



Safe Church and Your Child

First Church Natick
United Church of Christ

At First Church Natick, we believe that *“We are called to express the love and welcome of Christ through word and action in our community and the wider world.”* Every effort is made to ensure that all who participate in our church life, including children, adults and church workers, whether paid or volunteer, will be able to live out our mission in an environment that is safe, secure, and nurturing. Our church will promptly respond to all allegations of abuse, neglect, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct.

Security

Access to our building is restricted, except on Sunday morning. Security codes are required for entry. Code holders must complete a Statement of Compliance with the church administrator to obtain a code. Codes are usually time restricted and may not be shared. Security cameras are in constant operation at all entries except the East Central Street doors.

General Guidelines

We welcome volunteers who have been actively and regularly participating as members for at least six months, or as friends (non-members) of the Church for at least a year.

Paid employees of First Congregational Church, as well as volunteer group leaders and overnight chaperones who accompany youth on field trips/overnights/outings, must provide a completed and reviewed CORI form before beginning volunteer service.

Childcare and classroom volunteers must provide a signed Volunteer Application and Disclosure Forms before beginning volunteer service.

Chaperones for youth activities off the premises must also be at least 21 years old. For overnight activities, there must be at least one adult of the same sex as the participants.

Childcare and classroom volunteers must be at least five years older than the oldest child participating in the class, group, or activity.

Our church has an open door philosophy, meaning that all rooms are to be visible at all times. If there is no window in the door of a room where children are meeting, the door will be left open. We make every effort to ensure that there are two adults in the room for all classes or programs involving minors. It is permissible to have one teacher per classroom as long as the room is visible at all times and a supervisor is circulating in the hallways.

No adult will be alone in the Church, or at a church approved activity, with a child(ren) that is not his or her own or a relative, without permission of the child(ren)'s parent(s). If a second adult cannot be located, the class or activity will be canceled, and the children will be returned to their parent(s) or guardian(s).

It is permissible to have one adult per car with each car carrying a group of young people on a field trip. Drivers must be at least 25 years old, with a clean driving record for the past five years. Field trips and youth events will require approval of the Director of Faith Formation or one of the pastors, as well as parental consent, compliance with vehicle rules, and appropriate supervision.

Discipline

The purpose of discipline with children is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect, and cooperation. No child shall be disciplined by any form of physical punishment. Verbal reprimands shall not include destructive criticism, insults, or shouting.

Safety and First Aid

Emergency evacuation drills are scheduled to take place annually for the Sunday morning programs for children and youth.

A first aid kit is located on the wall by the door to the elevator lobby in the church kitchen. An AED unit is located on the wall of the first floor elevator lobby. A complete First Aid Kit shall be brought by the leader of each event off the premises of the church.

Suspected Abuse

All allegations of abuse will be promptly reported to the Director of Faith Formation, the Pastor(s) or the Church Moderator, and, if reasonable cause is found, to the Department of Social Services (DSS). Members of the church community, including volunteers working with children and youth, are morally obligated to report reasonable suspicions of abuse.

Safe Church Response Team

A Safe Church Response Team, consisting of 3 to 5 church members, will be appointed annually by the Coordinating Council. Please contact the church office for contact information on current team members.

Our church seeks to be faithful to the biblical mandate to "let the children come unto me," by providing a welcoming space that is safe and secure for our children and youth. We strive to create a nurturing environment in which infants, children, youth and adults can learn about, experience, and share God's love with others. We also recognize that we have a moral responsibility to provide the highest quality and safest care and programming possible in all areas of our ministry programs.



We welcome your questions and concerns and feedback!
(admin@FirstChurchNatick.org or 508-653-0971)