunteer, will have a safe, secure, and nurturing environment in which to work and explore their relationship with God and each other. To that end, each person responsible for the care of children and youth will be required to sign the FCCR Covenant Agreement in Section VII.

B. SCOPE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures included in this document apply to all activities which take place within the building and properties of the FCCR, as well as to programs, activities, and events scheduled as part of the ministry of the church which take place elsewhere. The policies and procedures apply to all members, associate members, friends, volunteers, and employees of the church, and to all outside groups which rent FCCR facilities or use them without charge. Nothing in this Safe Church Policies and Procedures supersedes the responsibilities of the employees, volunteers, and administration of the FCCR under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A (mandated reporting of suspected child abuse/neglect).

C. *LOCATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

Copies of the Safe Church Policies and Procedures which members of the FCCR and those renting or using its facility without charge can consult will be kept in binders in two locations in the FCCR:

1. The Church Office
2. The Christian Education Director's Office

There will also be a link to an electronic copy on the FCCR website.

All forms referred to in this Safe Church Policies and Procedures are available from the Christian Education Committee of the FCCR.

II. *KEY AND RENTAL/USE POLICY*

A. *KEY POLICY*

All persons who have a key to the FCCR must have a clear reason for needing a key and must be CORI'd and approved to have one by the FCCR Trustees, and the Office Manager. Copies of the FCCR Key Policy and Agreement are available in the Church Office.

1. People who hold certain positions in the church are regularly authorized by the Trustees to hold keys to the FCCR. Those positions include paid employees, church officers, committee chairpersons, youth supervisors, and others. People desiring a key must request one through the church's Office Manager and /or Board of Trustees.
2. Keys must be returned when they are no longer needed or the Trustees require their return. The return of keys will be documented by the Office Manager.
3. People obtaining keys for renting/using the FCCR facility that are not Christian Education Committee of the FCCR related will be CORI checked by the Office Manager. The Christian Education Committee of the FCCR will be responsible for all CORI reports pertaining to their own programs and missions.

B. *RENTAL/USE POLICY*

1. All outside groups which use FCCR facilities either by rental or without charge must be approved by the Office Manager, designated representative(s), or the Trustees. Such groups must submit to the Office Manager an FCCR Rental/Use Agreement Form which contains their designated representative's signed statement that he/she has read the church's Covenant Agreement (see appendix) and have access to the Safe Church policy and that his/her group will comply with them. The Office Manager will maintain these signed forms in a secure location approved by the FCCR Board of Trustees.
2. Outside groups using the FCCR facility that have screening policies of their own such as Family Promise homeless program are responsible under their own guidelines with the understanding that the designated areas of FCCR are off limits to non Family Promise volunteers, even church members.
3. Activities sponsored by the FCCR, its committees, boards, fellowship groups, and staff which use FCCR facilities (including funeral and wedding services and their accompanying receptions) will not usually be required to submit an FCCR Rental/Use

Agreement Form, unless there is a special circumstance, such as when an FCCR committee sponsors an outside group's use of the FCCR facility.

III. SCREENING AND HIRING

A. APPLICATIONS POLICY

The First Congregational Church of Rockport welcomes volunteers who have been actively participating as members or friends of the Church and church staff to become involved with the various programs offered as part of the church's youth ministries. All adults involved with supervising those programs must agree to a CORI check.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Adult:** Persons age 18 and older, as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
2. **Agreement of Non-Disclosure (AOND):** A signed form, submitted by an individual who seeks to have access to CORI reports, in which the individual agrees to abide by certain terms of confidentiality.
3. **Authorization for a CORI Check:** A form signed by an individual which gives the FCCR permission to obtain that individual's CORI report from the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
4. **Authorized Adult Guest (AAG):** An adult who has been authorized by the Director of Christian Education to attend an authorized FCCR Day Field trip or FCCR Overnight Event as a guest, but who does not serve in any authorized supervisory capacity on such trips.
5. **Authorized Driver (AD):** An adult 25 years old or older who has been authorized by the Director of Christian Education to transport individuals on an authorized FCCR Day Field Trip or FCCR Overnight Event, but who does not serve in any authorized supervisory capacity on those trips, unless the driver has also been authorized to serve as a Chaperone on them.
6. **Authorized Teaching Assistant:** An adult or youth volunteer who has passed a CORI check and functions in an authorized, non-supervisory role in the church's youth activities, such as in the church school or youth group.
7. **Authorized Volunteer:** Any person, who offers or is recruited to serve as an FCCR church volunteer, has completed the appropriate FCCR forms of this document and has been accepted by an FCCR committee, board, or supervisor to provide unpaid services to the FCC. This may include church school teachers, Confirmation class teachers and mentors, youth group leaders, drivers for church-sponsored youth events, or ordained clergy serving as Supply Ministers of the FCCR.
8. **Certification:** A process by which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts grants an organization legal access to CORI records after a review of the application submitted by that organization to the Commonwealth's Criminal History Systems Board.

9. Chaperone: A volunteer who assists Supervisors in supervising youth in a special FCCR activity, such as a youth fellowship event, day field trip, or overnight event. To be an authorized Chaperone, an individual must have passed a CORI check, and be at least 21 years old and a minimum of five years older than the oldest youth participating in the activity.
10. Children or Youth: Persons under the age of 18, as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
11. CEC: Christian Education Committee
12. CHSB: Criminal History Systems Board (Commonwealth of Massachusetts)
13. Church Staff or Paid Employee: Any individual hired or called and compensated by the FCCR to hold a position in the FCCR on a part-time, full-time, temporary, or permanent basis.
14. Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI): Information regulated by the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) and maintained by the Board of Probation regarding criminal convictions of persons within the Massachusetts Court System. The term CORI will be understood to include a LexisNexis National Background Check.
15. Day Field Trip: A youth event which is authorized by Christian Education, which is scheduled to take place off FCCR property, and which requires FCCR Authorized Drivers. The only adults allowed to participate in FCCR Day Field Trips are those authorized to do so as Supervisors, Chaperones, Drivers, or Adult Guests.
16. Day Field Trip Consent Form: A form signed by the parent or guardian of a child which gives permission for that child to participate in an FCCR Day Field Trip.
17. Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF)
18. FCCR or the Church: the First Congregational Church of Rockport, Massachusetts of the United Church of Christ.
19. FCCR Key holder Acknowledgment Form: A form signed by a person who has been assigned and has accepted a door key to the FCCR. This form contains the individual's signed statement that he/she has read the church's *Covenant Agreement and* will comply with them.
20. Medical Release Form: A form signed by the parent or guardian of a child that gives permission for the medical treatment of that child under the instructions of an on-call physician at a hospital or clinic.
21. Overnight Event: A youth event which is authorized by the Christian Education and scheduled to take place overnight either in the FCCR or off FCCR property. The only adults allowed to participate in FCCR Overnight Events are those who have already passed a CORI check and who have been authorized to participate in those events as Supervisors, Chaperones, Drivers, or Adult Guests.
22. Overnight Event Consent Form: A form signed by the parent or guardian of a child which gives permission for that child to participate in an Authorized FCCR overnight event.
23. Pass a CORI Check: After reviewing an individual's CORI report received from the CHSB, the FCCR's Christian Education Committee determines that the individual

passes a CORI check and thus is eligible to serve in an FCCR position, paid or volunteer, which involves contact with children. The Committee's determination is made in accordance with the provisions in section III.F **POLICY FOR REVIEW OF CORI RECORDS** of this *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*.

24. Rental/Use Form: A form signed by the designated representative of an outside group which has been authorized to rent FCCR facilities or use them without charge. The form contains the designated representative's signed statement that he/she has read the church's *Summary of Youth Protection Policies* which is included in section IVG on pages 14 and 15 below, and that his/her group will comply with them.

25. Statement of Compliance for an Individual: A form signed by an individual who indicates that the signer has read and agrees to comply with the FCCR *Summary of Youth Protection Policies* (included in section IVG on pages 14 and 15 below) in his/her activities at the FCCR and in FCCR sponsored programs.

26. Supervisor: A volunteer or paid FCCR worker, including Church Staff members, who have passed a CORI check and have direct supervisory responsibility for the care of youth, in an FCCR position such as a church school teacher, Confirmation class teacher, youth group leader, or youth choir director. Chaperones assist Supervisors in supervising youth in a special FCCR activity, such as a youth fellowship event, day field trip, or overnight event.

C. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The Christian Education Committee (CEC) is a committee of the FCCR for implementation of the policies and procedures contained in the FCCR's Safe Church Policies and Procedures.
2. The CEC is made up of six members.
3. The Christian Education Director (CED) is the CORI Administrator for all CEC sponsored events. The CED will review CORI reports and determine if individuals pass a CORI check and thus are eligible to serve in an FCCR position, paid or volunteer, which involves contact with children. In making that determination, the CED may, if it deems necessary, seek counsel from the FCCR's Personnel Committee.
4. The CEC will ensure that all the forms required by these Safe Church Policies and Procedures are created or obtained, updated as needed, and made available for FCCR use.
5. The CEC will obtain appropriate forms for the FCCR from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB), such as the Agreement of Non Disclosure (AOND) and Authorization for a CORI Check.
6. The CEC will obtain appropriate forms for the FCCR from the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) such as the DCF Mandated Reporter Form.
7. The CEC will consult with the FCCR Trustees in the development of their forms, which include: Key Holder Acknowledgment Form, Rental/Use Agreement Form, and Application for Employment.

8. The CEC will develop the forms, which include: Medical Release Form, Day Field Trip Consent Form, and Overnight Event Consent Form.
9. The CEC will develop additional forms required by these Safe Church Policies and Procedures, such as the FCCR Safe Child Incident Report and the Statement of Compliance for an Individual.
10. The CEC will renew, as needed, its Certification on behalf of the FCCR, with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB).
11. The CEC will obtain all the signed forms and any accompanying documentation required by sections C.4, C.5, and C. 6. of these Safe Church Policies and Procedures and maintain them in a secure location in the FCCR Christian Education Director's office.
12. The CEC will oversee the reporting of suspected child abuse to the DCF and responses to such reporting, as indicated in Section E Suspected Child Abuse of these Safe Church Policies and Procedures. The CEC will obtain all available reports and documentation on such reporting and responses and maintain them in a secure location in the FCCR as determined by the CEC.
13. The CEC will post in a prominent place in the Church Office and keep updated, important information relevant to FCCR's Safe Church Policies and Procedures.
14. In performing its duties the CEC may, as it deems necessary, seek counsel from the FCCR Trustees.

D. APPLICATION AND POSITION SELECTION PROCEDURES

1. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- a) All candidates seeking paid employment at the FCCR, including ordained ministers, will complete and submit to the FCCR the following:
 - (1) Application for Employment
 - (2) Signed and dated Authorization for a CORI Check
 - (3) Signed and dated Statement of Compliance for an Individual
 - (4) Signed and dated statement of reading Safe Church Policy
- b) All individuals under consideration for the following Authorized Volunteer positions in the FCCR, namely, church school teachers, nursery supervisors, Confirmation class teachers and mentors, youth group supervisors, chaperones, drivers, authorized adult guests, ordained clergy serving as FCCR Supply Ministers, or any other FCCR volunteer position which involves contact with youth, will complete and submit to the FCCR the following:
 - (1) Signed and dated Authorization for a CORI Check
 - (2) Signed and dated Statement of Compliance for an Individual
- c) Authorized Drivers must have car insurance. Additionally, those under consideration to be drivers must also submit to the FCCR copies of the following:

- (1) Their driver's license
- (2) The registration of the car in which they will be driving FCCR youth
- (3) The summary page of their car insurance policy.

2. POSITION SELECTION PROCEDURES

- a) All paid employees on the staff of the FCCR, including ordained clergy, are hired or called to their FCCR position, on the condition that they pass a CORI check as determined by the FCCR CEC. Prior to selecting a candidate to be hired or called for such employment an appropriate FCCR committee, board, or committee must:
 - (1) Review the candidate's application for the paid position available,
 - (2) Contact references for the candidate to obtain information that may be helpful in determining the candidate's suitability for the position being sought,
 - (3) Pursue with both the candidate and the candidate's former employers any gaps in time, irregular employment patterns, or unexplained absences which appear on the candidate's application for employment.
- b) Paid employees on the staff of the FCCR who do not pass a CORI check, as determined by the FCCR's CEC, shall be considered ineligible to continue their FCCR job position and shall be immediately removed from that position.
- c) All volunteers must pass a CORI check, as determined by the CEC, before they are authorized to hold the FCCR volunteer positions noted in section III.D.1, subsection b. Prior to authorizing a candidate to serve in such an FCCR position, an appropriate FCCR committee, board, or supervisor must:
 - (1) Review the candidate's application for the volunteer position available,
 - (2) Interview the candidate.
- d) The appropriate FCCR committee, board, or supervisor may also, at its discretion, make reference checks on such candidates.
- e) All ordained ministers must pass a CORI check, as determined by the CEC, before they can be authorized by the Diaconate to serve as a Supply Minister of the FCCR.

E. CORI CHECK POLICY

1. In order to ensure that CEC volunteers are appropriate for their positions, the FCCR CEC will conduct a CORI check on all individuals serving, or being seriously considered to serve, in the following positions:

- a) Ordained ministers serving as FCCR Settled Ministers, Interim Ministers, or temporary ministers serving for an extended period of time;
- b) Unless they are FCCR employees, FCCR Sunday school teachers, nursery supervisors, Confirmation class teachers and mentors, authorized teaching assistants, and chaperones;

- c) Authorized drivers for CEC sponsored events; and
 - d) All other youth group supervisors, not CORI-checked under the above rules.
2. The Office Manager will conduct CORI check as soon as reasonably possible on persons serving in the following non-supervisory positions:
- a) FCCR employees other than paid ordained ministers;
 - b) Authorized Adult Guests
 - c) Authorized Drivers
 - d) Non-CEC key holders
3. The Christian Education Director is the coordinator of CORI requests performed for the people listed in subsection E.1 (a)–(d) above and shall be responsible for ensuring that the information received from those requests pertaining to CEC is stored in appropriate locked CEC office files.
4. The Office Manager is the coordinator of CORI requests performed for the people listed in subsection E.2 (a)–(d) above and shall be responsible for ensuring that the information received from those requests is stored in appropriate locked files in the FCCR office.
- a) In accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, all information contained within CORI reports will be held in confidence by the Christian Education Director or Office Manager.
 - b) All signed forms and documentation required by these *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* are obtained and maintained for the FCCR, in accordance with the requirements in section III.G **SCREENING AND HIRING DOCUMENTATION**.

F.

POLICY FOR REVIEW OF CORI RECORDS

1. The CED and Office Manager will use the following criteria in its review of CORI records and determination if individuals are eligible or not, to serve in particular paid or volunteer positions or as a key holder in the FCCR:
- a) Individuals whose CORI reports show that they have been convicted of committing child abuse, whether physical, emotional, or sexual, will not be considered, under any circumstances, for paid or volunteer positions in the FCCR which involve contact with children or given a key for access to the church and its facilities.
 - b) Subject to appeal as described in section VI of this policy, individuals are ineligible to serve in any paid or volunteer FCCR positions if their CORI and /or National Background report show that they have been convicted of a crime, plead guilty to or no contest to a crime involving physical abuse; domestic violence, child abuse or financial misconduct, or if a judgment has been entered against them in a

civil lawsuit charging any of the forgoing or sexual discrimination or sexual harassment.

c) Individuals are ineligible to serve in any paid or volunteer FCCR positions which involve contact with children under any circumstances if their CORI reports show that they have been convicted of a crime, or plead guilty or no contest to a crime which involves the use of force or violence, rape, performing an unnatural act, sodomy, indecent assault, battery, or the crime of attempting any of the aforementioned offenses; or illegally manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any controlled substances or the crime of possession with intent to manufacture, distribute or dispense a controlled substance, or if they have been charged with any felony listed above and are either awaiting trial or have been defaulted by the court.

d) Anyone who admits to any of the offenses listed in section III.F subsection 1.a or III.F subsection 1.b of this *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*, whether listed on their CORI report or not, will not be considered, under any circumstances, for a paid or volunteer position in the FCCR which involves contact with children.

e) In making their determination of an individual's eligibility to hold a key or particular position in the FCCR, the CEC and or Office Manager may also consider:

(1) Criminal offenses noted in that individual's CORI report or admitted by that individual, which are not named in section III.F subsection 1.a or III.F subsection 1.b of these *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*.

(2) Other factors which relate to that individual's ability to contribute to the FCCR's mission of maintaining "a safe, secure, and nurturing environment" in which children, adults and church workers can "work and explore their relationship with God and each other."

f) The CEC and or Office Manager will determine that individuals are not eligible to drive for FCCR youth activities if their CORI reports and/or other public records available to the CEC show that the individuals' driving licenses have been revoked or suspended at any time in the previous five years. However, individuals whose driver's licenses were revoked or suspended more than five years ago may be eligible to drive for FCCR youth activities, but only if the CEC determines that such eligibility is appropriate. The CEC will report their determinations, but not the details of CORI reports, to the appropriate FCCR leaders of youth activities which use such drivers.

G. *SCREENING AND HIRING DOCUMENTATION*

1. The CEC will obtain the following signed forms and any accompanying documentation required by sections III.D, III.E, and III.F of this *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* and maintains them in a secure location in the FCCR as determined by the CEC and approved by the Trustees. Such forms and documentation include, but are not limited to:

- a) Agreement of Non-Disclosure forms
- b) Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board Certification and documents
- c) Signed and dated Authorizations for a CORI check

- d) Signed and dated Statements of Compliance for an Individual CORI report

IV. YOUTH PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION

A. YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

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

B. YOUTH PROTECTION PROCEDURES

1. Two Adult Rule

No adult will be alone with a child or children in the FCCR or at any FCCR activity on or off FCCR premises, unless

- a) The adult is a parent, other relative, or legal guardian of the child or children;
- b) The adult has received permission from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the children or children, to be alone with them;
- c) A child's behavior is disruptive in the church school, and one of the two adult teachers in the classroom needs to leave it briefly to seek the Christian Ed Director or the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) to come to the classroom.
- d) One of the two adult teachers in the classroom needs to leave the classroom briefly in order to provide for the wellbeing of a child, for example, to assist a child who has become ill or who needs to go to a bathroom. Apart from the exceptions noted above, two adults, not married to each other, must be present with a child or children under 18 years of age at all times in the FCCR or at any FCCR activity on or off FCCR premises. If the two adults are a married couple, then a third adult must also be present to satisfy this Two Adult Rule. Any FCCR class or activity which cannot meet this Two Adult Rule must be canceled and the children must be returned to their parent(s) or guardian(s). All outside groups which are authorized by the FCCR to rent FCCR facilities or use them without charge must also abide by this Two Adult Rule.

2. Five Years Older, Minimum Age and Minimum Involvement Rules

- a) Supervisors and Chaperones must be at least five years older than the oldest participant in the FCCR class, group, or activity they supervise.
- b)

A person must be at least thirteen years old to help in the nursery or church school classrooms, except when Christian Education Committee authorizes particular children under the age of thirteen to give such help.

- c) All volunteers need to have been involved with FCCR or another ecumenically associated church for at least six months before supervising youth.

3. Medical Release Forms

- a) All youth participating in an FCCR Day Field Trip or FCCR Overnight Event must have a Medical Release Form on file with the FCCR before they can participate in that trip or event.
- b) The Director of Christian Education will:
 - (1) Issue Medical Release Forms so the parent(s) or guardian(s) of youth can complete and return them, as appropriate, to the Director of Christian Education.
 - (2) Keep all signed Medical Release Forms on file in a secure location in the FCCR as determined by the Christian Education Director.
- c) Each time an FCCR Day Field Trip or Overnight Event occurs, the original Medical Release Form submitted for each participating youth must be taken to that trip or event by an FCCR authorized Supervisor of that activity. Also, a copy of each of those Medical Release Forms must be kept on file in a secure location in the FCCR as determined by the Christian Education Director.

4. Authorized FCCR Youth Events

- a) Categories of Authorized FCCR Youth Events are as follows:
 - (1) Youth Fellowship Events. These are Christian Education Committee authorized youth events which take place in the FCCR or in another local locale under the supervision of Christian Education Director appointed supervisors. Parents or Guardians take complete responsibility for transporting their youth to and from these events.
 - (2) Youth and Family Events. These are events, usually in the wider community which the Christian Education Committee encourages FCCR families and their youth to participate in together, but which the FCCR does not sponsor. Parents or Guardians take complete responsibility for transporting their youth to and from these events and supervising their own youth at them.
 - (3) Day Field Trips. These are youth events which are authorized by the Christian Education Committee, which are scheduled to take place off FCCR property, and which require FCCR Authorized Drivers. The only adults allowed to participate in FCCR Day Field Trips are those authorized to do so as Supervisors, Chaperones, Drivers, or Adult Guests.
 - (4) Overnight Events. These are youth events which are authorized by the Christian Education Committee and take place overnight either on FCCR property or elsewhere. The only adults allowed to participate in FCCR Overnight Events are those who

have already passed a CORI check and who have been authorized to participate in those events as Supervisors, Chaperones, Drivers, or Adult Guests.

- b) All FCCR Youth and Family Events, Day Field Trips, and Overnight Events must be approved by the Christian Education Committee before they can take place and before fund raising can begin for them. If possible, proposals for such events should be received by the Christian Education Committee at least one month in advance of the event.
- c) The Christian Education Committee must authorize all Supervisors, Chaperones, Drivers, and Adult Guests who participate in FCCR youth activities, and such authorization must be made in accordance with the requirements of this Safe Church Policies and Procedures.
- d) Full information about FCCR programs should be made available beforehand to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the youth who participate in them. Such information should include: the purpose and basic agenda of the scheduled event; trip, or overnight; the names of Supervisors, Chaperones, and Drivers; dates and times; costs; and the method of transportation.
- e) Parents or guardians must complete and return a signed Day Field Trip Consent Form or Overnight Event Form to the FCCR, and have a signed Medical Release Form for their child on file with the FCCR, before their child can participate in that trip or event.

5. Vehicle Rules

- a) Drivers for Authorized FCCR Day Field Trips or FCCR Overnight Events must be 25 years old or older. A copy of their driver's license, the registration of the car they will drive FCCR youth in, and the summary page of their car insurance policy must be on file with the FCCR in a secure location of the FCCR as determined by the Christian Education Committee. Authorized Drivers will have passed a CORI check prior to driving for an FCCR youth trip. However, if a CORI report has not been requested or received from the CHSB by that time, a CORI check must be completed soon afterwards. Any Authorized Driver who fails to pass a CORI check will automatically lose their Authorized Driver status and no longer be eligible to drive for FCCR Day Field Trips. Only Authorized Drivers who have already passed a CORI check may participate in FCCR Overnight Events.
- b) Anyone who has had their driver's license revoked or suspended within the past five years will be ineligible to drive for FCCR youth activities. However, individuals whose driver's licenses were revoked or suspended more than five years ago may be eligible to drive for FCCR youth activities, but only if the CE Committee determines that such eligibility is appropriate. The CE Committee will report their determinations of the eligibility of individuals to serve as FCCR drivers to the appropriate FCCR Supervisors of youth activities which use such drivers.
- c) All occupants of vehicles used in FCCR youth activities must wear seat belts.

- d) Drivers of vehicles used in FCCR youth activities must not text while driving.

6. Appropriate Supervision

The Two Adult Rule noted in IV.B subsection 1 of this *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* must be followed in all FCCR events involving youth. It will be the responsibility of Supervisors and Chaperones to oversee all youth attending such events and provide for their well being. Other requirements for adult supervision of FCCR youth are as follows:

- a) On FCCR Day Field Trips there must be at least:
 - (1) One adult (Supervisor or Chaperone) for every four youth in grades Preschool through 4th Grade.
 - (2) One adult (Supervisor or Chaperone) for every 6 youth in 5th Grade through age 17. C. Supervisors and Chaperones must be at least five years older than the oldest participant in the FCCR class, group, or activity they supervise.
- b) On FCCR Overnight Events on or off church property:
 - (1) There must be the following minimum levels of adult supervision (authorized Supervisors and Chaperones combined) for the number of youth:
 - (a) One to five male youth require at least two male adults.
 - (b) One to five female youth require at least two female adults.
 - (c) When the total number of youth attending (either gender) exceeds ten, the minimum total number of adults (either gender) needed to supervise the group are as follows:
 - Eleven to fifteen youth require at least five adults.
 - Sixteen to twenty youth require at least six adults.
 - Twenty-one to twenty-five youth require at least seven adults.
 - Twenty-six to thirty youth require at least eight adults.
 - (d) If the above minimum levels of supervision cannot be achieved, the activity must be canceled and the church cannot be held responsible for any deposit fees which are lost as a result of that cancellation.
 - (2) Boys and girls must sleep in separate areas from each other and each group must have at least the minimum number of adults (Supervisors or Chaperones) of the same gender present as noted in 6 a) (2) above.

C. DISCIPLINE

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

1. No youth in any FCCR youth class, event, or trip will be disciplined by the use of any form of physical punishment.
2. Supervisors and Chaperones are expected to listen to the FCCR youth they are supervising, and clearly communicate expectations of appropriate behavior to them.
3. An exception to the Two Adult Rule is as follows: If a child's behavior is disruptive in the church school, one of the two adult teachers in the classroom may leave it briefly to seek the Christian Education Director or the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) to come to the classroom.

D. *APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES AND BEHAVIOR*

Activities that involve intimate physical contact are not suitable recreational activities for FCCR youth programs. Smoking, drinking of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, and improper language are not allowed.

E. *YOUTH PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION DOCUMENTATION*

The Director of Christian Education will obtain all signed forms and documentation required by this *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* and maintain them in a secure location in the FCCR as determined by the Christian Education Committee. Such forms and documentation include, but are not limited to:

1. Medical Release Forms
2. Information on authorized FCCR youth fellowship events, youth and family events, field trips, and overnight events
3. Day Field Trip and Overnight Event Consent Forms
4. Record of the authorization of Supervisors, Chaperones, Authorized Adult Guests, and Authorized Drivers for Authorized FCCR youth events and trips.
5. Copies of these current documents for each Authorized Driver: Driver's License, Car Registration, and Car Insurance Policy summary page.

F. *OUTLINE OF YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES*

Length of time a volunteer needs to be involved with FCCR or another ecumenically associated church before supervising youth:	At least six months.
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<p>Criminal background (CORI) checks conducted automatically for these positions every two years.</p>	<p>All paid church staff employees, including all settled ministers, youth group supervisors, chaperones, church school teachers, nursery teachers, confirmation class teachers and mentors, authorized teaching assistants, authorized drivers, authorized adults guests, all adults on FCCR overnight events CORI'd beforehand</p>
<p>Signed statement of compliance with Summary of Youth Protection Policies will be required of:</p>	<p>Anyone having regular, direct contact with children, any organization renting/using the FCCR facility, any individual in possession of a FCCR key</p>
<p>Key Policy</p>	<p>Key holders must be CORI'd and authorized by the Office Manager And approved by the Trustees. Keys distributed and records maintained by the Office Manager.</p>
<p>Two Adult Rule</p>	<p>Two Adults (not married to each other) must be with a child who is not their own or a relative, at all times unless they have parental consent</p>
<p>Five Years Older Rule</p>	<p>Supervisors, Chaperones must be 5 years older than the oldest child in their class or group</p>
<p>Minimum Age Rule</p>	<p>Helpers in Nursery, Church School must be at least thirteen years old, unless authorized by the Christian Ed Director</p>
<p>Medical Release Forms required for:</p>	<p>FCCR Overnight Events</p>
<p>Authorization of the CEC needed for:</p>	<p>All FCCR Youth Fellowship Events, Day Field Trips, Overnight Events</p>
<p>Christian Ed Director must authorize:</p>	<p>All supervisors, chaperones, drivers, and adult guest in the FCCR youth activities</p>

<p>Adult to child supervision ratios:</p>	<p>Two Adult Rule- all FCCR youth activities Additional requirements as follows, with adults below being Chaperones and the Five Years Older Rule Applies Preschool- Grade 4 -1 adult every 4 youths Grade 5 - age 17 -1 adult every 6 youths 1-5 male youth - at least 2 male adults 1-5 female youth - at least 2 female adults 11-15 youth total- at least 5 adults 16-20 youth total- at least 6 adults 21-25 youth total- at least 7 adults 26 -30 youth total- at least 8 adults</p>
<p>Drivers for FCCR Day Field Trips or Overnight Events</p>	<p>Must be 25 years or older Must have a safe driving record Must have car insurance</p>
<p>Discipline</p>	<p>Positive, non-physical discipline only</p>
<p>Appropriate activities and behavior</p>	<p>No activities involving intimate physical contact. No smoking, drinking of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, or improper language.</p>

G. SUMMARY OF YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES

1. The following policies must be followed by all:
 - a) Persons who are active in the First Congregational Church of Rockport, MA of the UCC
 - b) Outside groups which are authorized by the church to use its facilities
2. Suspected Child Abuse must be reported
 - a) The First Congregational Church of Rockport, MA of the UCC requires that anyone who suspects that child abuse has taken place on the church's property or in a church sponsored event off the church's property must report it immediately to the church's CEC.
 - b) Upon receiving such a report, the Christian Education Committee will immediately make an oral report of the incident to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF).
 - c) The initial reporter will also be required to make out two written reports about the incident, one to the church within 24 hours and one to DCF within 48 hours.

- d) Members of the Christian Education Committee can assist with those reports.
- 3. The Two Adult Rule must be followed
 - a) There must always be a minimum of two adults (not married to each other) present with a child (or children) under 18 years of age in the church facility or at any church sponsored event off the church's property.
 - b) The only exceptions to this Two Adult Rule are that an adult may be alone with a child (or children) if:
 - (1) The adult is the child's parent, other relative or legal guardian
 - (2) The adult has permission from the parent or legal guardian to be alone with the child
 - (3) The adult is serving as an Authorized Driver for the church
 - (4) One of two adult teachers in a classroom must leave the classroom briefly to locate a child's parent or guardian, or to assist a child, for example, a child who becomes ill or who needs to go to the bathroom.
- 4. Five Years Older Rule

Classroom, nursery, and youth group Supervisors and Chaperones must be five years older than the oldest participant in the class, group, or activity they supervise.

5. Appropriate Activities and Behavior

Activities that involve inappropriate physical contact are not suitable recreational activities. Smoking, drinking of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, and improper language are not allowed.

6. Medical Release Forms

All youth must have a signed Medical Release Form on file with the FCCR before they can participate in an FCCR Day Field Trip or Overnight Event.

V. SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

A. *REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND RESPONSE POLICY*

1. Allegations of child abuse must be immediately reported to the CEC and the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF).
2. Members of the FCCR church community, including FCCR volunteers working with youth, are morally obligated to report reasonable suspicions of child abuse.
3. Concern to maintain confidentiality should not keep anyone from making such a report to the FCCR and the DCF, because children are vulnerable and have an overriding right to the protection of the FCCR and the DCF.
4. All allegations, reports, and DCF rulings on child abuse must be handled with respect for the dignity of everyone involved and with regard for their privacy as appropriate.

5. All information obtained and all actions taken during the process of reporting allegations of child abuse and making responses after those reports have been submitted must be documented.
6. The CEC will obtain all such documents and maintain them in a secure location in the FCCR as determined by the CEC and approved by the Trustees.
7. All FCCR employees, volunteers, and the CEC will cooperate fully with DCF and police investigations of suspected child abuse.
8. In performing its duties in this Section V, Suspected Child Abuse of this *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*, the Christian Education Director shall, as indicated herein, seek legal counsel from the FCCR's insurance provider.

B. MANDATED REPORTS

1. Mandated Reporter: a person who, by virtue of their profession or position, is required by the Massachusetts Child Protection Act *Mass. Gen. L. c. 119 Section 1 et seq.* to report to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) all reasonable suspicions of child abuse. The law applies to these categories of church personnel:
 - a) Clergy members, ordained or licensed ministers;
 - b) Persons who perform official duties on behalf of a church that are recognized as the duties of clergy, ordained or licensed ministers; and
 - c) Persons employed by a church (but not church volunteers) who supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel children on a regular basis.
2. The FCCR interprets the Massachusetts Child Protection Act *Mass. Gen. L. c. 119 Section 1 et seq.* to mean that people who serve in the following employed or volunteer FCCR positions are such Mandated Reporters:
 - d) Minister
 - e) Director of Christian Education
 - f) Director of Music
 - g) Church Organist
 - h) Children's Choir Director
 - i) Deacons
 - j) Sexton
3. FCCR and DCF Reports:
 - a) FCCR Oral Report: a verbal report which is made immediately to the FCCR CEC when child abuse is suspected. If a member of the CEC is not available, the report is made to the FCCR Minister or Director of Christian Education.
 - b) DCF Oral Report: a verbal report which a member of the CEC makes by

telephone to the Massachusetts Department of Child and Families as soon as a report of suspected child abuse is received. If a member of the CEC is not available, the report is made by the FCCR Minister or Christian Education Director.

- c) FCCR Safe Child Incident Report: a written report that must be submitted to the CEC within 24 hours after a DCF Oral Report of suspected child abuse was made. The FCCR Safe Child Incident Report must contain all the information necessary to complete a DCF Mandated Report on that suspected abuse. The person who originally reported the suspected abuse will make out this Safe Child Incident Report in conjunction with the CEC, or in conjunction with the FCCR Minister or DCE if a member of the CEC is not available to help. The CEC will maintain this report in its secure files.
- d) DCF Mandated Report: a written report that must be submitted to the Department of Social Services within 48 hours after that suspected abuse was reported orally to DCF. The completion and submission of this Mandated Report will be overseen by the CEC or by the FCCR Minister or CED if a member of the CEC is not available. The CEC will receive and maintain a copy of this report in its secure files.
- e) Individual DCF Reports: an individual not on the CEC may choose to contact DCF directly to submit their own DCF Oral Report and/or DCF Mandated Report regarding a particular allegation of child abuse. In such situations, the CEC will offer to help the individual fill out the DCF Mandated Report, but that individual must be identified on that Mandated Report as the reporter. Also, the CEC will ask such individuals to fill out an FCCR Safe Child Incident Report and submit it to the CEC to maintain in its secure files.

C. REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

- 1. Reports are to be made in the following sequence:
 - a) Ensure the Child's Safety. When a person suspects that a child has been abused, the very first priority is to be sure that child is as safe as possible, physically and emotionally. 911 should be called if the injury or situation seems to require immediate attention from medical, police, or fire fighting personnel.
 - b) Obligation to Make Oral Reports.
 - (1) Once the safety of the child has been ensured, the person suspecting the abuse, or their designee, such as the Minister, the DCE, or any other Mandated Reporter, should immediately report the suspected abuse to a member of the CEC.
 - (2) If a member of the CEC is not available, the report should be made to the FCCR Minister or DCF. The names and phone numbers of the members of the CEC are in the Church Office.

2. Once CEC members, or in their absence the FCCR Minister or DCF, receive a report of suspected child abuse, they will immediately:
 - a) Seek to inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the allegation of their child's abuse, unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) have been alleged to be the abuser(s).
 - b) Submit by telephone a DCF Oral Report of the alleged abuse to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). The phone number for making oral reports to DCF is posted in the Church Office.
 - c) Inform and seek legal counsel from the FCCR's Trustee's, including counsel regarding any public statements about the situation which will be made to the congregation as a whole or to the media.
 - d) All actions taken in accordance with this section of the FCCR *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* must be documented and given to the CEC to maintain in its secure files.
3. Inform Appropriate FCCR Leaders As Needed
 - a) It is the policy of the FCCR that if a DCF Oral Report of alleged child abuse is made against any FCCR employee or volunteer, that employee or volunteer must be immediately removed from all contact with children in FCCR sponsored programs, at least until DCF rules on the legitimacy of the allegation made and on whether or not it is appropriate for that FCCR employee or volunteer to have contact with children.
 - b) It is vital that the acts within our FCCR mentioned in this section, be handled with as much discretion, fairness, and respect for all involved as possible, and with the recognition that DCF still needs to investigate and render its judgment on the allegation made.
 - c) If a member of the CEC is not immediately available to carry out the CEC duties prescribed in this section, then those duties will be carried out as soon as possible, by either the FCCR Minister or DCF, as appropriate in the situation.
4. Once a DCF Oral Report of alleged child abuse is made against an FCCR employee or volunteer, the CEC committee must immediately inform the Trustees or the supervisor of that employee or volunteer, that such a DCF Oral Report has been made and that they, in their supervisory role, must immediately remove that employee or volunteer from all contact with children in FCCR sponsored programs, at least until DCF rules on the allegation.
5. In addition to the above, if a DCF Oral Report of alleged child abuse is made against an FCCR employee or volunteer whose ecclesiastical standing is held by an Association of the United Church of Christ, such as an FCCR Minister, Commissioned Minister, or Supply Minister, the CEC will immediately inform the Chairperson of the Diaconate, who, in turn, will consult with the Conference Minister of the MACUCC about any additional steps which may be taken by the FCCR and/or the UCC Association which holds the individual 's ecclesiastical standing.
6. All actions taken in accordance with this section of the FCCR *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* must be documented and given to the CEC to maintain in its secure files.

7. Submit the FCCR Safe Child Incident Report Within 24 Hours
 - a) The person who originally suspected the child abuse should, in conjunction with the CEC, complete and submit the FCCR Safe Child Incident Report to the CEC within 24 hours after the DCF Oral Report of the suspected child abuse was made.
 - b) If a member of the CEC is not available to help with that Incident Report, that person should complete and submit it in conjunction with the FCCR Minister or DCF.
 - c) That Safe Child Incident Report must contain all the information necessary to complete a DCF Mandated Report on the suspected abuse.
 - d) All actions taken in accordance with this section of the FCCR *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* must be documented and given to the SCC to maintain in its secure files.
8. Submit the DCF Mandated Report Within 48 Hours
 - a) Within 48 hours after the suspected abuse of a child was reported orally to DCF, a DCF Mandated Report on that suspected abuse must be completed and submitted to DCF.
 - b) The completion and submission of this Mandated Report will be overseen by the CEC or by the FCCR Minister or DCF if a member of the CEC is not available.
 - c) All actions taken in accordance with this section of the FCCR *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* must be documented and given to the CEC to maintain in its secure files.
 - d) Individual DCF Reports May Be Made
9. An individual not on the CEC may choose to contact DCF directly to submit their own DCF Oral Report and DCF Mandated Report regarding a particular allegation of child abuse.
10. In such situations, the CEC will offer to help the individual fill out the DCF Mandated Report, but that individual must be identified on that Mandated Report as the reporter.
11. Also, the CEC will ask such individuals to fill out an FCCR Safe Child Incident Report and submit it to the CEC to maintain in its secure files.

D. RESPONSES, DCF RULINGS, AND DOCUMENTATION AFTER REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

1. Responses After Reporting Suspected Child Abuse
 - a) All allegations, reports, and DCF rulings on child abuse must be handled with respect for the dignity of everyone involved and with regard for their privacy as appropriate.
 - b) All FCCR employees, volunteers, and the CEC will cooperate fully with DCF and police investigations of suspected child abuse.

c) Pastoral support will be offered to all parties within the FCCR who are involved in a suspected child abuse situation connected with the FCCR, including those who have made the complaint and/or abuse reports, the accused, the families of both, and the congregation. Decisions about how this support will be given will be made by the church's ministerial staff in consultation with the CEC and the Trustees, as appropriate.

d) Once a DCF Oral Report of alleged child abuse is made, the CEC will immediately inform and seek legal counsel from the FCCR's Trustees, including counsel regarding any public statements about the situation which will be made to the congregation as a whole or to the media.

2. DCF Rulings On Allegations Made Against FCCR Employees or Volunteers

a) When the CEC receives a DCF ruling on an allegation of child abuse made against an FCCR Employee or Volunteer, the CEC will immediately convey that ruling to the Trustees, or supervisor which oversees that employee or volunteer, so that appropriate steps can be taken with that individual in accordance with the DCF ruling and the *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*.

b) In addition, when the CEC receives a DCF ruling on an allegation of child abuse made against an FCCR employee or volunteer whose ecclesiastical standing is held by an Association of the United Church of Christ, the CEC will immediately inform the Chairperson of the Diaconate, who, in turn, will both convey that ruling to and consult with the UCC Association which holds the individual's ecclesiastical standing and/or by the FCCR in accordance with its *Safe Church Policies and Procedures, Human Resources Policy and Procedures*.

c) Any actions taken in accordance with this section of the *FCCR Safe Church Policies and Procedures* must be documented and given to the Board of Trustees and to the CEC to maintain in its secure files.

3. Documentation

All information obtained and all actions taking during the process of reporting allegations of child abuse and making responses after those reports have been submitted, must be carefully documented and signed, including dates, times, and locations of all activities and meetings; the names of the persons present; any decisions or conclusions made; and any further action to be taken. The CEC will obtain all such documents and maintain them in a secure location in the FCCR as determined by the CEC and approved by the Trustees.

VI.

CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION (CORI) POLICY & APPEAL PROCEDURES

CORI request forms are on file. The form contains fields of information that must be collected to provide CHSB with additional information for further research should FCCR have difficulty assessing if the record can be attributed to an applicant. Additionally, the new regulations mandate that the applicant's identity must be verified with a government issued photographic form of identification. Certified agencies are required to document this verification.

There will be a "Response Team" of three individuals which will review the CORI. The Pastor, Christian Education Director and one member of the cabinet will serve as the Response Team. To ensure that there will be both male and female representatives on the Response Team, the cabinet will choose one member of the cabinet to serve on the team at its first meeting of the year. The Response Team will familiarize itself with the terms of this policy as well as the established procedures of FCCR for dealing with complaints of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment against any employee(s) or volunteer(s) in leadership positions(s). In accordance with the *FCCR Safe Church Policies and Procedures* and applicable state requirements, FCCR will file a CORI Individual Agreement of Non Disclosure and Statement of CORI Certification Compliance form for all members having access to and reviewing the CORI.

The following lists the required procedure should the CORI reflect a criminal record:

- notify the applicant of the potential adverse decision based on the CORI;
- provide a copy of the CORI to the applicant and this *FCCR Safe Church Policies and Procedures*;
- provide a copy of the CHSB's information concerning the process in correcting a criminal record;
- inform the applicant which part of the criminal record appears to make him ineligible;
- provide the applicant with an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the CORI upon receipt of additional documentation from the applicant and/or the CHSB;
- review the information with the applicant and inform him/her of the decision; and
- document all steps taken to comply with this section.

Attached are the related CORI and Application and Disclosure forms.

VII. FCCR COVENANT AGREEMENT

The covenants between persons responsible for the care of children and youth within the First Congregational Church of Rockport require integrity and truthfulness for the spiritual health of the individuals participating and the whole church. The first priority of a person responsible for the care of children and youth is to nurture the spiritual health, well-being, faith, and safety of all the children and youth involved in its programs. To this end, I as a caregiver for the children and/or youth, pledge the following:

- To promote peace and safety while nurturing the wellbeing and faith of every child and youth involved in any church program.
- To be respectful and accepting of the individuality, privacy, and belongings of every child and youth involved in any church program.
- To hold in confidence anything communicated in confidence while involved in any church program. Confidentiality means that no private information shall be passed along except when a

child or youth's safety and well-being are threatened. If a child's well-being or safety is at stake, I will pass the information on to the Director of Christian Education or the minister.

- Not to have sexual contact with any child or youth. This includes but not limited to any inappropriate touch.
- Not to use inappropriate language (swearing; or sexually harassing, or suggestive language). This includes any communication i.e.; body language, direct expression or intimation, of a sexual or threatening nature that may cause another to feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Not to use any illegal drug or alcohol while participating with any child or youth in a Christian education program.
- To nurture my own spiritual well-being by regular participation in the life of the church through worship and prayer; to be responsible for my own personal reactions and feelings in the process of caring for any child or youth, utilizing the support and wisdom of the Christian Education Director and minister as necessary.
- To complete a CORI and read the *FCCR Safe Church Policies and Procedures*.

Signature

Date