

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY GUIDELINES**

**July 1, 2010**

These guidelines are for the protection of individuals served by and serving the ministries of First Reformed Church. Two female representatives of the Safety and Security Team will implement and enforce these guidelines.

**SCREENING:** All teachers, youth sponsors, and staff shall be screened by the Safety & Security Team first and then approved by the consistory as stated in the bylaws of the church. First Reformed Church and its leaders reserve the right to conduct a criminal background check on any person who wishes to work with children and youth.

**DISCIPLINE:** The use of corporal punishment (hitting, slapping, pushing, and kicking) is not permitted. Appropriate forms of discipline include the following:

1. Verbal warning
2. Helping a child focus on more acceptable activities.
3. Using a time-out strategy – the child may be placed in a time-out area or chair. (This is an age appropriate activity for younger children and the length of the time-out will not exceed their chronological age in minutes.
4. Asking the child's parent, guardian, or an assistant to attend the next meeting and participate in the activities.
5. Removing the child from the activity and bringing him/her to a parent/guardian.
6. Removing the child/youth from an off-campus activity and having the child's parent/guardian pick the child up from the event.

Parents are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction or does not respond to discipline.

Concerns about a child's/youth's behavior will be reported to the program supervisor and assistance will be requested if needed.

**ABUSE:** Not only shall those who work with children/youth not participate in abusive behavior, but they shall be alert to possible abuse that is being inflicted upon the child by others. The following may be indicators of abuse:

1. Physical abuse is any intentional means of inflicting physical pain or injury to another person and can be a single event or a chronic pattern of behavior. Possible symptoms include: bruises/welts, multiple injuries including abrasions, contusions, lacerations, burns, tethering abrasions (resulting from an area of the body being tied to something), extreme shyness, avoiding physical contact with adults, behavior extremes ranging from withdrawal to aggression.
2. Physical neglect is intentionally not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his/her care. Possible symptoms include: dirty body or clothes, hunger, odor, unkempt appearance, "pack rat" – taking extra food or supplies.
3. Sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or any sexual intimacy forced on a child/youth for the sexual stimulation or gratification of another person. Possible symptoms include: frequent sore throat, urinary tract infections, complaints of headaches, stomachaches, backaches, sexual knowledge beyond the child's developmental level, wearing extra layers of clothes and refusing to remove the layers, depression, and withdrawal from activities and relationships.
4. Sexual harassment could include but is not limited to inappropriate sexually oriented humor, language, questions, or comments about sexual behavior or orientation, unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, repeated requests for social engagements, or display of sexual material in such a way as to embarrass or intimidate a person.
5. Emotional abuse is attempting to control an individual's life through words, threats, and fear; destroying an individual's self-worth through harassment, threats, and deprivation. Possible

symptoms include: frequent complaints of headaches, stomachaches, or backaches, eating disorders, difficulty with peer relationships, exhibiting behavioral extremes – withdrawal, compliance, aggression, anger, or very low self-esteem.

**ABUSE REPORTING:** All church workers – paid staff and volunteers – are required to report any alleged or suspected abuse situations to their program supervisor, who will report to a pastor. If necessary, it will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

**BATHROOM USE:** No child over five (5) years of age shall be assisted in the restroom unless he/she is physically, mentally, or emotionally disabled.

Children five (5) and under should be escorted to the bathroom by an adult female volunteer or staff volunteer. For those needing assistance, the bathroom door/stall must be left ajar.

Children age six (6) and over must request permission from a church worker/volunteer to leave the classroom in order to go to the bathroom.

#### **NURSERY PROGRAMS:**

1. All nursery workers shall be screened by the Safety & Security Team and then approved and informed of their duties by the nursery committee. We do encourage the use of teenagers, both male and female, in the nursery but there must be at least two people on duty in the nursery and one of them must be an adult female. If there is a nursery situation in which only one child is present, it is sufficient to have one adult female on duty in the nursery.
2. All parents leaving a child in the nursery must sign in their children on the nursery log, put a nametag on the child, and label the child's personal items, such as diaper bag, bottle or pacifier. The parents may also be issued a pager with which they may be alerted to problems with their child while in the nursery. A parent must report immediately to the nursery upon being paged.
3. Children will be dismissed by nursery workers to appropriate parents, guardian, or designated party.
4. If a child needs assistance using a restroom, he or she will be accompanied by an adult female nursery worker who must leave the door ajar.
5. Parents or guardians of nursery age children need to remain on church grounds during nursery time and/or be attending a FRC ministry for which the nursery is provided.
6. The door windows of any room used by children/youth may not be covered for any reason.

#### **YOUTH GROUP:**

1. A "First Reformed Church sponsored event" is an event that has been approved by the Consistory. (This is required in order that the event will be covered by insurance.)
2. Each student involved in an event off site is required to submit a completed release form including medical insurance and medical information.
3. Parents or guardian will be given the agenda of the event, address and telephone number/cell phone number of the place where the group will be going and the anticipated time of departure and return.
4. Leaders will be present in all sleeping areas for supervision. Young men and women will not be permitted to sleep in the same area together.
5. Leaders should avoid being alone with youth of the opposite sex. If unavoidable, have parental/guardian/authoritative permission to meet with the student one on one.
6. One-on-one encounters between staff members and students are an important part of ministry. In cases of one-on-one contact between a youth group staff member and a child/youth, parents must be notified and meetings must occur in the church when other groups are meeting or in a public setting. (In confidential situations where a parent cannot be notified, another staff member or youth sponsor must be notified.)
7. Regardless of the relative ages, it is never appropriate for a youth group worker and a youth member to date each other.
8. The door windows of any room used by children/youth may not be covered for any reason.

**BUS TRANSPORTATION:** The buss committee has responsibility to ensure the bus and driver comply with all the state regulations such as CDL license. They also are to ensure that the driver is trained on our particular bus and authorize him or her to drive the bus.

**MAINTENANCE:** First Reformed Church will maintain the building and grounds and make repairs as necessary to ensure the safety and security of all who use our facilities.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN:** (See last page)

Sanctuary evacuation:

1. If there is a tornado warning ½ hour before any church service or event, that service or event will be cancelled.
2. In case of severe weather during the worship service when an evacuation is needed, the following steps will be taken:
  - a. A church member, fire personnel, law enforcement personnel or other authoritative person will inform the pastor or speaker.
  - b. The pastor or speaker will then give instructions of the evacuation plan that has been posted by doorways and on the pulpit.
  - c. Elders and deacons will be posted by the doors to direct people to the basement.
  - d. At the time of severe weather, no one will be excused outside until the “All Clear” has been given.
  - e. Elders, deacons, fire personnel, or law enforcement personnel will check the church and Friendship House for anyone who has been left behind, and lead them to the basement.

In case of fire:

- a. A church member, fire personnel, law enforcement personnel or other authoritative person will inform the pastor or speaker.
- b. The pastor or speaker will then give instructions to evacuate the sanctuary according to plans which are posted by the doors and on the pulpit.
- c. Elders, deacons, fire personnel, law enforcement personnel, or other authoritative person will assist with the evacuation and check to ensure all have been evacuated.
- d. Everyone will meet at the meeting place, which is the rock parking lot north of the church.

In case of Bomb, gas, or other threat

The same procedure as fire will be used.

## GUIDELINE AGREEMENT

I have read, understood, and will follow the Safety and Security Guidelines of the First Reformed Church, Sheldon, Iowa. I agree to uphold myself in an honorable and Christ-like manner at all times and seek to provide a safe and caring atmosphere for all who participate in any of our educational ministries.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_