

SAFE CHURCH SAFE CONDUCT POLICY

St. John United Church of Christ - Freeport, IL

1. Statement of Policy

But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Mathew 19:14

As a community of Christian faith, St. John United Church of Christ (St. John UCC) is committed to creating and maintaining ministry programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, Authorized Ministers, staff, and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation.

The congregation of St. John UCC supports principles of safe conduct, which include individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the congregation in fulfillment of the standards set by our Christian faith.

St. John UCC strongly opposes and prohibits sexual exploitation, sexual harassment or any form of exploitation or abuse of others regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or mental capacity. It is the intention of our congregation to affirmatively nurture good behavior, and to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, as necessary, discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Every member of the congregation – whether Authorized Minister, elected or appointed leader, employee, or volunteer – has a role to lead those who look to them individually for guidance, to monitor their behavior and redirect them as they cross boundaries of safe conduct. Our congregation shall nurture good conduct as demonstrated by personal behaviors that are consistent with our Christian values.

2. Ministerial Conduct

St. John UCC provides our youth and at-risk adults with the highest quality ministry programs available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth and at-risk adults that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success. Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, conduct with youth and at-risk adults is outlined with specific expectations of each person, whether employee or volunteer, as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from St. John UCC. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth and at-risk adults or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously. St. John UCC will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

Each employee or volunteer sharing in the ministry of St. John UCC shall acquire knowledge of the details of this policy and related procedures in order to:

1. Prevent sexual exploitation or sexual harassment of parishioners, employees or others by anyone engaged in ministry on behalf of St. John UCC.
2. Prevent abuse or exploitation of at-risk adults, to include financial exploitation.
3. Prevent abuse or mistreatment of youth including abuse of one youth by another.
4. Demonstrate appropriate physical contact or verbal interaction as defined in this policy and prevent or re-direct inappropriate interaction or physical contact by others.
5. Enforce standards for contact between employees and volunteers, and youth and at-risk adults outside of scheduled programs.
6. Communicate to others and practice guidelines regarding electronic communications and social media.
7. Manage risk of one-on-one contact between employees and volunteers, and youth and at-risk adults.
8. Recognize the importance, and act upon observations or allegations of behavior outside policy boundaries to include personal interactions, use of social media and use of church computers.
9. Understand and accept obligations and know how to report suspected abuse of youth and at-risk adults as required by this policy or as required by the State of Illinois, and cooperate with investigations as may follow.
10. Recognize circumstances of sexual harassment and the obligation and means to report to church leadership.
11. Understand how, by their action or inaction, they individually pose a risk to the church in the form of legal liability or loss of reputation.

Every employee and volunteer shall refrain from using a position of power or authority to exploit an advantage over any other person, regardless of age, capacity, or ability.

Employees and volunteers who are Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ and serving the congregation in any capacity (active, retired, employee, volunteer) shall hold themselves to a higher standard of care with respect to their personal conduct and relationships with the congregation, church staff and volunteers, whether pastoral, administrative or personal in nature. Utmost care and good faith are expected.

3. Application & Qualification

St. John UCC requires that all employment or volunteer candidates who work with youth and at-risk adults to:

1. Complete an application (containing work history; education, and residence history); a self-disclosure statement; and provide a minimum of three references, which shall include both work-related and personal.
2. Undergo a criminal background check through the church's third-party provider.
3. Successfully complete the two-part training program outlined below.

Upon selection, all persons will sign an acknowledgement receipt of the Safe Church / Safe Conduct Policy.

Volunteers shall be active members of the church, or otherwise affiliated with the church, for no less than six months before being permitted to work in programs with youth or at-risk adults.

There shall be no exceptions to this policy, even when candidates come from another church with similar programs.

Interview

St. John UCC requires that all applicants be interviewed during the selection process and prior to employment or volunteer engagement. The purpose of the interview is to determine whether the applicant possesses the skills needed to perform the job requirements and whether the applicant demonstrates characteristics that will uphold the congregation's commitment to a safe environment. The interview will also provide the applicant with information about job responsibilities and expectations.

The chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry program and the staff member of the related program will conduct the interview for each candidate. Each shall employ behavioral interviewing techniques to assess suitability for working with youth, and specifically discuss the church's commitment to protect youth and at-risk adults.

Reference Checks

St. John UCC requires that all applicants submit three references. Reference checks will be conducted for all applicants prior to employment or service in any ministry program. A minimum of three references is required, including two professional and one personal reference. The Leadership Team responsible for the ministry program will conduct telephone interviews with the references. The interview will inform the referent that the applicant is applying for a position with the organization, and will explain that the applicant will have access to a at-risk population.

No offers of employment or permission to volunteer will be given until the required number of references is completed. A completed reference check forms will be maintained in the applicant's personnel file or volunteer file.

Background Checks

St. John UCC requires that all applicants undergo a criminal history and sexual offender registry background check. After the background check has been initiated, provisional employment or volunteer approval may be granted by the chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry and the Senior Pastor until the criminal background results are obtained and reviewed. New employees and volunteers may not work unsupervised with youth or at-risk adults until the background check results are returned.

Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check.

The background check will be performed by a third-party contracted provider and will include the following:

- National multi-state criminal records search;
- National sex offender registry search;
- Social security number trace and alias search; and
- County criminal records search for every county where the applicant has lived or worked for the past 7 years

If the position involves financial management or vehicle transportation, additional components will be added to the background check.

The cost of the background checks will be paid by St. John UCC.

Employment and Volunteer Decisions

A committee of three consisting of one member from the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area, one member of the Safe Church Team and the Senior Pastor shall review each background check and agree that the applicant is eligible for employment or volunteering. In the case of employment, the Human Resources Team will also be part of the review.

Where a criminal record exists, consideration shall be given to:

- Seriousness of the crime;
- Statutes that may legally disqualify the person from working with minors;
- Length of time since the last offense;
- Pattern of criminal activity; and
- Activities the applicant has been involved in since the offense(s) occurred.

Conviction for the following crimes shall be considered barriers to employment or volunteer work with youth:

- Violent crimes;
- Sexual assault;
- Sexual abuse or neglect of a youth or at-risk adult; and
- Drug offenses or driving offenses (depending upon position requirements)

Arrest data are not grounds for disqualification, only convictions. The status or relevance of other crimes will be considered individually.

Following the review, each committee member shall sign and date one of two documents that becomes part of the applicant's personnel file or volunteer file:

*"We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant would be **acceptable** for the position."*

OR

*"We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant is **not acceptable** for the position."*

Confidentiality

At all times, the privacy and security rights of individuals are to be protected with utmost care. The Safe Church Team, along with the staff person acting as administrator for background checks, shall assure that physical means and processes are in place to protect individual rights. Records will be retained in a secure location.

Training

The mission of St. John UCC is first to prevent abuse of youth and at-risk adults. We wish to identify and nurture safe conduct, to lead and to guide through adequate training.

To fulfill our leadership obligation, each new employee and new volunteer shall complete a specific program of training within 30 days of assuming duties. Compliance of training requirements shall be documented by the Safe Church Team and communicated to respective chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area (Faith Formation, Music Ministry, Lay Visitation, etc.).

The Safe Church Team will hold no fewer than two periodic trainings each calendar year, with one held immediately prior to the start of the program year. The training program will contain two aspects. Completion of both aspects is required:

- Organization level, conducted at the periodic training events
- Abuse prevention education, conducted through an online training system

The Safe Church Team will ensure compliance that each employee and volunteer has mastered requirements and provide additional supervision and guidance as required to assure required conduct. The Team will review training records annually, and inform individuals of the need to recertify. Records of compliance shall be maintained by the Safe Church Team and secured in the church office.

4. Monitoring and Supervision

St. John UCC requires each employee or volunteer who is in a position of leadership to regularly supervise and provide leadership in the fulfillment of our congregation's Code of Conduct and Ministry Standards. Our intent is to sustain relationships which encourage employees and volunteers to meet our abuse prevention objectives while being mutually supportive as a team. All must be comfortable in reporting violations of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards to leadership. The objective of monitoring is, first, to protect youth, then to protect staff from false allegations, and to protect the reputation of St. John UCC and its ministry programs.

Concurrently, employees and volunteers are to understand that the performance of their position includes the obligation to observe and report patterns of behavior that violate the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards. In support of a practice of *progressive discipline*, violations of the Code of Conduct and Ministry Standards will be documented by the Safe Church Team

The chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related program shall continuously monitor performance using a variety of techniques including:

1. Scheduled visits;
2. Unannounced random visits at unpredictable times;
3. Spontaneous interviews with youth and at-risk adults;
4. Planned interviews or surveys of youth, at-risk adults, employees, and volunteers;
5. Meeting regularly with individual employees and volunteers;

6. Group supervision meetings;
7. Reviewing site documentation (e.g. progress notes, incident logs, etc.).

The chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related program shall:

1. Monitor computer use and internet use within the bounds of the ministry program
2. Utilize filtering, firewalls and encryption technology to the extent practicable
3. Assure that employees have signed the computer use policy

Monitoring efforts are to be documented and individual employment records annotated as appropriate. Efforts and results shall be reported to the Church Council.

5. Internal Reporting and Feedback

St. John UCC acknowledges that, in ordinary administrative matters, employees and volunteers are expected to address concerns with their immediate supervisors.

However, situations affecting the health and welfare of youth and at-risk adults require a direct and expedited means of communication to executive staff and leadership who can act upon concerns when an observer or victim is uncertain their concerns will be given attention.

When any employee or volunteer observes violations of the Code of Conduct, whether committed by an employee, volunteer, or other person, or observe any other circumstance they find suspicious or feel is inappropriate, or may rise to the level of suspected abuse, they have a right and duty to report it directly to Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related program to which the observation applies. A roster of leadership will be clearly posted and made available at the periodic training sessions

The chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related shall act as Ombudsmen, while respecting and protecting the confidentiality wishes of the observer or victim, if any, shall ascertain with reasonable certainty the relationship of the observer to the incident and the credibility of the information being provided.

The Ombudsmen shall report the circumstances to the Senior Pastor and President of Church Council.

The Senior Pastor and President of Church Council shall call the Safe Church Team together to initiate:

1. investigation of the facts,
2. information sharing and/or corrective action or
3. reporting as may be required by statute.

If for any reason, the observer believes that the primary contact has failed to respond or has not given credibility to the observer, the latter may contact the President of Church Council and the Senior Pastor to report the observation. The observer or victim shall be permitted to report violations of policy or circumstances of abuse with complete anonymously.

6. Congregational Awareness

St. John UCC is committed to a policy of open communication and education for the benefit of the youth, parents, at-risk adults, and guardians served through our ministry programs. Every person is entitled to know what to expect of our ministries, the employees and volunteers who serve them, and to know the related policies and procedures created to protect our mutual ministry together.

To that end, this entire policy shall be posted on the St. John UCC website, www.stjohnuccfreeport.org, under "About Us". The Safe Church Team will ensure that the online documents represent the latest version of this policy.

At the time youth or at-risk adults are enrolled in ministry programs at St. John UCC, parents or guardians shall be provided:

1. A copy of the St. John UCC Code of Conduct, and Ministry Standards;
2. A summary of the content of the orientation to be provided to youth and at-risk adults regarding boundaries and reporting.
3. Information regarding the means to report violations of policy or suspicions of abuse.
4. Information regarding their personal obligation to report suspected abuse as it may exist under the laws of the State of Illinois, and the congregation's commitment to mandatory reporting.
5. An invitation to practice the "open door policy," and visit programs in progress at any time at their convenience.

Each ministry program shall provide an orientation to youth and at-risk adults covering the following subjects:

1. Age-appropriate information about boundaries (with reference to the Code of Conduct);
2. How to protect themselves from abuse; and
3. How to report boundary violations or incidents of abuse.

The orientation shall be provided:

1. Individually at the time a youth or at-risk adult begins participation in a ministry of the church; or
2. As a group at the opening of a term, or event; and
3. Annually when a ministry program is regularly recurring.

Parents and guardians shall be invited to receive the same abuse prevention training as provided to employees and volunteers, and notified when the periodic training events are offered.

7. Responding

St. John UCC is committed to prompt, professional and measured response to all circumstances, which may range from documenting violations of these policies and procedures to responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse.

We are committed to:

1. seriously consider the concerns of victims;
2. undertake a fair investigation of policy violations;
3. protect the confidentiality of parties involved in investigation;
4. report to as required and cooperate fully with public authorities; and
5. communicate fully with the congregation within the bounds of individual rights to confidentiality.

Every member of the Congregation, whether Authorized Minister, elected or appointed leader, staff, or volunteer is shall fulfill this commitment as part of their respective duties in all parts of congregational life.

Responsibility of Employees and Volunteers

Each employee or volunteer is obligated to fulfill the Code of Conduct and Ministry Standards both by living the standard and helping others to do the same.

Each employee or volunteer is obligated to guide and gently correct others as they would in a circumstance of high personal risk. When another person, regardless of status, rank or power, commits a violation of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards, the observer must report the violation to the supervisor of the ministry program, or the next level of authority if necessary.

Reporting responsibility includes incidents of youth-on-youth sexual activity, dangerous behaviors, sexual harassment of any kind, bullying of any kind, exploitation of any person, or circumstances which rise to the level of abuse requiring action by a mandatory reporter.

Responsibility of Church Leaders

St. John UCC expects that all employees and volunteers – and Authorized Ministers and elected or appointed leaders especially – will relate to each other in a cordial and professional manner. They will support each other in matters of safe conduct and encourage and mentor each other in their supervision.

Each person acting in a leadership capacity in the congregation (Leader) is required to fulfill the standards for Monitoring & Supervision along with the Code of Conduct and Ministry Standards. Leaders shall foster safe conduct by example and by correcting, mentoring and counseling followed by progressive discipline. Whether upon direct observation or as a result of reports from others, each Leader shall take affirmative steps to correct behavior or enforce policies.

Each Leader shall document by notes in an individual file actions taken to counsel and correct individuals to include verbal warnings or written notices.

At such time as verbal warnings are found to be ineffective and a written notice is required in order to correct behavior, each leader shall draft the notice with the guidance of the chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related program. After such notice has been acknowledged, a Leader may proceed to a higher level of supervision if they feel there is a conflict of interest created by another relationship such as family ties.

At such time as warnings, verbal and written, are deemed unsuccessful, and termination from ministry, employment or volunteer status is required, a termination letter shall be issued only with the authority and over the signature of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related program.

A Leader may be expected to recuse themselves from the reporting and disciplinary process in situations where there appears to be a conflict as a result of family ties or outside-of-church relationships. Leaders are still a mandatory reporter in the understanding of St. John UCC.

Mandatory Reporters

St. John UCC understands that every person involved with the ministry programs of the congregation are considered mandatory reporters by the congregation.

All Authorized Ministers, elected or appointed leaders, employees, and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. They should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. They will:

- a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
- b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youth and at-risk adults against abuse.
- c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
- d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

Authorized Minister, elected or appointed leaders, staff, and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, adults, or youth to the and the President of Church Council and Senior Pastor.

If the concern or complaint involves Authorized Ministers, the report will be made to the President of Church Council and Senior Pastor (unless the complaint involves the Senior Pastor), and the Ministry Team of the Illinois Conference UCC. The Illinois Conference UCC can be reached by calling (708) 344-4470).

St. John UCC cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. All Authorized Ministers, employees, or volunteers shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.

Other Reportable Behaviors

While the State has defined abuse for the purpose of child protection statutes and mandatory reporting, other kinds of behaviors occur which are outside the bounds of safe conduct and to which St. John UCC requires a response. The following circumstances constitute reportable abuse which require response to include counseling, correction, progressive discipline and termination.

1. Youth-on-youth sexual activity;
2. Dangerous behaviors (hazing, truth or dare, drinking, etc.);
3. Bullying, whether youth-on-youth or adult-on-youth;
4. Exploitation of an at-risk adult, whether physically, mentally or financially.

All such activity shall be reported by Employees/Volunteers or Leaders in the same manner as any violation of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards. In the event of out-of-program circumstances where there is not an identifiable leader, reports shall be made to the Senior Pastor or President of Church Council.

Other Disciplinary Processes

Other behaviors not necessarily involving youth or at-risk adults, or which may not be considered strictly illegal, are subject to other disciplinary practices as may be set out in governing documents of the congregation or of the denomination. Behaviors subject to other adjudication may include but are not limited to:

1. Sexual harassment, whether among employees or volunteers;
2. Sexual exploitation;
3. Professional boundary violations by employees or Authorized Ministers;
4. Sexual relationships between an Authorized Minister and a minor even when permitted by law.

All such activity shall be reported by employees and volunteers in the same manner as any violation of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards. In the event of out-of-program circumstances where there is not an identifiable Leader, reports shall be made to the Senior Pastor or President of Church Council.

Notification of Parents and Guardians

St. John UCC understands that the safety of its ministry programs is created in partnership with parents and guardians. A youth or at-risk adult may be party to an incident either as an initiator or as the victim. Whether the person is initiator or victim may not be clear in all circumstances, such as a youth-on-youth incident. And violation of policy does not necessarily create a victim. While notification of parents or guardians of such circumstances may be warranted, utmost care in communication is required.

Therefore, an employee or volunteer, having knowledge of an incident which warrants communication to a parent or guardian shall first advise the chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related program. A communications plan will be developed and agreed immediately and agreed to by those involved in communicating with a parent or guardian. While communicating with a parent or guardian, and **being mindful of the importance of timely communication**, care shall be given to assessing:

1. The specific facts;
2. Whether a disciplinary or termination process is required;
3. Whether a youth or at-risk adult should be dismissed from a program (requiring notification of other parents/guardians);
4. Whether mandatory reporting is a factor;
5. Who shall and in what manner communicate with the parents/guardian;
6. Whether the pastoral staff should be involved in the communication;
7. Tentative remedial steps to prevent a further incident.

Notification of parents shall not be delayed when immediate medical care is required.

Cooperation with Investigations

St. John UCC expects and requires the cooperation of all employees and volunteers in the investigation of violations of the Code of Conduct, Ministry Standards or other misconduct, including a complainant, witness, and the accused offender. We may interview these individuals privately and take oral and/or written statements from them. Any person who fails to cooperate with such an investigation or to provide complete and truthful information may be subject to disciplinary action.

Victim Needs

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of St. John UCC is to be responsive to the needs of victims within the constraints or obligations imposed under insurance contracts. In general, we will attend to the immediate needs of victims by providing support and pastoral care.

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

Responding to Media

St. John UCC believes in transparent communication involving any alleged incident of abuse within its ministry programs. However, media publicity following an incident of abuse or exploitation may be detrimental to the reputations of individuals, the members of the congregation, and St. John UCC.

Without intending ever to evade the media, contacts with media must be managed and conducted only by a person specifically designated by the Church Council to represent the church. No other person(s) may speak on behalf of the church. Unless designated differently by the Church Council in a particular circumstance, the exclusive spokespersons for the church shall be the Senior Pastor and the President of Church Council.

Prior to speaking to media, the Senior Pastor and the President of Church Council shall contact and consult with Illinois Conference UCC Legal Counsel, to obtain an understanding of appropriate statements or admissions and issues of privacy that may apply to the situation.

The Senior Pastor and the President of Church Council *shall give immediate* consideration to securing Insurance Board media relations and crisis management resources. Considering the speed of news cycles, a prompt determination is required, erring on the side of seeking help.

8. Administrative Practices

Reporting to Leadership

St. John UCC affirms that each ministry program of the congregation is directly responsible to the Church Council to report activities and developments which may have a bearing on the well-being of a member of the congregation or its constituents, or the reputation of the church, its ministry programs, and the congregation. The Leader of each ministry program shall report directly to the chair of the Leadership Team responsible for the ministry area and the staff member of the related program incidences of suspicious or inappropriate interactions (adult-youth; youth-youth; adult - at-risk adult), sexual activity between youth, and allegations of abuse or violations of professional boundaries.

Ministry Standards

Ministry programs subject to this standard shall include: music, education/faith formation, counseling, pre-school, day care, Sunday school, nursery, sports, mission activity in which youth or at-risk adults are constituents, or off-site activity in which youth and at-risk participate.

No new ministry or program may be created in the name of St. John UCC without the expressed written consent of the Church Council, after consideration of the benefits to the church, intended constituents of the program, financial viability, the risks attendant to the activity and methods to be employed to manage risk.

Each ministry program of the church, based upon its activities, participants and constituent interests, shall establish standards governing its activities, to include such details as age eligibility, safety practices, training of staff, documentation, etc. Such standards shall be consistent with and not in conflict with the church's ministry standards.

When ministry programs are subject to State regulation (for example, day care, pre-school) such regulations shall constitute minimum requirements. Without creating unnecessary duplication, Ministry Standards shall apply in addition to regulatory requirements.

Building Use

Prior to use of church facilities by an outside organizations (lessees) to conduct activities equivalent to those sited above, and whether or not rent or contributions are provided to the St. John UCC (lessor), there shall be an evaluation of whether the organization has established sufficient standards to be regarded as a competent partner in ministry.

A lease or use agreement shall be required with the organization, which lease shall cite fulfillment of the organization's written or statutory standards as a condition of continued occupancy of church property. The use agreement shall contain terms requiring that "lessee hold harmless, defend and indemnify lessor for claims arising out of its occupancy of and activities on lessor's property" (or equivalent language).

The organization shall be required to demonstrate maintenance of insurance, to include personal property, workers compensation, general liability and professional liability coverages that may apply to the activity (for example, sexual misconduct liability, professional counseling liability, educators professional liability).

9. Monitoring Compliance with Standards

St. John UCC is committed to maintaining an atmosphere of safety in all ministry programs through the application of this policy. The success and strength of this policy is not created by its words, but by the actions of our employees and volunteers who must carry it out. While the policy generally prescribes safe conduct principles, each person is called upon to document that they are engaged in achieving the objectives of the policy.

From time to time employees and volunteers will be required to re-direct, correct and remediate individuals who have not maintained the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards. While violations of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards, do not constitute an incident of suspected abuse requiring statutory reporting, they do require a response.

In the aftermath of an incident of suspected abuse or a significant violation of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards, it may be necessary for the church and its leadership to defend their actions which support this policy. Therefore, every individual employee and volunteer shares in the obligation to regularly observe and document their good management.

Following the pattern of good employment practices, Leaders shall follow a process of “progressive discipline” in supervisory relationships with both employees and constituents. This process recognizes that an isolated violation of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards may not be intended or malicious; the first transgression may simply indicate the failure to properly train. Nevertheless, repeated violations cannot be tolerated.

Each Leader shall employ progressive discipline, and maintain records of both monitoring and disciplinary activity. (Monitoring activity is described above under Monitoring & Supervision.) As required elsewhere in this policy, reports shall be provided to supervisors and the Board which shall document regular monitoring activity and that steps in “progressive discipline” have been taken. While in most situations “progressive discipline” will be the normal process, it is understood that an egregious violation of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards may require immediate termination of an employee or volunteer, subject to the conditions for termination specified in this policy.

End of Safe Church / Safe Conduct Policy, Version 2017-9-1A