

SAFE CHILDCARE POLICY

Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Brentwood-Kingston

Biblical Foundation

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." Matthew 19:14

"Whoever welcome one such child in my name welcomes me." Matthew 18:5

Words of Introduction

As a community of Christian faith, Pilgrim United Church of Christ is committed to creating a community and maintaining program, facilities in which members, friends, staff and volunteer can worship, learn and work together in safety and an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. This is especially true for children and youth under the age of eighteen.

Every member of the congregation, whether clergy, leader, lay staff, volunteer or parent, has the responsibility to uphold behavior that is consistent with our Christian values as we seek to guide and care for those who look to us individually and collectively for guidance and spiritual formation.

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, all clergy, employees, elected and appointed lay leaders, and volunteers are Ministers of the congregation. It is critically important that every Minister of the church understand the use and misuse of authority and its impact on others, especially minors. Every Minister is responsible for understanding and maintaining these policy guidelines for safe conduct, so that each person of the community is protected and therefore given opportunity to flourish. Every adult Minister will understand and accept the obligation to report suspected abuse of children or other vulnerable adult as required by this policy and as required by the State of New Hampshire, and to cooperate with investigations as may follow.

Pilgrim United Church of Christ is committed to mutual accountability, one to the other. Every Minister shall also be attentive to their need for healthy self-care, continuing education, sensitivity, and the maintenance of good personal boundaries (including but not limited to physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries, as well as electronic boundaries, including the use of social media.)

PILGRIM UCC, BRENTWOOD-KINGSTON

Authorized Children and Youth Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Email: _____

References: One reference must be related to you and the other references must not be related to. One reference should be someone who has witnessed previous work or care with minors.

(1) Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

(2) Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Pilgrim UCC has a rule that any person working directly with minors must be in relationship with our congregation for not less than 6 months.

How long have you been a member of this church? _____

How long have you been a friend of this church? _____

Previous church membership, if any?

Name: _____ Address: _____

_____ Pastor/Contact information: _____

Self-Disclosure Form

I have never been convicted of, not pled guilty or no contest to a crime. (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated, misdemeanor convictions for which probation was completed and the case dismissed.)

_____ True _____ Not True

If not true, please briefly describe the nature of the crime/s, the date and place of conviction and the legal disposition of the case. The church will not deny a position to any applicant solely because the person has been convicted of a crime. The church, however, may consider the nature, date and circumstances of the offense, as well as whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position applied for.

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

_____ True _____ Not True

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

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

_____ True _____ Not True

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

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

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

_____ True _____ Not True

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

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, provide a brief explanation.

APPLICANT:

The covenants between persons seeking authorized volunteer positions in the church require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health and well-being of the church. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate.

Beginning such relationship with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize Pilgrim UCC and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding my character and qualifications, including all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement, and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background, character, and qualifications. To encourage such person and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses.

The Pilgrim UCC authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the sharing of information regarding applicants those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise both the position I am seeking to fill and program I am seeking to participate in. To that end, I authorize Pilgrim UCC and its agents to circulate, distribute and otherwise share information gathered in connection with the application to such persons for these purposes. I understand the Pilgrim UCC will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

If I am offered and accept employment or volunteer service with the church, I agree to comply with its published policies and rules, including those related to harassment of employees, reporting known or suspected child neglect or abuse and similar requirements. If requested to do

so, I will cooperate with any church investigation of a possible violation of church policies and rules by providing complete and truthful information in an oral and/or written statement.

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of Pilgrim UCC's Safe Church Policy.

PRINT NAME AND SIGN

PRINT NAME & SIGNATURE/PARENT OR GUARDIAN FOR APPLICANTS UNDER 18

DATE

Background Check

I agree to the New Hampshire State police conducting a background check and will provide the results of this background check to the Pastor or Interim Pastor of Pilgrim United Church of Christ. Such a background check+ can be secured by contacting State Police (32 Hazen Dr., Concord, NH 03305 SPHeadquarters@dos.nh.gov) The cost is \$25.00. Pilgrim UCC will reimburse this cost.

(If this background check is unremarkable, it will be filed in a confidential, secure location, held for 2 years, and then destroyed. If there are concerns raised in the course of a background check, the Pastor or Interim Pastor will meet with the Christian Faith Formation Team to discuss going forward. Background checks that raise concerns will also be filed in a secure and confidential location for a time to be determined.)

_____ Agree

_____ Do not agree

CODE OF CONDUCT & BEST PRACTICES

- When meeting one-on-one with a child, seek to do so in a public place in full view of others
- Be aware of and limit touch. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes. Hug in the presence of others. Do not touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other employees or volunteers that you are alone with a child, or accompany a child to the bathroom and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)
- Document and report to the Chair of the CFF Team and/or Pastor any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

General Social Media Policy – No minister, employee, volunteer or member of Pilgrim UCC shall create or use a media site (web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the church without explicit written permission of All Church Council. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the church, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official church sites/channels when they have been made available by the church. These may include web pages, Facebook, email and similar means.

- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sending text messages to children and/or replying to text messages from children.
- If a child attempts to communicate with an employee or volunteer via text, contact with a parent or guardian will be sought to bring them into the “loop”.
- Group texts and emails may be sent to children by an employee or volunteer as it relates to logistical matters, e.g. meeting dates, times and places.
- Any email communications with an individual child must include the child’s parent/s or guardian/s.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from communicating with children using social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Personal social networking profiles and blogs of employees and volunteers must be private and inaccessible to children.
- Employees and volunteers with profiles on social networking sites may not request to be friends with children or approve friend requests from children.

OUT OF PROGRAM (OFF SITE) CONTACT

Pilgrim UCC strongly recommends that Ministers, employees or volunteers consider the following guidelines when having any outside contact with children from church programs.

Appropriate Outside Contact

- Taking groups of children on an outing
- Attending sporting activities with groups of children
- Attending functions at a child's home, with parents present

Inappropriate Outside Contact

- Taking a child on an outing without the parents written permission
- Visiting a child in the child's home, without a parent present
- Entertaining one child in the home of a church employee or volunteer
- A lone child spending the night with a church employee or volunteer

Approved 1/15/2017 by All Church Council