

BENEFICENT CHURCH SAFE SPACE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Beneficent Congregational Church, Providence, RI
United Church of Christ

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A – INTRODUCTION

A.1 PURPOSE

As stated in our Church's Vision Statement, Beneficent Congregational Church (BCC) is "committed to being a wellspring of Christian faith for a diverse people and a voice for justice for all." That sense of justice guides every effort to ensure that all who participate in our church life, including children, adults, and church workers, whether paid or volunteer, will be able to explore their relationship with God and each other as they seek to grow in their faith and faithfulness. Our commitment for an environment that is safe, secure, and nurturing includes spiritual growth that is free from authoritarian control, manipulation, or coercive, damaging spiritual practices. We believe that leaders are called to shepherd the flock with humility and love, not to misuse power for personal gain, control, or the silencing of dissent. This commitment to a safe and secure environment extends to all persons and non-BCC organizations using BCC's facilities or participating in BCC programs.

A.2 SCOPE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures included in this document apply to all activities which take place within the building and properties of BCC, as well as programs, activities, or events scheduled as part of the ministry of this Church which take place elsewhere. The policies and procedures apply to all members, associate members, friends, volunteers, clergy and other employees of the Church as well as organizations renting or using Church facilities or participating in BCC programs, activities, or events.

A.3 ADOPTION AND MAINTENANCE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Safe Space policies and procedures will be developed with input from the Senior Minister, the Minister/Director of Christian Education, the Christian Education Committee, and with consultation from the Rhode Island Conference of the UCC.
- A draft of, and revisions to, the policies and procedures will be presented to the Church Council for their review and approval.
- Upon approval by the Council, the policies and procedures (including any changes made by the Council) will be presented to the Congregation at its next scheduled congregational meeting for adoption.
- Copies of the Safe Space Policies and Procedures will be kept in the Church office, Christian Education office, and the Senior Minister's office. In addition, a notice will be posted near the main door of the Meeting House and on the BCC website, stating that the church has Safe Space Policies and Procedures and where a copy can be obtained.
- The Safe Space Policies and Procedures will be reviewed at least every five years by the Christian Education Committee, the Minister/Director of Christian Education, and Senior Minister. Any proposed revisions shall be presented to the Council and Congregation according to the above procedures.

A.4 SAFE SPACE ADVOCATES POLICY

There shall be a minimum of three Safe Space Advocates; namely, the Senior Minister, the Minister/Director of Christian Education, and a designee appointed by the Church Council. The rationale for having three (or more) Safe Space Advocates is as follows:

- The responsibility of this position is such that it should not be in the hands of only one person; limiting this position to one person increases a risk to the effective supervision of these Safe Space Policies and Procedures;
- In the event of a conflict of interest, there will still be someone to oversee policy implementation;
- The awareness and implementation of these policies and procedures requires persons with an awareness of the overall operation of the church, and ability to influence the church's operation when needed.

The Senior Minister and the Minister/Director of Christian Education may designate additional persons as part of a Safe Space Advocates Team. In the absence of a Senior Minister or Minister/Director of Christian Education, the Church Council shall appoint an additional designee(s).

In order to facilitate the comfort of women and girls to report possible cases of abuse or misconduct, every effort should be made to include at least one woman as a Safe Space Advocate.

The Safe Space Advocates shall be responsible for:

1. coordinating the implementation of the policies and procedures contained in this document;
2. receiving and maintaining a file of Incident Report Forms;
3. consulting the Church Council in the assignment and distribution of church keys; and
4. conducting investigations of suspected misconduct.

B – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR KEYS AND KEYHOLDERS

1. Certain people are authorized by virtue of their position in the church to hold keys. These people include paid employees, officers of the church, committee chairpersons, education leaders, etc.
2. Keyholders must familiarize themselves with the Beneficent Church Safe Space Policies and Procedures, sign a Statement of Compliance, and submit a Key Receipt Form.
3. Non-BCC groups or individuals wishing possession of a key, by virtue of a relationship with the church or by functioning as an outreach or mission partner of the church, must assure compliance with these Safe Space Policies and Procedures, and must receive the approval of Council in consultation with the Safe Space Advocates.
4. The keys will be assigned following approval by the Church Council and distributed by the Office Manager or other person so authorized by the Council.

5. The Church Council will review this list annually for compliance with these Safe Space Policies and Procedures.
6. It is the responsibility of the Safe Space Advocates to monitor who is in possession of keys and request the return of keys from persons no longer authorized to hold them.
7. Records of keyholders will be maintained by the Office Manager. Keys shall be returned when they are no longer needed by the holder or if the Council revokes the keyholder's authorization. The return shall be documented by the Office Manager.
8. Keys are not to be loaned to unauthorized persons, duplicated, or kept beyond the time that they are needed. Authorized keyholders may loan their key to a spouse if the spouse has signed the Key Receipt Form and the Statement of Compliance.

C – REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMENCING AND CONTINUING EMPLOYMENT OR VOLUNTEERISM

C.1 DEFINITIONS

Authorized Volunteer: Any person who has completed the appropriate Disclosure Form and has been accepted by the appropriate supervisor, Board, or Committee at BCC to provide unpaid services. This may include people to whom keys have been assigned, Sunday School teachers, or youth group leaders.

Child/Children/Youth: All children and youth from birth to age 18.

Direct contact: Anyone who has the immediate responsibility for the care of children or regular face to face interactions with children, such as Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, youth choir directors, or nursery supervisors.

Event Volunteer: An adult who helps with an event (e.g. field trip, retreat) but has not committed to regularly helping with youth activities. Event volunteers may include chaperones or drivers for church-sponsored youth events.

External candidate: An applicant for a position, paid or volunteer, who is not a member of BCC, has not been actively and regularly participating as a member or friend of the Church for at least six months, or has never held a position at BCC previously.

RI BCI: Rhode Island Background Criminal Investigation; information regulated by the State of Rhode Island regarding criminal convictions of persons within the Rhode Island Court System.

Safe Space Monitor: A person who has had a background check and has been appointed by the Safe Space Advocates to serve as a monitor on Sunday mornings.

Staff or paid employee: Any individual hired and compensated by BCC on a part-time, full-time, temporary, or permanent basis.

C.2 CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS

Generally, volunteers must be actively and regularly participating members or friends of the Church for at least six months prior to applying to become involved with the various programs offered as part of the Children and Youth Ministry, subject to the discretion of the Safe Space Advocates.

C.3 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- All candidates, whether external or internal, seeking paid employment at BCC, all paid staff, and all ordained staff, whether paid or not, will complete the following:
 - a. Application for Employment;
 - b. Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form;
 - c. Authorization/Request for a criminal record check; and
 - d. Statement of Compliance for Volunteers and Staff.
- All authorized volunteers serving as Sunday School teachers, nursery supervisors, youth group leaders, workers who will accompany youth on field trips outside BCC or supervise youth overnight as a regular part of their responsibilities, whether on or off BCC property, or any other position that requires regular direct contact with youth will complete the following:
 - a. Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form;
 - b. Authorization/Request for a criminal record check; and
 - c. Statement of Compliance for Volunteers and Staff.
- Event volunteers such as drivers conveying other than their own children for field trips or chaperones for off-site activities or overnight events may, at the discretion of the Christian Education Committee and/or Safe Space Advocates, be requested to complete the following:
 - a. Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form;
 - b. Authorization/Request for a criminal record check; and
 - c. Statement of Compliance for Volunteers and Staff.
- All applications for paid employment or authorized volunteer positions requiring a Disclosure Form will be reviewed by an appropriate supervisor, Board, or Committee. Before assuming a paid or volunteer position, the applicant will be interviewed with the following in mind:
 1. Gaps in time, irregular employment patterns, or unexplained absences noted on the Application for Employment must be pursued with both former employers and potential employees.
 2. For candidates for paid positions, references will be contacted for information that may be helpful in determining the applicant's suitability for the position being sought.
 3. For candidates for volunteer positions, references may be contacted at the discretion of the supervisor or supervisory board or committee.

4. Interviews will be conducted with those applicants who are deemed suitable following the review of the application and contact with previous employers and references.
5. If the applicant is deemed suitable for the position being sought, a criminal record check through the RI Bureau of Criminal Investigation (RI BCI) will be conducted if required per subsection C.4.

C.4 RI BUREAU OF CRIMINAL IDENTIFICATION (RI BCI) CHECK POLICY

- A. In order to ensure that employees and volunteers are appropriate for their positions, a RI BCI check will be performed on candidates for the following roles:
 - a. paid employees;
 - b. ordained staff, whether paid or unpaid;
 - c. Sunday School teachers
 - d. nursery attendants
 - e. consistent volunteers
 - f. youth group leaders; and
 - g. chaperones and drivers, at the discretion of the Christian Education Committee and/or Safe Space Advocates.
- B. The Safe Space Advocates shall ensure that:
 - a. all appropriate applicants, in written form, have consented to a RI BCI investigation;
 - b. information received as a result of the RI BCI investigation is reviewed according to the criteria set forth in subsection C.5; and
 - c. information collected is held in confidence.
- C. An employee or volunteer may request a RI BCI check directly from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (and will be reimbursed for the cost) or may authorize the Church to submit the request. If the RI BCI investigation determines that a criminal record exists, the Safe Space Advocates will review the information in accordance with the criteria and policies set forth under subsection C.5 and will consult with the Church's attorney if necessary. After such review, the Safe Space Advocates will make a decision regarding the personnel transaction at issue.
- D. Non-clergy background checks will be renewed every two years; background checks for clergy shall be in accordance with United Church of Christ requirements or every two years, whichever is less.

C.5 CRITERIA AND POLICIES FOR REVIEW OF CRIMINAL RECORDS

1. Anyone convicted of, or who admits to committing child abuse or neglect, whether physical, emotional, or sexual, will not be considered, under any circumstances, for a position involving contact with children.
2. There will be a presumption that the applicant is ineligible for any position involving direct contact with children if the background check indicates a felony

- conviction for a crime which involves the use of force or violence, rape, indecent assault, battery, or the crime of attempting any of the aforementioned offenses; or illegally manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any controlled substances or the crime of possession with intent to manufacture, distribute or dispense a controlled substance, or has been charged with any felony listed above and is either awaiting trial or has been defaulted by the court.
3. The Safe Space Advocates may consider other factors as they deem appropriate that bear on a candidate's suitability for a paid or volunteer position.

D – YOUTH PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION

D.1 YOUTH PROTECTION COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Beneficent Congregational Church is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. In order to ensure this, we will provide supervision for all activities and programs involving children and youth, and will employ practices that provide for the safety of children, youth, and those who care for them.

D.2 DEFINITIONS

Assistant: A volunteer who functions in a non-supervisory role for regular youth activities such as Sunday School or nursery care.

Chaperone: A volunteer who helps supervise youth for a special activity, such as a field trip. Generally, a chaperone should be a member of BCC for at least six months or have attended BCC regularly for at least six months, subject to the discretion of the Safe Space Advocates. Chaperones must be at least 21 years old and a minimum of five years older than the oldest youth participating in the activity.

Helper: See “Assistant.”

Supervisor: A paid or volunteer worker who has direct responsibility for the care of youth, such as a teacher, nursery staff person, youth group leader, chaperone, or choir director.

Field trip: A youth event that is scheduled off BCC property.

D.3 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

D.3.1 Two Adults Policy and Procedures

The Two Adults Policy is intended to protect youth and to prevent adults from encountering a situation where they could be wrongfully accused. Therefore:

- a. Two adults, not married to each other, must be present with a child or children under 18 years of age at all times. If the supervisors are a married couple, then a third adult must be present. If a second (or third) adult cannot be located, the

- class or activity may be cancelled, and the children returned to their parent(s) or guardian(s). The two adults policy applies for all Church-related classes, activities, or events involving youth.
- b. If there are not two adults in a Sunday School room, a Safe Space Monitor will serve as a roaming second adult, frequently checking in on classrooms on Sunday morning to assure appropriate and safe interactions between teacher and students.
 - c. For overnight events, boys and girls must sleep in separate areas or with as much separation as possible. If possible, two chaperones should directly supervise each group. The Safe Space Advocates will work with non-binary individuals (youth or chaperones) as needed to ensure appropriate supervision. If the minimum level of supervision cannot be achieved, the activity must be cancelled; this may result in the loss of deposit fees for which the church cannot be responsible.

D.3.2 Five-Year Older Policy

Classroom helpers, nursery helpers, youth group assistants, and chaperones must be at least five years older than the oldest participant in the class, group, or activity. The minimum age to help in the nursery or Sunday School classroom is thirteen.

D.3.3 Open Door Policy

Sunday School rooms and youth meeting rooms shall have the doors unlocked and the rooms accessible when occupied.

D.3.4 Bathroom and Diaper Changing Policies and Procedures

- a. Children under age 9 should be accompanied to the bathroom by an adult. The adult may stand outside the bathroom door.
- b. When a child needs assistance in the bathroom, the door must remain open at all times. Volunteers and staff workers must not be alone with children in the bathroom unless the door is open.
- c. Diapering may only be done in designated areas with full classroom view. Diaper areas must be disinfected after a child is changed. Hands must be washed after each child is changed.

D.3.5 Field Trip or Youth Event Procedures

- a. All field trips or events must be sponsored by, or receive the approval of, the Christian Education Committee before the activity can take place and, if needed, before fundraising for the activity begins. Any person or group wishing to schedule either a field trip or evening or overnight youth event at the church must, with reasonable advance notice, provide the Christian Education Committee with a proposal.
- b. Parents or guardians should be fully informed about programs, activities, leaders, chaperones, dates and times, cost, method of transportation, and purpose of the scheduled trip or activity.
- c. If not accompanied by a parent or guardian, a Permission and Medical Release Form must be completed and returned before a child or youth can participate in the event.

- d. In addition to the two adults policy, it is recommended that a ratio of at least one adult per eight children is maintained. A higher adult to child ratio is advised when going to places that have a large number of people present, is near a body of water, is a remote area with few emergency facilities/phones nearby, or requires travel by public transportation.
- e. All chaperones and other event volunteers for youth activities must be approved by the Christian Education Committee and Safe Space Advocates.
- f. Vehicle rules:
 - 1. Drivers for field trips must be 25 years or older and have a copy of their driver's license and registration on file, and evidence of current car insurance.
 - 2. Anyone who has had their license revoked or suspended within the past five years will be ineligible to drive for youth activities. If it was revoked or suspended more than five years ago, the Christian Education Committee will make a decision as to suitability.
 - 3. All occupants of a vehicle are required use a seat belt.

D.3.6 Medical Release Policies and Procedures

- a. A Permission and Medical Release Form must be completed before any child may participate in an overnight youth group event or go on a field trip.
- b. Permission and Medical Release Form must be completed by a parent or guardian and returned to the Minister/Director of Christian Education.
- c. The Permission and Medical Release Form must be taken with an adult leader for each field trip or overnight event.
- d. Completed forms will be returned to the parent or guardian upon completion of the field trip or overnight event.

D.3.7 Policies for Discipline

The purpose of discipline with youth is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect, and cooperation.

- a. No youth will be disciplined by the use of any form of physical punishment.
- b. Supervisors should listen to the youth, and clearly communicate expectations of appropriate behavior.
- c. Every effort will be made to avoid placing a child in an embarrassing situation, whether with peers, parents, or the congregation.
- d. Reinforcing wanted behavior is to be emphasized over focusing on an unwanted behavior.
- e. If a child's behavior is disruptive, one of the adults in a classroom may leave to seek the Minister/Director of Christian Education or the child's parent to come to the classroom.
- f. For advice on dealing with problem behavior or for a situation which causes concern, teachers or other volunteers should seek the advice of the Minister/Director of Christian Education or Senior Minister.

D.3.8 Inappropriate activities

Activities that involve inappropriate physical contact are not suitable recreational activities. Inappropriate physical contact may include but is not limited to:

- wrestling
- piggyback rides
- tickling
- touching chests, buttocks, knees, legs, or genital areas

D.3.9 Electronic communication

Any private electronic communication between staff and youths, including the use of social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, texting, etc. is prohibited. All communication between staff and youths must be transparent. The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

Appropriate Electronic Communication

- Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youths ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth's parent;
- Communicating through "organization group pages" on Facebook or other approved public forums;
- "Private" profiles for Clergy, employees, and volunteers which youths cannot access.

Inappropriate Electronic Communication

- Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments;
- Sexually oriented conversations;
- Private messages between Clergy, employees, and volunteers with youths;
- Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites;
- Posting inappropriate comments on pictures;
- "Friending" participants on social networking sites.

In addition, provide this information to your participant's parents so that they know what is appropriate and inappropriate from your staff.

Cell Phone Use: While assigned to work with youths, staff are not permitted to use electronic communications device except during approved breaks and emergency situations. Internet use, text messaging and/or emailing pictures while assigned to work with youths is strictly prohibited regardless of the type of device used and whether for business or personal reasons. Employees need to ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy.

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) organization members and/or program participants for personal and/ or

inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

There are occasions in which staff will need to use personal or organization issued electronic communication devices. In these cases, staff will have explicit direction from supervisors governing use. Situations which may require use of organization issued or personal electronic communication devices include field trips, off-site programs, and emergencies.

E – RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUTSIDE GROUPS

E.1 COMMUNITY SERVICE

Before BCC assumes responsibility for a court or school assigned individual for community service, the Safe Space Advocates will provide the Church's Safe Space Policies and Procedures to the court or school and require an assignment that is appropriate for said policies.

E.2 COMMUNITY GROUPS

Any community group seeking to use the church as a meeting place will be given a copy of the following statement:

“In addition to being a drug-free space, Beneficent Congregational Church has a set of Safe Space Policies and Procedures that guides us in our effort to assure a safe environment for children and adults. Specifically, we want the church environment to be safe from abuse or harassment. Additionally, we recognize that any adult in Rhode Island is obligated by State law to report any incident of known or suspected child abuse.”

Leaders of groups which have an ongoing relationship and use of the building will be required to sign the Statement of Compliance Form for Organizations using Church Facilities.

Community groups seeking keys to access the church must comply with the policies and procedures set forth in Section B: Policies and Procedures for Keys and Keyholders.

F – ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES

1. On Sunday mornings, the Deacons and the Ushers assigned for that day are responsible to see that Church entrance doors are locked or monitored.
2. First aid kits will be provided in each of the following rooms:
 - Sunday School classrooms
 - nursery
 - church office
 - Meeting House
 - kitchens

3. An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) will be positioned in the central hallway between the Meeting House and the Round Top Center.
4. Sunday School teachers and nursery staff will be required to have current CPR certificates for infants and children and be trained for AED use. The Church will arrange for annual training as needed.
5. Sunday School fire drills will be conducted every September.

G – SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE PROCEDURE

Anyone who knows of or suspects child abuse is required by law to report the suspicion. This may be done by contacting DCYF through its reporting line, 800-RI CHILD (800-742-4453) using the Incident Report Form to provide appropriate information.

The Safe Space Advocates must be informed of any reported incident.

H – ADULT CONDUCT

H.1 DEFINITIONS

Authorized minister: A person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an association of the United Church of Christ. This does not include substitute pulpit supply.

Harassment: Repeated misconduct, whether verbal or physical, that creates an environment that is uncomfortable, unwelcoming, discriminating, or intimidating, or leads to an atmosphere in which a person's ability to participate in worship and activities at the church is compromised.

Minister: A person, lay or ordained, engaged by the Church to carry out its ministry. For the purposes of this document, a minister includes elected or appointed leaders of the Church, employees, commissioned ministers, and authorized ministers. This does not include substitute or one-time only participants such as visiting musicians or speakers.

Sexual exploitation: Activity or conduct of a sexual nature in which a minister engaged in the work of the Church takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the minister.

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 with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination.

Spiritual Abuse: Misuse of spiritual authority by clergy or lay leaders to control, coerce, manipulate, or exploit members of the congregation. This may include demanding unquestioning obedience, punishing dissent, or using "disfellowshipping to exclude or isolate individuals. Spiritual abuse may also be the misuse of scripture and spiritual

language by any person to demean or otherwise cause emotional and psychological harm to individuals. This may include using the Bible to force compliance, justify abuse, or cause unreasonable shame and guilt.

H.2 PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND HARASSMENT

BCC wishes to create and maintain a community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. The Church is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation and harassment of any kind, and such behavior is prohibited by Church policy. It is the intention of BCC to respond to allegations of behavior that are contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate it.

H.3 PROHIBITION OF SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Spiritual abuse can be intentional or unintentional; it is not included in all seminary curricula, and even where it is included, it may not be mandatory. Even if unintentional, it is harmful to individuals and cannot be tolerated. It is the intention of BCC to support spiritual abuse training for its ministers, and to respond to allegations of spiritual abuse and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate it.

H.4 POLICY ON MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

All persons engaged in the ministry of BCC (including elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and authorized ministers) are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in ministering to the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Sexual exploitation or spiritual abuse of church members or other individuals by anyone engaged in the ministry of BCC is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

I – PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED MISCONDUCT

I.1. Measures in Response to Suspected Misconduct

- A. The complainant may attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual(s) accused of sexual exploitation, harassment, or spiritual abuse using informal measures.
- B. If an informal resolution of the complaint(s) does not seem appropriate or does not succeed, formal proceedings may be instituted. The Safe Space Advocates shall be informed of all formal complaints, and the complainant(s) may request the Safe Space Advocates initiate an investigation, using the following procedure:
 - 1. Gather statements from individuals involved and anyone else with pertinent information.

2. Consider all information and make a determination of findings.
3. A finding that the complaint is verified may result in recommendations to Council for action, such as:
 - i. Formal reprimand with defined expectations for changed behavior, including possible public notification.
 - ii. Recommending or requiring a program of growth that may include education and/or counseling.
 - iii. Probation, with the terms of the probation clearly identified.
 - iv. Dismissal from employment or volunteer leadership position.
 - v. Dismissal from affiliation with, or membership in, the Church.
4. A finding that no sexual exploitation, harassment, or spiritual abuse has occurred shall be provided to both the employee or volunteer and the complainant.
5. Findings shall be reported to the employee's or volunteer's supervisor or supervisory committee.
6. If the accused employee or volunteer is an authorized minister, the Moderator will inform the Conference Minister or Association Committee of the allegation. BCC will cooperate fully in any procedures of the UCC related to the person's ministerial authorization while retaining the right and the responsibility to employ or designate leadership within BCC as it determines best.

I.2 APPEAL

If the complainant(s) or accused person(s) is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter, they have the right to appeal to the Council who will appoint a committee to review the complaint.

I.3 DOCUMENTATION

All information obtained during the investigation, all activities related to the issue being addressed, and all findings are to be carefully documented and signed, including dates, times, and locations of all activities and meetings; the names of the parties present; any decisions or conclusions made; and any further action to be taken. This documentation is to be retained in a secure location determined by the Safe Space Advocates.

J – TRAINING AND EDUCATION

J.1 POLICY ON TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Every effort will be made to train all employees, volunteers, and Church members as deemed appropriate regarding the Safe Space Policies and Procedures. Staff, volunteers, and Church members who have regular direct contact with youth should also receive education about child abuse awareness. Anyone who will have regular contact with children in our church and anyone who will have possession of a key to the Church will be asked to read the Safe Space Policies and Procedures and sign a Statement of Compliance.

J.2 PROCEDURES FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- A. Training will be a mandatory part of volunteer training and employee orientation.
- B. Once an individual has participated in the initial training, a refresher course will be required every year to ensure that the individual's knowledge is current and accurate.
- C. The Office Manager shall maintain a record of who has received training.

K – REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS (RSO)

BCC is committed to be a welcoming congregation to all persons and to keep BCC as a safe place for all. The following section addresses circumstances where a registered sex offender wishes to participate in activities connected with BCC. The following is intended to both protect the congregation from harm and to provide registered sex offenders a safe environment in which to worship.

K.1 DEFINITIONS

Behavioral Covenant for Church Attendance and Participation (“Behavioral Covenant”): This is an agreement between the Church and a Registered Sex Offender (RSO) that defines the limitations and conditions of the RSO’s participation in the Church and its activities.

Covenant Partner/Monitor: A Covenant Partner/Monitor is an adult without felony criminal convictions who can be assigned to accompany an RSO while on the property of the Church or while attending an event or activity sponsored by the Church. The Church may designate more than one Covenant Partner to an RSO.

Expulsion: Expulsion is defined as the immediate exclusion of the individual from Church property and events and activities sponsored by the Church as well as revocation of Church membership.

Registered Sex Offender (RSO): A Registered Sex Offender is defined in Rhode Island General Laws, Title 11. In the case of an individual residing outside of Rhode Island, it is defined in applicable laws of that State.

Registered Sex Offender Review Group: This group shall consist of the Senior Minister, the Minister/Director of Christian Education, any additional Safe Space Advocates, the Moderator, and the Presiding Deacon.

Vulnerable Adult: A vulnerable adult is an individual who is physically or mentally unable to advocate for them self.

K.2 RSO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. Anyone who is an RSO is required to make that status known to the Senior Minister.
- B. The RSO must provide contact information for their attorney, therapist, and parole/probation officer as well as give written permission for the Senior Minister to talk to them at any time.
- C. When the Senior Minister becomes aware of an RSO, they will meet with the RSO Review Group which shall:
 - a. Review the individual's situation;
 - b. Assess the risk to the congregation;
 - c. Assign at least one Covenant Partner/Monitor to the individual;
 - d. Implement a Behavioral Covenant for Church Attendance and Participation signed by the Senior Minister, the Moderator, and the individual; and
 - e. Inform the Church Council and Board of Deacons of the situation.

Information regarding the names of registered sex offenders will be kept on file and will be available upon request.

- D. Anyone who is an RSO will be required to sign a Behavioral Covenant for Church Attendance and Participation which defines the limitations and conditions of the individual's participation in the church.
- E. Anyone who is an RSO will always be in the company of an assigned Covenant Partner/Monitor while on the property of the Church or while attending an event or activity sponsored by the Church. The Covenant Partner/Monitor shall not be a spouse, partner, or relative of the offender. It is the responsibility of the RSO to schedule the presence of a Covenant Partner/Monitor when needed. Covenant Partners/Monitors agree to report any breach of the Behavioral Covenantal to the Senior Minister.
- F. If a victim of an RSO is a member or employee of the congregation, the RSO may be refused church participation; if a victim of an RSO later becomes a member or employee, the RSO may be subject to expulsion.
- G. Anyone who is an RSO cannot work on behalf of BCC with children, youth, or vulnerable adults in any paid or volunteer capacity.
- H. There shall be no expectation of anonymity on the part of the RSO. "Clergy-penitent privilege" does not prevent clergy from informing the congregation of matters which maybe relevant to their safety nor does it require clergy to hold information in secrecy. This information is not confidential and will be shared by the Senior Minister with anyone they deem necessary, including BCC staff.
- I. At the Senior Minister's request, the Behavioral Covenant can be reviewed and modified as necessary. At a minimum, the Agreement will be reviewed annually.

- J. As membership of the RSO Review Group changes, the Behavioral Covenant will be shared with each new member.
- K. BCC shall comply with all State laws regarding restrictions placed on Registered Sex Offenders.

K.3 GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION

In addition to provision F above, grounds for expulsion include:

- A. The failure of an RSO to notify the Senior Minister of their status.
- B. The failure of an RSO to comply with the Behavioral Covenant for Church Attendance and Participation.
- C. The failure of an RSO to comply with the BCC Safe Space Policies and Procedures is grounds for discipline up to and including expulsion.