

MISSION STATEMENT

“The one thing I ask of the Lord-the thing I seek most-is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD’s perfections and meditating in his Temple. For He will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock.”
Psalm 27: 4-5

“And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who trust in me to lose faith, it would be better for that person to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around the neck.”

Matthew 18:5-6

PURPOSE

As a church we are called upon by God to care for and provide a safe place, a sanctuary for our children, youth, and seniors. These people and people of all ages have been entrusted to our care. Our church should be a place where someone can grow in his or her faith and without fear. This policy and its procedures also protect those who have the responsibilities as leaders and teachers.

In the case of an emergency, an act of nature, fire, or problem with the church building, we need to have documentation of who is in the building and where. This will not only help us but any emergency personnel that may be called to the church building.

We are not stating that we have a problem or imply lack of trust; our hope is to protect our children, youth, seniors, our leaders, teachers, and the church body in its entirety. We have set in motion guidelines and documentation to provide a record if an incident should occur. Any person can become a vulnerable child/adult in the right circumstances and we want to ensure we are the comfort and refuge of God’s love to all at all times.

SCREENING

1. Any person wanting to work with our children and youth (18 years and under) will have been a member of our congregation for at least 6 months.

2. A CORI request form will be completed by anyone, who has not previously been checked, wanting to work with the children and youth for any event.
3. Upon return of the CORI inquiry, any offense that involves the safety or reckless endangerment of anyone, or drug use, will be taken into further consideration and prayer. We believe in the redeeming power and grace of Jesus Christ, but these prior offenses could imply danger to our youth. At the very least, if approved, the volunteer will require the presence and cooperation of one or more other adults in all situations.
4. Any CORI inquiry revealing sexual misconduct or sexual offense of any kind will be denied. Any offense that involves a minor will be denied.
5. Any CORI returned with a negative result other than those mentioned above will be decided on a case by case basis.
6. All CORI's will be updated every 3 years and kept for at least 5 years. CORI's will be kept in a locked box. A list of all CORI approved applicants will be compiled and updated as needed.

PROCEDURE

1. Registration/Emergency cards and any other paperwork must be completed by a custodial parent/guardian and returned to the Sunday School Superintendent or adult in charge of the activity.
2. The Sunday School Wing or place of activity will be checked by an adult before the activity begins.
3. Parents/Guardians will need to sign their child in and out of the church for youth and children activities, including Sunday School. Children that are in the 6th grade or older, may sign for themselves if they have a signed permission slip from their parents. If a sibling is driving a younger sibling, they may sign for the younger sibling if they have prior authorization from their parents.
4. All children will be signed in and out by the person in charge of the activity.
5. We will strive to have 2 adults in our Sunday school classes or at each activity involving the children or youth. If 2 adults are not in attendance, the classroom door shall remain open while the class is in session. The Sunday School Superintendent, designated lay person, or pastor shall check in periodically and be near enough to quickly respond.
6. All documentation will be kept in a binder on the bookshelf in the Church Office.
7. Occasional CPR training will be sought and/or offered as we strive to have at least one CPR certified volunteer at each event.

8. When anyone visits a youth or vulnerable elder adult outside of an official church function, the two-adult policy or other safety measure (recording device or gathering in a public place) will be our standard.

9. Meetings and classes and visits will only occur in open rooms or rooms that have glass windows in the door. We are thankful for a church building constructed with safe sanctuaries in mind.

REPORTING/INCIDENT REPORT

If an accident or problem should occur involving a minor whether it is a cut, scrape, medical emergency, or allegation of abuse, the following steps will be taken:

1. The church will call 911 if the incident is a medical emergency, the parents/guardians if not on site, the person in charge of the activity, and the Pastor.
2. A written incident report must be filled out within 24 hours of any situation.

If the situation is a type of abuse, steps #3-6 will be taken.

3. The person who is first notified and/or informed of the allegation of abuse will immediately notify the pastor (if the incident does not involve the pastor), the lay leader, and church council chairperson. Along with the children and youth ministry coordinators, these church leaders will then form the response team.

4. The Charlton Police Station Department will be notified at [508] 248-2250 and a report will be filed with them. They will guide the response team as to what forms need to be filed and determine who needs to be notified. This will be done on a case by case basis.

a. In the case of a child 17 or younger an 51A report will be filed with the Department of Children and Families.

b. In the case of an elder incident a report will be filed with Tri-Valley Elder Services.

5. The New England Conference shall be notified of all major incidents [minor cuts & scrapes need not be reported]. Any guidance provided by conference resources will be followed on a case-by-case basis.

a. Pastor Heather Bailes Baker, Coordinator of the New England Conference Response Team at [508] 428-2811

b. Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar- Area Bishop at [978] 682-7555 x 250.

c. Reverend Megan Stowe- District Superintendent at [508] 853-1895.

6. All incidents shall be kept confidential. However, in the case that there are inquiries made by church members, newspapers, or the community, the pastor shall be the spokesperson for the church. All such inquiries will be directed to the pastor. If the allegation of abuse involves the pastor, the lay leader will take the pastor's role in the response team.

7. Any incident involving a senior or other person will follow the same procedure. (We strive, as well, to follow the same basic guidance in regards to children and youth for older members as well to preserve the safety and comfort of all persons.)

All incidents shall be kept confidential

In conclusion, the above steps are in place for the safety of the children and all people involved in any situation whether it be an incident, accident, medical emergency, problem with the building, or disaster.

Children are our present, our future, our hope, our teachers, and our inspiration. As a church it is our duty to provide a safe environment [sanctuary] for them to come to learn, understand, grow, and love God.