

The First Congregational United Church of Christ of Appleton, Wisconsin

Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

A full version of First Congo's SafeConduct™ Policy is available at www.firstcongoappleton.org.

The First Congregational United Church of Christ of Appleton, Wisconsin is referred to as First Congo throughout this policy.

The Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults (Code of Conduct throughout the rest of this policy) defines specific rules, procedures, behavior and conduct that all employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy who work with Children or Vulnerable Adults are required to follow in order to comply with First Congo's SafeConduct™ Policy. All employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy who work with Children or Vulnerable Adults will receive and agree to implement the Code of Conduct prior to assuming responsibilities. Every two years, these individuals are required to review the Code of Conduct as part of their Volunteer Application. This biannual Code of Conduct update corresponds with First Congo's biannual background check update and training program refresher.

General Requirements

Each person subject to this Code of Conduct shall:

- Act as a team member in fulfilling ministry objectives.
- Treat Children and Vulnerable Adults fairly and with respect, without regard to race, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion.
- Practice those behaviors we regard as necessary and positive, as well as refrain from those behaviors that have been defined as prohibited.
- Observe the 2:1 rule: Two adults may meet with a Child, or one adult may meet with two or more Children.

General Prohibitions

The following behaviors are prohibited at all times.

- Display affection toward a Child or Vulnerable Adult in private.
- Use profanity or tell off-color jokes.
- Discuss sexual encounters with or around Children or Vulnerable Adults, or in any way involve Children or Vulnerable Adults in one's personal problems or issues.
- Date or become romantically involved with Children or Vulnerable Adults.
- Use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of Children or Vulnerable Adults.
- Possess sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on church property or at church-sponsored events.
- Have secrets with Children or Vulnerable Adults.
- Stare at or comment on anyone's body.
- Engage in inappropriate or unapproved communication with Children or Vulnerable Adults.
- Work one-on-one with Children in a private setting.

- Abuse Children or Vulnerable Adults in any way, including but not limited to the following:
 - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain.
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse.
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
 - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
 - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
 - Permit Children to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, games of Truth or Dare, ridicule, humiliation or sexual activity.
 - Manipulate or exploit a Vulnerable Adult in any way.

Reporting Obligations

Each employee, volunteer and Authorized Clergy shall report:

- Concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, other adults or Children to the Authorized Clergy or the Program Director associated with the program.
- Allegations or incidents of Suspected Abuse to the designated law enforcement or child welfare authority.

Specific Interaction Standards

First Congo employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy shall conduct themselves in a manner that fosters understanding of safe conduct in the context of serving Children and Vulnerable Adults. The standards articulated below serve two purposes:

1. To protect Children and Vulnerable Adults from abuse or grooming for abuse elsewhere.
2. To protect/prevent employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy from engaging in patterns of behavior that may be construed as abusive or predatory. While a single infraction of guidelines may not constitute abuse, a pattern of repeated violations will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from ministry.

Approval and Affection

In providing physical approval or affection, the following guidelines apply.

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

The manner of speaking with Children and Vulnerable Adults establishes respect. The following guidelines apply.

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

Adult-Child Ratios

For babies up to 18 months of age, a 1:4 ratio will be observed. For Children ages 18 to 36 months, 1:5, and for Children 36 months to age 9, a 1:10 ratio shall be maintained. A ratio of 1:25 is acceptable for Children over the age of 9. Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy under the age of 18 are not included in the ratio.

In all cases an employee, volunteer, or Authorized Clergy under the age of 18 working with Children shall be under the supervision of an adult over the age of 21.

Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy under the age of 21 shall not supervise or lead a youth group in which the oldest participating Child is less than three years younger than the supervisor/leader.

Bathrooms and Changing Rooms

The following practices shall apply to supervision of bathrooms and changing rooms during church programs.

- No employee, volunteer or Authorized Clergy shall enter with a single unrelated Child, unless the entry door is ajar (propped open) in a way that the employee, volunteer or Authorized Clergy can be observed by others. Children may not supervise other Children in the bathroom unless easily observed by another adult.
- Children in second grade or younger shall not enter unsupervised or enter as a lone pair.
- Supervised bathroom or changing room usage means that the adult in charge is within eyesight of the bathroom or changing room door.
- Children in eighth grade and younger are required to ask permission before using bathrooms.

Authorized Clergy and Program Directors are to frequently and randomly check bathrooms and/or changing rooms to ensure proper usage as outlined above.

Transition and Free Time

Especially during day-long, off-site or overnight activities, Children will periodically not be engaged in a supervised activity. Supervision shall be maintained during transition times through the use of chaperones, hall monitors and escorts to minimize the opportunity for security breach. Parents are expected to promptly pick up or drop off their Children to all church activities. Parents are responsible for their Children's safety and supervision when designated church activities are not taking place.

Free Time for Children during Adult/Parent Programs and Events

When designated church activities are taking place but mainly involve adults, it is the responsibility of the parents who bring children with them to be in the same room (or where Children may be easily observed by their parents) or to use available child care provided by First Congo. It is the duty of the Authorized Clergy or Program Director to inform parents of their supervision responsibilities and proactively ensure the adequate supervision of Children during programs.

Authorized Clergy and/or corresponding Program Directors shall assess at what times and places additional duties are to be assigned to employees and volunteers to assure supervision of transition and free time.

Transportation of Vulnerable Adults

Anyone driving Vulnerable Adults on behalf of First Congo to any official ministry event shall complete SafeConduct™ online training, sign the Driver's Pledge, and follow, where applicable, the Adult Travel Policy.

Transportation of Children

Transportation of Children—whether on buses, motor coaches or private passenger vehicles—is a serious responsibility. Utmost care shall be taken in view of the risks associated with managing transportation.

The following standards shall apply.

- No employee or volunteer shall transport a single Child who is not his/her own, except as may be required in an emergency with the approval of a supervisor. Communications shall be established to verify the whereabouts, expected arrival and change of custody of the Child.
- Any driver operating a vehicle that holds 16 passengers or more, including the driver, shall possess a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL).
- Any person who drives on behalf of First Congo-sponsored programs shall be previously qualified under First Congo's Driver's Pledge.
- Adult-Child ratios shall be maintained and within the safe loading limits of the vehicles being used. Before each trip, a Church Travel Manifest shall be provided to the church administrator that documents the departing time, arrival time, destination, mileage and names of passengers, supervising staff and volunteers. Any unusual occurrences or significant changes in route should be documented.

- All passengers are to be seated and use safety belts, if available, when the vehicle is running.
- Employees and volunteers are to be seated in larger vehicles in a way that permits them to supervise young passengers.
- First Congo does not rent fifteen-passenger vans. If, while partnering with an outside organization, a fifteen-passenger van is used by that organization, a copy of the NHTSA fifteen-passenger van safety tips will be provided to the organization by First Congo staff.
- When passengers must disembark at a rest facility or destination, care shall be taken to obtain a head count upon arrival and departure. All passengers shall be required to complete a trip in the same vehicle to assure accountability.
- Use the Field Trip Preparation Checklist.

Off-site Activities (Day Trips)

Off-site activities require special additional planning, taking into account the nature of the destination and exposure to the public at large. For example, attendance at a public venue such as an amusement park will require greater supervision than a visit to a sister church. Due to the increased risk of a Child becoming lost or injured during an off-site activity, extra care shall be taken to assure adequate supervision.

The following are minimum requirements.

- All off-site activities shall be approved in advance by the supervisor of the employee, volunteer or Authorized Clergy making the request.
- The trip leader shall provide a plan outlining transportation and supervision for the activity.
- Parent/guardian permission shall be obtained. Permission forms are to cite the destination(s) and dates of activity.
- Adult-Child ratios shall be increased by at least one adult person for the same number of Children. One adult may supervise only two persons under the age of 18 who are employees or volunteers.
- Each employee or volunteer shall be assigned to a specific group of Children to supervise. Each employee or volunteer must then maintain a roll sheet listing all of the Children in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks will be conducted routinely.
- Standards for bathroom activities, transition time and transportation shall be maintained.
- Parents/guardians shall be provided a means to make emergency contact with the trip leader.

Overnight Activities

Camps generally have the experience and staffing to adopt different standards than these below. The assumption for the purpose of this standard is lodging at a public hotel, but this standard is applicable to overnights on the church premises and mission trips.

As with off-site activities, overnight activities present an even higher level of risk to Children than day trips, due to isolation from parents and the 24-hour supervision that is required throughout the activity.

The following standards will apply in addition to standards for off-site activities.

- Overnight activities, whether on the church site or not, shall have prior approval of corresponding Authorized Clergy.
- All overnight activities include a minimum of two adult chaperones over 21 years of age.
- All volunteers and employees under 18 years of age must be supervised at all times.
- Trip leaders or other designated adults shall conduct routine walk-throughs of high-risk areas.
- In the event of a building evacuation, an outdoor rally point will be designated in advance.
- A roster will be maintained of the room assignments for each Child and adult.
- A bed check will be conducted at a specific time known to all.
- Adult-Child ratios are to be maintained for outings away from the lodging site.
- A daily schedule of events shall be maintained with supervisory duty assignments included.
- Double-queen lodging is preferred at hotels, four to a room. Children in each room will be of similar age. No adult will share a bed with a Child.
- Adult rooms will be scattered among rooms occupied by Children. There shall be at least one adult lodged on any floor on which Children are sleeping.
- Standards for bathrooms, out-of-the-way locations, off-limits locations and transition time shall be maintained as the site circumstances and facilities may require.
- Use the Youth Behavioral Covenant.

Out-of-Program (Off-Site) Contact

First Congo generally recommends that employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy do not have outside contact with Children from church programs. However, there are certain programs for which off-site contact is acceptable and where observing the 2:1 rule is required. The following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate for ministry with children:

Appropriate Outside Contact	Inappropriate Outside Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending sporting events or other activities as part of a group • Attending functions at a Child's home with parents present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking one Child on an outing without a parent's or guardian's written permission • Visiting a Child's home without a parent present • Entertaining one Child in the home of a church employee or volunteer • A lone Child spending the night with a church employee or volunteer

In addition, when outside contact is unavoidable, the Authorized Clergy or Program Director shall identify for the employee or volunteer: what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate (above), which off-site contact is acceptable for Children's ministry, and how parents will be made aware of such outside contact.

One-on-One Interactions

Because most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a Child, private one-on-one meetings with a Child are prohibited unless approved in advance by the Authorized Clergy or Program Director. When so permitted, the following guidelines shall apply.

One-on-One Interaction Guidelines

- When meeting one-on-one with a Child, always do so in a public place in full view of others.
- Avoid inappropriate physical interactions as previously stated.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other employees, volunteers or Authorized Clergy that you are alone with a Child and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents—including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment and behavior problems—and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

To the extent any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one shall seek to be under the supervision of others while meeting privately with a Child.

The First Congregational United Church of Christ of Appleton, Wisconsin

Social Media and Electronic Communications

Social Media definition: Electronic platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, or similar, that allow for reciprocal interaction between individuals.

Electronic Communications definition: Electronic Communications include email, texting and any additional application or website which allows for direct and potentially private communication.

General Social Media Policy

In order to extend the life of the congregation, enhance communication and develop participation of young people in the life of the church and its ministry, First Congo will authorize certain employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy to manage the church's website and Social Media channels.

No party shall create a website or Social Media site in the name of, or purporting to represent, the church without the explicit, written permission of the Authorized Clergy or Program Director most directly involved with the ministry. When an employee, volunteer or Authorized Clergy, acting in their capacity as a representative of the church, leads or coordinates activities using Social Media, the Program Director or Authorized Clergy must review all electronic materials for appropriateness of content. These electronic materials may include Web pages, Facebook, email and similar means. At First Congo we define Children as anyone age 17 or younger. Connection is defined as friending, following or in any way linking profiles together.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy who manage public pages on behalf of church programs are responsible for monitoring communications and assuring that appropriate conduct is enforced in conversations. The employee or volunteer shall:

- As possible, post a link to this Social Networking Code of Conduct on all official Social Media pages of First Congo.
- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the Code of Conduct.

Each employee, volunteer or Authorized Clergy who leads using the resources of Social Media shall:

- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their Children's interactions through electronic channels with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind Children how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.

- Authorized Clergy or Program Directors shall notify parents/guardians of any new electronic channel of communication upon initiation, and provide parents/guardians the opportunity to participate in said electronic channel.

Communication with Children

Due to the attendant risk of Electronic Communications with Children, especially the inability to supervise, the following standards shall apply.

- All Electronic Communications with Children and Vulnerable Adults in general must follow First Congo's Code of Conduct. Social Media and messaging with Children shall be limited to logistical matters, e.g., setting meeting dates, times, places or investigating matters of pastoral concern. When concerns regarding safety, legal matters or inappropriate discourse arise, the parents or legal guardians of the perceived victim shall be notified.
- On websites such as Facebook, Twitter or MySpace, all social networking communication with Children on behalf of the church must take place within the context of First Congo's official electronic channels.
- Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy shall not use personal social networking profiles or personal blogs to message with Children of the church to whom they are not related.
- Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy with personal profiles on social networking sites may not make any type of connection through Social Media with Children of First Congo to whom they are not related.
- Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy are allowed to communicate directly with Children of the church using a church or personal email account, First Congo electronic newsletter, or text messaging service, provided that the Child's parents are copied on all communications. Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy may make phone calls to Children directly only after receiving parental permission.

—The Church of the Open Door—

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**



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