

***Trinitarian Congregational Parish of Castine, UCC***  
***Safe Conduct/Safe Church Policy***

**I. Statement of Policy**

As a community of Christian faith, the Trinitarian Congregational Parish of Castine (TCP) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities, and a community in which members, friends, Clergy, employees, and volunteers can worship, learn, and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. The congregation of TCP supports principles of SafeConduct,<sup>1</sup> which include individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the congregation in fulfillment of the standards set by our Christian faith.

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

Every member of the Congregation, whether authorized clergy, leader, lay staff, volunteer or parent, has a role to lead those who look to them individually for guidance, to monitor their behavior and redirect them as they cross boundaries of safe conduct. We commit to nurturing good conduct by demonstrating personal behaviors that are consistent with our Christian values.

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<sup>1</sup> SafeConduct™ is a set of policies devised by the Insurance Board and made available to churches and organizations within the denominations eligible to be served by the Insurance Board (<https://www.insuranceboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Safe-Conduct-Policy-Template.pdf>).

## II. Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adults

TCP is committed to creating an environment for youth and vulnerable adults that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success. No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from TCP. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth and vulnerable adults or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. TCP will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The specific expectations of this code of conduct are as follows.

1. Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
3. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will avoid inappropriate displays of affection and verbal interactions, and will avoid displays affection with youth and vulnerable adults that cannot be observed by others.
4. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not stare at or comment on youth and vulnerable adults' bodies.
5. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth and vulnerable adults.
6. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth and vulnerable adults.
7. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on TCP's property.
8. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not have secrets with youth and vulnerable adults and will only give gifts with prior permission.
9. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth and vulnerable adults.
10. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth and vulnerable adults in a private setting. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youth and vulnerable adults.<sup>2</sup> All programs for youth and vulnerable adults will be staffed by at least two adults.
11. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will not abuse youth and vulnerable adults in anyway including (but not limited to) physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, mental abuse, and neglect.
12. TCP will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth or vulnerable adult by another youth or vulnerable adult. In addition, TCP will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, including physical, verbal, relational, or cyberbullying, or sexualized bullying.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2C for more guidance on such one-on-one interactions.

13. All Clergy, employees, and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. They should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. They will:
  - a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
  - b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youth and vulnerable adults against abuse.
  - c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
  - d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
14. Clergy, employees, and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, adults, or youth to the pastor or the Church Council.
  - a. TCP cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any Clergy, employee, or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.
  - b. Clergy, employees, and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of youth and vulnerable adult abuse, indecency with a youth and vulnerable adult, or injury to a youth and vulnerable adult.

### **III. Screening and Selection of Employees/Volunteers**

The process of screening and selecting employees and volunteers is an essential element of management due diligence.

*Standing of Authorized Clergy:* In the United Church of Christ (UCC), authorization for ministry is granted by the Committee on Ministry of the local association (the Sunrise Association, in the case of TCP). Clergy serving at TCP must meet the requirements of and be authorized for ministry in and on behalf of the UCC by the Sunrise Association.

*Background Checks:* Criminal history and sexual offender registry checks will be conducted for all employees and for volunteers working with youth. The background check(s) should include the following:

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

Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check. Where a criminal record exists, it will be the responsibility of the pastor, in consultation with Church Council (or Church Council, if the employee in question is the pastor) to determine whether the record should disqualify the applicant. Consideration shall be given to:

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

Conviction for the following crimes will be considered barriers to employment or volunteer work with children: violent crimes, sexual assault, sexual abuse or neglect of a child, and – depending on position requirements – drug offenses or driving offenses. Arrest data are not grounds for disqualification, only convictions. The status or relevance of other crimes will be considered individually.

#### **IV. Training**

The mission of TCP is first to prevent abuse of children and other vulnerable adults. Each new employee and new volunteer working with youth shall complete a specific program of training within 30 days of assuming duties. Fulfillment of training requirements shall be documented by the Pastor or supervisor.<sup>3</sup> Abuse prevention curriculum shall include:

- *Organization level policies and procedures:* Staff and volunteers will be oriented to church policies at the time of hiring, including: code of conduct, standards applicable to ministry, procedures for reporting potential violations, explanation of individual statutory reporting obligations, identifying and managing organization-specific situations, and physical security procedures.
- *Abuse prevention education:* Staff and volunteers will be required to complete the Abuse Prevention Training offered through Praesidium.

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<sup>3</sup> A training module is provided free-of-charge by the Insurance Board to all churches/organizations eligible to be covered by the Insurance Board, whether or not they actually are.

## V. Procedures for Reporting and Responding

Once a Clergy member, employee, volunteer, youth, or parent has expressed a concern or made an allegation about the treatment of a youth, TCP commits to taking action to reduce any subsequent risk to the youth, to the accused staff member or volunteer, and to the organization.

### A. Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations

Any Clergy member, employee, or volunteer who observes suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or potential policy violations has a responsibility to immediately report their observations. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youths will be taken seriously. Our procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected.

As required by mandated reporting laws, Clergy, employees, and volunteers must report any suspected abuse or neglect of a youth—whether on or off organization property or whether perpetrated by employees, volunteers, or others—to state authorities. In Maine, reports can be made to the Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-452-1999.<sup>4</sup> Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith and without malice. *\*Refer to state specific mandated reporting requirements for definitions of abuse more specific reporting information.*

If an employee or volunteer witness suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from another employee or volunteer, they are instructed to:

- Interrupt the behavior,
- report the behavior to the pastor (for reports about staff or volunteers) or the moderator (for reports about the pastor),
- document the report,
- keep reporting until appropriate action is taken.

### B. Responding to Reports

In the event that a report of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations is received, the person receiving the report should proceed as follows.

- The person receiving the report is instructed to determine if the youth or vulnerable adult is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm.
- The person receiving the report – or a designee, if so warranted – will speak with the individual who has been reported to inform them of the report and the specific allegations that have been made.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-welfare>

- The person receiving the report will contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by your mandatory reporting procedures. The one making this contact is instructed to obtain a case number and the name and contact information of the appropriate staff member at the office of the relevant authorities.
- The person receiving the report will review the file of the individual who has been reported to determine if similar complaints have been reported.
- The person receiving the report, or a designee, will conduct any other interviews necessary to determine whether this policy has been violated. A written record of all interviews will be kept, containing only the pertinent factual details.
- In consultation with Church Council, the person receiving the report will determine the appropriate response.
- The report, and the outcome of any investigation and disciplinary action, will be documented and a copy maintained in the individual's file.
- If at any point, a concern arises about possible abuse, state authorities must be contacted.
- If appropriate, parents and/or guardians will be notified.

Based on the information gathered, one or more of the following responses may be required.

- Increase monitoring, training, or supervision of the employee, volunteer, or program.
- If policy violations with youths are confirmed, the employee or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and prosecution.
- The organizational response will be evaluated after any complaint, including the need for increased supervision, revised policies or procedures, or additional training.

### *C. Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Abuse and Sexualized Behaviors*

Most serious incidents of youth-to-youth abuse are preceded by more subtle incidents such as name-calling, taunting, or roughhousing. Interrupting these interactions early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can keep the program environment safe. TCP recognizes that the following interactions are high risk and should be prohibited: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, interactions between youth that single out a single individual, interactions that involve ridicule or humiliation.

Youth-to-youth sexual behaviors can include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity, and similar types of interactions. If employees or volunteers witness youth-to-youth sexual behaviors, they are instructed to follow these procedures.

- If you observe sexual activity between youths, you should immediately separate them.
- Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted and separate the youths.
- Notify your supervisor, including what you observed and how you responded.
- Follow your supervisor's instructions regarding notifying the authorities and informing the parents of the youth involved.
- In some cases, if the problem is recurring discipline may be required including not allowing one or both youths to return to the program.

In the event that a report is received of a youth's sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the individual receiving the report should follow these procedures.

- Meet with the staff or volunteer who reported the sexual activity to gather information.
- Confirm that the youths involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
- Review the steps taken by the staff on duty.
- Meet with parents of the youths involved.
- Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the children involved.
- Notify the proper authorities, as appropriate.
- Develop a plan of corrective action, if appropriate, in response to the incident.
- Review, with the pastor or Church Council, the need for additional supervision, revised policies or procedures, or additional training.

#### *D. Responding to Victims*

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of TCP is to take a trauma-informed response to the needs of victims, within the constraints or obligations imposed under insurance contracts. In general, we will attend to the immediate needs of victims by providing support and pastoral care.

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

#### *E. Notification of Parents*

A minor child may be party to an incident either as an initiator or as the victim. Whether a child is initiator or victim may not be clear in all circumstances, such as a child-on-child



incident, and violation of policy does not necessarily create a victim. While notification of parents of such circumstances may be warranted, utmost care in communication is required.

While communicating with a parent, and *being mindful of the importance of timely communication*, care shall be given to assessing:

- The specific facts;
- Whether a disciplinary or termination process is required;
- Whether a child should be dismissed from a program (requiring notification of other parents/guardians);
- Whether “mandatory reporting” is a factor;
- Who shall and in what manner communicate with the parents/guardian;
- Whether the Pastor should be involved in the communication;
- Tentative remedial steps to prevent a further incident.

#### *F. Responding to Media*

Contacts with media must be managed and conducted only by a person specifically designated by the Church Council to represent the church. No other person(s) may speak on behalf of the church. Unless designated differently by the Council in a particular circumstance, the exclusive spokesperson for the church shall be the Pastor or the Moderator.

Prior to speaking to media, the Pastor or Moderator shall contact and consult with the Maine Conference UCC to obtain an understanding of appropriate statements or admissions and issues of privacy that may apply to the situation.

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

## **VI. Congregational Awareness**

We are dedicated to a policy of open communication and education for the benefit of the children, parents, vulnerable adults and guardians we serve. They are entitled to know what to expect of our ministries, the Ministers who serve them, and to know the related policies and procedures created to protect the respective ministry constituencies. Constituencies include the children, the parents, the vulnerable adults, the guardians, and the Ministers.

This entire policy shall be posted on the TCP website, [www.tcpoc.org](http://www.tcpoc.org).

At the time children or vulnerable adults are enrolled in TCP programs, parents or legal guardians shall be provided with a copy of this policy, including the TCP Code of Conduct.

Children and vulnerable adults shall be provided an orientation covering the following subjects:

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

Parents/guardians shall be encouraged to report violations of policy, boundaries or suspected abuse to the Pastor, Moderator, or Chair of the Christian Education Committee.

If for any reason, parent/guardian believes that the primary contacts have failed to respond or have not given credibility to the parent's/guardian's concerns, the latter may contact the church Council or the Sunrise Association of the UCC to report those concerns.

## VII. Registered Sex Offender Policy

As a community of faith, serving by the example of Jesus Christ, we also seek to attend to the needs of all who seek healing and fellowship among us. We shall be prepared to accept in our midst those who have violated the most sacred mores of our society at large, in order to provide them refuge, peace, example and support in their recovery and penitence. We commit to doing so with utmost care for the welfare of our congregation, collectively and individually, and the community we serve.

We accept that there are risks to be born in our deliberate association with and ministry to sex offenders who are considered a pariah among the community-at-large as evidenced by the many constraints placed upon their interaction with the community. We agree to honor the needs of the congregation and our community to have reasonable assurance that a sex offender in our care will not have an opportunity to reoffend as a result of lapses in our management of the offender.

We shall consider limited participation or membership of a sex offender in our congregation with utmost care which shall include the following elements:

- Document understanding of the statutory limitations applying in the State of Maine to the movement and activities of a sex offender, taking into account the programs of the church or the operations of tenants.
- Consider and understand the character of the crimes which have resulted in requiring an individual to register as a sex offender, the passage of time without repeated conduct or behavior and the risk and opportunity of re-offending that is presented by the particular programs of our congregation.
- Document understanding of limitations and prohibitions placed upon the offender by courts and probation authorities. The opinion of a mental health professional regarding the suitability of the person to participation in the life of the church shall be obtained. In all cases where probation is in force, we shall obtain the explicit approval of and conditions of participation specified by the probation officer. A recommendation by law enforcement or mental health professionals to deny participation to an offender shall be honored in all cases.

Understanding that, with respect to a person who is an employee, volunteer or in a position of church leadership, who has previously been conviction for acts of sexual misconduct as defined by insurance contracts, knowledge by church leaders and managers of such prior conviction will have the effect of voiding coverage for the individual employee, volunteer or church leader and for the church for future acts of sexual misconduct by that person.

Given that criminal convictions are a matter of public record, there shall be no expectation of secrecy on the part of the offender. As a condition of participation in our faith community, the offender must agree that the leadership of the church shall make it known to the members, constituencies and customers of the church that we have accepted among us a registered sex

offender. The conditions and limitations that apply to participation in the life of the church shall be known to all.

With the advice of legal counsel, and in all cases, the conditions of participation by a registered offender shall be defined by a “limited access agreement” executed by the offender and church. Such agreement shall be approved by probation authorities as may be necessary according to para. 3., above. The agreement shall be reviewed annually to validate ongoing eligibility. Violation of the agreement by the offender shall be considered as grounds for immediate cancellation of the agreement.

The following additional considerations shall apply:

**Victims in the congregation** – In such case as the victim of a RSO (registered sex offender) is a member of the congregation, employee or is a client of other services provided by the congregation, the RSO shall not be permitted to attend the church or church activities.

**Clergy-penitent privilege** – “Clergy-penitent privilege” is a “Rule of Evidence” defining or limiting information which clergy may reveal in a court of law only. “Clergy penitent privilege” does not prevent clergy from informing the congregation of matters which may be relevant to their safety; it does not require clergy to hold information in secrecy.

Ordained clergy shall assume responsibility and take extraordinary care to understand the scope and limitations of clergy-penitent privilege in the State of Maine, and the parameters of confidence and privilege as defined by our denomination. Authorized clergy shall inform the leadership of the church of the general principles of confidence and privilege under which (s)he performs his/her clerical duties.

**Escorts (Parish Associate)** – Conditions of limited access for a RSO will commonly require that the offender have an escort while on the church premises or at church events elsewhere. A person serving as an escort shall not be a spouse, partner or relative of the offender.

**Approval & Supervision** – With the advice and prior approval of the Pastor and a pastor-appointed church member, a Limited Access Agreement with a Petitioner (known RSO) may be signed only by the Pastor. The Pastor, in association with other “authorized clergy” and parish associates (escorts), who shall be named in the Limited Access Agreement, shall be responsible for the general supervision of the Petitioner in all of the latter’s activity in relation to the church. Elements of supervision shall include the following:

- Knowledge of the terms of the Limited Access Agreement, including activity limitations placed upon the Petitioner.
- Knowledge of the Petitioners offense history sufficient to understand the risks of association with the church and its ministries.
- Willingness to assert activity limitations and to report any violation of restrictions placed upon the Petitioner.

- Willingness to intervene in any onset of a risky or problem behavior.
- Willingness to report all cases of non-compliance to the Senior Pastor.

The Pastor shall assess, prior to selection, whether a proposed parish associate is willing to fulfill the above elements of supervision.

**Professional privacy** – Members who are employed in certain occupations may have a statutory obligation to maintain privacy around the criminal history of their clients who may also be parishioners. Such members shall decline to accept leadership roles which may put them in a position of decision-making regarding individuals who may be their professional clients.

**Juveniles** – While the criminal record of a juvenile is ordinarily concealed by the courts, the church may come to know the juvenile's history by other means. Honest disclosure by a juvenile and parents in the volunteer application and screening process may reveal that a record exists without knowing the specifics. While a limited access agreement will be required for the juvenile, as for others, every precaution will be taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality which the law affords a juvenile.

## Appendix 1: Definitions

1. Physical abuse is injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a youth.
2. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a youth and an adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.
3. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
4. Neglect is the failure to provide for a youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a youth from harm.
5. A Minor is anyone under the age of 18 (also referred to as youth throughout policy).
6. A Vulnerable Adult is anyone aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
7. Mandatory Reporters are those persons required by Maine law to report suspected abuse to police or child welfare agencies.
8. Authorized Clergy includes any person who is admitted to authorized ministry by The United Church of Christ who serves the congregation in any capacity, whether called as pastor or serving in a retired, emeritus, administrative, or volunteer capacity.

## Appendix 2: Definitions of appropriate and inappropriate interactions

**A. Physical Contact:** TCP’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are as follows.

| <i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>   | <i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a youth to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul> |

**B. Verbal Interactions:** TCP’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are as follows.

| <i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>   | <i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Appropriate jokes</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Praise</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name-calling</li> <li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths in the personal problems or issues of Clergy, employees, and volunteers</li> <li>• Secrets</li> <li>• Cursing</li> <li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li> <li>• Shaming</li> <li>• Belittling</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks</li> <li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</li> </ul> |

**C. One-on-One Interactions**

Private, one-on-one interactions with youth or vulnerable adults are prohibited unless approved in advance by the pastor or Church Council. In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, Clergy, employees, and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse.

- One-on-one meetings with a youth should occur in a public place where both parties are in full view of others.
- Displays of physical affection that can be misinterpreted should be avoided. (See Appendix 2.A, above.)
- If meeting in a room or office, the door open should be left open.

Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.



**D. Off-site Contact:** The following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.

| <i>Appropriate Outside Contact</i>   | <i>Inappropriate Outside Contact</i>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking groups of youths on an outing</li> <li>• Attending sporting activities with groups of youths</li> <li>• Attending functions at a youth’s home, with parents present</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking one youth on an outing without the parents’ written permission</li> <li>• Visiting one youth in the youth’s home, without a parent present</li> <li>• Entertaining one youth in the home of staff or volunteers</li> <li>• A lone youth spending the night with staff or volunteers</li> </ul> |

When outside contact is unavoidable, ensure that the following steps are followed:

1. Supervisors should identify for Clergy, employees, and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
2. Ensure that staff or volunteers have the parents’ permission to engage in outside contact with the youth. Consider requiring the parents to sign a release-of-liability statement.

**E. Electronic Communication:** Private electronic communication (e.g., direct contact via a personal e-mail or personal social media accounts) between staff and youths is prohibited. All communication between staff and youth should occur through organizational channels and/or with parents included. The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication.

| <i>Appropriate Electronic Communication</i>  | <i>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</i>   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youths with a supervisor, another staff member/volunteer, or the youth’s parent copied in.</li> <li>• Communicating through the Church’s social media sites or other approved public forums.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments</li> <li>• Sexually oriented conversations</li> <li>• Private messages between Clergy, employees, and volunteers with youths</li> <li>• Posting pictures of organization participants on personal social media sites</li> <li>• Posting inappropriate comments on pictures</li> <li>• “Friending” participants on personal social networking sites</li> </ul> |

**F. Gift Giving:** Clergy, employees, and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youths, and only when supervisors/the TCP Church Council is aware of and approves the gift and if parents have been notified.



### **Appendix 3. Acknowledgment of SafeConduct Policy and Procedure**

I have read and agree to comply with my organization's policies regarding sexual abuse prevention.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee or Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date