

Policy for Registered Sex Offenders

The Pioneer Valley Church of Christ (herein referred to as the “church”) has determined to establish and maintain a safe and caring environment for everyone. Church should be a place of grace for all sinners, including those whose crimes are public. Knowing that children are at risk, not yet having the ability to protect themselves, we strive to provide protection for them by monitoring any known individual on a Sex Offender Registry (SOR) participating in this congregation.

Our church believes that the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people (Titus 2:11), that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32), that confession of sin (James 5:16) and a turning away from sin (Romans 6:1-2, 7:12-13) is required.

Because of the unusual circumstances of providing a safe place to worship for the individual on a SOR and for the congregation, special guidelines must be implemented. Every effort will be made by the church leadership to protect the privacy of the individual on a SOR, while not compromising the safety of that individual or of the congregation.

When it comes to the attention of any one associated with the church that there is someone attending or requesting to become a member of the church who is on a SOR, it must be brought to the attention of The Lead Evangelist, a member of the church’s Board of Directors, or The Elders or Elder(s) in training.

These leaders shall designate a sub team of at least 3 people who will be responsible for implementing this policy. The sub team may designate additional people, as circumstances warrant, to assist in the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

1. Disclosure of the individual’s SOR status will only be made to those individuals who need to know, as outlined below and on the attached Participation Agreement.
2. A signed release must be provided by the individual on the SOR so that their Probation Officer, Parole Officer, or licensed counselor can be contacted for specific information about their offense and to assure the implementation of this policy includes any specific state required guidelines.
3. The individual on the SOR must sign a Participation Agreement to adhere to the following requirements for participation in the church:
 - a. Three accountability partners will be chosen by the sub team. These accountability partners will make sure that the individual on the SOR properly follows and makes the appropriate, timely disclosures required by the Participation Agreement.
 - b. **The individual will always be physically accompanied by at least one of their Accountability Partners at all times, while on church property or when attending a church-related function or activity.** A church-related function or activity is defined to include any and all activities where one or more church members or any of their family members are present, regardless if there is an

expectation that the activity is for adults only or not. This specifically includes going to the home of a member of the church.

- c. The individual is not permitted to be involved in any children's or youth ministries.
 - d. The individual is not permitted to be in the Children's Ministry rooms, Teen room, or other areas where children's and youth activities usually take place.
 - e. The individual must be actively involved in a treatment program with a qualified professional until such time that their psychiatrist, psychologist, or licensed counsellor is willing to write a letter to the church stating that the treatment of the individual no longer needed.
 - f. Should the individual fail to comply with the participation requirements, the offender will be asked to discontinue participating in church activities.
4. There must be an ongoing and full disclosure to the Evangelist, Elders (or Elders in training), and the President of the Board of Directors by the SOR individual or the sub team of any and all changes to the individual's SOR status until such time as church leadership no longer deems it necessary.
 5. Reviews of compliance may be conducted periodically.
 6. The individual must sign a copy of this policy that will be kept on file in a secure location at the church building.
 - a. If the individual disagrees with this policy, any particular part of this policy, or is unwilling to sign a copy of this policy, they must request exceptions to this policy in writing to be reviewed by the above-mentioned sub team.
 - b. The sub team must review and approve or decline any requested exceptions.
 - c. Next, the Board of Directors must also review and approve or decline any requested exceptions.
 - d. No exceptions will be granted without approval of sub team and the Board of Directors.
 7. A copy of this policy will be published annually for our congregation.
 8. Once the above requirements are met, the individual can attend the church and its related functions as long as they agree and abide by the Participation Agreement.

PVCC Participation Agreement:

1. I will refrain from any physical or verbal contact with minors under the age of 18 years old who are attending or participating in any church activity.
2. I will not sit next to a minor child and if such a person sits next to me, I must move unless the minor/child's parents or adult guardian are present and are aware of my being on a SOR.
3. I will not develop any special or close relationships or friendships with minors or children under the age of 18 years old, unless the minors/children's parents or adult guardian are aware of my being on a SOR and consent to the friendship/close relationship.
4. I will not linger or loiter in areas where youth/children's ministries are being conducted. I will refrain from using any part of the church facility where pre-school, children, or youth activities are in session, including areas where children and youth ministries take place.
5. I agree to not allow any child into any motor vehicle to which I have access unless accompanied by their parent or adult guardian and that parent or adult guardian is aware of my being on a SOR.
6. I will not go to a church member's home where children are present unless the minors/children's parents or adult guardian are present at the home and are aware of my being on a SOR.
7. I have received permission from my probation officer or parole officer, and licensed counselor to attend church services. I agree to comply with any court mandated restrictions or other legal restrictions or conditions of probation, treatment, and/or requirements and recognize that these shall supersede any conditions that are less restrictive or contradictory in this agreement.
8. I will always be in the sight of at least one of my Accountability Partners at all times, while on church property or when attending a church-related function or activity. A church-related function or activity is defined to include any and all activities where one or more church members or any of their family members are present, regardless if there is an expectation that the activity is for adults only or not. This specifically includes going to the home of a member of the church.
9. I will notify my accountability partner within 24 hours of being contacted by any law enforcement officer concerning any new charges or allegations.
10. I will only use the bathroom facilities when physically accompanied by at least one accountability partner. In cases of emergency, I will enlist an adult male escort who is aware of my SOR status to accompany me before using restroom facilities.

11. I will meet monthly with my accountability partner and yearly with the Lead Evangelist to discuss my growth in Christ and struggles with sex.
12. I will refrain from placing myself in a questionable or compromising position in regards to special needs/mentally challenged adults attending church events.
13. I will consult with my accountability partner and church staff before committing to participate or serve in any ministry opportunity (i.e., volunteer activity or event). I will restrict my church participation to ministries that involve adults only. I agree to limit my participation to the following areas:

		Date _____	Initial _____
		Date _____	Initial _____
		Date _____	Initial _____
		Date _____	Initial _____

14. I understand that the provisions of this Participation Agreement do not create any personal and/or legal rights against the church that would afford me any claims or right of redress in any legal or administrative proceedings, nor does this agreement in anyway preclude the church from exercising its right to freely exercise its faith as set forth in United States Constitution and the General Laws of this state with respect to church governance in matters relating to church membership and/or discipline.
15. This agreement shall remain valid as long as I attend and/or participate in the activities of the church and any church-related activities, unless the church, in its sole discretion in matters pertaining to membership and discipline, determines that the allegations against me were unfounded. I understand that dismissal of criminal charges in itself, shall not constitute exoneration of an allegation of sexual misconduct for the purposes of these restrictions, but may be considered by the church in making that determination.
16. Should I wish to transfer my attendance, participation, or membership to another congregation, I specifically agree and consent that a copy of this document may be sent to the subsequent congregation.
17. While no individual on a SOR will be publicly named, I understand and except that there will be an annual notification to the church informing our church family of the SOR policy. I also understand that new members may also receive a copy of the SOR policy.
18. I specifically authorized the church to notify the following church leaders, on a need-to-know basis, that I am a registered sex offender and that the need-to-know will be determined at the sole discretion of the church:

Church Leadership Team
Board of Directors
Children's Ministry Leaders

Vacation Bible School Leader
Head of the Building Safety Team
The Head Usher

I have read and understand the above guidelines and agree to abide by them. If at any point I fail to adhere to any of the above conditions, I recognize that my participation may be terminated or otherwise restricted. Such failure shall be determined at the sole discretion of the church leadership.

I explicitly give my written consent to allow the church to contact my probation or parole officer for the purposes of implementing the church's SOR policy and for my probation or parole officer licensed counselor to release any and all of my information to the church.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20__

Participant's Signature

Participant's Printed Name

Signature, Lead Evangelist

Printed Name, Lead Evangelist

Signature, President, BOD

Printed Name, President, BOD

Signature, Elder or Elder-in-Training

Printed Name, Elder or Elder-in-Training