



**First Parish Congregational Church, UCC  
East Derry, New Hampshire**

**Safe Church Policies and Procedures  
2012**

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## Safe Church Committee Mission Statement

We, the Safe Church Committee of the First Parish Congregational Church, UCC, recognize that our congregation's health and safety are key aspects of our culture of caring. It is our objective to promote a safe and healthy environment for our church members, visitors, and the community who participate in our programs and use our facilities. We will do this in accordance with federal, state and local regulations, and recognized safety standards, as they apply to our church. Our church's spiritual mission depends on the health and safety of our members and the proper maintenance of our worship facilities.

We must be responsible for, and committed to, the common goal of maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our community, free of exploitation, intimidation, abuse, misconduct and harassment of any form. We share a spiritual, legal, economic and moral obligation to foster a safe and healthy church.

# Section 1 – Sanctuary Evacuation Procedure

<b>First Parish Congregational Church, UCC</b>		
Title: Sanctuary Evacuation Procedure		
Doc. #: DB-001	Version #: 01	Effective Date: 07/01/2011
Owner Group: Diaconate Board		Page: 1 of 2

**APPROVALS:**

<i>Timothy Beecher, Diaconate Co-Chair</i>	<i>6/26/11</i>
Owner Group	Date
<i>Kenneth R. Williams</i>	<i>6/26/11</i>
Safe Church	Date

**1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process for evacuating the sanctuary in the event of an emergency.

**2.0 SCOPE**

The procedure applies to the evacuation of the sanctuary in the event of an emergency during the Sunday morning worship service or other scheduled worship service (ex.: Christmas Eve service).

**3.0 AFFECTED GROUPS**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach & Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christian Ed                | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diaconate                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance            | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Library            | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Life         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <u>Pastors</u> |   |   |

**4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

- 4.1 The Diaconate Board is the owner of this procedure.  
 4.2 The Diaconate Board members are responsible for implementing this procedure.

**5.0 DEFINITIONS**

N/A

**6.0 PROCEDURE**

- 6.1 In the event of an emergency that requires the evacuation of the sanctuary, and potentially the entire church facility, the sanctuary will be evacuated in an urgent and orderly manner.

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- 6.2 The evacuation process will be coordinated by the Diaconate members present.
- 6.3 The primary evacuation route will be the two staircases at the rear of the sanctuary, the means for entering the church.
- 6.4 All capable individuals will exit down the stairs and out the side door into the parking lot.
- 6.5 If necessary, use the front door onto the street, but direct people toward the parking lot to prevent blocking the street to responding emergency vehicles.
- 6.6 Individuals should not exit into the Choir Room and through McGregor Hall.
- 6.7 The elevator is not to be used. The Diaconate members will assist those individuals that require assistance in using the stairs. Handicapped persons should be carried down the stairs by Deacons or others who are physically able.
- 6.8 If deemed appropriate, the fire escape exit at the front of the sanctuary may be used for people sitting near the front of the sanctuary.
- 6.9 Children in church school classes will evacuate the building according to the Christian Education Board's Fire Drill Procedure.
- 6.10 All people are to congregate in the far end of the parking lot by the dumpster to allow for emergency vehicles and personnel. Parents may then meet up with their children.
- 6.11 Any person not accounted for should be related to a Deacon or Pastor for notification of emergency personnel.
- 6.12 People should not leave the site until cleared by emergency personnel to avoid interfering with emergency vehicles.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

- 7.1 Christian Education Board Fire Drill Procedure

## 8.0 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
01	Original	Refer to Header on Page 1

## Section 2 – Youth Choir Policy

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Title: <b>Safe Church Guidelines for Youth Choirs</b>		
Doc. #: MB-001	Version #: 02	Effective Date: 06/01/2011
Owner Group: Board of Music Ministry		Page: 1 of 2

**APPROVALS:**

<i>Kenneth R Wellons</i>	5 .22 .2011
Owner Group	Date
<i>Kenneth R Wellons</i>	5 .22 .2011
Safe Church	Date

**1.0 OBJECTIVE**

To present the policy of First Parish Church regarding leadership guidelines for youth and children's choirs.

**2.0 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all adults that lead programs for children involved in Music activities held at or sponsored by FPC.

**3.0 AFFECTED GROUPS**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council            | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach & Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Ed       | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaconate          | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship        | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe Church    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities         | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance            | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music   | <input type="checkbox"/> Library            | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____ |   |   |

**4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of all individuals who lead a choir containing individuals under the age of 18 to observe the following guidelines.

**5.0 DEFINITIONS**

N/A

**6.0 POLICY**

6.1 Two adults, one of whom must be at least 21 years of age or older, will be present at all rehearsals. If two adults cannot be present the single adult will always have at least two youth members present. One-on-one situations should be avoided.

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Title: Safe Church Guidelines for Youth Choirs

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- 6.2 Rehearsals will be held in an open area, i.e. an area where a passer-by would have a clear view of the area. Rehearsals will not be held in a room with closed doors that do not have a window.
- 6.3 Youth in Grades 2 and below will be signed in and out of the rehearsals.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

## 8.0 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
01	Original	11/28/2004
02	Changed to new Format	Refer to Header on Page 1



**Section 3 – Safe Church Document  
Procedure**

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Title: <span style="float: right;">Document Procedure</span>		
Doc. #: SC-001	Version #: 01	Effective Date: 06/01/2011
Owner Group: Safe Church	Page: 1 of 3	

**APPROVALS:**

<i>Kenneth R Wellman</i>	5.22.2011
Owner Group	Date
<i>Kenneth R Wellman</i>	5.22.2011
Safe Church	Date

**1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process and format for generating procedural documents and policies pertaining to the Boards and Committees of First Parish Church.

**2.0 SCOPE**

This procedure applies to the development of procedures written to document specific activities that are the responsibilities of the defined Boards and Committees of First Parish Church.

**3.0 AFFECTED GROUPS**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council            | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach & Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Ed       | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaconate          | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship        | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe Church    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities         | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance            | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music              | <input type="checkbox"/> Library            | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____ |   |   |

**4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the Safe Church Committee to ensure that procedures for the various Boards and Committees are documented and controlled.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of each Board and Committee to document the procedures that are important to their operation.
- 4.3 Safe Church will assign numbers to the procedures.
- 4.4 The church Administrative Assistant is responsible for maintaining the originals of the procedures (electronic and paper) and providing copies of the procedures to the appropriate groups.

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## 5.0 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Original Copy: The paper copy of a procedure that contains the approval signatures.
- 5.2 Electronic Copy: The electronic version of the document written in Microsoft Word with attachments in MS software (i.e.: Excel, Powerpoint) or other current format.

## 6.0 PROCEDURE:

- 6.1 All procedures written for a particular activity of a Board or Committee will be written in the following format:
  1. Purpose
  2. Scope
  3. Affected Groups
  4. Responsibility
  5. Definitions
  6. Procedure or Policy (for policies)
  7. References
  8. History
- 6.2 Each procedure will be assigned a number for control purposes. The numbers are assigned as follows:
  - 6.2.1 AA-XXX  
Where: AA = the alphabetic abbreviation for the Board or Committee  
XXX = the sequential number for the procedures for the particular Board or Committee
  - 6.2.2 The code for the various Boards and Committees is as follows:
    1. CC = Church Council
    2. CE = Christian Education
    3. DB = Diaconate Board
    4. FB = Facilities Board
    5. MB = Music Board
    6. OM = Outreach & Mission Board
    7. PB = Personnel Board
    8. SB = Stewardship Board
    9. FC = Finance Committee
    10. LC = Library Committee
    11. MC = Membership Committee
    12. NC = Nominating Committee
    13. SC = Safe Church Committee
    14. YM = Youth Ministry Committee
    15. CL = Community Life Committee
- 6.3 Each Board or Committee that is affected by the procedure or policy will be identified by checking the box next to the Board or Committee name in Section 3.0. If others are affected by the document, such as the pastor or ad hoc committee, this can be added to the "Other" line.

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Title: Document Procedure

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- 6.4 Each procedure will be assigned a version number starting with 01 for the original issue and progressing numerically as the procedure is revised and reissued.
- 6.5 When the procedure is approved, an effective date will be assigned.
- 6.6 The electronic version of the procedure will be sent to the church Administrative Assistant (AA) for maintenance in the church computer system.
- 6.7 The original paper copy with the original signatures will be sent to the AA for placement into a procedures manual. This manual will contain the originals of all procedures for Boards and Committees.
- 6.8 Copies of the procedure will be made and given to the Chairperson of the owner group and to the chairs of the affected groups.
- 6.9 The chair persons are responsible for seeing that members of the groups have copies of the procedure and are familiar with their content.
- 6.10 When a procedure needs to be revised, the Board or Committee requests an electronic copy of the procedure from the AA. This copy will be used to make revisions.
- 6.11 When revisions are made, they are summarized in the history section of the document.
- 6.12 A list of all documents will be maintained by the Safe Church Committee. A copy of the list will be included in the procedures manual in the office. The list will contain the:
  - 6.12.1 document number,
  - 6.12.2 document name,
  - 6.12.3 owner group,
  - 6.12.4 version number, and
  - 6.12.5 effective date.

## 7 REFERENCES

N/A

## 8 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
01	Original	Refer to Header on Page 1

## Section 4 –Background Check Policy

<b>First Parish Congregational Church, UCC</b>		
Title:		
<b>Background Check Procedure</b>		
Doc. #: SC-002	Version #: 03	Effective Date: 06/01/2011
Owner Group: Church Council/Safe Church		Page: 1 of 5

**APPROVALS:**

Kenneth R Wellcamp

5-22-2011

Owner Group

Date

Kenneth R Wellcamp

5-22-2011

Safe Church

Date

**1.0 PURPOSE**

First Parish Congregational Church takes very seriously the safety and security of our youth and church resources. To ensure this, a procedure, identifying the requirement for and the process by which a background check will be performed, is described herein.

**2.0 SCOPE**

The following people will be required to submit a background check to the church: all paid staff; volunteers who work with children and youth; and volunteers who work with finances. People needing a background check will not be allowed to assume their duties until the background check has been reviewed.

**2.1 The paid staff category include:**

- 2.1.1 Senior Pastor;
- 2.1.2 Associate Pastor;
- 2.1.3 Affiliated pastors;
- 2.1.4 Administrative Assistant;
- 2.1.5 Music Director;
- 2.1.6 Organist;
- 2.1.6.1 This would not include substitutes
- 2.1.7 Nursery Care Worker;
- 2.1.8 Maintenance Worker;
- 2.1.9 Custodians.

**2.2 The volunteers who work with children and youth category include:**

- 2.2.1 Church school teachers;
- 2.2.2 The church school superintendents;

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Title: **Background Check Procedure**

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- 2.2.3 Vacation church school teachers;
- 2.2.4 Confirmation leaders;
- 2.2.5 The directors of any choir that contain members under the age of 18;
- 2.2.6 Commissioned Ministers;
- 2.2.7 Board of Christian Education Members;
- 2.2.8 Youth Ministry Committee Members;
- 2.2.9 Middle school and high school youth leaders;
  - 2.2.9.1 This includes all chaperones and drivers that participate in a youth event.

## 2.3 The volunteers who work with finances category include:

- 2.3.1 The Treasurer;
- 2.3.2 The Assistant Treasurer;
- 2.3.3 People who sign checks (i.e. the Moderator and Assistant Moderator);
- 2.3.4 People who collect the money from the collection plate and bring it to the church office. There will be a list of people who have been authorized to perform this function.
- 2.3.5 People in charge of accounting for the money at church functions.
  - 2.3.5.1 These functions would include the Best Breakfast, the Sugar Plum Fair, the Youth Ministry Auction, the Harvest Supper and other church related fundraisers (i.e. such as the piano repair fundraiser). The only person needing the background check is the one whose duty involves accounting for the money and turning it over to the Assistant Treasurer. The people who actually collect the money do not need a background check.

## 3.0 AFFECTED GROUPS

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council               | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach & Mission   | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christian Ed          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diaconate             | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe Church    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facilities            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Library              | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Life            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Pastors</u> |   |  |

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Title: **Background Check Procedure**

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## 4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

In general, the following boards or committees have the responsibility of requesting background checks for the indicated positions.

### 4.1 Board of Christian Education:

- 4.1.1 Church school teachers;
- 4.1.2 The church school superintendents;
- 4.1.3 Vacation church school teachers;
- 4.1.4 Board of Christian Education Members

### 4.2 Board of Music Ministry:

- 4.2.1 The directors of any choir that contain members under the age of 18.

### 4.3 Youth Ministry Committee:

- 4.3.1 Middle school and high school youth leaders, chaperones and drivers;
- 4.3.2 Confirmation leaders;
- 4.3.3 Youth Ministry Committee Members.

### 4.4 Diaconate

- 4.4.1 Commissioned ministers.

### 4.5 Personnel Board:

- 4.5.1 All paid staff (Pastors, Music Director, Administrative Assistant, Organist, Nursery Care Person, Maintenance Worker, Custodians).

### 4.6 Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer:

- 4.6.1 People who sign checks (i.e. the Moderator and Assistant Moderator);
- 4.6.2 People who collect the money from the collection plate and bring it to the church office.

### 4.7 The Church Council:

- 4.7.1 Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer;
- 4.7.2 People in charge of accounting for money at church functions;

### 4.8 The Safe Church Committee will coordinate the obtaining of the background checks.

## 5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1 Background Check – A New Hampshire State Police Criminal Records Check.

5.2 Review Committee- the Review Committee will consist of the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor, the Safe Church chairperson and, in the case of paid staff, the Personnel Board chairperson.



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## 6.0 PROCEDURE

6.1 The Safe Church Committee will coordinate the obtaining of the background checks. The procedure will be as follows:

- 6.1.1 A board or committee requesting a background check will submit the name to the Safe Church Committee.
- 6.1.2 The Safe Church Committee will review the request for duplication or a previous background check then will issue the request form to the person.
- 6.1.3 The person will complete the background check request form and return it to the Safe Church Committee.
- 6.1.4 The Safe Church Committee will send it to the checking authority.
- 6.1.5 The Safe Church Committee will add the name and date of the background check to the background check database when the information is returned from the checking authority.
- 6.1.6 The Review Committee will review the information and make decisions based upon it. They will relay the decisions to the requesting board or committee.
- 6.1.7 The background check information will be filed in a secure, limited access, location within the church office. Access to the information will be restricted to the Review Committee. People will have access to their own background check results.
- 6.1.8 The Safe Church Committee will maintain a database of who has submitted a background check form and the date the background check was completed.

6.2 Background checks will be valid for 5 years.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

- 7.1 New Hampshire Division of State Police Web Site  
[www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/nhsp/](http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/nhsp/)

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Title: **Background Check Procedure**

Doc. #: SC-002

Version #: 03

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## 8.0 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
01	Original	July 1, 2005
02	Added Christian Ed, Youth Ministry and Finance members. Added all drivers and Chaperones to Youth Events.	Jan. 18, 2008
03	Moved to new format. Removed Finance Committee members. Removed redundant wording.	See header on page 1

## Section 5 – Lockdown Procedure

<b>First Parish Congregational Church, UCC</b>		
Title: <b>Lockdown Procedure</b>		
Doc. #: SC-003	Version #: 02	Effective Date: 06/01/2011
Owner Group: Safe Church		Page: 1 of 4

**APPROVALS:**

Kenneth R Williams

5.22.2011

Owner Group

Date

Kenneth R Williams

5.22.2011

Safe Church

Date

**1.0 PURPOSE**

The Purpose of the document is to outline the steps to be taken if a lockdown is needed to secure the safety of the people inside the First Parish Congregational Church facilities.

A Lockdown would be implemented for the following situations:

- 1) Intruder in the Church School area.
- 2) Intruder in the Sanctuary.
- 3) An external threat in the area, i.e. a natural disaster, a problem at a local business, a threat to the community, etc.

**2.0 SCOPE**

The Scope of this document is to cover the typical Sunday Morning Activities at First Parish Church. It does not address non-Sunday morning activities.

**3.0 AFFECTED GROUPS**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council               | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach & Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christian Ed          | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diaconate             | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe Church    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facilities            | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Library            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Life |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Pastors</u> |   |  |

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Title: Lockdown Procedure

Doc. #: SC-003

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## 4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the Safe Church committee to write, review and maintain the lockdown document.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the Christian Education Committee to insure the superintendent and the church school teachers are trained in the execution of the lockdown procedure.
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the Diaconate to be familiar in the steps of the lockdown procedure.

## 5.0 DEFINITIONS

### 5.1 Lockdown:

- 5.1.1 i.e. confinement for safety: an emergency safety procedure in which people remain in a locked indoor space

## 6.0 PROCEDURE

### 6.1 Intruder Lockdown Steps during Church / Church School

#### 6.1.1 Church School

##### 6.1.1.1 The superintendent will:

- 6.1.1.1.1 Notify the church school teachers and the deacon of the month using the two-way radios.
- 6.1.1.1.2 Call 911.
- 6.1.1.1.3 Check downstairs bathrooms if notified that a child is missing from a downstairs classroom if it is deemed safe to do so.

##### 6.1.1.2 The Church School Teachers will:

- 6.1.1.2.1 Close and lock classroom doors.
- 6.1.1.2.2 Close shades/cover door windows.
- 6.1.1.2.3 Turn off lights.
- 6.1.1.2.4 Take attendance, and notify the superintendent using the two-way radios if a child is missing.
- 6.1.1.2.5 In AB classroom, if child is missing, check upstairs bathrooms if deemed safe to do so.
- 6.1.1.2.6 Gather children out of sight and under cover with minimal noise and movement.
- 6.1.1.2.7 The downstairs Noyes classrooms move into a single classroom.

#### 6.1.2 Sanctuary

##### 6.1.2.1 The Deacon of the month will:

- 6.1.2.1.1 Call 911
- 6.1.2.1.2 Notify the church school superintendent using the two-way radios.
- 6.1.2.1.3 Close and lock the sanctuary doors.

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- 6.1.2.1.4 Close and lock the balcony door.
- 6.1.2.1.5 Gather people out of sight and under cover as much as possible.

## 6.1.3 Kitchen

- 6.1.3.1 Lock doors.
- 6.1.3.2 Close and latch overhead windows.

## 6.1.4 MacGregor Hall, Dena's Kitchen, Parker Library, Shepard Music Room.

- 6.1.4.1 Lock Dena's Kitchen Door.
- 6.1.4.2 Go to the MacGregor Hall bathroom and lock the door.

## 6.1.5 Remain in lockdown until the Police give an all clear.

## 6.2 Intruder Lockdown Steps during non-Church Period

### 6.2.1 After Church

#### 6.2.1.1 Currier Hall

- 6.2.1.1.1 Lock the doors
- 6.2.1.1.2 Close shades/cover door windows.
- 6.2.1.1.3 Gather people out of sight and under cover as much as possible.

#### 6.2.1.2 Other Rooms

- 6.2.1.2.1 Follow the procedure for Church School and Sanctuary.

### 6.2.2 Remain in lockdown until the Police announce an all clear.

## 6.3 External threat Lockdown Steps

### 6.3.1 During Church / Church School

#### 6.3.1.1 Church School

##### 6.3.1.1.1 The superintendent will:

- 6.3.1.1.1.1 Notify the church school teachers and the deacon of the month using the two-way radios.

##### 6.3.1.1.1.2 Call 911

##### 6.3.1.1.1.3 Lock external doors.

#### 6.3.1.1.2 The Church School Teachers will:

##### 6.3.1.1.2.1 Close classroom doors.

##### 6.3.1.1.2.2 Close shades/cover door windows.

#### 6.3.1.2 Sanctuary

##### 6.3.1.2.1 The Deacon of the month will:

##### 6.3.1.2.1.1 Call 911.

- 6.3.1.2.1.2 Notify the church school superintendent using the two-way radios.

##### 6.3.1.2.1.3 Lock all external doors downstairs.

- 6.3.1.2.1.4 Evacuate the sanctuary and balcony to lower levels if weather related

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

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## 6.3.1.3 Kitchen

6.3.1.3.1 Lock External doors.

6.3.1.4 MacGregor Hall, Dena's Kitchen, Parker Library, Shepard Music Room.

6.3.1.5 Lock Dena's Kitchen Door.

6.3.1.6 Remain in lockdown until the Police announce an all clear.

## 6.3.2 During non-Church Period

### 6.3.2.1 After Church

#### 6.3.2.1.1 Currier Hall

6.3.2.1.1.1 Close shades/cover door windows.

#### 6.3.2.1.2 Other Rooms

6.3.2.1.2.1 Follow the procedure for Church school and Sanctuary.

6.3.2.2 Remain in lockdown until Police announce an all clear.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

None

## 8.0 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
01	Original	June 12, 2006
02	Added lockdown procedure for additional rooms. Changed format	See Header on page 1

## Section 6 – Missing Child Procedure



<b>First Parish Congregational Church, UCC</b>		
Title: <b>Missing Child Procedure</b>		
Doc. #: SC-004	Version #: 02	Effective Date: 06/01/2011
Owner Group: Safe Church		Page: 1 of 4

**APPROVALS:**

<u>Kenneth R Wellborn</u>	<u>5-22-2011</u>
Owner Group	Date
<u>Kenneth R Wellborn</u>	<u>5-22-2011</u>
Safe Church	Date

**1.0 PURPOSE**

The Purpose of the document is to outline the steps to be taken if a child is reported missing at the First Parish Congregational Church facilities.

**2.0 SCOPE**

The Scope of this document is to cover the typical Sunday Morning Activities at First Parish Church. It does not address non-Sunday morning activities.

**3.0 AFFECTED GROUPS**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council               | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach & Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christian Ed          | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diaconate             | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe Church    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facilities            | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Library            | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Life            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Pastors</u> |   |  |

**4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the Safe Church committee to write, review and maintain the Missing Child search procedure.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the Christian Education Committee to insure the superintendent and the church school teachers are trained in the execution of the Missing Child search procedure.

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- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the Diaconate to be familiar in the steps of the Missing Child search procedure.
- 4.4 It is the responsibility of the Pastors to be familiar in the steps of the Missing Child search procedure.
- 4.5 It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to monitor the location of their child while the child is not in Sunday School.

## 5.0 DEFINITIONS

N/A

## 6.0 PROCEDURE

### 6.1 Search Coordinator

- 6.1.1 In most cases one of the Pastors will serve as the coordinator of a missing child search. They are the most visible people in the church and would be the most likely person a parent would turn to in the case of a missing child. Any available Deacons should also be involved in the search. The Pastor may turn the role of Search Coordinator over to a Deacon.

### 6.2 Search Times.

- 6.2.1 There are four distinct times during a typical Sunday when a child may be reported missing.

#### 6.2.2 Before Church

- 6.2.2.1 One of the Pastors will serve as the Search Coordinator.
- 6.2.2.2 The Search Coordinator will remain in the office area of the building.
- 6.2.2.3 The Standard Search steps should be followed.

#### 6.2.3 During Church before Sunday School

- 6.2.3.1 One of the Deacons of the Month will serve as the Search Coordinator.
- 6.2.3.2 The Search Coordinator will remain in the Sanctuary area.
- 6.2.3.3 The Standard Search steps should be followed.

#### 6.2.4 During Sunday School

- 6.2.4.1 The Sunday School Teacher will serve as the Search Coordinator.
- 6.2.4.2 The Sunday School Teacher contacts the Superintendent using the two-way radio.

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- 6.2.4.3 The superintendent goes to the classroom to take over for the teacher while the teacher starts the search.
- 6.2.4.4 The teacher does a quick check of the Playground and parking lot then checks the Sanctuary, balcony and Narthex.
- 6.2.4.5 If the child is not found the search is turned over to one of the Deacons of the Month who conducts a Standard Search. The parents are notified.

## 6.2.5 After Church

- 6.2.5.1 One of the Pastors will serve as the Search Coordinator
- 6.2.5.2 The Search Coordinator will remain in the office area of the building
- 6.2.5.3 The Standard Search steps should be followed

## 6.3 Standard Search

- 6.3.1 The following steps should be taken.
- 6.3.2 The Search Coordinator recruits Deacons and other church members to be Door Guards to cover the Exits from the building.
- 6.3.3 The Door Guards should be located at the entrance to the parking lot and in the Playground.
- 6.3.4 The Parking lot door guard should:
  - 6.3.4.1 Check outgoing vehicles
  - 6.3.4.2 Watch the following Doors:
    - 6.3.4.2.1 New Building – main entrance
    - 6.3.4.2.2 New Building – Kitchen
    - 6.3.4.2.3 Noyes Building - parking area door
    - 6.3.4.2.4 Old building – Kitchen
    - 6.3.4.2.5 Old Building – Funeral door
    - 6.3.4.2.6 Old building – Main door
- 6.3.5 The Playground door guard should
  - 6.3.5.1 Watch the following Doors
    - 6.3.5.1.1 Old Building – tower door
    - 6.3.5.1.2 Old Building – Sanctuary fire exit
    - 6.3.5.1.3 New Building – Playground Door – next to Noyes building
    - 6.3.5.1.4 New Building - Playground Door – at lower lever
    - 6.3.5.1.5 New Building – Oscar’s Closet Door
    - 6.3.5.1.6 New Building – Currier Hall back exit.

## 6.4 The Search Coordinator recruits Deacons and other church members to conduct the search.

- 6.4.1 Key locations to search include:
  - 6.4.1.1 Area 1 – Old Building, Upper Level - Sanctuary, balcony and storage areas, Narthex, Lift

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6.4.1.2 Area 2 – Old Building, Lower Level - Library, Music room, Dena's Kitchen, Macgregor Hall, Tower Area, Handicap Bathroom

6.4.1.3 Area 3 – New Buildings, Lower Level -Downstairs Classrooms, Bathrooms, Oscar's Closet

6.4.1.4 Area 4 –New Buildings, Upper Level -Upstairs Classrooms and Bathrooms, Church office, Currier Hall

6.4.1.5 Area 5 – Outside – Playground and Parking lot

6.4.2 The search should include all closets.

6.4.3 The searcher should notify the Search Coordinator as soon as possible.

6.4.4 If available the two-way radios should be used.

6.5 If the child is not located, the Search Coordinator will contact the police (911).

## 7.0 REFERENCES

None

## 8.0 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
01	Original	June 12, 2006
02	Added Door Guards, Changed format	See Header on Page 1

## Section 7 – Child Abuse Reporting Policy

<b>First Parish Congregational Church, UCC</b>		
Title: <b>Child Abuse Reporting Policy</b>		
Doc. #: SC-005	Version #: 01	Effective Date: 07/01/2011
Owner Group: Safe Church		Page: 1 of 2

**APPROVALS:**

<i>Therese A. Wellons</i>	<i>6-26-11</i>
Owner Group	Date
<i>Therese A. Wellons</i>	<i>6-26-11</i>
Safe Church	Date

**1.0 OBJECTIVE**

To present the policy of First Parish Church regarding the reporting of abuse to children.

**2.0 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all adults that lead programs for children involved in activities held at or sponsored by FPC.

**3.0 AFFECTED GROUPS**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach & Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christian Ed                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaconate                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe Church    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facilities                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Life            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <u>Confirmation</u> |   |  |

**4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of all individuals who observe signs that may indicate a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, to report it to the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor or the Moderator

**5.0 DEFINITIONS**

There are four categories of Child Abuse. These are Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect.

# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

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Signs of Physical Abuse include: Bruises, welts, burns that cannot be sufficiently explained; Injuries on places where children don't usually get hurt (the back, neck, back of legs, face); Repeated injuries; Withdrawn, fearful or extreme behavior.

Signs of Sexual Abuse include: Difficulty walking or sitting; Pain or itching in the genital area; Torn, stained or bloody underclothing; Frequent complaints of stomachaches or headaches; Chronic depression; Withdrawn; Feeling threatened by physical contact; Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex; Running away from home.

Signs of Emotional Abuse: Inability to play as most children do; Sleep problems; Antisocial behavior; Behavioral extremes; Lags in emotional and intellectual growth.

Signs of Neglect include: Chronically dirty; Chronic school absences; Dress inadequate for weather; Left alone; Left in care of siblings too young to baby-sit; Often fatigued – even falling asleep in school; Hunger; Self destructive feelings or behavior.

## 6.0 POLICY

6.1 If during an event at or sponsored by FPC an adult chaperone or event leader observes signs of abuse or neglect with any child, that person is to report this case of suspected abuse to the Senior Pastor.

NOTE: In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the information may be reported to the Associate Pastor or Moderator.

6.2 The Senior Pastor will assess the information and determine whether the information should be reported to the appropriate authorities.

6.3 If deemed appropriate, the Senior Pastor will report the information to the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth and Families.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

7.1 State of New Hampshire DCYF website ([www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf](http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf)).

## 8.0 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
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01	Original	
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Refer to Header on  
Page 1

## Section 8 – Youth Ministry Policy



# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Title: Safe Church Guidelines for Youth Ministry

Doc. #: YM-001

Version #: 02

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protocols shall take into account the ongoing safety of all youth. A Permission Form and a Medical Form is to be filled out and signed by a parent/legal guardian for every youth participating in any given Youth Ministry event.

## **6.8 Age of Drivers**

6.8.1 Event leaders shall establish and communicate clear beginning and ending times and locations for all events. No drivers under the age of 21 shall be permitted to drive within those parameters.

## **6.9 Adult Leaders Alone with Youth**

6.9.1 Adult leaders should not be alone with youth. In cases where this is not possible or practical, the safety and comfort of the youth involved should be considered foremost.

## **6.10 Sleeping Accommodations**

6.10.1 It is the responsibility of all event leaders to provide appropriate supervision for all sleeping areas for FPC sponsored youth events. Such supervision shall be considerate of safety and comfort. Of the youth involved.

## **6.11 Protocol for Physical Contact**

6.11.1 Physical contact between human beings is a natural, positive thing. In the context of FPC sponsored youth events, such contact shall not be of a sexual nature nor shall it engender feelings of discomfort for those involved.

## **6.12 Protocol for Missing Children**

6.12.1 It is the responsibility of all event leaders to establish and communicate protocols to be followed in the case of a missing child. Such Protocols should designate a person in charge and that person should be the spokesperson in the situation. Parents are always to be apprised of the situation at the earliest possible time.

## **6.13 Youth Room Supervision / Rules**

6.13.1 It is the responsibility of all youth event leaders to maintain appropriate supervision in the youth room during their events for which they have responsibility.

6.13.2 Youth room rules shall be established by the Youth Ministry Committee in consultation with the youth of the church. Such rules shall be posted in the youth room and followed by all who use the room.

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## 6.14 Confidentiality

6.14.1 The maintenance of confidentiality is critically important in building trust between adult leaders and youth. The Youth Ministry Committee acknowledges that there are situations where it is important to break confidentiality for ethical reasons or reasons of safety. In such cases, the youth involved is to be informed before confidentiality is broken.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

## 8.0 HISTORY

Vers.#	Changes	Effective Date
01	Original	1/18/2008
02	Changed to new Format	Refer to Header on Page 1

## Section 9 –Church Function Signup suggestions

**First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
East Derry, New Hampshire  
Safe Church Committee  
May 18, 2008**

**Suggestions for Non-Church affiliated people attending an off-site Church event.**

**The Issue:**

The attendance of non-church people at off-site church events. A non-church person is defined as someone who does not attend Sunday worship (and had never been to a regular church service). Non-church people attended two events in the past year; the Labor Day weekend at Horton Center, which a non-church family attended and the woman's retreat at which a non-church person attended.

The people learned about the events from our bulletin board, either by seeing it themselves or by having a friend see it and tell them about it. In the case of the Horton center weekend the attending family thought it was just a camping weekend and not a church function. In addition to attending the weekend the family proved to be a distraction to many of the church people attending the weekend. They did not attend any of the scheduled functions and even held their own campfire.

In keeping with our mission statement "... we are dedicated to welcoming all people who seek the Word of God, Christian fellowship and service to others..." It would seem that people from the community should be welcome at church events either onsite or offsite. It is important that these people understand that the event is a church event.

**Suggestions:**

1. Have either the words "Church Function" or "Private Church Function" on the announcement going on the bulletin board.
2. Having a Registration form for the off site event. Something similar to what Youth Ministry uses for youth events.
3. Having a column on the signup form listing church affiliation, something along the line of "member/ attendee/ friend of (List friend).

## Section 10 – Informational Documents

State of New Hampshire - Child abuse Warning Signs

State of New Hampshire – Child Abuse Reporting Requirement

State of New Hampshire – Child Abuse Report Response

State of New Hampshire – Adult Abuse Reporting Requirement

State of New Hampshire – Adult Protection Program

Boy Scouts of America- Four Elements of Abuse

**First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
East Derry, New Hampshire**

State of New Hampshire Warning Signs of Child Abuse

**WARNING SIGNS**

Child Abuse Report Line

**1-800-894-5533 or (603) 271-6562**

By learning some of the warning signs of abuse and neglect, you'll be more alert to a child who may need help.

**Signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Bruises, welts, burns that cannot be sufficiently explained
- Injuries on places where children don't usually get hurt (the back, neck, back of legs, face)
- Repeated injuries
- Withdrawn, fearful or extreme behavior

**Signs of Sexual Abuse:**

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Frequent complaints of stomachaches or headaches
- Chronic depression
- Withdrawal
- Feeling threatened by physical contact
- Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex
- Running away from home

**Signs of Emotional Injury:**

- Inability to play as most children do
- Sleep problems
- Antisocial behavior
- Behavioral extremes
- Lags in emotional and intellectual growth
- Self destructive feelings or behavior

**Signs of Neglect:**

- Chronically dirty
- Chronic school absences
- Dress inadequate for weather
- Left alone at home or without supervision
- Left in the care of siblings too young to baby-sit
- Often fatigued - even falling asleep in school
- Hunger
- Self destructive feelings or behavior

**First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
East Derry, New Hampshire**

State of New Hampshire Child Abuse Reporting Requirements

Child Abuse Report Line

1-800-894-5533 or (603) 271-6562

**Reporting Requirements:**

- If a child tells you that he or she has been hurt or you are concerned that a child may be the victim of any type of abuse or neglect, you must call the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).
- NH Statute requires **any person** with reason to suspect a child under age 18 has been abused or neglected **must report** that suspicion **immediately** to DCYF.
- If you have reason to suspect a child has been abused or neglected, **contact DCYF** by telephone from **8 :00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday**.
- Proof of abuse and neglect is **not required to make a report**.
- **Reports** of abuse and neglect concerns **are confidential and can be anonymous**. If you have asked that you name not be disclosed, please that DCYF will make every effort to remove you name from all DCYF records of the report and investigation. However, if the case ever goes to court, a judge may request identifying information.
- **Call your local police department** with urgent child abuse or neglect reports **during DCYF non-work hours** (between 4:30 PM and 8:00 AM or on weekends and holidays).

When you contact DCYF you'll be asked for some information. You may not have all the answers. It would be helpful if you can provide the following:

- The name, address, sex, and estimated age of the child and any other children at the home
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the adults who are responsible for the child
- The full nature and extent of the child's injuries, maltreatment, or neglect
- Any information about previous injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect
- How great a risk you believe this may be to the child
- How you learned of this situation
- Any action that has been taken to treat or assist the child
- Family's strengths and resources
- Any other information that could be helpful in determining the cause of the injuries
- A written report may be requested by DCYF within 48 hours.

Sometimes, people are unsure if a situation is abusive. Even if you're in doubt, call. DCYF has extensive experience in child protection. DCYF may find no abuse or neglect has taken place but may still offer assistance to the family.

**First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
East Derry, New Hampshire**

State of New Hampshire Child Abuse Report Response

**DHHS' Response to Child Abuse and Neglect Reports**

Child Abuse Report Line  
1-800-894-5533 or (603) 271-6562

**When a report of potential abuse or neglect is made:**

- Child abuse and neglect reports are received by child protective staff at the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Central Intake Unit. The Intake unit accepts or screen out the report.
- If the report is accepted, it is electronically sent to the DHHS District Office responsible for the particular geographic area in which the child resides.
- A Child Protection Social Worker (CPSW) is assigned to assess allegations in the report.
- The CPSW is required to obtain information that will enable DCYF to determine if the allegations can be substantiated.
- NH Law requires DCYF to forward all reports of child sexual abuse or severe physical abuse to law enforcement.

**The assessment process requires:**

- Meeting with family and all household members.
- Interviewing the child victim.
- Making collateral contacts.
- Making a determination regarding safety of the child and the potential risk of harm. Determination outcomes:

**Unfounded:**

- Allegations are not substantiated.
- Family may be referred to community services for support.

**Founded:**

- Allegations are substantiated.
- Services provided to ensure continued safety and well being of child.

**Responsibilities of the Child Protective Service Workers:**

- Assess suspected cases of abuse and neglect.
- Assist the family in identifying areas of concern.
- Provide in-home visits and supportive services to help children stay at home with their families.
- Develop a case plan with the family
- Coordinate community and DCYF services for the family.
- Consult with domestic violence specialists, drug and alcohol counselors, and mental health therapists when appropriate.
- If the child is in imminent danger, petition the court for assistance or removal of the child from the home.
- Arrange for the child's placement in foster care or a residential care facility.
- Review the family's case plan every 6 months.

The involvement of DCYF in a family's life to protect a child is a highly sensitive and confidential matter. DCYF is restricted by NH Law and federal laws regarding information it can discuss with individuals outside of the child's immediate family.



**First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
East Derry, New Hampshire**

**State of New Hampshire Adult Abuse Reporting Requirements**

**Adult Abuse Report Line**

Bureau of Elderly & Adult Services (BEAS)  
1-603-271-7014 or 1-800-949-0470

**For Nursing or Assisted Living Facilities**  
Contact the Long Term Care Ombudsman:  
1-800-442-5640 or 603-271-4375

The Adult Protection Law requires any person who has a reason to believe that an elderly or incapacitated adult has been subjected to abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect to make a report immediately to Bureau of Elderly & Adult Services (BEAS).

**MAKE A REPORT**

- If you suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation you must call BEAS
- Proof of abuse or neglect is not required to make a report.
- Reports are confidential and anonymous. The Adult Protection Law does not allow BEAS to release your personal information to anyone unless you agree or a court orders BEAS to do so.

**HELPFUL INFORMATION**

When you contact BEAS, you will be asked for some information. You may not have all the answers. Just tell us what you know regarding:

- The name, address, telephone number, sex, and estimated age of the incapacitated adult.
- The name, address and phone number of a guardian or someone who is legally responsible for the individual.
- The full nature and extent of the individual's injuries, maltreatment, or neglect and where the incident/situation occurred.
- The type of living arrangement for the individual.
- Any information about previous injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.
- How great a risk you believe this may be to the individual.
- How you learned of this situation.
- Any action that has been taken to treat or assist the individual.
- The name, address, phone number, sex, and relationship of the person believed responsible for the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the individual.
- Your name, address and phone number.
- Any other information that could be helpful.

Sometimes people are unsure if a situation is abusive. Even if you're in doubt, call. BEAS has extensive experience in adult protection. BEAS may find no abuse or neglect has taken place but may still offer assistance to the individual.

**First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
East Derry, New Hampshire**

State of New Hampshire Adult Protection program

**Adult Abuse Report Line**

Bureau of Elderly & Adult Services (BEAS)  
1-603-271-7014 or 1-800-949-0470

**For Nursing or Assisted Living Facilities**  
Contact the Long Term Care Ombudsman:  
1-800-442-5640 or 603-271-4375

The Adult Protection Program carries out the legal requirements of the Protective Services to Adults Law. The purpose of the law, which is civil and not criminal, is to provide protection for incapacitated adults who are abused, neglected, exploited, or self-neglecting.

Adult Protection Program activities include:

- The receipt and investigation of reports of alleged emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or self-neglect, referral to law enforcement agencies as necessary;
- The determination of the validity of the report and the need for protective services; and
- The provision of and/or arrangement for the provision of protective services when necessary, and when accepted by the adult who has been determined to be in need.

The Adult Protection Law requires any person who has a reason to believe that an incapacitated adult has been subjected to abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect to make a report to the appropriate state agency or office.

The responsibility to receive and investigate reports of suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect of incapacitated adults under NH's Adult Protection Law, is determined based on an incapacitated adult's living arrangement or situation, as outlined below:

- An adult is defined as living in an independent living situation if that person lives in their own home or apartment, the home or apartment of friends or relatives, a boarding home, or there is no fixed address. For these situations, the report should be made to the local Bureau of Elderly & Adult Services (BEAS) District Office.
- The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is responsible to receive initial reports involving incapacitated adults who are residents of nursing facilities or assisted living facilities.
- A central adult protective services (APS) unit in the BEAS Central Office receives and investigates reports involving incapacitated adults who live in or are participating in homes/programs administered by or affiliated with the DHHS Bureaus of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.
- The central APS unit is also responsible to receive and investigate reports involving incapacitated adults who are suspected to have been abused, neglected or exploited in their own homes by individuals paid to provide care, or while receiving care in a community, general or specialized hospital, rehabilitation center or other treatment center.

The Following Information is from the Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection Training.

### **The Four Elements of Child Sexual Abuse**

There are four conditions (or elements) of child sexual abuse that must be present in order for the abuse to occur. Only one of the elements needs to be removed in order to prevent child sexual abuse.

#### **1. Motivation to abuse**

The child has to be in the presence of someone with a desire to sexually abuse children.

Only one thing distinguishes a child molester from everyone else, the desire to engage children in sexual activities. Child molesters come from all walks of life. Most are unremarkable, they would not stand out in a crowd. While most child molesters are men it is not unknown for women to be molesters. Male and female children and adolescents have also been known to sexually molest other children. It is very difficult to identify people who want to engage in sexual activities with children. This is particularly true of those who do not have a record of sexual abuse.

#### **2. Overcome inhibitions**

The abuser has to overcome his or her inhibitions to sexually abuse a child or adolescent.

Child molesters know that using children for sexual gratification is wrong. They also realize that if they were to engage in sexual activities with children and then be exposed as a child molester, they would be in serious trouble. For these reasons, child molesters must rationalize their sexual conduct with children as being harmless, something the child wanted, or a situation resulting from loss of control due to the influence of drugs or alcohol

#### **3. Overcome protections**

The abuser has to overcome all of the protections that should exist in a child's environment.

Children usually benefit from the supervision of their parents, of other adults and the presence of other children and adults. Child sexual abuse requires secrecy and isolation in order for the molester to engage in sexual conduct with a child. In order for a child molester to successfully molest a child, he or she must create an opportunity to be alone with the child.

Child molesters use various strategies to get children alone. Often, they will gain the confidence of parents and volunteer to baby-sit or to take the child to enjoyable activities. A common ploy is to make up a reason for the child to come to the molester's house for special training or planning.

#### **4. Overcome resistance**

The abuser has to overcome the child's resistance.

Most child molesters use a process to gradually prepare the child for sexual abuse. This process is called grooming. It establishes a trust relationship with the child. Then the molester misuses that trust to engage the child in gradually more intrusive sexual behavior. By the time the child realized what has happened, he or she has progressed to a point where disclosure of the abuse would – in the child's mind – be personally devastating.

Child molesters succeed because the power they have over the child as a result of the grooming process is so great that the child will do anything to please the abuser and avoid the stigma they associate with the sexual abuse. If the molester detects resistance after engaging the child in sexual abuse, he will often tell the child that if the child discusses the abuse, the child will be in trouble – and will be blamed for allowing it to happen. Another common statement is that no one would believe the child, as it would be the child's word against that of an adult – and 'who will they believe, the child or the adult?'

