

**Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Grafton, WI**

Safe Sanctuary Guidelines

A. MISSION STATEMENT: *The congregation of Pilgrim United Church of Christ aspires to be a safe and nurturing place. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for everyone; children, youth, adults, visitors and employees who participate in our programs and use our facilities. We want our congregation to be a safe haven, free of all forms of inappropriate interaction.*

B. Inappropriate interaction can include:

- **Physical abuse** is when a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm.
- **Emotional abuse** is when a person exposes a child, youth or adult to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty.
- **Neglect** is a form of abuse in which a person endangers a child's, youth's or adult's health, safety, or welfare through negligence.
- **Sexual abuse** is when there is either direct sexual contact between a child and an adult or anyone older and more powerful or any interaction between a child and an adult in which the child or adult is being used for the sexual stimulation of another person.

If you are unsure whether or not your suspected case falls under this definition, it is strongly recommended that you err on the side of caution and report your suspicion immediately.

C. Reporting Responsibilities: Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between a person and a child, youth or adult shall be promptly reported to the Pastor, A Children's Ministry Staff Member, Youth Director or a member of the Safe Sanctuary Response team.

D. Screening Policy

The Pastor, Children's Ministry Staff, Youth Director and the Safe Sanctuary response team shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate screening is conducted. There are two levels of screening: primary and secondary.

PRIMARY SCREENING PROCEDURE:

Volunteers and/or anyone with anticipated unmonitored contact with youth or children will complete a screening application and authorize a Criminal Records Background Form.

The Pastor, Children's Ministry Staff or Youth Director will review the submitted forms and may conduct a personal interview. The Pastor, Children's Ministry Staff or Youth Director will arrange for a criminal records background check, when applicable, and will check the references listed on the survey.

SECONDARY SCREENING PROCEDURE: Whenever reasonable, volunteers who will have regular contact with children or youth over the course of a year are asked to review this policy, its code of behavior, and return a signed acknowledgment indicating such a review to the Pastor or his/her designee.

Any person known to have committed previous acts of sexual misconduct with children or youth shall be strictly prohibited from serving our children or youth.

E. Maintenance and Records:

All records collected in compliance with these Safe Sanctuary Guidelines (SSG) shall be in a secure location to protect the integrity and confidentiality of the records.

F. Education

The Children's Ministry Staff or Youth Director will provide or make available these Safe Sanctuary Guidelines to all members of the congregation and to others upon request.

All staff and volunteers who work directly with children and youth are required to review the Plan and to sign a statement that they have reviewed the Plan and will comply with its requirements.

G. Best Practices and Regular Operating Procedures

- **The Two Adult Rule:** Whenever reasonable, the children and youth in both the educational and youth program of our congregation shall be under the care and supervision of two adults, one of whom may be a high school aide. An exception would exist if programs are so constructed as to provide constant visual access and frequent observation by Children's Ministry Staff, Youth Director, adult or aide. Furthermore, no teacher, advisor, aide or anyone else working with our children or youth should place themselves in a compromising situation by being alone with a child or with children out-of-sight of other adults or aides.

H. Parental Consent:

The Church will request written consent from the parent or guardian before a child can attend activities or programs away from our facilities.

I. Discipline:

The purpose of discipline with children and youth is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of religious responsibility, respect and cooperation. No child or youth shall be disciplined by the use of spanking, hitting, slapping or any form of physical punishment. Verbal reprimands shall not include destructive criticism, insult or shouting. Adults, aides and others helping in the classroom are encouraged to listen to the child or youth, communicate expectations of appropriate behavior, use time-outs or give alternate choices. If a child or youth is disruptive, a teacher or aide from the class or a neighboring class may be sent to locate a staff member or the designated person in charge. If none of these people are readily available, a parent should be contacted and brought to the room.

J. Children's and Youth Group Activities:

No adult leader, staff or volunteer should initiate or encourage inappropriate interaction with, or among, children or youth. Setting boundaries is the responsibility of the adults. All participants are expected to remain with the group throughout the times listed in congregation publications. No pairing or otherwise separating off from the group to other parts of the building or grounds is permitted without the approval of the supervising adults. In the event of overnight programs, there is to be no co-mingling of the opposite sex in sleeping arrangements. There is to be adult supervision with the group at all times.

K. Substance Awareness:

- **Drugs** – The use of any illegal drugs is strictly prohibited at all congregational sponsored events. The misuse of prescription medications (or over-the-counter drugs) is prohibited at all congregational sponsored events, and particular attention toward prevention will be exercised at congregational sponsored child and youth events.
- **Tobacco** – Tobacco products may not be used in the church or in the presence of children or youth at congregational sponsored child or youth events. Where tobacco is used (at congregation sponsored adult or family events) we strongly encourage using designated areas and protocols.
- **Alcohol** – Alcohol may not be used in the presence of children or youth at congregational sponsored child or youth events. Where alcohol may be present at church sponsored adult or family functions (i.e. bowling, sporting events, restaurants, camping, etc.) we encourage – and expect of each other – responsible and appropriate behavior.
- **Retreat/Youth Trip Medication Procedure** – All parents of youth (7th–12th grade) will hand in all over-the-counter and prescription medications in a well labeled zip-loc bag, including directions of dosage and content to the Youth Director or designee prior to departing on retreats or youth mission trips. The Youth Director or designee will dispense all medications as prescribed or needed.

L. Parental Guidelines:

We strongly encourage parents, when on the premises with their children, to know at all times where their children are, who they are with, and what they are doing. It is strongly encouraged that children 10 or under do not play in unsupervised areas.

M. Auto Safety Policy:

Drivers must have a valid driver's license in order to drive any youth or child on a church-sponsored event.

Adult volunteers will see that children and youth wear seatbelts or are secured in appropriate child safety seats when being transported for church sponsored activities. No more passengers than can be safely restrained will be carried in a vehicle for these activities.

We subscribe to a “zero tolerance” for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including illegal substance or the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medications).

Youth under the age of 21 years of age are not to be used as chauffeurs for any church sponsored activities when at all possible.

N. Sex Offenders:

- **Philosophy:** Pilgrim United Church of Christ strives to be an inclusive community, respecting our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of an individual.

To the degree any person's actions seriously compromise the health of this congregation, our response as a people of faith must reflect our concern for the overall safety and well-being of our members.

- **Procedures:** If someone with a pending accusation or a conviction of a sexual offense wishes to become a regular part of our congregational life, he or she must be willing to abide by these SSG to ensure both the well-being of our members and to help the individual avoid any situation where he or she may face false allegations.

These SSG also apply to current members and friends should they face charges or conviction for sexual offenses.

The individual with a pending accusation or a conviction of a sexual offense must meet with the Pastor to discuss his/her desire to become part of the regular life of this congregation. The individual must indicate a willingness to make available to the Pastor and Safe Sanctuary Advisory Panel any background material that would be helpful in evaluating his/her situation. For persons already convicted of a sex offense, the probation officer also must be in contact with the pastor. The individual also must express a willingness to sign and abide by our Limited Access Agreement.

Our Advisory Panel will evaluate the risks and decide and identify appropriate ways for this person to participate in the life of the congregation. The panel will also decide if any specific conditions need to be added to the Limited Access Agreement.

If the Advisory Panel determines that participation is appropriate, the individual will then be given the Limited Access Agreement and asked to sign it. Any violations of this agreement could result in the person being denied further participation in the life of our congregation.

O. Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel is a group of people designated to meet periodically to evaluate the climate of the congregation to ensure that the Safe Sanctuary Guidelines are being followed in all areas. They will also meet to receive and review allegations of misconduct as highlighted in the Safe Sanctuary Guidelines.

The team shall consist of the Pastor, Children's Ministry Staff, Youth Director and at least one parent appointed by the Pastor, Children's Ministry Staff or Youth Director. At least one member of the Response Team will have attended a Safe Sanctuaries workshop or training session. All members of this team shall maintain confidentiality.

Important Note: This document can be changed at any time without notice at the discretion of the Pastor, Children's Ministry Staff, Youth Director and Advisory Panel.

Volunteer Covenant for People Working with Children and Youth
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

Name _____

Address/P.O. Box _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Mobile Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Home Church _____

Briefly describe any previous experience working with children or youth:

Pastoral Reference (if less than 6 months at Pilgrim UCC)

Name _____ Position _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

I am interested in the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer with children/youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver/Chaperone | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Covenant Statement

Because God calls us to be a community of faith and leaders in Christ's church, I covenant with God and all persons participating in the events sponsored by Pilgrim United Church of Christ to conduct myself in a manner that promotes the well-being of the children, youth, and families that I will serve. As a part of this covenant, I agree to participate in a professional manner in activities with the children and youth in my charge, to extend genuine care and concern to all participants while maintaining healthy and appropriate relationship boundaries, and to treat all people with dignity and respect.

I have reviewed the Pilgrim United Church of Christ Safe Sanctuaries Plan and agree to comply with its requirements.

Signature _____

Date _____

Statement of Disclosure
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

Pilgrim United Church of Christ seeks to ensure the safety of young people while they are in our care. All adults providing frequent supervision and/or leadership for Pilgrim United Church of Christ events are required to provide the following background information. This form is based on State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Form HFS-64A.

1. I have never been found guilty, pled guilty or no contest to a criminal charge in federal, state, local, military or tribal court (not including acts of civil disobedience for justice issues). True Not True

2. No civil lawsuits alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual misconduct, or physical or emotional abuse has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired. True Not True

3. I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials or service in a volunteer position, or had any of these terminated by my supervisors for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual misconduct, or physical or emotional abuse. True Not True

4. I have not been arrested or convicted of the possession, use or sale of drugs within the last 7 years. True Not True

5. I have not abused legal or illegal drugs, or alcohol within the past year. True Not True

6. My driver's license has not been suspended or revoked within the last 7 years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance. True Not True

7. There are no other facts or circumstances involving my present or past actions that would call into question my being entrusted with leading and supervising children and/or youth. True Not True

If you answer "not true" to any of the above statements, please attach a short explanation of any charges, lawsuits, reasons for termination, dates, nature and place of the incident(s) leading to these, locations where any charges were filed, names and addresses and phone numbers of any employers and/or supervisors involved in terminations, and any other information you feel important to add to help us most fully understand your background.

I, _____, have truthfully completed this form, thus providing Pilgrim United Church of Christ with accurate and honest information regarding my present and past actions.

Signature _____ Date _____

Authorization for Background Check
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

As part of our dedication to ensure the safety of children and youth while they are in our care, we require all adults providing frequent supervision and/or leadership for Pilgrim United Church of Christ events to give permission for a background check to be completed.

Full Legal Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Current Address: _____

Previous Addresses (City and State if you cannot recall)

Any other names you have used in the past (maiden, married, etc..)

Driver's License Number _____ State issued: _____

I, _____, hereby authorize Pilgrim United Church of Christ to complete a criminal background check in order to investigate the possibility of any present or past criminal actions that may be on file with relevant county, state, and/or national government agencies on my behalf.

Signature _____ Date _____

Incident Report Form
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

Date:

Time:

Describe the event (What happened and where)

Questions that arise from the event

Person who filed this report: (Print name and sign)

Limited Access Agreement
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

Pilgrim United Church of Christ affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles.

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 to both you and our children or youth of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our congregation but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to help you avoid accusations.

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in:

- Adult worship services
- Pastoral care
- Other _____.

You are to avoid all contact with children on congregation property or congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- Please remain in the presence of an adult who knows your situation at all times on a Sunday morning and at any other time when children are present.
- If a child in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone, or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children or youth.
- Please avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session, such as nursery school or youth group.
- Other _____.

I accept that the following people will be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children or youth for whom they care: the Pastor, Children's Ministry Staff, Youth Director and Safe Sanctuary Advisory Panel.

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property. I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly by a pastor and will remain in effect for an indefinite period.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Chaperone: _____ Date: _____

Advisory Panel Member: _____ Date: _____