

# SAFE CHURCH POLICY



CHURCH OF THE  
**GOOD SHEPHERD**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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# Contents

Commitment to a Safe Church .....	3
Purpose .....	3
I. Definitions .....	4
II. Building and Grounds Safety.....	6
III. Ethical Behavior – Code of Conduct.....	6
IV. Health Privacy .....	7
V. Safe Church Policies for Children and Youth .....	7
VI. Safe Church Policies for the Protection of Adults .....	13
VII. Integrating an Accused, Admitted, or Convicted Sex Offender into Congregational Activities .....	13
VIII. Youth Who May Be Suspected of Sexual and/or Behavioral Abuse .....	17
IX. Reporting and Response.....	18
X. Covenant of Acceptance.....	21
XI. Acknowledgements .....	21
XII. Adoption of the Safe Church Policy .....	22
XIII. Appendix - Forms .....	23

# **Church of the Good Shepherd United Church of Christ Safe Church Policy**

## **Commitment to a Safe Church**

The members of Church of the Good Shepherd, United Church of Christ (COGS) are committed to creating and maintaining a safe place in which members, friends, staff, officers and volunteers can worship and work free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, and exploitation or bullying. This policy is intended to protect our youth and vulnerable people of any age; to create an environment that protects children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth. A safe church includes the maintenance of a safe, hygienic physical environment conducive to the physical health and well being of all who use the facility. Our church is and will be a safe place.

This policy will provide guidelines to prevent Pastoral misconduct, physical abuse, child sexual abuse, sexual misconduct/exploitation, bullying behavior and any behavior that puts others at risk of harm. All who work with children will be required to submit to a criminal background check.

## **Purpose**

We believe that all individuals are to be treated with respect and dignity. We believe that we have particular responsibilities to protect our children, youth and adults by providing safe, healthy environments. We must support each other to ensure that all adults, youth and children alike can grow in the Christian faith.

All persons associated with COGS should be aware that our church will not tolerate exploitation, sexual harassment, physical or emotional abuse, or other violations of personal dignity and safety, and that such behavior is prohibited by COGS Safe Church Policy. It is the intention and responsibility of our church to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior which is contrary to this policy, and if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

# I. Definitions

**Called Staff:** Those called by COGS, who are authorized by the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. They are ordained or commissioned staff.

**Child Abuse and Neglect:** Any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

**Confidentiality:** Ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access. Information obtained through screening, application, reference check, interview or criminal background check will be kept in confidence unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through these means will be kept in a secure location, and access will be restricted. In the event of an investigation, confidentiality will be maintained by all parties involved. To further enhance confidentiality, case content will not be transmitted via electronic mail by the Response Team.

**Education Helper:** A member, associate member, or paid staff of the church who has volunteered to assist the assigned leader with educational activities.

**Elder Abuse:** Involves knowingly, intentionally, or negligently inflicting pain, injury, or harm or depriving a vulnerable adult of essential services or supports, or improperly using an incapacitated adult's funds or property for another's profit. Adult maltreatment includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, financial exploitation, and neglect by a care-giver, or self-neglect.

**Emotional Abuse/Harassment:** Humiliating or abusive behavior that lowers a person's self-esteem or causes them torment. It is commonly understood as behavior that is intended to disturb or upset. It can take the form of verbal comments, actions or gestures.

**Employed staff:** Those who are paid and authorized by COGS to carry out its ministry (does not include Pastor).

**Exploitation:** Behavior toward individuals that treats them as means to an end, and uses people as a resource with little or no consideration of their well-being; the taking, misuse or concealment of the property or assets of another.

**Friend:** Frequent attendee who is not on the membership rolls.

**Member/Associate Member:** A person who is listed on the official membership rolls of the church. Each member will be given a copy of this policy and must agree to abide by it.

**Pastoral Relationship:** The relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

**Minor:** Children and youth who are younger than 18 years of age.

**Physical Abuse:** Abuse involving physical contact intended to cause feelings of intimidation, pain, injury or other physical suffering or bodily harm. Physical abuse includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, pinching, causing someone to fall, and striking with an object or head-butting.

**Response Team:** Team consists of two members, one male and one female, and two (2) alternates, one male, and one female, selected by the Council in preparation for the possibility of hearing and acting on complaints covered by COGS Safe Church Policy.

**Sexual Abuse and Exploitation:** The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of a minor child or an adult, or as defined by federal or state law. This includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic material to another person.

**Sexual or Behavioral abuse:** Physically or psychologically harassing behavior perpetrated against an individual by one or more persons (e.g., bullying).

**Sexual Harassment:** Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation that may intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the other person, or subject the person to public discrimination. Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome, and using sexual behavior to control, influence or affect the career, salary, work, learning or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church.

**Social Networking:** Includes Twitter, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, Google+, and all other current and future Internet social networking websites. Social networking has opened up many new doorways for cyber-crime and children, youth and parents need to be aware of the risks.

**Teacher:** A congregation member who has accepted the responsibility for delivering effective Christian education programs that nourish the spiritual growth of all members and friends of COGS.

## **II. Building and Grounds Safety**

Building and grounds should be maintained in a clean and healthy manner, handicap accessible and free of obstructions.

Doors to the classrooms, the parlor, pastor's office, sanctuary, and fellowship hall shall have windows.

The usher/greeter team each Sunday will monitor the church parking lot to minimize the vandalism of members'/friends' cars. If an occurrence happens, the usher/greeter should write down the license number and call Sandia Heights Security. Their number is located inside the main entrance.

Once a person is forbidden access to the building, their code will be eliminated from the security system.

## **III. Ethical Behavior – Code of Conduct**

Called staff, employed staff, and volunteers engaged in the work of COGS are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their actions and words in caring for the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Because staff or volunteers engaged in the ministries of the church may be in Pastoral relationships with individuals who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or otherwise personally vulnerable, it is imperative that they have adequate preparation and education for helping those individuals under their care. They should recognize their own limitations and make appropriate referrals when necessary.

Every member and associate member has the responsibility to promote an environment that is free of the threat of physical or psychological harm and all forms of discrimination; one that nurtures and keeps safe the faith and spiritual well-being of all within the church. Physical abuse, emotional abuse or emotional harassment, exploitation, bullying, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment are damaging to the victim and perpetrator alike and will not be tolerated within this sacred space. All who come to worship at COGS must be free to feel the great joy of being a part of a faith community.

## **IV. Health Privacy**

To safeguard the privacy of members of COGS during times of illness, the Pastor and those in the congregation will only, with appropriate permission, announce or share that a person is facing health problems.

## **V. Safe Church Policies for Children and Youth**

Members of Church of the Good Shepherd, UCC, are committed to protecting the safety of all our children. We take seriously our responsibility to create an environment that minimizes the risk of harm to children. An important feature of risk reduction is insuring that the staff and volunteers we have working with young people are able and willing to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and consistent with the laws of the State of New Mexico.

### **A. MANDATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Mandated Reporting**

Every person who knows or has reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected in New Mexico must report the matter immediately to CYFD's Statewide Central Intake child abuse hotline (**1-855-333-SAFE [7233] or #SAFE from a cell phone**), or to law enforcement or the appropriate tribal identity. Specific professionals mentioned under the law as mandated reporters are: licensed physicians, residents or interns, law enforcement officers, judges presiding during a proceeding, nurses, schoolteachers, school officials, social workers, and members of the clergy who have information not privileged as a matter of law.

#### **Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

It is important for every person to take child abuse and neglect seriously, to be able to recognize when it happens, and to know what to do when you see it. Call CYFD's Statewide Central Intake (SCI) at 1-855-333-SAFE [7233] or #SAFE from a cell phone if you suspect child maltreatment is occurring.

When making a report of abuse or neglect, you may choose to remain anonymous as the reporter, and will be immune from liability, civil or criminal, as long as you have acted in good faith by reporting. We encourage reporters to provide information about who they are, as it assists us in the investigative process. The reporter's name remains confidential unless ordered to be released by a court of law. In rare cases, a reporter could be required to testify in court if such testimony is necessary to protect the child.

While we make every effort to protect a reporter's identity, CYFD cannot guarantee that an alleged perpetrator will not figure out who has made the report. There do exist cases in which parents or alleged perpetrators are able to guess who reported the abuse based on the nature of the report. In these cases, CYFD's role is to attempt to redirect the alleged perpetrators and engage them in focusing on the concerns for the child.

As a reporter of abuse or neglect, it is important to include as many details about the suspected maltreatment as possible. In order for a report to be screened in for investigation, you must be able to provide enough information so that we might be able to find the child. While certainly desirable, it is not necessary to know the name and address of the child and/or parents. All descriptive information you can provide about the child, parent, and location of the abuse helps, such as: the child's school, parent's work place, vehicle license plate, etc.

### **How does this change our approach as a church community?**

All Church of the Good Shepherd clergy and professional staff are committed to creating an environment in which children and youth feel comfortable raising concerns regarding their safety and to addressing these concerns in a thoughtful and comprehensive manner, while at the same time protecting them by utilizing the oversight of the Children, Youth and Family Division of the State of New Mexico.

Clergy-persons in the state of New Mexico, or any person working with, overseeing, teaching, or relating to youth at Church of the Good Shepherd, will file a report with the Children, Youth and Family Division in accordance with New Mexico State law should abuse or neglect of a child under 18 be suspected. This directive applies to all of our professional staff and teachers, both paid and volunteer.

### **B. CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD EMPLOYEES**

All employees who will have direct contact with youth or children must agree to have a background check conducted and to sign a disclosure statement indicating if they have ever been reported for child abuse or dismissed from a job for reasons of misconduct toward children.

Upon accepting employment at Church of the Good Shepherd, all employees, regardless of their position within the Church, will be given a copy of the Safe Church Policy by the Personnel Committee and be scheduled for training in policy implementation.

### **C. VOLUNTEERS SERVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

As a lay-led church, we depend upon our members' good will and generous time commitments. This is particularly true in the staffing of the many and varied programs we offer young children and youth. While we want to maximize the opportunities for all members of the Congregation to contribute their time and talents in the service of young people, our responsibility is to ensure a safe environment for children and youth. This commitment requires us to take extra care in insuring that those working with our young members conduct themselves in a respectful and appropriate manner.

To accomplish this objective, all volunteers working with children and youth will be asked to complete a brief "Survey of Talents" and to confirm that they have not been charged or convicted of any form of child abuse. They also will be asked to read and confirm their



agreement with the Church of the Good Shepherd “Safe Church Policy” with particular emphasis on the Congregation’s expectations about how volunteers should conduct themselves when interacting with young people.

#### **D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

A child is anyone under 18 years of age.

##### **Conduct Guidelines for Volunteers:**

- *All volunteers, professional and support staff will observe the “two adult rule.” **No adult is to be alone with one child or one youth on a church sponsored activity, on or off church premises.** This includes driving alone with a single child. Staff or volunteers who need to have private conversations occur with youth will hold those conversations in a public place (restaurant, coffee shop, etc.) or in an office within Church of the Good Shepherd during normal business hours if the office has a clear glass panel allowing viewing from the hallway when the door is closed; or any other room with the door open or with easy viewing from the outside.*
- *Appropriate physical touch is an important part of showing love and support to children. Nothing in the Safe Church policy should be construed as stopping an adult from hugging a child to show affection or approval for something well done or to comfort a child who has faced a disappointment or injury.*
- *Inappropriate touch will not be tolerated. Inappropriate touching between the child’s shoulders and knees, kissing, any type of hitting, or any touch uncomfortable to a child is strictly prohibited.*
- *Words have power to heal or to wound. Inappropriate language with children includes derogatory statements about any aspects of their identity, words spoken in anger, any sexually explicit statements and language deemed inappropriate among Christians is strictly prohibited.*

#### **E. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

Research has indicated that one of the best protections an organization can have against child abuse is to set clear conduct standards for all staff and volunteers. At COGS these standards will be reinforced through an introductory training program and ongoing supervision and will be provided to all new and continuing

COGS employees and volunteers. ***This training also will include an overview of child abuse and procedures for employees and volunteers to follow if they suspect that a child has been or is a victim of any form of child abuse.*** This training will be provided before October 1, annually, under the direction of the Ministry of Spiritual Education and Development.

***All volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend this ongoing training.***

## **F. ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Any staff, volunteer, parent or youth who suspects that a Church of the Good Shepherd staff member or volunteer is involved in the abuse or mistreatment of a child should discuss their concerns with the professional staff or other clergy person as soon as possible and then file a report through appropriate channels. If another clergy person is alleged to be involved in the report, he or she should immediately inform the Pastor. If the Pastor is the subject of the allegation, the allegation should be submitted to the church Moderator.

All COGS paid and lay leadership will cooperate fully in any investigation of such a complaint as required by state law and the denomination of the United Church of Christ. The person who is alleged to be involved will be asked to take a leave of absence until the Response Team reviews the merits of the case and makes recommendations regarding the complaint. In the case of alleged abuse by an ordained person, the leave of absence will be conducted in accordance with the policies of the Southwest Conference. The status of that leave (paid or unpaid) will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Personnel Committee.

## **G. EDUCATING THE CONGREGATION**

Clarifying our policies with respect to the hiring and training of program personnel and responding to charges of abuse are important components of insuring that COGS provides a safe and secure environment for all. Equally important, however, is educating ourselves on how to be better caretakers and role models for children and youth. To that end, it is important that we, as a Congregation, make a concerted effort to provide learning opportunities for both our adult and youth members. Specifically, relevant Ministries and committees can promote the safe church concept by:

- *providing opportunities to talk about the issue of child abuse with our youngest members within the context of their educational and fellowship programs;*
- *providing opportunities to educate parents on the topic through our Sunday School programs; and*
- *educating all existing and new members of the Congregation about the role they can play in preventing abuse and supporting the healthy development of our children, youth, and adults.*

## **Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Conduct with Children and Youth**

**Meet with youth often. Be a part of their life.** Earn their trust by authentic interaction with them. Be a loving, caring, positively influencing, God centered example in their life. Relationship building is vital to our ministry with them. Meet them in their “life arena” i.e. at school, sporting events, performances, restaurants, concerts, at church and at outings. Any interactions members of the congregation have with kids within our program, socially or through scheduled programming, off-site or on-site, are considered part of the Ministry of this church, and such actions and interactions need to be appropriate and consistent with these guidelines.

COGS supports safe, loving, caring leaders for our kids. We acknowledge that the behaviors of Church leaders can directly and positively impact the life of our children. The good judgment of members of the congregation is a vital element in our Ministry.

### **For the safety of our kids, and for each of us as leaders, use caution when:**

- ***Social Networking*** – Employees and volunteers of Church of the Good Shepherd are charged to promote safe social networking practices on electronic devices (i.e. computers, phones, etc). Educating children and adults in our congregation about the dangers of social networking is imperative.
- ***Being alone*** (one on one) with kids in non-public places, regardless of whether it is social or for “counseling”. This would include places such as your home, their home, your/their car, secluded settings and offices or rooms with closed doors and no clear panel openings.
- ***Picking kids up*** or dropping them off at places if it means you will be in a one on one situation with them.
- ***Being alone*** (one on one) with kids in hotel rooms or other lodging facilities, when traveling with youth and student groups.
- ***Putting yourself in situations*** that might be construed by others as inappropriate, compromising or reckless, when interacting with kids.
- ***Trying to solve any one youth’s problem(s)*** by yourself. We are a team. Regularly bring other team members up-to-date with issues you are dealing with for objective input and accountability.
- ***Being the “sole contact”*** for any particular youth.
- ***Situations where a youth may try to manipulate*** you into inappropriate, compromising or reckless behavior. (If this is the case, or if you are even suspect of it, confer immediately with a member of the staff or youth team).

- ***When arranging time with kids, set time limits or boundaries on how long you can meet. This will give either of you an “out” if necessary (if for any reason you or the youth is feeling uncomfortable). It will also help kids respect your own time boundaries.***
- ***In one on one situations, be accountable to another adult (spouse, youth team member, church staff) about your meetings with kids. Let someone know what you are doing, where you are going, and your time frame.***

**Do develop strong, lasting, positive relationships** with kids and let them know they are loved. Sometimes the love they get from us is the only love they will know.

- *Love kids and hug kids if this is your style, if it is appropriate, and if you feel comfortable with it (also, only if the youth feels okay with it). Be appropriate and public in your touch and be an “equal opportunity” hugger, not a selective hugger. Inappropriate touch would include touching between the waist and the knees, hitting, kissing, and any sexual touching.*
- *Be sensitive to kids’ personal space, and learn to “read” them. Do not force hugs or affections.*
- *Be a positive example to our kids in all you do. They watch and see everything you do (as trip leader, in prayer, in worship, in fun, in singing, in settings outside of church) and they look to you [us] as role models. If you act as though the rules don’t apply to you, then the youth will wonder why they should apply to them.*
- *Choose your words wisely. Words have the power to heal or wound. Inappropriate language with youth includes derogatory statements about any aspect of their identity, and words spoken in harsh anger. Any sexually explicit statements and language deemed inappropriate among Christians is strictly prohibited.*

The objective of these guidelines is not to hinder our experience and interaction with kids, but to enhance it and to make it safer both for them and for us. This is also an evolving set of guidelines and not necessarily an exhaustive list. There will always be situations where it may seem like it is not possible to operate within these guidelines. This is when we need to look to creative solutions, without embarrassment or prejudice, and support each other on the Ministry Team.

## **VI. Safe Church Policies for the Protection of Adults**

- A. At any time when only one or two staff or members are on the premises, the entrances to the building shall remain locked. Normal office hours are posted at the main entry door.
- B. Anyone who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment, or becomes aware of a harassing situation, should report the incident immediately to either the Pastor or the Response Team.
- C. The church building is a smoke-free environment.
- D. The church campus is an environment that is free of alcohol, weapons and illicit drugs.
- E. Ordained or other professional staff who find themselves in a one-on-one situation should not conduct meetings behind closed doors unless an opportunity for visibility is present.
- F. All adults must assume responsibility for themselves by never placing themselves in a compromising situation or position.
- G. All called staff must participate in Boundary Training and attend renewal sessions as required by the Southwest Conference.

## **VII. Integrating an Accused, Admitted, or Convicted Sex Offender into Congregational Activities**

A person who has been convicted of, or who has an unresolved accusation of any criminal sexual activity will not be permitted to be involved in any children's Christian education or youth group activity at COGS. A person with a known history of sexual offense against children will only be allowed to interact with children at any congregational function in compliance with that individual's Covenant of Limited Access.

Sex offenders who have completed prison sentences and mandated treatment, as well as registered with the local sheriff for inclusion in the New Mexico Sex Offenders Registry, if so ordered, have complied with their punishments. However, the church must assure that a convicted sex offender does not have the opportunity to re-offend in the COGS congregation. Nor should the sex offender be permitted situations where the individual can be falsely accused.

The church also recognizes that the presence of a sex offender in the congregation creates concerns for the membership. The physical safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole may outweigh the rights and privileges of the individual.

The following procedures will apply to a situation involving either a current or prospective participant in the congregation. The situation may be revealed by public notice, private information, or an individual coming forward voluntarily. If sexual offenses against children are at issue, the provisions in Section III will be followed.

1. No matter how the situation is revealed, the Pastor will meet privately with the accused individual as quickly as possible to discuss the concerns that have been raised. The Pastor will check the sex offender registry at [www.nmsexoffender.com](http://www.nmsexoffender.com) before this meeting. If the person is a member of the congregation and has a partner who also attends COGS, then the Pastor should attempt to involve the partner as well. In the case of a domestic situation which may involve custody issues or unsubstantiated allegations, these same procedures will be followed.

If the Pastor is the accused, these steps do not apply. Instead, the Moderator should be contacted immediately to forward the information to the Response Team, which will refer the matter to the Conference Pastor of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. Information on the current leadership may be found online at [www.uccswc.org](http://www.uccswc.org). The Southwest Conference may be contacted by telephone at: Toll free 1(800) 822-0821 or local 1(602)468-3830.

2. If the Pastor determines that there is reasonable cause for concern, the accused person will then be asked to meet with the Response Team, and to refrain from attending church activities until the process is completed. Response Team members and procedures will be the same as in Section VIII.
3. If the accused person currently is or has previously been in the criminal justice system, the individual will be asked to sign a release so that the Response Team or professionals engaged by the Response Team can contact the individual's sex offender treatment provider and/or current therapist, if applicable, and determine if those people are members of ATSA (Association for the Treatment of Sex Abusers). The therapist and, if applicable, the probation or parole officer will be asked for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the person will offend or re-offend, and whether additional restrictions beyond the standard Covenant of Limited Access ought to be placed on the person's participation. It will be necessary to know the number, timing, and nature of all reported offenses.
4. It is beyond the scope and experience of COGS UCC, its membership and its leadership to assess the risk or probability that a person will offend or re-offend. The Response Team will require the accused person to present a recent ATSA assessment.
5. The Response Team must consider these questions:

- a. Given what professionals have advised, will this person sign and obey a Covenant of Limited Access in order to assure the safety of children and youth?
  - b. Can a Covenant of Limited Access reasonably protect the physical safety and emotional well-being of the congregation as a whole?
  - c. In an instance of a domestic situation involving custody issues or unsubstantiated allegations, is a Covenant of Limited Access necessary to assure the safety of children, youth, or adult congregation members?
6. If the assessment indicates that the person has completed or is participating successfully in treatment and is not at high risk for offending, the Response Team may choose to develop a Covenant of Limited Access.

This covenant permits the person to participate in certain aspects of church life, setting clear boundaries and prohibitions. Typically a Covenant of Limited Access will specify participation in some combination of worship services, coffee hour, team, committee and/or council meetings, adult education, and all-adult events. It may prohibit all contact with children on church property or at church-sponsored events. This includes not talking to children, volunteering for or chaperoning children's or youth's events, including children's Christian education classes, and talking with children before, during or after worship. It may require the person to remain at all times in the presence of an adult who knows the situation when children are present. It may identify specific persons who are required to be with the person on the COGS campus. It denies the person access to keys to any church building.

All persons known to have a past history of sexual offenses will be required to sign a Covenant of Limited Access. Depending on the circumstances, the person may be asked to sign one annually.

7. If the professional assessment indicates that the person is at high risk for offending, it is appropriate and necessary to deny to that person involvement in any COGS UCC activities.

Any of the following reasons will be considered sufficient to exclude a person from all congregational activities:

- a. Refusal to allow the Response Team to contact the treatment provider and parole or probation officer.
- b. Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist or therapists.

- c. Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at a too high risk for offending.
  - d. Refusal to sign a Covenant of Limited Access.
  - e. Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Covenant of Limited Access at any time after it is signed.
8. The Response Team may decide at any time to select and appoint a Support Group of three (3) persons, supervised by the Pastor, who will agree to offer support to the person. The group must acquaint itself with any therapeutic program the person has undergone or will continue to be a part of. The group must meet the person, the person's probation or parole officer, and other appropriate people so that clear boundaries can be established for the protection of children and youth, the physical safety and emotional well-being of adult congregation members, and to reduce the likelihood of false allegations or suspicions. If the person has a partner in the church, the partner must be involved in developing the Covenant of Limited Access as well.
  9. A person who is denied a Covenant of Limited Access, or who is asked to sign a Covenant of Limited Access and refuses to do so, will be informed that if they enter the Church or its property, they will be asked to leave by a member of the Response Team or the Church Council. If the person further refuses, the police department will be called for assistance.
  10. The Response Team will meet at least quarterly with any individual with whom COGS UCC has a Covenant of Limited Access, and with any applicable Support Group, to review the arrangement and to address any concerns.
  11. Each time that a member of the Response Team changes, the other member of the Response Team must make available to the incoming person copies of any Covenants of Limited Access currently in effect.
  12. In sharing information appropriately, it is important to remain aware of confidentiality and privacy for all involved. Hard copies of files relating to a Covenant of Limited Access must be treated with care and stored in a secure location.
  13. If and when legal questions arise, the Response Team must contact an attorney who can provide information and advice informed by applicable state and local statutes.

The congregation grants to the Response Team authorization to execute the provisions of this policy.



## **VIII. Youth Who May Be Suspected of Sexual and/or Behavioral Abuse**

When an incident in which a teenager or child in the congregation is alleged to have inappropriately touched another person, or sexually harassed another person, or harassed another person comes to the attention of the Pastor or other staff member, the Pastor will initiate contact individually with the parents of both children to discuss the allegation and next steps. The Pastor will provide pastoral support and offer necessary referrals to community resources to all involved.

Depending on the state law and the nature of the incident, it may be necessary to notify Children, Youth and Families Division (CYFD). Before the CYFD-determined initiator is permitted to continue to attend Christian education or other activities, the youth should receive an extensive assessment by a child psychologist or psychiatrist who has experience with children with sexual and/or behavioral abuse problems.

It is not the responsibility of the Pastor or the Response Team to decide if abuse has occurred, but rather to assure that such an assessment does take place.

While this review is occurring, the alleged initiator's Christian education teacher will be informed of the allegation and the parents must agree to closely monitor their child at all times on COGS campus. The child may be removed from Christian education during this time, and will not be allowed unsupervised time with other children until the assessment is complete.

The Pastor will decide if the situation warrants the involvement of the Response Team and at what point this involvement will occur. If the therapist recommends that the child can safely attend church functions with other children, then the Pastor and the parents will meet with the child to discuss the importance of never repeating the behavior, the harm it can do to other children, and the consequences should such a situation occur again.

If the treatment provider reports that the child has a sexual behavior problem that is likely to be repetitive, the Response Team and the parents will meet to decide how and if the child can safely be involved with Christian education or youth group programs. A modified Covenant of Limited Access will be developed and signed by both the child and the parents.

In some cases, a family will want to bring a child who has been treated for sexual offenses back into the congregation after treatment is completed. In such cases the steps for involving an adult offender will be followed, including a Covenant of Limited Access signed by both the youth and the parents.

## **IX. Reporting and Response**

### **Procedures for Handling Allegations of Misconduct by Employees, Volunteers and Church Members**

#### **A. Basics**

1. All allegations must be taken seriously.
2. Response to allegations must be handled with respect for everyone's privacy and confidentiality. In all areas of an investigation, confidentiality will be maintained by All parties involved.
3. Care and safety of all parties involved are the first priority. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed.
4. Never prejudge the situation, as the accusations may or may not prove to be true.
5. Document everything.

**B.** The Safe Church Response Team shall consist of two members, one male and one female, and two alternates, one male and one female, selected by the council. Initially, one member and one alternate shall serve for one (1) year, and the others shall serve a two (2) year term. Subsequently, each member and each alternate will serve a two (2) year term. The team must always consist of a female and a male serving staggered terms. Response Team Members and alternates must have been members of COGS for at least one (1) year and have completed a disclosure screening form. They will complete training using material developed for this purpose.

**C.** Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of sexual exploitation, harassment or other misconduct:

1. The Pastor will immediately notify a parent or guardian of any minor involved in a complaint.
2. The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the respondent, the person accused of misconduct.
3. The complainant can report the incident to the Pastor in an effort to resolve the matter. The Pastor will document the complaint and all attempts to reach a resolution.
4. If a resolution of the complaint is not reached, the complainant(s) and/or the Pastor may request that the Response Team institute proceedings which shall include the following steps:

- a. The Pastor shall advise the Response Team of the complaint, forward to them the initial documentation of the complaint and inform them of ongoing steps and actions taken.
- b. If the Pastor is the subject of the complaint, the Moderator shall be contacted immediately and shall forward the complaint to the Response Team which will promptly refer it to the Conference Pastor of the United Church of Christ Southwest Conference.
- c. If a member of the Response Team is the subject of the complaint, the Pastor shall replace that member with the alternate of the same gender.
- d. If the initial complaint originates with the Moderator or the Response Team, the complainant shall be advised immediately to seek counsel with the Pastor, before divulging any details.
- e. The Response Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged misconduct and from others who may have pertinent information.
- f. The Response Team shall document all findings.
- g. The Response Team shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include:
  - (1) A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior.
  - (2) Recommend or require psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment to continue church attendance and/or membership.
  - (3) Determine that the alleged misconduct did not occur.
  - (4) Determine that the allegation was purposely false, and take steps to investigate the complainant.
- h. If the Response Team reaches the conclusion that the individual involved, in extreme cases, should be dismissed from employment or volunteer position and, church affiliation or membership should be terminated, this finding must be referred to the Executive Committee of the Church Council. This body will make the final disposition of the Response Team's recommendation.
- i. The Response Team may seek the advice of appropriate legal counsel and/ or other "helping" professionals.

**D.** A written summary of the Response Team's proceedings must be maintained in all cases.

**E.** The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate

behavior. Any member, associate member or friend of COGS may initiate or proceed with a complaint process on behalf of himself or herself or on behalf of another.

**F.** In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration must be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

**G.** Any person bringing a sexual harassment or exploitation complaint, or assisting in investigating such a complaint, will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

**H.** If either the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Response Team, he or she has the right to appeal to the Moderator or to the Vice Moderator if the Moderator is the subject of the complaint. The scope of any such appeal shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this policy were followed. If the Moderator or Vice Moderator determines that the procedures of this policy were not followed, he or she will refer the matter back to the Response Team to complete the processing of the complaint in accordance with these procedures. The matter will not be reconsidered on the merits and the decision of the Moderator or Vice Moderator will be the final resolution of the matter.

**I. Child Abuse.** In compliance with legal requirements, COGS will report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to, New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Division, if at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any member of the church who has serious concerns about the welfare of a child is expected to immediately report those concerns to the Pastor so that the church may take appropriate action in a timely manner. The numbers for Children, Youth and Families Division are:

Toll free 1(800)797-3260 or Local 1(505)841-6100

**J. Elder Abuse.** Any member of the church who has serious concerns about elder abuse should immediately report those concerns to the Pastor so appropriate action may be taken in a timely manner. The numbers for Adult Protective Services are:

Toll free 1(866)654-3219 or Local 1(505)476-4912

**K. Clergy.** Apart from any proposed disposition of the matter by the church, all allegations of behavior which call into question the fitness for the ministry of any authorized Pastor will be promptly forwarded to the COGS Pastoral Relations Committee and the Church and Ministry Committee of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. Contact information for The Southwest Conference is:

Toll free 1(800)822-0821 or Local 1(602)468-3830. Email [office@uccswc.org](mailto:office@uccswc.org)

## **X. Covenant of Acceptance**

As a member of COGS I do promise and pledge to practice my faith with this family of Jesus Christ. I will, by the grace of God, seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus by my love for God and the members of this church. I will be non-abusive and kind to each member in word and deed. I will seek to understand and care for the other members as I would desire that they might understand and care for me. I will abide by the terms of COGS Safe Church Policy.

## **XI. Acknowledgements**

Materials in this policy are adapted from various sources including:

“Making Our Churches Safe for All, an Introduction to Abuse Prevention for Local Churches”,  
UCC Insurance Board

“The Time Is Now, Guide to Developing Abuse Prevention Policies” The United Church of  
Christ

“Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention” Shepherd of the Hills United Church of  
Christ, Phoenix, AZ

“Safe Church Policy” The First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Woodstock, CT

“Safe Congregation Policy” The Unitarian Church in Charleston, Charleston, SC

“Policy of Nurture and Care” The Congregational Church of Algonquin, Algonquin, IL

“Safe Church Policy” First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Crystal Lake, IL  
Church Mutual Insurance Company

St. Paul’s United Church of Christ, Rio Rancho, NM

Union Church of Hinsdale, UCC, Hinsdale, IL

First Presbyterian Church, Arlington, VA

Webinar conducted by Carl J. Kotheimer, CPCU, ARM  
Insurance Board Partners in Protection  
Toll Free Tel: 1-800-437-8830  
Fax: 216-736-3239

700 Prospect Avenue, 5th Floor  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
Toll Free Tel: 1-800-437-8830; Fax: 216-736-3239  
[www.insuranceboard.org](http://www.insuranceboard.org)

Pat Harrison  
Lovitt & Touche, Inc.  
1050 W. Washington Street, Suite 233  
Tempe, AZ 85281  
800-417-2756  
[info@lovitt-touche.com](mailto:info@lovitt-touche.com)

## **XII. Adoption of the Safe Church Policy**

**A.** COGS will adopt the Safe Church Policy by the following sequence of events:

1. The Council must approve the policy.
2. The congregation must approve the policy

**B.** Upon approval by the congregation, the policy will take effect immediately.

Approved by Safe Church Committee:

MM DD YYYY

Approved by Church Council:

MM DD YYYY

Approved by Congregation:

MM DD YYYY

## **XIII. Appendix -Forms**

### **Page**

- 24** Permission to Obtain Background Check with Identifying Information
- 25** Parental Consent to Transport a Minor
- 26** Medical Information and Emergency Treatment Consent
- 28** Vehicle and Driver Readiness
- 30** Professional Assessment Directive by the Response Team
- 31** Release for Criminal Justice Supervisor and/or Therapist's Assessment
- 32** Covenant of Limited Access
- 35** Incident Report
- 37** Response Team Report
- 38** Formal Reprimand
- 39** Misconduct Allegation Dismissed
- 40** Summary of Response Team Activity
- 41** Appeal for Review
- 42** Procedural Directive for the Response Team
- 43** Recommendation for Dismissal from COGS UCC

## Permission to Obtain a Background Check

(This form authorizes the Church to obtain background information and must be completed by the applicant. The Church will retain this completed form on file for two years after requesting a background check.)

I, the undersigned applicant, authorize COGS United Church of Christ, through its insurance provider, Church Mutual, to procure background information about me. This report may include my driving history, including any traffic citations, a social security number verification, present and former addresses, criminal and civil history/records, and New Mexico sex offender records. I understand that I am entitled to a complete copy of any background report of which I am the subject upon my request to COGS.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Identifying Information for Background Check

#### Print all information

##### Name

First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Other Names Used (alias, maiden, nickname)

1.

2.

3.

##### Current Address

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ How long? \_\_\_\_\_

##### Former Address(es)

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ How long? \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

##### Drivers License

State \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Turn form over if additional space is required for answers.

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E-mail: [cogs@ucccogs.org](mailto:cogs@ucccogs.org) – Website: [www.ucccogs.org](http://www.ucccogs.org)





**Medical Information and Emergency Treatment Consent**  
**Print all Information**

I give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in trips with the Youth group of COGS United Church of Christ from September 1, \_\_\_\_\_(year) to August 31, \_\_\_\_\_(year).

In case of emergency, my child may be treated at the nearest medical facility:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_ If no, please explain.

Name of Child

First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

-

Home Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone(     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number of Child \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insurance Company and Number \_\_\_\_\_

Family Medical Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's contact information \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contacts and phone numbers if unable to reach parent or guardian

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 2 pages

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**Vital Medical Information for Child**

**Current Medications**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Allergies to Medications**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Food Allergies**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Medical conditions** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of last tetanus immunization** Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

## Vehicle and Driver Readiness

### Print all information

#### Name

First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

#### Address

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Home (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Your Vehicle

Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_

Is your vehicle in good repair and equipped with safety restraints (including those for infants and young children if you will transport them)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, explain in detail.

Have you ever been cited or convicted for DWI (Driving While Intoxicated)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, explain in detail. Include where and when each such charge was made and the outcome.

Page 1 of 2 pages

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In providing transportation for children and youth, I agree to:

- Obey all traffic regulations, including speed limits and safety restraint requirements.
- Transport only the number of persons my vehicle is equipped to carry.
- Drive only when I am free of the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substance.

Applicant's Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Person reviewing this form\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Attach copies of:

- Current Driver's License
- Proof of Insurance
- Current Vehicle Registration

Page 2 of 2

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**Professional Assessment Directive by the Response Team**

**Print all information**

The Response Team makes the following directive to:

**Name of Individual Involved** \_\_\_\_\_

This Directive is a  
**Recommendation** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Requirement** \_\_\_\_\_

This Directive is for the individual named to obtain one of the following services as a condition for further church attendance or participation in church activity.

Psychological Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

Psychiatric Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment \_\_\_\_\_

Resource Referral(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up Information:

**Response Team**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual Involved**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Release for Criminal Justice Supervisor's and/or Therapist's Assessment**

**Print all Information**

I, the undersigned, give my consent for release of information concerning my case history with the Criminal Justice system to the Safe Church Response Team of COGS.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, give my consent for the release of information contained in the Therapist's Assessment, which I was directed to undergo, to the Safe Church Response Team of COGS.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Therapist \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist's Contact Information:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Referral \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

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## Covenant of Limited Access

COGS celebrates freedom, inclusion and diversity of belief, recognizing love as the creative and supporting force in life. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk both to you and them of an incident or accusation. Your participation will be limited in ways to ensure the safety of our COGS family and to assure that you will not be subjected to unwarranted accusations.

You understand that you will not be allowed to interact with children or youth, including volunteering or chaperoning events for children and youth, children's and youth religious education classes, talking with children before, during or after worship, or interacting with children during intergenerational events. You will not be permitted keys to any church building.

A Support Person is a person who knows about your history/situation and has been designated, with the approval of the Response Team, to accompany you to activities where children and youth may be present.

We believe that the following checked activities are appropriate for your participation:

**Worship services**

Yes (  )                                      Only if escorted by Support person (  )                                      Never (  )

**Fellowship time**

Yes (  )                                      Only if escorted by Support Person (  )                                      Never (  )

**Education intended primarily for adults**

Yes (  )                                      Only if escorted by Support Person (  )                                      Never (  )

**Adult meetings with children in the same area (such as Fellowship Hall)**

Yes (  )                                      Only if escorted by Support person (  )                                      Never (  )

**Adult meetings with children not present in the area**

Yes (  )                                      Only if escorted by Support person (  )                                      Never (  )

**Intergenerational church activities**

Yes (  )                                      Only if escorted by Support Person (  )                                      Never (  )

**Intergenerational group outings away from church campus**

Yes (  )                                      Only if escorted by Support Person (  )                                      Never (  )

Page 1 of 3 pages

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I understand that the terms of any Covenant of Limited Access, information about the type, number and date(s) of convictions, general reasons for the decision to require a Covenant of Limited Access and my identity may be disclosed to such church staff and church members as are needed for implementation. I hereby consent to this disclosure and waive my right to take legal action against the church, its employees, and members for such disclosure authorized by this policy.

I understand that this Covenant will be reviewed regularly, every three (3) months, and will remain in effect for an indefinite period.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator or Vice Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Page 3 of 3 pages

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**Incident Report**

**Print all information**

Name of person reporting the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

In what manner was the incident reported? \_\_\_\_\_

**Person(s) involved in the incident: (name, address, telephone)**

\_\_\_\_ Minor \_\_\_\_ Adult \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Minor \_\_\_\_ Adult \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Minor \_\_\_\_ Adult \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Minor \_\_\_\_ Adult \_\_\_\_\_

**(Complete a separate report for each minor involved.)**

Location of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness (es):

Name, Address, Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name, Address, Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name, Address, Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply

\_\_\_\_\_The alleged victim was a minor less than 18 years of age, and his/her parents were notified and were present at the interview of the alleged victim.

\_\_\_\_\_It was determined that the allegation was unwarranted and all parties concurred.

\_\_\_\_\_It was determined that there was sufficient evidence and concern to report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

\_\_\_\_\_The alleged perpetrator was notified of this decision on (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_The incident was reported to the appropriate authorities on (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ It was determined that the incident should be referred to the Response Team.

Description of the incident and recommended outcome:

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Pastor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Response Team Report

**Print all information**

Name of Person Reporting Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview with participant in or witness to reported incident**

Interviewee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of interaction with Response Team: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee's Statement-----

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**Interviewee**

Name	Signature	Date
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_____	_____	_____
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**Response Team**

Name	Signature	Date
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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**Formal Reprimand by the Response Team**

**Print all information**

**This document affirms that an infraction of the Safe Church Policy has occurred.**

Person reporting incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Infraction \_\_\_\_\_

Individual(s) Involved

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

The following outlines expectations for changed behavior by the individual(s) involved:

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**Response Team**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual(s) Involved**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Misconduct Allegation Dismissed**

**Print all information**

This document affirms that the misconduct alleged to have been committed by

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ on

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_ **did not** occur.

A determination has been made by the Response Team that a false charge was purposely reported by

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ on

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Response Team**

Name:

Signature:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Signature:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Summary of Response Team Activity**

**Print all information**

Alleged misconduct was reported to the Response Team (date)\_\_\_\_\_.

Name(s) of individual(s) involved:

\_\_\_\_\_

Description of alleged misconduct:

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Detail all steps taken, in chronological order, using dates wherever possible.

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Date Incident Report resolved:\_\_\_\_\_.

Follow-up Steps Recommended/Required (circle one)

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**Response Team**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appeal for Review of Response Team’s Conclusion**

**Print all information**

Individual requesting review:\_\_\_\_\_

Complainant\_\_\_\_ Respondent\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_I request that the **Moderator** review the records and determine if the Response Team followed all of the procedures outlined in the Safe Church Policy during the course of their investigation.

**Note:** The **Vice Moderator** will undertake the review only in the absence of the Moderator or if the Moderator is the subject of or a party to the complaint.

The review will cover only the procedures followed by the Response Team, not the facts of the case.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

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**Procedural Directive for the Response Team**

**Print all information**

The matter of the alleged misconduct involving:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ that occurred on

Date \_\_\_\_\_

is returned to the Response Team for continued processing in accordance with procedures as outlined in COGS Safe Church Policy.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Church Office Held \_\_\_\_\_

**Recommendation for Dismissal from COGS United Church of Christ**

**Print all information**

The Response Team recommends that:

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

be dismissed from the following church relationship:

\_\_\_\_ Employment position

\_\_\_\_ Volunteer position

\_\_\_\_ Membership in COGS

\_\_\_\_ Affiliation with COGS United Church of Christ

**Response Team**

Name  
Date

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name  
Date

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 3 pages

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The Executive Committee of the Church Council concurs \_\_\_\_/does not concur \_\_\_\_ in the recommendation to dismiss.

**Executive Committee**

**Moderator**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

**Vice Moderator**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

**Clerk**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

**Treasurer**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

**Financial Secretary**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

**Pastor (non-voting)**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

The dismissal of (Name)\_\_\_\_\_ was reported to the  
Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ by the Moderator on (date)\_\_\_\_\_.

**Moderator**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____