

# SAFER CONGREGATION POLICIES & PRACTICES

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ANNAPOLIS *(May 2017)*

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### **General Purpose Statement**

Our commitment, as Unitarian Universalists, to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to justice and compassion, compel us to create a safe and nurturing environment that protects children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth while part of our community. Additionally, we affirm our commitment to maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, physical ability, gender, or sexual/affectional orientation. We pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner which conveys mutual respect and consideration.

### **UUCA Safe Congregation Covenant (adopted April 2002)**

The Unitarian Universalist church of Annapolis is a place of safety and integrity for each person's mind, body, and spirit. We are a supportive and nurturing faith community, honoring and respecting the rich diversity of those gathered here. Recognizing that warmth, kindness, and passion will shape us as a congregation of goodwill, generosity, and presence, we covenant to affirm and promote:

- \* Honesty and authenticity in our relationships;
- \* Words that are supportive and caring, not belittling or demeaning;
- \* A welcoming and non-judgmental attitude;
- \* Respect for each person's boundaries of mind, body, and spirit;
- \* Listening to one another.

As we continue on our spiritual paths, honoring the gifts, blessings, and commitments each person brings to our congregation, let us be gentle with each other, for we do not know what is in another person's heart.

### **Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sexual Ethics**

One of the *Leader Resources in Creating Safe Congregations* restates our Principles in terms of sexual ethics, and appears in every age level of *Sexuality and Our Faith*, the companion volume to *Our Whole Lives*<sup>1</sup>.

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.  
*Every person's sexuality is sacred and is worthy of respect, and therefore, is not to be violated.*

- Justice, equity and compassion in human relationships.  
*We treat others as we would want to be treated; therefore, sexual exploitation and interpersonal violence is wrong.*
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation.  
*Accepting each other, as we are, means doing no harm and fostering well-being in one's self and others.*
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.  
*In our relationship to others, our freedom of sexuality is as important as the responsibility for it.*
- The right to conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large.  
*As a community and as an institution, we are responsible for creating a secure and safe environment.*
- The goal of a world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.  
*We have the opportunity to create the kind of environment that lends itself to peace, liberty and justice in human sexuality, and we can become a model for the rest of society.*
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.  
*When we respect each person's sexual integrity we honor the wholeness of life and we respect the web of all existence.*

## Definitions

The terms used in this document will have the following meanings:

- A. **Child or Children** includes all persons under the age of 18 years (eg, youth)
- B. **Abuse** includes non-accidental conduct that involves bodily injury or impairment; offensive physical or sexual contact, including physical or sexual abuse; physical or sexual harassment; physical or sexual molestation; or physical or sexual exploitation.
- C. **Physical abuse** includes offensive physical contact or activity that causes bodily injury.
- D. **Sexual abuse** means any sexual touching of a child or any activity that causes a person to engage in any sexual act or conduct without that person's consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.
- E. **Physical harassment or molestation or exploitation** means activity that places a person in fear of bodily injury by such acts as threatening or tormenting behavior, compelling a person by force or threat of force to engage in conduct from which the person has a right to abstain, knowingly restricting substantially the movements of another person without that other person's consent, communicating to a person a threat to commit an act against that person or another person or entity where the natural consequence of the threat is to place that person in fear or cause that person to engage in conduct in which that person otherwise would not engage, or similar repeated offensive physical or verbal conduct.
- F. **Sexual molestation and sexual exploitation** means activity that places another person in a situation where that person feels compelled to engage in sexual conduct to which that person

would not voluntarily consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.

- G. **Sexual harassment** means making sexual advances or requests for sexual favors to another person, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where the other person by words or conduct has indicated that such words or conduct are not desired, or where a reasonable person would expect that such words or conduct would not be desired.

**Note:** This is also covered in the UUCA Personnel Handbook. (← is it?)

## Special Relationship Between Minister and Congregation

*“Congregations confer powers upon their ministers through roles which the minister is expected to assume—worship leader, teacher, counsel or representative in the larger community...The powers of ministry have a great potential for good if they are used responsibly, and with potential for damage if they are abused...Ministers need to be fully aware of those powers and use them responsibly for the building of spiritual community, not for personal gratification. Exploiting ministerial powers for personal advantage abuses those congregants who become the inappropriate sexual objects of a minister’s personal interest. Such abuse damages the religious community of which the abuser is minister.”*

~ Excerpted from Thomas Mikelson, *Reflections Toward a Unitarian Universalist Theology of Clergy Misconduct through Sexual Abuse*, December, 1992<sup>3</sup>

We as a community expect the Minister to abide by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association’s (UUMA) Code of Professional Practice which acknowledges that ministers are the recipients of automatic trust, and comments directly on the issues of clergy sexual misconduct and the abuse of the trust congregations place in their ministers. In subscribing to this code, ministers agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

The complete text of the code is published in the UUMA Guidelines which is available on the UUMA website (Log on to [www.uuma.org](http://www.uuma.org), click onto Guidelines and Code of Professional Practice].

In the case of violation of this code, the Response Team will contact the Central East Region Director and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) who will initiate an investigation.

## Special Relationship Between Religious Educator and Congregation

*“I recognize that as a religious leader in whom trust and power have been placed, I am both morally and legally in a professional relationship to which I am called to be faithful...I must never abuse the authority of my position by manipulating others to satisfy my personal needs, which may include, but are not restricted to, sexualized behavior with any child, adolescent, or vulnerable adult seeking advice or comfort; with any adult in another committed relationship; with interns or with youth advisors. Nor will I engage in any other exploitative relationship that abuses the power and damages the trust that a specific individual, a congregation, or an institution has placed in me. As a religious education professional, I have the responsibility to be aware of, to advocate, and to live by this Code of Professional Practices,...Furthermore, I will be aware of and observe the legal requirements of my State or Province regarding reporting of physical or sexual misconduct.”*

~ Excerpted from the *Religious Educator’s Code of Professional Practices*

We as a community, expect the Religious Educator and other professional religious education staff, to abide by the Liberal Religious Educators Association's (LREDA) Code of Professional Practice, which acknowledges that religious educators are also the recipients of special trust. In subscribing to this code, professional religious educators agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

The complete text of the Code is published in the LREDA Guidelines and Code of Professional Practices which is available on the LREDA website ([www.uua.org/lreda/content/code.html](http://www.uua.org/lreda/content/code.html)).

In the case of violation of this code, procedures as outlined in this policy will be used.

### → → → Safer Congregation Team (from 2002 Document)

Since a direct approach is not always appropriate, a Safer Congregation Team shall be formed to provide the church with a means of safely and effectively resolving such situations. We recognize the right of an individual who is accused of inappropriate behavior to respond to the allegations, unless the panel deems informing that individual of the allegations unnecessary, unhelpful, or unsafe to panel members or the complainant. Along with this policy statement are Safer Congregation Procedure which include guidelines for the formation and functioning of the Safer Congregation Team, *as well as guidelines for a thorough investigative process and resolution (Safer Congregation Procedure)*.

This church also supports the Policies of the Unitarian Universalist Association and its Ministerial Fellowship Committee regarding professional behavior. This Safer Congregation Policy Statement and the Safe Congregation Procedure are also considered to include prohibitions against all criminal behaviors.

#### ***Formation and Functioning of Safer Congregation Team***

The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Safer Congregation Team of five members consisting of the Senior Minister, a member of the Board of Trustees, and three members of the congregation to serve for *two years in rotation, two members being appointed in even-numbered years and two members in odd-numbered years with the minister being a constant*. The five will include a **balance of gender and sexual orientation representation**, and replacements will be appointed by the Board as necessary or as terms expire. The Team will appoint a chairperson and a back-up chairperson to fill in if the chairperson is unavailable. The Team shall handle complaints according to the following guidelines:

All complaints shall be given prompt and fair consideration. *A prompt resolution is necessary when any individual's or group's safety is at risk*. The Safer Congregation Team shall act with sensitivity, objectivity, and fairness in handling these complaints. Persons presenting complaints shall be free of coercion, restraints, interference, discrimination, or reprisal.

A complaint can be made verbally or in writing *directly* to any member of the Safer Congregation Team. That member will then contact the chairperson *as soon as possible*, who will arrange for the formation of a *3-person* panel to address the complaint. The panel will have a balance of representation of gender and sexual orientation. The complainant or any panel member can request that an additional member(s) of the Safer Congregation Team be on the panel, hence increasing the panel size to four or five members. The panel must include either the minister or a board member. *In every case, the panel, as well as the Safer Congregation Team, will avoid any potential for a conflict of interest.*

If the panel's decision involves any disciplinary action against the offender, the panel shall make that recommendation to the Board of Trustees. If no disciplinary action is involved, the panel's decision can close the complaint process.

In handling any given complaint, the panel shall not be required to keep a written record if the complaint is resolved informally or dropped at the request of the complainant. Under such circumstances, neither shall the panel be required to contact the individual the complaint was against, *otherwise a written record will be maintained in confidence.*

Unless otherwise required, this confidential record shall only be accessible to the Safer Congregation Team members, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the minister. Access shall be further limited if the complaint involves any of these parties.

### **Safer Congregation Team: Complaint Investigation Process**

1. The panel will meet with the person(s) making the complaint as soon as possible, but no longer than ten days from the date of the initial complaint. Notes will be taken at this meeting. The goal is to get an account of the complaint. The panel will try to ascertain as much specific information as possible including dates, places, actions and, if possible, witnesses or others who heard of the complaint at the time it occurred. The individual making the complaint, as well as witnesses, must be assured that all information gathered during the investigative process will be held in strict confidence.
2. The minister and the Chairperson of the Safer Congregation Team will be informed of the possible violation, and they will decide when and how much information to share with the rest of the Safer Congregation Team and the full Board of Trustees.
3. The panel will speak with the person(s) accused to get an account of the events surrounding the complaint. Notes will be taken at this meeting and the panel will gather specific information, including dates, places, actions and possible witnesses.
4. The panel and, as appropriate, other members of the Safer Congregation Team may need to recommend to the minister a role for the person(s) accused, during the determination of facts. It may be necessary to remove this individual from any educational or leadership role until there is an outcome of the investigation.
5. The panel will meet with those identified by the person(s) bringing the complaint as well as by those identified by the person(s) accused, who can support their accounts. All people interviewed must be assured that any information collected will be held in confidence and that it is the belief of the congregation that all parties are "innocent until proven guilty." Ideally meetings will be completed within 10 days and those interviewed will be informed again of the need for confidentiality.

The entire process, from the date of complaint to the panel's decision should take no longer than 20 days, unless there are extenuating circumstances

6. The panel will meet to come to a determination of facts and discuss their findings with the minister, chairperson of the team, and others as appropriate. At this point the panel should not be concerned with possible consequences as this may influence their interpretation of the findings.

To aid in evaluating the situation, the panel may consider:

- Dangerousness: Is there a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
- Disruptiveness: How much interference is there with church functions?
- Perception or awareness of the situation by the person(s) who is the object of the complaint,
- Apparent causes of the situation: Conflict between person(s) and others in the church? Mental Health issues? Other?
- History: Frequency or degree of disruption/problem in past
- Other factors relevant to the particular situation.

6. Based on all information collected and recognizing that facts can be elusive, often confusing, and subject to interpretation and perception, the panel, minister, chairperson of the team and others as appropriate, will make a decision as to the outcome of the investigative process.

7. The panel will meet with the person(s) bringing the complaint and separately with the person(s) accused, to discuss the investigation, their conclusion and the decision. Decisions may include:

- Mediation/counseling with involved parties, together or individually
- Removal from a church activity, a leadership or teaching role or removal from the premises for a prescribed time
- Expulsion from church activities and premises

9. Documentation of the complaint, the determination of facts and the outcome should be reported to the minister and the full Safer Congregation Team in order that decisions are clearly consistent across the board. The minister and Chairperson will decide if others have a need to know this information. Witnesses interviewed are not told of the findings, only that the investigation is over and that their assistance is appreciated. The sealed file is kept in a secure location.

10. During this process lay pastoral ministers may be enlisted to provide support to all parties involved.

A complaint against the minister will be handled by a special Safer Congregation Team panel consisting of: the President of the Board of Trustees, another board member, and three members of the congregation. All of those involved in the complaint process will respect the confidentiality of these matters.

## **Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Volunteers and staff who work with children will be informed of the signs of abuse in children during annual training. Workers with children or youth may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under their care, this should be reported immediately to the Director of Religious Exploration and/or Senior Minister, for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by Maryland state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children, and will enter into a Limited Access Agreement, pending an investigation, for the protection of the adult as well as the children. (Appendix 7)
3. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
4. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
5. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, the Safer Congregation Team will work to investigate. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
6. Any person who is *not* found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children or youth on a permanent basis, and the Limited Access Agreement will remain in effect (Appendix 7).
7. The Senior Minister or their appointee will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless they are alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.
8. A pastoral visit with a minister will be arranged for those who desire it.

It is not the function of the Ministers, Religious Educators, staff, or Board of Trustees to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. Rather it is both Maryland law and the policy of The Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis to immediately report any situation in which any person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected. Such a report must be made to the local Maryland Department of Child Protective Services (CPS). Religious institutions are not considered mandated reporters, and so cannot be bound by law with regard to reporting abuse, but reporting suspected abuse is the responsibility of all citizens, and should be made as soon as possible, preferably within 48 hours of the disclosed or suspected abuse. Anne Arundel County CPS can be reached at: 410-269-4500.

Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, UUCA will rely on the decisions of those authorities as to the validity of the complaint. It is also UUCA's responsibility under these guidelines to develop an appropriate plan of response to the allegations.



In all cases, the Senior Minister will also notify the President of the Board and the lead staff person at the UUA Regional Office (Central East Region), and seek their advice and counsel. Additionally, the Minister will notify the church's insurance company.

In the event the accused abuser is the Senior Minister, reports will be filed by, and the notifications referenced above will be the responsibility of, the President of the Board of Trustees.

## **Selection of Volunteer Leaders**

All persons who desire to serve on the Board of Trustees, or to work with children or vulnerable populations (elders, homebound, those receiving pastoral care) who are participating in our programs and activities will adhere to the following process.

*See Appendix 2 for all applicable forms for Leaders.*

a. **Six Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any of the aforementioned Leadership Positions until s/he has been involved with UUCA for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children. **If the volunteer has been a member and volunteer in another UU congregation within 6 months, a satisfactory call to the Minister and/or Religious Educator at the previous UU congregation might warrant waiving the 6-month rule.**

b. **Written Application**

All persons seeking to serve in any of the aforementioned Leadership Positions must complete and an application in a form to be supplied by us. **The written application will be renewed every 3 years.** The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children/leadership, employment and volunteer information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

c. **Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct Form**

All persons seeking to serve in any of the aforementioned Leadership Positions must sign a Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct form to be supplied by us. **The Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct form will be re-signed every 3 years. The form will affirm the Leader's commitment to upholding a high standard of ethics and conduct, especially with regard to sexual ethics and conduct, while at UUCA and in their life.**

d. **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant and a member of the UUCA Staff or Ministry Team to discuss their suitability for the position.

e. **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for all who wish to serve in any of the aforementioned Leadership Positions. Additionally, a motor-vehicle background check is required, for volunteers who will be driving children or youth in their car.

Before a background check is run, prospective leaders will be asked to **complete** an authorization form allowing the church to run the check.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Director of Religious Exploration and/or Senior Minister, on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our church's mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children or in certain Lay Leadership roles. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

The background check must be completed, along with the Application and signed Code of Ethics and Conduct (See: b, c), every three (3) years.

#### f. Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

**References will only be checked once.** Reference-checks are not required for other Leadership roles that do not involve working with children or youth.

### **Revoking Volunteer Leader Status**

If, at any time during a volunteer's service with UUCA, the Minister or Director of Religious Exploration deems it no longer appropriate for that volunteer to continue service with children and youth or in their particular Leadership role, they reserve the right to terminate the volunteer relationship for the physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual health and safety of the participants in our church programs.

### **Two Adult Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two **unrelated** (eg; unrelated and not married or partnered to each other) adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some children's classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity (except in a parent-approved mentoring situation with adults whose backgrounds we have thoroughly checked).

### **Classroom Ratios**

We will strive to maintain a 1:5 ratio of adults-to-children (one adult for every 5 children) in the classes for 4th grade and younger. We will strive to maintain a 1:9 ratio of adults-to-children in the older classes.

## Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary for childcare workers (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to care for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14.
- Teenage workers must always work with at least one other teen or adult when providing childcare (that is, the "Two Adult Rule" applies to teenage workers, as well).
- Whenever possible, Teenage workers will be paired with at least one other adult over the age of 18.
- Teenage workers cannot supervise children over the age of 10, even if partnered with an adult worker.
- Teenage workers will be screened through reference checks.
- Teenage workers will not be left alone in the building with children, but will have access to an adult in a nearby room or directly upstairs at all time. Adults will check in on teenage workers at unspecified intervals throughout the childcare time.
- Volunteers or workers with our High School youth group (grades 9-12) must be at least 25 years old.

## Check-in/Check-out Procedure

- For children in our Nursery and/or Beginner R.E. programs, a check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in and out by a parent or guardian.
- Older children (elementary age) will either: be dropped off by parents/guardians to Childcare/RE, will come directly from the Sanctuary to childcare after the Time for All Ages as a supervised group, or will be transferred by a volunteer from Childcare to RE. Teachers or Assistants in the class should mark children's attendance when they arrive and when they leave. Parents should pick up Elementary Age children from RE classes and connect with the Teacher or Assistant to be signed-out.
- Older youth (5th grade and older) should arrange with parents where to meet after the Religious Exploration class time.
- Parents with special circumstances needing other arrangements for the release of their children should see the Director of Religious Exploration ahead of time.

## Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at The UUCA. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

In the event of exposure to a highly contagious illness, an attempt will be made to notify the families of all potentially exposed children (and adults) in a timely manner.

## Medications Policy

It is the policy of the UUCA not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Director of Religious Exploration to develop a plan of action.

For all children and youth in our Religious Exploration programs, medical information or special needs must be disclosed on their Registration Forms. For youth (ages 10-18) a Medical Release and Health Insurance Form must be filled out by parents for each youth registered in the RE Program. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to disclose this information and update these forms as needed. Forms will be kept in the Religious Exploration classroom folder, which are secured throughout the week and available to adult facilitators and advisors of each class on Sunday or field trips only.

For children in UUCA day camps, on a field trip, or overnight activity, special parental permission can be granted to UUCA adult volunteers to administer medication as directed. Permission, directions, and medication in its original packaging must be given in a labeled clear plastic bag to the designated adult at the beginning of any event in which medication might be necessary. It will be sent home with parents at the end of the event.

A first aid kit will be readily available in or nearby each classroom, and additional first aid kits will be available to take on field trips. Locations of first aid kits will be listed in RE Training materials.

## Discipline Policy

It is the policy of the UUCA not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the Director of Religious Exploration if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

The UUCA Religious Exploration Program has a "Policy on Children's Behavior" in which the steps are detailed as to how behavioral issues and discipline will proceed in such circumstances as they are warranted. In no case is corporal punishment ever used as a discipline method. See the Policy on Children's Behavior (Appendix 1).

## Restroom Guidelines

For the protection of all, adults (other than parents/guardians) should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Doors may be propped open to ensure adequate help for children while also allowing visibility of adults in the bathroom. Procedures for bathroom-time with children is addressed in RE Volunteer Training. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

## Accidental Injuries to Children

A first aid kit will be readily available in or nearby each classroom, and additional first aid kits will be available to take on field trips. Locations of first aid kits will be listed in RE Volunteer Training.

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate, following universal safety precautions, and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care. No incident report is required for this type of minor injury.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention (or in situations requiring behavioral intervention (eg., fighting, rough-housing, biting, etc.)), an incident report will be completed by those volunteers or witnesses who were present for the incident, and signed by the parent or guardian of the child in question. A copy of the incident report form will go home with the parent/guardian, as well as a copy will be kept securely in the Director of Religious Exploration's office. (Incident Report Form: Appendix 6)

## Internet Use and Safety Practices

**Social Media** - UUCA may maintain public pages, groups, or accounts for the purposes of advertising, communicating, and connecting members and friends and the wider community. The Senior Minister and Administrative Team reserve the right to monitor these accounts for material and delete inappropriate or irrelevant material posted to these groups. Groups within the church, such as programs, events, or classes, might also host social media groups. UUCA does not control the content of social media pages or email groups run by small groups within the church, but it strongly encourages any social media use to be consistent with our mission, values, safe congregation Covenant, and safety policies. Groups that might include information or photos of children or youth should be "Closed" groups (eg, not viewable by the larger public unless they are given access to the group).

**Adult/ Youth Internet practices** - Adults should not initiate "friend" requests of youth. Adults should consider their willingness to maintain a relationship with youth if they are requested to be friends by the youth, and accept requests accordingly. Adults should set content settings to protect youth from any inappropriate material on their own social media page. Email and texts should never be initiated one-on-one from an adult to a youth. Only group-texts or emails are appropriate in the context of coordinating RE related events. In the event that a one-on-one text or email situation is required (eg, COA mentoring, or Youth CON event planning, etc.), adults should always inform parents of communication, and save texts and emails.

**Employee Guidelines** - The aforementioned practices apply to everyone within the UUCA community, including employees and clergy. Employees and clergy have the right to speak from their own opinion and experience on their personal social media sites, with the understanding that anything they say in the public sphere-- in real life or on the internet-- ultimately reflects back to UUCA. Any comments, posts, or emails sent through official UUCA channels (eg, newsletter, e-news, UUCA Facebook, etc.) must conform to the mission and values of the congregation and cannot be "only" the viewpoint of the employee. Employees

shall not use church computers or internet access to access websites that would harm the integrity (both physically and ethically) of the church community-- including downloading questionable software, keeping up virus protection, or accessing sites with inappropriate material such as pornography.

**Photo Policy** - Parents and Guardians will be given the option in the R.E. Registration Form to opt-out of having their child's image used in online websites, communications, or public groups. Children and minors will not have any identifying information visible (nametags, etc.) or be named in any online communication when photos are used. Adults images may be used for online or communication purposes but will be removed if requested by the person whose image is used.

## **UUCA Building Safety**

An escape plan and the location of the nearest fire extinguisher will be posted in each classroom.

A Sunday morning fire drill will be conducted by the Administrative Staff Team annually; parents/guardians will be informed of the meeting point and where they should plan to meet their children in the event of a fire. See Fire Drill procedures (Appendix 9) for implementation guidelines.

### **Building Use With Youth Events**

- When youth hold any overnight event in the church, they will have exclusive use of the main building (not the Fahs House) from 8pm on the day the event starts until 8am on the day when the event ends.
  - If the event spans several days (such as Youth "CONs"), no adults other than advisors or chaperones for the event, and/or church staff will be allowed to use the building for the entire period. Exceptions might be made to that rule in the case of longer multi-day events but *no* unaffiliated adults will be allowed from 8pm to 8am each night.
  - Room reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis, and the entire building cannot be reserved unless it is available, or unless a group already scheduled agrees to move to the Fahs House.
- When youth hold daytime events at the church, every effort will be made to reserve rooms located apart from those where other events will be held at the same time, although the youth group will not have exclusive use of the building.
- In order to respect the privacy of the Ministerial Intern or resident of the Fahs House apartment, no event will be scheduled in the Fahs House from 9pm to 8am.
- Youth will sign the Youth Code of Ethics for overnight events held at UUCA or elsewhere (Appendix 3).

### **Fire Drill and Evacuation**

**Fire Drill** -- We will hold a fire drill after service on a Sunday morning each Summer, evacuating everyone from the buildings: sanctuary and narthex, offices, lower-level RE space, and Fahs House. The drills will occur immediately at the end of the single 10am service. The objective of the fire drills is to rehearse getting everyone out of the buildings in a safe and orderly manner as quickly as possible, just as we would need to do in case of a real fire or other emergency. See Appendix for Fire Drill Procedures.

**Evacuation** -- Children and adults in the lower level of the building should, if at all possible, leave out the exterior door of their classroom and proceed down the walkways to meet in the Memorial Garden. RE volunteers and staff should bring their classroom folder with them to keep track of attendance and head-count. Anyone in the upper levels should proceed out the front or side doors of the building, up the walkways to the Fahs House, and to congregate in the back parking lot. If they evacuate out the back sanctuary doors, they should proceed if possible down the stairs and congregate in the Memorial Garden. No one should congregate in front of the main doors of the building, since that is where the Fire Department will need to come. In the case of fire in the Fahs House, they should congregate near the back end of the rear parking lot. After everyone has evacuated the building, staff will retrieve parents/guardians to come get their children from the Memorial Garden area. Parents should not just get children without first telling a staff person.

## **Transportation to and from UUCA Events**

It is the responsibility of the UUCA R.E. Program, or the parents, to provide safe transportation to and from UUCA sanctioned events. The UUCA R.E. Program requires the following:

When traveling to and from outings, conferences, meetings, and other UUCA activities, a parent/guardian signed permission slip is required for each child/youth participating or being driven to an off-site activity. Most events will be covered in the "beginning of the year all-inclusive permission slip." If an event arises that is not covered on that permission slip, a separate form must be created and signed by parents/guardians of all children participating.

Children should be secured per Maryland law with appropriate seating arrangement (eg., height requirements for sitting in the front seat, using boosters, etc.) and all participants, including adults and children, must have and use a working safety belt.

One adult is allowed as a driver in a vehicle with two or more children, which is an exception to our Two Adult Policy. Vehicles should follow a set path, and travel "caravan-style" so that they are in view of each other.

Drivers under the age of 25 may drive themselves to church events, but may not have passengers in their vehicle for the purposes of transporting to, from, or within church events.

## **Procedures and Guidelines for Overnight Events**

Adults supervising youth sleepovers must be approved R.E. volunteers in compliance with UUCA's Leader Check policy. Parents who are staying over with their own youth need not be approved volunteers, but should not be considered "a supervising adult" (eg, two other adults still need to be present, etc.). Non-UUCA adult volunteers (eg, in the case of Youth CONs or District/Regional events) should be approved via the policies of the hosting organization.

There will always be a minimum of two unrelated adults present during sleeping hours regardless of the numbers of youth attending. Two unrelated adults must remain awake during these sleeping

hours. During a sleepover at UUCA, there should be a minimum ratio of one adult to eight youth with one additional adult required for each additional four youth.

During sleepovers at UUCA, all outside doors will be locked against entry once the last youth has arrived, and will remain locked until parents/guardians arrive for pick-up in the morning. Building will be secured per Building Use With Youth Events policy.

A Parent/Guardian Consent and Medical Release Form and a Medical Information Form will be required for each youth at the sleepover if not already completed through UUCA's RE Registration process.

Each youth will be required to complete and sign the Youth Code of Ethics for each sleepover event (Appendix 3).

Youth will sleep only in areas equipped with a functioning smoke detector.

Adults will be trained in fire safety procedures and youth will be made aware of fire safety guidelines.

Youth will not be segregated by gender for sleeping arrangements but will abide by the rule of "one person per sleeping cover, with visible floor space between sleeping covers" which will be enforced by adults in attendance.

## **Guidelines Involving Sex Offenders**

Situations may occur involving individuals accused or convicted of sexually aggressive behavior. Those situations will be addressed as follows:

An individual who has been convicted of or pled guilty to a charge of sexual misconduct or who has been determined to have engaged in any form of child abuse in any civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical forum will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved.

If an individual has been legally accused of sexual misconduct and is currently involved in civil or criminal litigation of such a charge, that individual will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved until there is final disposition of the case (resolution).

In the event that a person has been convicted of a sexual offense and completed a term of incarceration and seeks to enter the life of the UUCA, the Administrative Team will meet to make a determination as to whether or not and the ways in which the individual may be safely involved in the life of the congregation. If it is determined that the person can participate in congregational life, a Limited Access Plan will be developed (Appendix 7).

In all cases, the Ministers, Religious Educators, staff, or Board of Trustees may seek legal counsel before proceeding with either a draft or permanent Limited Access Agreement.



## **Training**

The UUCA will provide training on this Safer Congregation Policy to all new staff, leaders (Board, etc.) and anyone working with children and youth and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All leaders and volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

## **Questions?**

Contact one of the following people:

Senior Minister, Rev. Fred Muir -- [fmuir@uuannapolis.org](mailto:fmuir@uuannapolis.org), 410-266-8044 x100

Director of R.E., Elise Berrocal -- [eberrocal@uuannapolis.org](mailto:eberrocal@uuannapolis.org), 410-266-8044 x104

Administrator, Susan Eckert -- [seckert@uuannapolis.org](mailto:seckert@uuannapolis.org), 410-266-8044 x110

(Appendix 1)

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis

### POLICY ON CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR IN THE RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION PROGRAM

Occasionally, a child or youth may be consistently disruptive to the Religious Exploration group in which they are participating. Our volunteer leaders are not expected to handle severe behavior problems or complex special needs which make it difficult for the whole group to benefit from the program.

Leaders are advised of methods for organizing children in groups, and for addressing individual behavior problems. Every effort is made to assist leaders in preventing and handling difficult or stressful situations, and to support children with special needs.

If a child has special needs, parents are encouraged to talk with the team of leaders early on to recommend ways to better reach the child.

The Director of Religious Exploration, or a designated observer may visit the group and make suggestions to design a plan for improving the dynamics of the group or of the behavior of the individual child.

If no improvement is achieved, the parents will be asked to become involved in assisting the volunteer leader.

The following steps may be taken:

1. If a child's behavior is disruptive to the group, the parents will be informed that there is a difficulty and what steps are being taken to correct the problem. The parent(s) may be asked to become involved by talking to the child about classroom expectations.
2. If the behavior does not change, the parent(s) will be asked to come and observe the child in the group to assist the volunteer leaders in finding better ways to engage their child.
3. If the behavior does not change, the parent may be required to stay indefinitely in the group with the child.
4. If the behavior does not change, the parent may be asked to remove the child from the program. This final and most drastic action will be taken only after all the other options have failed.

In the unlikely event of a serious or violent behavior situation, or in a case in which a parent refuses to cooperate with the steps outlined above, the Director of Religious Exploration reserves the right to skip ahead to Step 4, removal of the child, for the safety and well-being of all involved.

(Appendix 2)



## *Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis* **R.E., BOARD, or CARE TEAM LEADER APPLICATION**

May 19, 2017

Dear Prospective UUCA Leader,

Thank you for volunteering to serve the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis as a leader with our children or youth, or on the Board of Trustees or Care Team. Volunteers in any of these roles must have been regularly attending UUCA for at least six (6) months prior to working with children or youth. Additionally, the Faith Development Minister and/or Senior Minister will request an interview with anyone they doesn't know personally.

You may be aware that Safer Congregation Policy is in place to ensure the safety of children and youth, vulnerable populations like those who are elderly and/or homebound, and to seek a culture of sexual, physical, and emotional health throughout the congregation. As part of this Safer Congregation Policy, all Leaders in R.E., Board, or Care Team must complete the attached *Application Form for UUCA Leadership* and the *Codes of Conduct and Ethics for UUCA Leaders*. Additionally, a National Criminal Background Check form will be sent to you electronically for you to complete in a timely manner. This will allow us to run a criminal, sex offender, and (if applicable) motor-vehicle background check. The forms are kept on file in the church office, and must be renewed every three (3) years if you wish to continue serving in one of the aforementioned capacities. Religious Exploration volunteers must also offer two references before they can work with children or youth at UUCA.

In our litigious society, we have to be very careful, and be able to document due diligence. You will find the form(s) that you need to fill out enclosed herewith. After you have completed the required forms, please mail them back or turn them into the church office. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to that matter.

Sincerely,  
*Rev. Fred Muir*

Enc.: *Application Form for UUCA Leadership*  
*Codes of Conduct and Ethics for UUCA Leaders*  
*Reference Check Form (for R.E. Volunteers Only)*

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Rev. Fred Muir, Senior Minister  
E-mail: [fmuir@uuannapolis.org](mailto:fmuir@uuannapolis.org)

410-266-8044 x100

333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401  
Fax: (410) 266-6910

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis (UUCA)

**APPLICATION FORM FOR UUCA LEADERSHIP**

(Revised 5/2017)

The following information is being used to help UUCA provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in our congregational programs.

This form is to be completed every three years by those who wish to serve as Leaders in our R.E. program (any capacity working with children or youth), on the Board of Trustees, or with the Care Team.  
Information will be kept confidential.

Full name (last, first, middle): \_\_\_\_\_

Any other names used (e.g. birth name, other married names): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliated with UUCA since (MM/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Congregational Affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Prior Congregational Affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in working in R.E. as (please circle):      Staff      R.E. Volunteer      Board Member      Care Team Volunteer

If volunteering to work with children -- Experience with children and/or youth includes (for information purposes only, experience is not required):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Volunteer Experience --  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the appropriate response for each of the following questions; use the back of the form for additional comments.**

1. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (other than **minor** traffic violations)?

Yes  No

2. Has a civil action ever been filed against you for reasons related to sexual misconduct?

Yes  No

3. Has a civil action ever been filed against you for reasons related to child abuse?

Yes  No

4. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse?     Yes     No

5. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the ethical and spiritual leadership and support of UUCA members, friends, participants, and/or children and youth?  Yes  No

I also agree to hold harmless the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, its trustees, employees and volunteers. In signing this form, I affirm that the information I have given is true and correct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CODES OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS  
FOR U.U.C.A. LEADERS**

*All Leaders, including Ministers, Staff, and volunteers working with children and/or youth, members of the Care Team, and members of the Board of Trustees, must sign the Codes of Conduct and Ethics for UUCA Leaders form every three (3) years.*

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

No minister, adult leader, child care giver, religious education teacher or advisor, nor any other person working in a paid or volunteer capacity in spiritual, ethical, or fiduciary responsibility under the auspices of the UUCA (RE volunteer, Board of Trustees, or caregiver through the Care Team) shall engage in sexual activity with persons under the age of eighteen.

Neither shall anyone engage in behavior with children, youth or adults which constitutes sexual harassment or verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

**CODE OF ETHICS**

*The UUCA exists to create the Beloved Community by inspiring and empowering all souls to live bold and compassionate lives.* In order to make this vision a reality, our congregation must be a safe place for every person's mind, body, and spirit. As such, any relationship fostered between two people must start from a place of respect and care. When a person is in a position with a power-differential, the person with more power is always placed in a position of responsibility for the care of the boundaries and relationship.

All Leaders shall refrain from any sexualized or sexual behavior, in person, written, or electronically, with any person under the age of 18.

Additionally, All Leaders shall refrain from any unwanted sexualized or sexual behavior, harassment, or physical, verbal, or emotional abuse of anyone affiliated with UUCA regardless of age.

Leaders, especially Ministers, Staff and Board Members, must hold themselves to high ethical conduct throughout their lives-- not only while working on behalf of UUCA-- because their conduct will always reflect on the church and the work we do within and beyond our community. If a Leader is found to have behaved unethically in their lives outside of UUCA parameters, their Leadership will be terminated.

\* I have read the above Codes of Conduct and Ethics for UUCA Leaders, and I am in agreement with their spirit and purpose and will comply with them.

\* I have read the UUCA Safer Congregation Policy, and pledge to uphold and enforce it.

Full Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis (UUCA)  
**RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION (R.E.) PROGRAM**  
**REFERENCE CHECK FORM**

333 Dubois Road; Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 266-8044

(Revised 5/2017)

All volunteers who wish to work with children and youth in our Religious Exploration Program (eg., as leaders, teachers, assistants, facilitators, mentors, advisors, and/or through Camp Beagle) must have two references checked as part of a thorough Safety Procedure. References do not need to be renewed.

- **Please complete all information and write clearly.**
- **These people will be emailed a link to complete an online reference form for you.**
- **Please inform your references to check their email and promptly respond to the online link.**
- **If they are not returned in time, the R.E. Staff will use the information provided below to contact them by phone.**

The following persons are familiar with my character, especially as it relates to working with children and youth, and as it relates to working with other adults. → **Please offer at least one non-UUCA reference. Institutional references preferred.**

1. Reference Name:	1. Reference Name:
Relationship to applicant:	Relationship to applicant:
How long have you known this person?	How long have you known this person?
Email Address:	Email Address:
Telephone #:	Telephone #:

I understand that the information I am providing may be verified by contacting persons or organizations named in this form, and that the Faith Development Minister reserves the right to request a formal criminal background check be obtained from the local police as specified by Maryland State law. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information.

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis Youth Code of Ethics

I am attending the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of event)  
to be held at \_\_\_\_\_ (location of event)  
on \_\_\_\_\_ (date of event), and

I understand that this event is coordinated by:

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of group or committee)

I understand my behavior will affect the Youth community of The Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis.

While attending this event:

- I will act in ways that encourage the well-being, safety, and the best interests of everyone attending this event.
- I will follow all federal, state and local laws.
- I will work out a system of communication with my adult sponsor during this event, and use that system throughout the event.
- I understand that I am encouraged to express myself in healthy ways and to respect each other's boundaries of mind, body, and spirit.
- I understand that behavior that breaks down the community, including sexual activity and sexual harassment, is inappropriate and therefore, not permitted in this setting.
- I will not consume any alcohol or illegal drugs.
- I understand that my sponsor has also agreed to refrain from any use of alcohol or illegal drugs during this event.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (youth name), have read and understand the Youth Code of Ethics. I agree to abide by these guidelines for the duration of the event. I understand that if I break this agreement or any covenants established at the event by the gathered community, my parents/guardians will be contacted and that I may be prohibited from attending any future events sponsored by The Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis or the wider UUA.



(Appendix 4) *Religious Exploration Registration Form -- This form resides online using JotForm and might be edited annually. This is the copy from the online form for the 2016-17 registration form*

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis**  
**RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION CHILDREN & YOUTH**  
**REGISTRATION FORM 2016-2017**

Child/Youth's Legal LAST Name \*

Child/Youth's Legal FIRST Name \*

Middle Initial

Name Child/Youth Usually Goes By

Child/Youth's Date of Birth MM/DD/YYYY



Child/Youth's Age by Sept. 1, 2016 \*

Parent/Guardian's (1) Name \*

Parent/Guardian's (2) Name (optional)

Parent/Guardian's Preferred Street Address

City

State, Zip

Parent/Guardian's Primary Phone Number (please indicate phone type: cell, home, work) \*

Parent/Guardian's Secondary Phone Number (please indicate phone type: cell, home, work)

Parent/Guardian's (1) Email \*

Parent/Guardian's (2) Email

### Religious Exploration (ages 6mos-18years available)

Which RE class at 10:10am will your child/youth participate in? \*

### Childcare (ages 6mos- 4th grade ONLY)

Which childcare session will your child most often participate in?

### Youth Worship Roles (ages 10-18years ONLY) -- Optional

**Please select if your child would like to participate!**

What role(s) would your 10-18 year old youth like to play during the worship service? (Can be monthly or more/less often)

- Usher, 9am service
- Usher, 11:15am service
- Greeter, 9am service
- Greeter, 11:15am service
- Sound Booth Tech, 9am service
- Sound Booth Tech, 11:15am service
- Worship Lay Minister (speaker), 9am service
- Worship Lay Minister (speaker), 11:15am service

My child/youth has the following allergies: (Please also describe reaction child could have to allergen)

My child/youth has the following medical concerns or needs which should be taken into consideration:

My child/youth has the following behavioral or emotional needs which should be taken into consideration:

The best way to engage with my child/youth and/or manage their medical/behavioral needs is:

As a parent or guardian of a child/youth in UUCA Religious Exploration, I understand that the program is cooperative and free of charge, and relies on the volunteer effort of parents. I agree to help in the following ways: \*

- Class facilitator (email eberrocal@uannapolis.org to confirm)
- OR - Serve on TWO of the following support teams:

Support Team Choices: (Please select TWO) By volunteering to serve on these teams, I agree to commit to meeting occasionally outside of church time, communicating as needed, and supporting the team's efforts to bring about a successful completion of the required tasks.

- RE Class Parent Assistant (once every other month, or so, not necessarily in your child's class)
- RE Space Handywork (e.g., changing lightbulbs, hanging items, fixing furniture, etc.)
- Childcare Session(s) Activity Leader (approximately once a month at 9 or 11:15)
- RE Classroom and Storage Organizing (approximately once a month)
- Purchasing RE Supplies or Snacks (purchases are not refunded)
- Stone Soup Event Planning (December time frame)
- Passover Seder Event Planning (March/ April time frame)
- RE Library Support (approximately once a month)
- Administrative Assistance/ Data Entry (scanning, copies, emails)
- PlayScape (playground) Support (hands-on gardening, building, maintenance - Fall & Spring)

I, the parent and/or legal guardian of the above listed child, understand that the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis (UUCA) provides a Religious Exploration (RE) program for children and youth. In consideration of my child participating in the UUCA RE program, I hereby release and discharge UUCA, its officers, trustees, members, staff, volunteer leaders and assistants from liability for any claim resulting from

injury to my child, whether caused by negligence or not, while participating in the RE program. In case of an emergency, please try to reach me at the above phone numbers if it is outside Sunday church hours. On Sunday mornings, I agree to be in the building while my child is in the RE program . If I cannot be reached, I authorize the administration of emergency medical aid to my child. \*

I Agree

From time to time, the congregation may use pictures of events in our congregation for its promotion on the web and in print, and individuals are not identified by name – other than those serving in appointed or elected leadership. \*

I give permission for my child/youth's picture to be used in this way.

I do not give permission for my child/youth's picture to be used in this way.

### **POLICY ON CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR IN THE R.E. PROGRAM**

***Children are NEVER to be left unattended on the church property (Sundays or any other time).***

During the Sunday morning programs, there might be a few children whose behavior is disruptive to the group they are attending. Since our facilitators and advisors are volunteers, they are not expected to handle severe behavioral needs that make it difficult for the group to benefit from the program. We are committed to assisting facilitators and advisors when a child or youth has needs that are in contrast to those of the group. Facilitators and advisors are instructed in methods for organizing children in groups and dealing with individual behavior. If the staff and volunteers have been unable to assist in creating a helpful change in behavior, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be asked to become involved with assisting the facilitator or advisor.

#### **The following steps may be taken:**

1. The parents will be first informed that there is a difficulty, what steps are being taken to meet the need of the child in the context of the needs of the group, and then the parent may be asked to become involved by talking to the child or youth about the behavior expectations within the group setting.
2. If the behavior does not change, the parent(s) will be asked to come and observe the child in the group and pose suggestions to the child and the facilitators or advisors.
3. If the behavior does not change, the parent may be required to stay in the group with the child.
4. If the behavior does not change, the parent may be asked to remove the child from the program. This final and most drastic action will be taken ONLY after all other options have failed to adequately resolve the needs of the child in the context of the needs of the group.

I further acknowledge that I have received and read, and that I understand the Policy on Children's Behavior, and agree to support it and abide by its terms. \*

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Policy on Children's Behavior (above)

***By submitting this form to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, I am giving my permission for my child or youth to participate in UUCA Religious Exploration programs, and the information submitted is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.***

• Submit

(Appendix 5)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis  
**SPECIAL ACTIVITY PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM**

**EVENT:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Field trip/excursion \_\_\_\_\_ Lock-in at church  
\_\_\_\_\_ Overnight trip \_\_\_\_\_ Special event at church

Planned by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Place: leaving from \_\_\_\_\_  
returning to \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant should bring/wear (clothing, money, food, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Other information: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information, contact: \_\_\_\_\_

===== CUT HERE =====

Adult other than parent authorized to pick up student (**to be filled out by parent**):  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PERMISSION AND LIABILITY RELEASE**

I understand that the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis (UUCA) is providing this activity in connection with its Religious Exploration program : (event and date) \_\_\_\_\_

My child(ren), \_\_\_\_\_ has/have my permission to participate in this activity and in consideration of UUCA's providing it, I hereby release and discharge the UUCA, its officers, trustees, members, staff, volunteers, and assistants from liability for any claim resulting from injury to my child(ren), whether caused by negligence or not, during the course of that activity. In case of an emergency please try to contact me at (phone #) \_\_\_\_\_  
If I cannot be reached, I authorize the administration of emergency medical aid to my son/daughter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or legal guardian's signature Date

*Youth 18 years old or older may sign the form themselves -- provide an emergency phone number.*

===== cut =====

**DRIVER INFORMATION** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Valid driver's license #: \_\_\_\_\_

Car insurance policy #: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of passenger seat belts: \_\_\_\_\_ (front), and \_\_\_\_\_ (rear)

(Appendix 6)

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis  
Religious Exploration Program  
Incident/ Accident/ Injury Report Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's age: \_\_\_\_\_ Class or Group: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adult(s) Present at incident/ accident (and contact info) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Description of incident/ accident, including other children who were involved, equipment or supplies that were involved, and the nature of any injury: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How was the incident/ accident/ or any injury handled or treated? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was a doctor's office or hospital visit required? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Steps taken to reduce the likelihood of this type of incident/ accident occurring again:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Adult witnesses:**

1) Print name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
2) Print name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Children's Ministry Coordinator, Director of R.E., or Minister**

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title/ role at UUCA: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent or Guardian of Child:**

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Limited Access Agreement

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping (being among us) with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation and/or leadership in particular areas of congregational life.

The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and us of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our congregation and our membership but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and vulnerable populations, and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult education, all adult social events, and well supervised multigenerational events. You are to avoid all contact with children on congregation property or congregation-sponsored events.

This includes the following:

- i. Please do not talk with children or youth.
- ii. You may not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
- iii. Remain in the presence of an adult who knows your situation at all times when children are present.
- iv. If a child in the congregation approaches you, either at the church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- v. Please avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session, such as nursery school or youth group.

\_\_\_\_\_ I accept that the following people will be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care:

- (Minister) \_\_\_\_\_
- (Minister) \_\_\_\_\_
- (Religious Educator) \_\_\_\_\_
- (Religious Educator) \_\_\_\_\_
- (Board President) \_\_\_\_\_
- (Staff/Other) \_\_\_\_\_
- (Staff/Other) \_\_\_\_\_
- (Staff/Other) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future UUCA functions and UUCA property.

Signature:	Date
Witness:	Date
Minister:	Date
DRE/MRE:	Date
Board Chair:	Date

## **SUMMARY: UUCA CHILD & YOUTH SAFETY POLICY**

For a complete copy of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis Safer Congregation Policies and Procedures, see the Director of Religious Exploration, Administrator, or Senior Minister.

### **This is a summary of that policy:**

- **Application:** All R.E. volunteers must provide an application and two references, preferably institutional in nature. An interview might be required with the DRE. For volunteers who might have one-on-one, driving, or overnight contact with minors, a formal background check is required.

- **Two-Adult Rule:** No fewer than two unrelated adults will be with any number of children at any time during a sponsored R.E. activity. Exceptions are granted for mentoring activities with parent permission. If it is impossible to have two approved adults, the group will leave the door open to the space.

- **Bathroom:** Older children can go to the bathroom by themselves in pairs. Younger children need to be walked to the bathroom, where adults will wait outside the door. If the child needs assistance, the bathroom door and stall door will be propped open while the adult assists the child.

- **Medicine:** UUCA volunteers do not give out medicine unless pre-arranged with the DRE and the parents, and medicine is provided in original packaging, labeled with the child's name, and given to responsible adult at the event along with the Medication Administration Form.

- **Building Safety:** An escape plan and the location of the nearest fire extinguisher will be posted in every classroom. A fire drill will be held each Fall. Overnight events at UUCA involving children will take place in the main building and no non-approved adults will be allowed in the building for the overnight part of the event.

- **Injuries and First Aid:** First Aid kit are available in classrooms and for field trips. Volunteers will provide simple First Aid following universal safety precautions. Parents will be contacted if more care is needed beyond basic First Aid or if an ambulance is called. An incident report will be completed by volunteers and signed by parents in all injury cases. A copy of that form should be given to parents, and a copy should be kept for the DRE.

- **Discipline:** In no case will corporal punishment be used. See the Policy On Behavior for details as to how to handle discipline or behavior issues.

- **Abuse or Neglect:** All adult volunteers agree to report suspected abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional) or neglect to the DRE or Senior Minister who will report to the appropriate authorities.



## **Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis Plan for Annual Fire Drills**

We will hold a fire drill after service on a Sunday morning each Summer, evacuating everyone from the buildings: sanctuary and narthex, offices, lower-level RE space, and Fahs House. The drills will occur immediately at the end of the single 10am service. The objective of the fire drills is to rehearse getting everyone out of the buildings in a safe and orderly manner as quickly as possible, just as we would need to do in case of a real fire or other emergency.

Staff members and others involved are asked to carry out the following duties:

- **Lead Staffer.** One person will serve as fire drill planner and coordinator. At close of each service, announce to congregation the procedure to be followed. Observe evacuation of sanctuary and narthex. Get reports of completions of evacuation from coordinators for office wing, lower level, and Fahs House. When all areas of all buildings are completely evacuated, cue staffer to turn off alarm.
- **Staffer 2.** On cue from Lead Staffer, following the announcement to the congregation at the end of each service, actuate the fire alarm bell by pressing the “Fire Drill” button in the control box in the narthex and Staffer 3 by walkie-talkie to actuate the fire alarm bell in Fahs House. Then stand at the top of the narthex stairs and direct people to go out of the building, not down the stairs. Receive report by walkie-talkie from Staffer 3 regarding successful evacuation of Fahs House and advise Lead Staffer. On cue from Lead Staffer, following reports of complete evacuation, turn off the alarm by pressing the “Signal Silence” button in the control box.
- **Staffer 3.** Serve as coordinator for Fahs House. On cue from Staffer 2 by walkie-talkie, actuate Fahs House fire drill system: push “Fire Drill” button, push “Enter” button, enter fire drill code “1111”. Direct occupants out of Fahs House to appropriate waiting areas on either side of the building. When building is completely evacuated, advise Staffer 2 by walkie-talkie of successful evacuation.
- **Ushers.** Direct people out of the sanctuary, mostly through the main entrance. They should then be directed along the path next to the office wing, over the footbridge and into the grassy area between the main building and Fahs House. Some may go out the rear exit to outside, but this necessitates going down the exterior stairs to get completely away from the building, so persons with mobility issues should be directed out the main entrance.
- **Staffer 4.** Serve as coordinator for office wing. Direct everyone in the wing to exit either through the exterior doors in individual rooms or down the corridor and out through the gallery doors. People should not go out through the narthex, which will already be crowded with people exiting from the sanctuary. When everyone is out of the office wing, advise Lead Staffer in the narthex.
- **Staffer 5.** Serve as coordinator for the lower level RE space. Direct everyone in the lower level to exit in accordance with the Emergency Exit Procedure posted in each room. When everyone is out of the lower level, come up to the narthex and advise Lead Staffer.