

Safe Church Policy

North Haven Congregational Church

North Haven, CT 06473

Mission

The congregation and ministers of North Haven Congregational Church aspire to be a Christ-centered fellowship where all can seek a close relationship with God. We recognize all persons are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26). Both the Old and New Testaments instruct the faithful to do justice and to care for all persons, including the young.

God calls us all individually to nurture faith in our community in a caring, safe, and loving manner. The church believes that children and all members are valuable gifts entrusted to our care spiritually, physically, and emotionally. The purpose of this policy is to protect all members in a safe church community. Out of commitment to provide an environment as secure as possible, it is the intent of this policy to ensure the best for our children, adolescents, and young adults, as we seek to provide protection for all among us in vulnerable positions.

It is the intention of this congregation to have a clear policy to discourage, and seek to prevent abuse within our Christian community, and to promote an avenue for an appropriate response should allegations of misconduct arise at any time. The goal of this response will be to establish a process to help both the alleged victims and alleged offenders. Throughout any investigation, God's grace and compassion need to be extended to all parties involved.

Abuse Prevention Policy

In our effort to prevent the occurrence of child abuse in the church, we are adopting the following policies, procedures and guidelines to protect our children, youth, staff, volunteers, and all other members of the North Haven Congregational Church (NHCC).

All persons engaged in the ministry of NHCC, including elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and ordained 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. Abuse, sexual harassment or sexual exploitation of parishioner(s) or other individual(s) by anyone engaged in the ministry of NHCC is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

Elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers and ordained ministers often deal with individuals who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or otherwise personally vulnerable. It is, therefore, imperative that those engaged in the ministry of this church maintain

their own psychological, emotional, and spiritual health, and that they have adequate preparation and education for helping those individuals they seek to serve in ministry. It is the policy of NHCC to encourage its leaders, authorized ministers, employees and volunteers to nurture safety within ministerial relationships by being attentive to self-care and education, and realizing the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Children and Youth Protection Policy

NHCC 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 expect that all people applying to be volunteers working with minors will have been members for at least six months or friends of NHCC for one year. It is the policy of the church to provide adequate supervision for all youth activities. We also expect all employees or volunteers who work with minors to complete and submit a disclosure document in a form substantially similar to that of the one accompanying this policy.

Child abuse as defined in the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) refers to physical injury or injuries inflicted upon a child or youth under the age of eighteen by a caretaker or school employee other than by accidental means, or injuries which are at variance with the history given of them. It also includes a condition that is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, cruel punishment, or being neglected. (CGS Sections 17a-101 and 46b-120(a)(3)). In addition, CGS Section 53-21 defines risk of injury to, or impairing the morals of children. Any person who willfully or unlawfully causes or permits any child under the age of sixteen years to be placed in a situation where the life or limb of the child is endangered, the health of the child is likely to impair the health or morals of any child or if any person has contact with the intimate parts of a child under the age of sixteen years, or subjects a child under the age of sixteen to contact with the intimate parts of such person, in a sexual or indecent manner likely to impair the health or morals of the child, will be guilty of injury to, or impairing the morals of children.

Child sexual abuse and sexual misconduct, as understood in this document, always involve a relationship in which both parties do not have equal power. Mutual consent is not possible where there is an imbalance of powers, for example between minister and congregant, church school teacher or youth leader and child, choir director and choir members.

For the purposes of this policy we are using the following definitions:

A child is defined in Connecticut Law as any person under the age of sixteen, and youth as any person age sixteen or seventeen. In this policy, the terms child(ren) and youth are used interchangeably.

Child Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity with a child in which a minor is used for the sexual gratification of another to include, but not be limited to: fondling, penetration, inappropriate touching, verbal comments, pornographic materials, obscene phone calls, and exhibitionism.

Minor: Any individual under the age of eighteen.

Teacher: Anyone who has responsibility for a church school classroom, vacation Bible school, is acting as a substitute or leading a summer Sunday school class, and has attended teacher training.

Classroom Helper: An adult or youth adult who assists a teacher.

Response Team: Three members, representing varied age groups, (at least one male and one female) of the congregation who will objectively investigate the allegations. One person of the group will be designated to be the spokesperson for the church to the media.

Ordained Minister: A person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an association of the United Church of Christ.

Sexual exploitation: Sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which an adult 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.

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. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.
- Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly: written contact, verbal contact, physical contact and visual contact.
- Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome.

Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Abuse, Misconduct and Sexual Harassment (See separate Policy and Procedures)

Education and Training

The Senior Minister and/or Associate Minister will be responsible for the implementation of procedures designed to educate volunteers, staff and church members regarding this policy. As part of each new church employee's orientation to NHCC, the Senior Minister will educate the employee about this policy and the employee's responsibility to abide by it. All employees will be requested to fill out a disclosure form. The Associate Minister will ensure that the Christian Education Board define and implement procedures designed to further the intent of this policy, and educate volunteers on these procedures through regular training programs. The Senior Minister will ensure that the Board of Deacons design and maintain procedures related to building use which uphold the intent of this policy. Annual training programs will teach church staff and volunteers how and when to report an allegation of misconduct and how to discuss questionable behavior with either the Senior Minister and/or the Response Team. These procedures will be appended to this policy and are subject to annual review.

Maintenance of Records

Records of all actions required by this policy and any material pertinent to it, including reports, workers' surveys, and application and acknowledgement forms, shall be kept for a legally appropriate time in a secure and confidential place; the location and security measures to be determined by the Senior Minister or Associate Minister.

Response Team

A Response Team will be constituted of three members, representing varied age groups, (at least one male and one female) of the congregation. The Response Team, appointed by the Moderator for indefinite terms, will objectively investigate all allegations of abuse, neglect or harassment. One person of the group will be designated to be the spokesperson for the church to the media. In the event that a volunteer, church member or staff member is uncomfortable reporting an allegation of sexual misconduct to the Senior Minister or Associate Minister, that person may take the allegation or concern to the Response Team. The Team will also serve to support staff members charged with confirming the suitability of volunteers. The team will lead the annual review of the "Safe Church" policy materials with Ministers, staff and volunteers. The Team will be a formally constituted Church Committee and its members may serve on other boards. Team members will be noted on documents related to this policy and changes will be announced promptly in church publications.

North Haven Congregational Church

Procedures for Handling Complaints of Neglect or Abuse

by Employees and Volunteer Leaders

The Response Team of three members, (including at least one male and one female), will be established by the Moderator and approved by the Council of North Haven Congregational Church (NHCC) each year at its first meeting, in preparation for the possibility of hearing complaints under its adopted statement of policy. The Response Team will familiarize itself with the terms of this policy as well as the established procedures of NHCC for dealing with complaint(s) of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment against any employee(s) or volunteer(s) in leadership position(s) in NHCC.

Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Abuse, Misconduct and Sexual Harassment

- All allegations will be taken seriously.
- Response to allegations must be handled with due respect for everyone's privacy and confidentiality.

Regarding minors (under 18 years old)

- Care and safety of alleged complainants (and family) are the first priority. Extend whatever pastoral resources needed. Notify parent of alleged complainant if appropriate.
- Document all activity involved in handling the incident; note date, time, persons involved, as well as the content of what was done. All documentation will be held confidential. All incidents involving children shall be reported to the appropriate agencies. Should it become necessary, full cooperation will be given to civil authorities under guidance of the church's attorney. The attorney must be present while any questions from the police or social service agencies are being answered by anyone.
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Regarding adults (over 18 years old)

- When questionable or inappropriate behavior related to possible sexual misconduct or sexual harassment between adults is observed, it should be reported to the Senior or Associate Minister and/or the Response Team. The incident will be documented by the pastoral staff or the Response Team who will discuss it and determine a response. Responses might include but are not limited to:
 - Documentation and close supervision of the person named—being certain that all responsible persons understand the need to supervise. Discussion with the person named to help him or her understand and respect appropriate limits of behavior.

- Discussion with the person whose behavior is in question and removal from the position; counseling may or may not be recommended.
- Evaluation of the incident, including conversations with the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator and their respective advocates and an agreement that counseling is indicated for either or both persons.
- The person(s) must provide proof that counseling has been initiated (e.g., a provider receipt or a letter).
- If the alleged perpetrator admits guilt and agrees to counseling, and if this is satisfactory with the alleged victim and the clergy and/or advocacy panel, and if the nature of the incident does not require legal intervention, a formal report to authorities may not be necessary.
- A formal report may be filed in which case the professionals (UCC Conference Minister or police) will take responsibility for evaluation and investigation. The alleged perpetrator will be removed without prejudice from his or her position pending completion of the investigation. In such a case, the Insurance Company and the church's attorney will be notified.

The accused will be treated with dignity and respect and will be offered support. If the accused is a church employee or volunteer, he or she should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed. If the accused is a paid employee, a decision will be made to maintain or suspend his or her income, as appropriate, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

- The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual(s) accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
- The complainant can report the incident(s) to the Senior or Associate Minister of the church, or the Response Team, in an effort to resolve the matter.
- If an informal resolution of the complaint(s) does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant(s) must request that the Response Team institute formal proceedings, which shall include the following steps (The Response Team must respond):
 - a) The Response Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged abuse or harassment, and from others who may have pertinent information, and present such information to the appropriate supervisory body (i.e., Pastoral Relations Committee, Christian Education Board, etc.) of the accused individual(s).
 - b) The Response Team, in consultation with ministers and the supervisory body shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include:
 - Formal reprimand with defined expectations for changed behavior, including possible public notification;
 - Recommending or requiring a program of growth that may include education and/or counseling;
 - Probation, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
 - Dismissal from employment or volunteer leadership position, and in extreme cases, affiliation with, or membership in, the church.

- Finding that no abuse or harassment occurred.
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If the accused employee or volunteer is an ordained minister, the Response Team shall inform the appropriate body of the wider United Church of Christ (i.e., Conference Minister, Consociation Committee on the Ministry) of the allegation. NHCC will cooperate fully in any procedures of the United Church of Christ related to the person's ministerial authorization while retaining the right and responsibility to employ or designate leadership within NHCC as it determines best.

If allegations of possible child abuse are included in the complaint(s), the Response Team will notify appropriate secular authorities and NHCC will cooperate fully in any investigation. This policy shall continue to be followed to determine the continuance of the individual(s) in leadership positions in NHCC.

A written summary of the supervisory board and Response Team's proceedings in such cases will be maintained.

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

If the complainant(s) or accused person(s) is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Response Team, he or she has the right to appeal to the Moderator of the congregation, who shall refer the matter to the governing board for resolution.

The Response Team will be prepared to issue a public statement to inform the congregation and respond to press inquiries. This statement will communicate that the church regards these allegations seriously and offers responsible action, concern, and support for all involved. No details of the accusation will be released. No statement will be issued until the church's attorney has approved it.

North Haven Congregational Church

Policy and Guidelines for the Children, Youth and Adults

Within the Christian Education Program

North Haven Congregational Church (NHCC) seeks to provide a physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe environment for its children, youth and adults. The following policies have been developed in order to foster Christian community and to protect the children, youth and adult volunteers involved in the Church School and Youth Ministry programs. Youth Ministry includes, but is not limited to, Junior and Senior Youth Programs and Confirmation. Church School includes but is not limited to Sunday School and “Kids Care”.

It is expected that all parents will become familiar with these policies and that all youth and adult volunteers will abide by them.

Parental Consent

1. **Medical Form/Permission Slips:** All children and youth are required to turn in a medical information form. The form will be kept confidential and will be held on file by the Minister(s). It needs to be filled out only once during the program year. Parents/guardians should notify the minister(s) if any medical information regarding their children should change.
2. **Permission slips** are required for certain children’s and youth events. It is noted on the permission slip when it is due and any costs involved.
3. **Transportation** for field trips, to activities, or for events, is by groups and requires written parental permission.
4. Those working with children and youth shall have signed, written consent of a parent or guardian before being alone with a child or a youth or chaperoning or supervising activities or programs away from the church and/or any unsupervised situation.

Nursery

Nursery care is provided during Worship by parents and other volunteers on a rotating basis. To ensure the safety of our youngest children, the nursery volunteers must be church members or long term friends of the church. The Christian Education Board shall seek to have one adult and one teenage volunteer or two adults available for nursery care. The parents/guardians must sign children in and out of the nursery and shall provide all information regarding allergies or health concerns to the caretakers each week. There will be no diapering by volunteers. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child is crying inconsolably, needs a new diaper or injures him/herself.

Official Activities

Youth Ministry programs, activities and events are officially sponsored by the Board of Christian Education of NHCC and initiated by the Youth Program's Leadership.

Official activities are generally planned in advance and are printed, with beginning and ending time, in the weekly Church Bulletin and/or the Church Newsletter and/or a separate mailing. Changes may be made by announcement in worship, a phone call, or a supplemental mailing.

From time to time, groups may deviate from their planned activity; for example, go out for ice cream or pizza or some other such activity. In that event, each child or youth will be required to assist the leader and call a parent/guardian to secure verbal permission over the phone. These are still official activities, as they will occur during the originally scheduled time and the advisors/ chaperones will be present.

All participants are expected to remain with the group throughout the times listed in church publications. No pairing or otherwise separating off from the group to other parts of the building or grounds is permitted except with permission of group leaders.

Any impromptu gathering of children or youth from North Haven Congregational Church is not an official activity of the Youth Ministry program.

Discipline

The purpose of discipline with children and youth is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian 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, insults or shouting. Adults are encouraged to listen to the child or youth, communicate expectations of appropriate behavior, use time-outs or give alternative choices.

Any child or youth attending any program who is found to be behaving inappropriately will have his/her parent(s)/guardian notified and will be sent home immediately. The Ministers will be notified at this time. Examples of inappropriate behavior include purchasing, carrying or using alcohol, drugs, fireworks, cigarettes (if under 18); involvement in sexual activity; involvement in abusive activity, including fighting, and leaving the building or grounds without permission.

It is expected that all volunteers will also comply with these behavior guidelines, with the exception of cigarette smoking, as the law permits persons over 18 years of age to smoke in designated areas; however, smoking in the presence of the children or youth is not recommended.

Advisors/Chaperones

In order to ensure the safety of our children and youth and in order to comply with the recommendations of our insurance carrier, our Church Council, and the United Church of Christ, all volunteers will be asked to complete an application form before working with our children or youth.

These forms will be confidential and kept on file as articulated in the maintenance records section of the policy. **Advisors** work on a continual basis with the children and youth. **Chaperones** are additional support persons such as parents who attend events on an occasional basis as needed.

Any trip or program that requires chaperones/advisors shall seek to have at least two adults including the program leader or attending minister. The general guideline is to have one male and one female adult present. More adults may be required if the nature of the activity or the total number of participants indicates. All attending advisors/chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and shall be selected at the discretion of the Board of Christian Education and/or the attending minister or advisors.

Teachers'/Classroom Helpers' Reporting Responsibilities

Each Church School classroom shall seek to have at least two teachers, one of whom is an adult, or one teacher and two classroom helpers, one of whom is an adult.

No adult leader, staff or volunteer should initiate or encourage intimate contact with a child or youth. Setting boundaries is the responsibility of the adults. The Director of Youth Ministries is responsible for implementing and enforcing appropriate boundaries through education and training for children, youth, parents and adult leadership. Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult worker and a child or a youth shall be promptly reported to the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Chairperson of the Christian Education Board, or the Response Team.

Overnight Rule

Any and all adult chaperones supervising overnight stays of church youth shall have been cleared to do so by the Senior Minister or Associate Minister, or other designated official. A signed parental consent form, which lists the names of the advisors to be present, is required.

Youth Members of Boards and Committees

No youth member of a church board, committee, sub-committee, or task force shall be in attendance at a meeting with less than three adult members or the youth's parent present.

Leaving and Locking Up

Generally, we seek to avoid situations where one adult and one youth or child are left at the church door waiting to be picked up by parents at the end of an evening activity. Parents are encouraged to respect concluding times.

Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol

The use of any illegal drugs, tobacco or alcoholic products on or in church facilities is not permitted. Over the counter and prescription medications can only be taken with prior authorization and knowledge.

Guests

Children and youth are encouraged to bring guests to church activities, programs and events. Guests must understand that they are expected to participate in the program, follow these guidelines and behave in an appropriate manner. Youth leaders will require names, addresses and phone numbers of such guests for future reference or contact.

Transportation

In general staff and adult leaders or teachers will not transport children or youth between church and home. Exceptions to these guidelines require written parental permission per Parental Consent above.

All persons in the vehicles shall wear seat belts. The vehicles shall not be loaded beyond safe seating capacity. Appropriate behavior is expected by all passengers. Whenever possible, there should be at least 3 persons in a vehicle, including the driver.

NHCC carries supplemental insurance to cover its children, youth, advisors/chaperones and volunteer drivers. Any volunteer who would like further information regarding coverage by NHCC may contact the Trustees or one of the Ministers. This information might be helpful for volunteers who are seeking to determine their own insurance needs.

COVENANT

I have read the policies for Youth Ministry at the North Haven Congregational church. I understand that I will comply with these policies, and failure to do so or failure to abide by the ground rules where we are visiting, may result in a call from my Youth Leader to my parent(s)/guardian and my being sent home.

Signed _____ Youth

_____ Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

Date

Dear Volunteer to the North Haven Congregational Church:

Thank you very much for volunteering your services to the North Haven Congregational Church. Your commitment to our church family is a valuable gift, which has a tremendous impact on our community. We appreciate your calling to share your faith in a ministry of teaching and caring.

Due to the fact that we live in difficult times, our children are faced with circumstances and choices which may put them especially close to jeopardy. We believe that our children and youth are valuable gifts entrusted to our care spiritually, physically and emotionally. It is important that they receive the moral influence and character of our church to help them grow toward God. All of us as church leaders, ministers, members, and teachers are called to express the best of our hopes and values so that the next generation is able to make a better world.

The enclosed personal information and recommendation form is a sign of our unhealthy and difficult times. Since we have such a high responsibility in the congregation, the church requests each volunteer who works with youth in the church to complete and return the form. This information will be reviewed by the pastors and the Chairperson of the Board of Christian Education and kept confidential.

It is our hope that this will help ensure the best for our children and youth and provide protection for all of us in vulnerable positions. Screening forms such as ours have been recommended by the United Church of Christ and our insurance company for use in local congregations. In a desire to be a proactive congregation, we have chosen to design and implement these policies and procedures.

There is evidence that in the United States at least one in three girls and one in eleven boys have been sexually violated. The statistics are worse in terms of physical violence against women and children. These realities call us to prayer and action as the church of God and Jesus Christ.

Thank you in advance for responding to this request. Our deep hope is that neither this action nor this letter is offensive to you. We are sure you will see this as a step to serve and protect our children and youth. If you have any concerns, questions, or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to call.

In Peace,

Scott Morrow
Senior Minister

North Haven Congregational Church

Rev. Scott G. Morrow, Minister

28 Church Street

North Haven, Connecticut 06473

(203) 239-5691

APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND/OR YOUTH

The North Haven Congregational Church seeks to provide a physically, emotionally and spiritually safe environment for its children and youth. In order to foster a nurturing Christian community and to protect our children and youth as well as our volunteers, the NHCC will follow its guidelines for screening and reviewing all volunteers with children and youth.

An Application for Volunteers Working with Children and Youth shall be completed by all volunteers who are engaged in ministry with our children and youth. These volunteers shall include Sunday School teachers and aides, Youth Program advisors, overnight chaperones and members of the Board of Christian Education.

A Volunteer Review Committee consisting of at least one of the ministers and the Chairperson of the Board of Christian Education shall be responsible for distribution, collection and processing of the applications and for making the appropriate contacts with references.

Applications will be held in strict confidence and will be kept on file for one year.

6. List other names you use (maiden, former, nickname, a.k.a.'s):

7. List your last two previous home addresses and length of residency:

8. Length of involvement with this church, including the date you joined the church:

9. Names and addresses of other churches you have attended regularly during the past 5 years:

10. List all previous church or community work involving youth (identify the name of the group, location, dates and type of work):

11. List any gifts, callings, training, education or other factors that have prepared you for work with children or youth (include First Aid training, babysitting courses, CPR training, etc.):

12. Name, address, and telephone number of two personal references (excluding relatives), including relationship and length of time you have known these persons:

13. Is there any fact or circumstance about you or your background that would call into question the advisability of entrusting you with the supervision, guidance and care of young people?

____ Yes ____ No

14. I have never terminated my employment or service in a volunteer position, or had my employment or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated, for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct, physical abuse, or child abuse.

True_____

Not True_____

If your services have ever been terminated for the above reasons, please give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination, name, address and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor, and nature and place of incident(s) leading to your termination.)

Covenant Agreement

I affirm that the information given above is true, complete and correct. I understand that this information may be verified by contacting persons and organizations with whom I have had contact or which may have information concerning me in regard to the specific statements recorded in this application form.

I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides such information. I also agree to release and hold harmless the congregation of North Haven Congregational Church, its officers, employees, agents or volunteers who provide/obtain such information.

I affirm that I have been given a copy of the Safe Church Policy and Procedures. I have read and understood the contents of the form. I agree that if I accept a volunteer position within the church, I will work in a way that is consistent with the goals and mission of the church.

Applicant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent's or guardian's signature if under 18 years of age:

Date: _____

Please use space below for additional information:

Guidelines For Ministers, Staff, And Other Adults Serving The Congregation:

Ministers, staff, and other church leaders need direction and guidelines in establishing and maintaining boundaries in their service to the congregation. These guidelines are identified to support staff and volunteers and are not to be viewed as rigid rules; but rather a structure upon which we will maintain a culture of mutual respect. It is understood that from time to time emergency situations may necessitate not following these guidelines. If the guidelines were repeatedly disregarded that would be cause for concern.

It is the North Haven Congregational Church policy that the Response Team will formally review and revise these guidelines annually with all employees and volunteers ministering to adults in the congregation.

- ◆ The NHCC seeks to maintain accountability and reduce isolation by encouraging counseling sessions to occur during regular office hours or when there are additional adults present in the church. Generally speaking, counseling sessions will not occur in isolated settings such as the home.
- ◆ The standard of practice for counseling is typically six to eight 50 minute weekly sessions. If additional sessions are required it may be more appropriate to make a referral. Counseling via telephone or e-mail should have similar boundaries.
- ◆ Ministers, staff, and representatives of the church will be accountable for their counseling and visitation activities. Confidentiality is vital, but supervision is also needed. Therefore, church leaders may require regular reports of ministry activities.
- ◆ Church leaders will periodically openly discuss the topic of “appropriate and inappropriate activities”. Individual preferences must be respected with regard to hugs and holding hands while praying.
- ◆ Church leaders will periodically discuss the topic of “what role does socializing and giving and receiving gifts have in the ministry of counseling?”. We don’t want simplistic limiting rules; however, boundaries do need to be identified.
- ◆ All employees and volunteers ministering to adults through visitation or counseling will be screened.
- ◆ Counseling assignments will be managed individually; some visitation activities may be done in pairs that are regularly rotated.
- ◆ Training in the NHCC “Safe Church” policies will be provided for all church members.
- ◆ The NHCC Response Team will annually review the policies and solicit feedback from the congregation regarding how well the policies are working.
- ◆ The leaders of the NHCC will be alert for red flags indicating potential vulnerability for the ministers, volunteers, or members of the congregation. Areas of potential concerns include a pattern of boundary violations, depression, family problems, financial concerns, infatuation, poor judgement or rationalization, and previous misconduct.

Counseling Disclosure Form

I _____ (the Counselee) have entered into counseling sessions at the North Haven Congregational Church. For my benefit the following is a list of general guidelines which the Church has established to be followed during counseling sessions.

1. The “Guidelines For Ministers, Staff, And Adult Volunteers Serving The Congregation” have been reviewed with me.

2. All counseling sessions will be held in a professional manner and atmosphere including:
 - ◆ Under no circumstances will there be any inappropriate physical contact between the counselee and counselor.
 - ◆ The counselor and counselee must avoid the establishment of any intimate personal relationship.

3. I also understand that any information disclosed by me regarding the abuse of a child in any form may not be confidential.

I agree that if any of the above provisions are violated, or if any situation should arise which makes me feel uncomfortable, I will report immediately and directly to:

- ◆ The Senior Minister or
- ◆ The Associate Minister or
- ◆ A member of the “Response Team”

I have had the opportunity to review and ask questions about the information listed above.

Signature of Counselee

Date

6. List other names you use (maiden, former, nickname, a.k.a.'s):

7. List your last two previous home addresses and length of residency at each:

8. Length of involvement with this church, including the date you joined the church:

9. Names and addresses of other churches you have attended regularly during the past 5 years:

10. List all previous church or community work in which you have volunteered (identify the name of the group, location, dates and type of work):

11. List any gifts, callings, training, education or other factors that have prepared you for this volunteer work:

12. Name, address, and telephone number of two personal references (excluding relatives), including relationship and length of time you have known these persons:

13. Is there any fact or circumstance about you or your background that would call into question the advisability of entrusting you with the guidance and care of our people?

____ Yes ____ No

14. I have never terminated my employment or service in a volunteer position, or had my employment or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated, for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct, physical abuse, or child abuse.

True_____

Not True_____

If your services have ever been terminated for the above reasons, please give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination, name, address and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor, and nature and place of incident(s) leading to your termination.)

Covenant Agreement

I affirm that the information given above is true, complete and correct. I understand that this information may be verified by contacting persons and organizations with whom I have had contact or which may have information concerning me.

I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides such information. I also agree to release and hold harmless the congregation of North Haven Congregational Church, its officers, employees, agents or volunteers who provide/obtain such information.

I affirm that I have been given a copy of the Safe Church Policy and Procedures. I have read and understand the contents of the form. I agree that if I accept a volunteer position within the church, I will work in a way that is consistent with the goals and mission of the church.

Applicant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent's or guardian's signature if under 18 years of age:

Date: _____

Please use space below for additional information:

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN A MOTOR VEHICLE

(North Haven Congregational Church)

All people who will transport children/youth within the scope of a church program are to complete this form. Completed forms should be kept on file in a secure place and should be updated regularly.

Attached to this form should be copies of:

Current Driver's License

Proof of Insurance ("Connecticut Insurance Card")

Current Vehicle Registration

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____
Home Work

Your Vehicle:

Make and Model _____

Year _____

Is your vehicle in good repair and equipped with safety restraints (including those for infants and young children if you will be transporting them)? _____

If there is another vehicle you might use in the course of transporting children/youth, please describe it in the same way: _____

Have you ever had a Driver's License revoked or suspended? If so, give details:

Have you ever been arrested for DWI (driving while intoxicated)? _____

If yes, give details as to where and when each such charge was made, and describe the outcome: _____

In transporting children/youth, I agree to:

* Obey all traffic regulations including speed limits and safety restraint requirements.

* Transport only the number of persons my vehicle is equipped to carry.

* Drive only when I am not under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating drugs.

Signed: _____

Attest Statement

Under penalty of perjury, I swear or affirm that the information given above is true, complete and correct. I understand and agree that a complete background investigation may be conducted with respect to me, and that this information may be verified by contacting persons and organizations with whom I have had contact or which may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides such information. I also agree to release and hold harmless the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ and the North Haven Congregational Church, their officers, employees, agents, and volunteers.

Applicant's Signature _____

Date _____

Witness _____

Person receiving/reviewing this form _____