



REVISION HISTORY

New document adopted April 10, 2013. This policy was developed on the recommendation of the Safe Congregation Task Force, which had the following members: Steve Fishbein, Stephanie Golski, Lori Linskey, Regina Podhorin Zilinski, Robin Pugh, Dan Tuft.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

This Safe Congregation Policy (“SCP”) is intended to protect the physical, sexual, and emotional well-being of all who come to UUCWC, especially children and youth, and in particular those involved in our Religious Education programs. It is the intention of this religious community to create an environment that encourages spiritual growth through the promotion of a safe environment in which its members can explore, experience and express what in life that they find meaningful.

As Unitarian Universalists, we strive to value the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." Openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination’s purposes and principles. However, when any person’s physical, sexual, emotional well-being, or freedom to safely express their beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly. Thus, we are inspired to create a safe and nurturing environment that protects both children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth while they are a part of our community.

We believe a Safe Congregation is a place free from all actions, verbal or otherwise, that degrade, threaten, scare, or harm other persons. Our children, youth, and vulnerable adults are especially entitled to be safeguarded from perceived, threatened, or actual harm. This "Safe Congregation Policy” establishes responsibility, authority, and accountability for making our faith community a Safe Congregation.

POLICY

1. Overall Responsibility, Authority, and Accountability

- (a) In consultation with the Safe Congregation Team (“SCT”), the Director of Lifespan Religious Education (“DLRE”) has the responsibility and authority to administer this policy as it pertains to those involved in Religious Education for Children and Youth and in Adult Religious Education. The DLRE is accountable to the Minister.
- (b) In consultation with SCT, the Minister has the responsibility and authority to administer this policy in other areas of congregational life. The Minister is accountable to the Board of Trustees (“Board”).
- (c) The SCT, in cooperation with the DLRE and the Minister (who are members of the SCT), has the responsibility and authority for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for responding to incidents. The SCT, with the advice and consent of the DLRE and the Minister, has the responsibility and authority to create written Procedures implementing this policy and to amend existing written Procedures. The SCT is accountable to the Minister (unless the Minister has a conflict of interest, in which case the SCT is accountable to the Board President).



- (d) Written Procedures initially created for implementation of this policy must be presented to the Board for approval within [three] months of the policy's approval by the Board.
- (e) All members of the congregation are required to adhere to this policy in their dealings with other members, friends, visitors, and children and youth.

2. The Safe Congregation Team

- (a) The Safe Congregation Team comprises the following members:
 - i. Minister (permanent member).
 - ii. DLRE (permanent member).
 - iii. One member of the Committee on Ministry ("COM"), who is trained in the Covenant of Right Relations and conflict resolution, appointed by COM.
 - iv. One member of the Board appointed by the Board.
 - v. Chair of the Committee on Religious Education for Children and Youth ("RE Committee") or another representative from the RE Committee appointed by the RE Committee.
 - vi. Chair of the Committee on Adult Religious Education ("ARE Committee") or another representative from the ARE Committee appointed by the ARE Committee.
 - vii. One at-large member, who has been a member of the Congregation for at least six months and who has experience in a field such as law, criminal justice, violence prevention, or child protective services, appointed by the other members of the SCT.
- (b) The SCT must meet at least annually to ensure all aspects of the policy are being implemented and maintained.
- (c) The SCT must respond to any incident relating to the emotional or physical safety of a person in our church, or to provide guidance/assistance to clergy, staff, and volunteers.
- (d) The SCT is responsible for ensuring all UUCWC staff as well as volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults receive appropriate training regarding this policy and Safe Congregation practices specified in SCT's written Procedures.
- (e) One appointed SCT member, selected by the SCT, is to chair the SCT.
- (f) Appointed members serve a three -year term (or for as long as they continue to serve on the appointing body, whichever is shorter). If a position on the SCT becomes vacant, the appointing body is responsible for making a new appointment to fill the vacancy.
- (g) All members of the SCT are required to sign a confidentiality agreement with respect to concerns or incidents brought to the SCT for consideration.

GUIDELINES

This policy should be implemented in a way that promotes most effectively the well-being of the most vulnerable members of the UUCWC community.



PROCEDURE under the SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY

REVISION HISTORY

This is a new document adopted [revised draft 04-05-13]. This Procedure was proposed by the Safe Congregation Task Force, discussed within the congregation, and approved by the Board. The Safe Congregation Team (“SCT”), established by the Safe Congregation Policy, has continuing responsibility and authority for amendments to this Procedure and for creating additional written Procedures to implement the Safe Congregation Policy.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

This Procedure implements the Safe Congregation Policy.

PROCEDURE

I. Definitions

- (a) Covenant of Right Relations. This policy is established as a responsibility of congregational life at UUCWC. All members of the congregation have a responsibility to protect the safety of all who come to UUCWC and to adhere to our Covenant of Right Relations:
<http://www.uucwc.org/what-we-believe/>
- (b) Applicable New Jersey Regulations.
 - i. Megan’s Law: http://www.nj.gov/njsp/spoff/megans_law.html
 - ii. Sex Offender Registry: http://www.njsp.org/info/reg_sexoffend.html
 - iii. Child Abuse Reporting Requirements: <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/reporting/links/>
 - iv. Sexual Assault Statute Summary N.J.S.A. 2C:14 et al: <http://www.njcasa.org/sexual-violence-nj/new-jersey-law>
- (c) Background Check.
 - i. For residents of New Jersey, “background check means one of the following background checks available in the state of New Jersey:
http://www.state.nj.us/njsp/about/serv_chrc.html#background.
 - ii. For residents of Pennsylvania, “background check” means a background check available in the State of Pennsylvania:
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=4451&PageID=458621&mode=2>.
 - iii. UUCWC require an initial background check in a volunteer’s state of residence for all volunteers who are Regularly Scheduled to work with children.
 - iv. All staff who are Regularly Scheduled to work with children are required to have a full state fingerprint check.
 - v. See below for more information on requirements for background checks.



- (d) Regularly Scheduled means scheduled to work or volunteer with children or youth more than 5 times per year.
- (e) Active Participant means a person who regularly attends Sunday services and who volunteers in ways that enhance congregational life and the congregation's social justice outreach.
- (f) Transfer (from another UU congregation) means someone who has been a member and Active Participant in another UU congregation within the prior six months for a period of at least one year.

II. Mandatory Safety Procedures for Children and Youth

A. Background checks and safety policies

1. A person who is Regularly Scheduled to work or volunteer with children and youth, including volunteers and employees, adults and youth, must complete and sign a Screening Form (Appendix A) (including social security number, driver's license number, two personal references) and a Code of Ethics Form (Appendix B).
2. Applicants who answer "yes" to any of the child abuse or sexual misconduct questions (Questions B, C & D) on the Screening Form are subject to further review by the SCT. This may result in the development of a limited contact agreement for this individual.
3. Applicants who answer "yes" to Question A on the Screening Form must be invited to talk with the DLRE and Minister before eligibility is determined.
4. All persons Regularly Scheduled to work or volunteer with children and youth must agree to submit to an initial criminal background check. Subsequent random checks will be conducted annually.
 - (a) Information obtained through the screening, reference check and background check must be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. Only members of the SCT are to have access to these forms, which will be kept in paper format in a dedicated, locked filing cabinet in the office of the DLRE. Only the DLRE and the Chair of the SCT will have keys to this cabinet. These forms must be kept for four years or as long as the individual is in regular contact with children at UUCWC.
 - (b) A background check that reveals a criminal, child abuse, or sexually-related offense will serve to initiate a discussion with the SCT and may result in the restriction or termination of employment or exclusion of the person in question from work with children and youth or other individuals. See **Appendix F** for Procedures for responding to offenses revealed by background checks and **Appendix G** for Procedures on involvement of convicted sex offenders in our congregation.
 - (c) The SCT must review the process of maintaining these sensitive files annually to ensure the highest standards of confidentiality are being maintained.

B. Supervision of Children and Youth

1. An adult may not teach religious education classes or lead other children or youth activities unless that individual has been active in the congregation for at least six months or that



individual has been an Active Participant in another Unitarian Universalist congregation for at least one year. A volunteer who Transfers from another UU congregation may teach without having been active at UUCWC for six months provided the volunteer has a letter of introduction from the former Minister or DLRE.

2. Staff or volunteers are required to be at least five years older than the age group with whom they are to work.
3. There must be at least two adults present in all youth activities regardless of how many children are present on a given day. One of the two must have a completed and cleared background check.
4. Children under age nine may not be left unsupervised at any time. Parents must supervise their children when they are not in a class or in another supervised RE or Music program event. Parents (not teachers or volunteers) are responsible for their children before the service begins and after the service and the RE program ends.
5. Children in the nursery and in the first floor RE classes must be picked up from their classrooms by a parent or guardian.
6. Parents and guardians are welcome to attend their child's religious education class at any time.
7. PreK-1st grade – All children under the age of seven must have a "bathroom buddy" (another child) when using the rest room and must be accompanied by an adult. Nonfamily adults cannot escort a child under the age of seven alone to the rest room.
8. During church services or RE classes on Sunday mornings, children must have a parent or guardian on the premises unless prior arrangements have been made with the DLRE or other designated religious education leader and a signed permission slip is submitted naming an adult who is *in loco parentis* for the morning.
9. The DLRE or the "DLRE of the Day" (an assigned member of the RE Committee) must be present every Sunday. The DLRE or DLRE of the Day must do a walk through of all RE spaces several times during each session to check that two teachers are in each RE class.
10. This section is to be made into a handout that is given to all parents.

C. Sleepover Guidelines

1. Adults who are volunteers supervising youth or child sleepovers must be members or active friends of this congregation for at least six months.
2. There must be a minimum of two adults present at youth or child sleepovers. Both adults must have completed and cleared the Background Check. There must also be a minimum ratio of one adult to five children or one adult to ten youth.
3. During sleepovers at the church, all outside doors must be locked against entry once the last child/youth has arrived and remain locked until parents arrive for pick-up in the morning.
4. A parent/guardian permission form and Medical Information Form (Appendix D) is required for each child/youth at the sleepover.
5. The adult supervisors must maintain a written list of attendees and emergency contact information for each.



6. During sleeping hours, a supervising adult must make periodic rounds of the entire facility to check for unsafe conditions or inappropriate behavior. In the event of unsafe conditions or inappropriate behavior, the activity in question will first be stopped, and then the other adult leaders will be alerted to the situation.
7. No youth or child is permitted to sleep in a room or area alone or with only one other person. Participants are permitted to sleep only in designated areas.
8. A lock-in or sleepover means that the children/youth are to remain on the premises during all times from the scheduled start to the scheduled end of the event. Exceptions may be made in medical or personal situations with parents/guardians permission or upon need for emergency medical services. A participant who needs to leave before the scheduled end of the event must have the need documented, either on the permission slip in advance or if the need arises during the sleepover, by a method deemed sufficient by leaders. Release of the participant is permitted only to a parent, guardian, responsible person identified in writing by a parent or guardian, or to emergency medical services personnel.
9. The parent or guardian of a youth or child who will be dropped off after the start of the event must notify the adult advisors or other leaders before the event begins so that the participant can be let into the building. A late-arriving participant must submit a permission form and medical registration to a supervising adult upon arrival.
10. No adult is permitted to be alone with a youth or child at anytime unless the adult is the youth or child's parent or guardian.
11. A participant who is a guest of a child or youth in the RE program must be approved by the DLRE in advance and the guest's parents/guardians must submit necessary forms prior to the event.

D. Field Trip Guidelines and Transportation

1. A signed permission slip (Appendix C) is required for each child/youth being driven, transported by train or plane, or walked to an off-site activity.
2. A minimum of two adults, at least one of whom has a BC, must chaperone a group at an off-site location. (How many adults need BC's?)
3. Drivers designated by the church for UUCWC sponsored events must be members of UUCWC and at least 21 years old with 3 years driving experience.
4. Each driver must show proof of license, registration, and insurance coverage upon request.
5. Each person in the car will have seatbelts and age appropriate seating arranged per airbag safety rules.
6. No driver may consume alcohol or use any form of drug which can affect physical or mental performance before or during the carrying out of his/her duty as driver.
7. One unrelated adult shall never transport one minor. (Two or more unrelated adults may transport one minor, and one adult may transport two or more minors.)
8. The driver must have a signed Permission Slip (Appendix C) for each minor passenger. These completed forms must accompany the minors while they are in the vehicle, and must be available to the chaperones for the duration of the trip.



E. Electronic Communications

Electronic communications among RE Teachers, Advisors, Staff, RE families, and children and youth are encouraged subject to the following restrictions:

1. Electronic Communication between RE Teachers, Youth Advisors, UUCWC staff, and RE families, children and youth are to be used to communicate only facts and information relevant to Religious Education.
2. An electronic communication sent to a child or youth by a UUCWC volunteer or staff member must also be sent simultaneously to the child's or youth's parent/guardian.
3. The use of individual text messaging and Instant Messaging as a means of communicating with elementary and middle school students is prohibited because parents cannot be copied on these types of communications. Group text messages that include all participating children and youth along with other adult supervisors are allowed but should only be used when absolutely necessary.
4. RE Teachers and Staff are not permitted to communicate with elementary or middle school children and youth via social networking sites such as Facebook, even if the child or youth initiates contact.
5. If necessary, Youth Group Leaders and RE Staff members may communicate with high school youth using social networking sites such as Facebook, but we strongly request that adults and high school youth follow these guidelines:
 - (a) If a high school youth invites an adult teacher/advisor/UUCWC staff member to be a "friend" on social media sites such as Facebook, the adult may accept. A teacher/advisor/UUCWC staff member is not permitted to invite a youth to become "friends" on social networking sites such as Facebook.
 - (b) The content of communications between High School Youth and teachers/advisors/RE Staff must be appropriate and consistent with the spirit and letter of this Safe Congregation Policy.
 - (c) Communication between high school youth and teachers/advisors / RE Staff on social media sites should take place on public spaces such as the "wall" on Facebook
 - (d) If a posting on a youth's social networking site raises concerns, or a youth seems to be in any danger, Youth Advisors and Teachers should contact the DLRE or the Minister immediately.

F. Concerns about Staff or Volunteers

1. Circumstances or events may indicate that an adult staff member or volunteer is no longer able to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults in a safe and reliable way. This may occur if:
 - (a) The person repeatedly fails to follow the guidelines outlined in the preceding sections;
 - (b) New information about the person is returned on a renewal background check;
 - (c) The person's application disclosures are found to be inaccurate;
 - (d) The person's conduct appears inappropriate;



- (e) The person is involved in any other circumstance or event that gives rise to significant concern on the part of a child, youth, parent or guardian, other congregant, staff, or Minister.
2. Anyone who has a concern about an adult who works with children, youth, or vulnerable adults should report the concern to a member of the SCT, using if convenient the confidential Notice of Concern (Appendix E2).
3. A member of the congregation who is **witness** to behavior that violates this policy and puts a child, youth, or vulnerable adult at risk must report their concern to a member of the SCT or the Board President, using the Notice of Concern Report Form (Appendix E2).
4. A church official required by law to report a concern to appropriate state or local authorities must do so, if possible consulting with the Minister and DLRE before making the report.
5. If the SCT (or the DLRE in consultation with the Minister) deems it appropriate to suspend or remove a volunteer from a position or to restrict in any way the volunteer's role with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, the SCT or DLRE may suspend the volunteer pending investigation; the volunteer may be removed only by decision of the SCT. Before removal, the volunteer must be given an opportunity:
 - (a) To know the complaints/allegations against him or her;
 - (b) To know the evidence supporting such complaints/allegations;
 - (c) To have the right to reply to such complaints/allegations.
6. If the suspended or removed volunteer is a minor, all such communications will be made in the presence of the child's parent or guardian.
7. The SCT has the responsibility and authority, after hearing from the suspended volunteer and gathering other relevant information, to decide whether to remove the volunteer from the position or to restrict the volunteer's role with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
8. The same process applies to removal of a staff member from a role involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

G. Accident or Injury Involving RE Participants

1. A first aid kit must be kept in each RE classroom and in the nursery.
2. In case of serious injury, an adult supervisor must call 911 immediately for emergency assistance.
3. In case of a minor injury, an adult supervisor or other qualified person must provide appropriate first aid, the injured participant's parent/guardian notified, and an incident report completed and submitted to the DLRE.
4. If a participant is injured, an adult supervisor must notify the participant's parent or guardian as soon as possible and must submit an Incident Report (Appendix E) to the DLRE
5. The DLRE must retain an Incident Report for four years following the incident.

H. RE Fire and Emergency Evacuation Process



1. In the event of fire or other emergency evacuation, infants and toddlers in the nursery will be picked up by their parents as they come out of the sanctuary and taken to the front lawn by the church sign.
2. In the event of an emergency evacuation, all children in RE Classes will be escorted out of the building by their teachers following posted evacuation routes to the front lawn by the church sign. Parents will meet their children at the sign.
3. A fire drill for religious education classes will be conducted annually.

III. Mandatory Procedures for the Safety of Adults

[To come....]

IV. TRAINING ON SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Protecting the physical, sexual, and emotional well-being of all who come to UUCWC requires the active involvement of all members/friends/staff of UUCWC. A truly safe congregation includes active bystanders who are educated about prevention and about intervention in instances of power-based personal violence (including child abuse, dating abuse, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and sexual abuse, harassment, or exploitation).
2. Training and education for staff, volunteers, and members is required
 - (a) Regularly Scheduled volunteers/staff are required to have comprehensive training on issues of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and the Safe Congregation policy before beginning work with children. The DLRE is required to arrange this training as needed. The training may include participation in online or face-to-face training.
 - (b) Regularly Scheduled volunteers are required to have an annual refresher training on the Safe Congregation policy and procedures. The refresher training may be conducted by the DLRE or a trained delegate.
 - (c) The SCT must work collaboratively with Adult RE to provide at least annual training opportunities for UUCWC members on their role in the prevention of child abuse, sexual abuse, harassment/intimidation/bullying, cybercrimes and other related issues affecting children and adults. The SCT must work collaboratively with the Worship Associates and Minister to integrate prevention messaging into services from time to time.



**APPENDIX to the PROCEDURE
under the
SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY**

- A: Screening Form
- B: Code of Ethics
- C: Permission Slip for Religious Education Field Trip
- D: Medical Information Form
- E1: Incident Report Form – Religious Education
- E2: Confidential Notice of Concern
- F: Guidelines for Response to Background Checks
- G: Limited Access Agreements
- H: Guidelines for Appropriate Affection



Appendix A
Screening Form for Volunteers and Staff Working with Children and Youth

Thank you for your interest in working with the children and youth of our congregation. Our congregation takes seriously our responsibility of assuring the safety of children and youth.

Please fill out this form and give it to the Director of Lifespan Religious Education (“DLRE”). This information will be kept under lock and key and access to this information will be restricted to members of the Safe Congregation Committee. These forms will be kept for four years or as long as the individual is in regular contact with children at UUCWC.

Thank you for your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of the children and youth in our congregation.

NAME: First _____ Middle _____ Last _____

Have you ever used a different name? _____ No _____ Yes

If yes, please list with dates:

Social Security Number: _____

Driver’s License Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

How long have you been attending this congregation? _____

HOME ADDRESS:

Street

Town, State, Zip

Number of years at current address: _____

If you have not lived at this address for at least 5 years, please list any previous addresses with dates.

Home Phone: _____



Work Phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Place of Work: _____

Number of years at current employment _____

May we call your current employer for a character reference? ____ yes ____ no

If not, please tell us why.

A. Is there anything that would show up in a criminal background check that we should be aware of? Please explain.

B. Have you ever been accused of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, and sexual exploitation of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor?

If yes, please provide details:

C. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by any employer for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse?

If yes, please provide details:

D. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being trusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth?

If yes, please provide details:



Congregation History and Prior Work with Children and Youth

List UU congregations you have attended during the past five years.

Name of Congregation _____

City, State _____

When did you attend? _____

Please list all previous work involving children and youth (list name, type of work performed, and supervisor).

Please list two references who are not relatives who are familiar with your work and character as it pertains to your experience with children and youth. If possible, provide references that have known you for at least 3 years.

1) Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Relationship to You: _____

2) Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Relationship to You: _____

I authorize the congregation to contact references and other congregations/institutions to obtain information about my background regarding my character and fitness for work with children and youth as well as to conduct a criminal background check. I authorize references to provide such information about me. I hereby release and hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless this congregation, its trustees, employees and volunteers.

Further, I understand that a member of the staff may check the sex offender registry, the Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) and/or contact the local police for more information about my background.

This information will be available only to those responsible for screening staff or volunteers or participating in a response team, or as required by law.

I attest that the above information is true and correct.



Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B
Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth
Working with Children and Youth

Based on the Code of Ethics by the UUA for People Working with Children and Youth
UUCWC is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our congregation, placing a special emphasis on meeting the unique needs of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

UUCWC’s Safe Congregation Policy is intended to help create and support this safe and nurturing environment. A Safe Congregation provides an environment in which we may each deepen our acceptance and understanding of one another, and in which personal transformation and spiritual growth are encouraged and supported in an atmosphere of civility, mutual respect, trust and kindness.

Our commitment to creating a Safe Congregation is grounded firmly in our seven principles, and especially in our abiding belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. We affirm the right of each person who participates in our congregation to seek and find spiritual, emotional and physical safety and acceptance at UUCWC. This includes safety from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Adults and older youth who are in leadership in our congregation play a key role in creating a safe congregation at UUCWC. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect that in all ways reflects our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people.

By signing this code of ethics, I, _____, agree that I will strive to support the children, youth and vulnerable adults with whom I work by treating them with respect, kindness and acceptance. Because all those involved suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care, I will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth in the community. Neither shall I sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

I have received information about, and agree to abide by, the UUCWC Safe Congregation Policy. By signing this, I am agreeing to conduct myself in accordance with this code. I understand that appropriate action will be taken if this code is violated.

Date _____ Signed _____



Affirmation Concerning Criminal Activity

I affirm that I have never been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty to any sexual crime. I also have not pled guilty to a lesser charge after having been charged with a sexual crime. I have never engaged in any form of child abuse, including sexual abuse. I have never been determined to have engaged in any sexual offenses in any civil, administrative, or ecclesiastical forum or other forum.

If there are any facts or circumstances in my background that call into question my being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children, youth, or vulnerable adults, I have met to review this information confidentially with the Minister and the Religious Educator.

Further, I agree to notify the Minister and the Director of Religious Education immediately should I be accused of sexual abuse, sexual offenses, sexual harassment, or other sexual improprieties in the time that I am working with children and youth in this congregation.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____



Appendix C Permission Slip for Religious Education Field Trip

Class or Group:

Destination:

Date:

Activity:

Purpose:

Departure Time:

From:

Return Time

To:

Type of Transport:

Primary Adult Contact:

.....
(Tear along dotted line and return lower section)

_____ has my permission to participate in
(Print child's name)

Event: _____ on Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Printed Name _____ Date _____

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

In consideration of Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing (UUCWC) organizing certain activities and events and allowing my child to participate in such activities and events, neither my child nor I (nor his/her other parent(s) or guardian(s) or our respective heirs, successors, executors, administrators, or assigns) will hold UUCWC or its agents responsible nor institute any suit for any damage, loss or injury that may be sustained as a result of my child's participation in the activity identified on this page. I give my permission for emergency medical treatment of my child.

(Print Child Name)

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Printed Name _____ Date _____

Where can we reach you or another responsible person in case of emergency during this event?

Name _____ Phone 1 _____ Phone 2 _____

For prompt emergency medical care of your child:

DOCTOR'S NAME _____ Phone _____

INSURANCE Policy numbers _____

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing



APPENDIX to PROCEDURE under the SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY

SCT

MEDICATION(S) /ALLERGIES/CONDITIONS (use reverse if needed):



**Appendix D
Medical Information Form**

Name of Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Name of Dentist/Orthodontist _____

Phone: _____

Do you carry medical/hospital Insurance? YES NO

Name of parent/person with insurance policy:

Health Insurance Agency Name _____

Policy # _____ Group Number _____

Medications being currently taken: _____

Allergies/Medical Conditions: _____

Date of Last Tetanus Shot: _____

Is there anything else a treating physician would need to know about your child?

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____



**Appendix E1 – Religious Education
UUCWC Incident Report**

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

a. Who was involved? _____

b. What happened? _____

c. Who witnessed the incident? _____

d. When was it brought to your attention? _____

e. Were there any visible injuries?

f. Who treated the injuries? _____

g. Were the parents/guardians notified? _____

Teacher Signature

Parent Signature

DLRE Signature



Appendix E2
CONFIDENTIAL NOTICE OF CONCERN

Individual(s) of Concern:

Date of occurrence:

Time of occurrence:

Type of Concern:

Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth

Policy violation with a child or youth

Possible risk of abuse

Other concern, please describe:

Describe the situation: What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present and who was notified?

If reported to the State, what was their recommendation about investigating? Attach additional sheets if needed.

Has this situation ever occurred previously? Attach additional sheets if needed.

What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called? Attach additional sheets if needed.

What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring?

Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation? Attach additional sheets if needed.

Submitted by (please print):

Telephone number:

Location and address:

Signature:

Date:

Once this report is completed, please submit it immediately to the Minister, DRE, a member of the Safe Congregation Team, or the Board President.

Reviewed by:

Date:

Appendix F

Background Checks: Guidelines for Response

Each adult who participates in our UUCWC community has worth and dignity. Thus, each instance where a past conviction is revealed by a Background Check (“BC”) will be carefully considered by the DLRE and Minister, or Safe Congregation Committee (“SCT”). For each instance that is considered, members of The SCT will sign a confidentiality agreement related to the particular incident. These records will be kept in a dedicated, locked filing cabinet in the office of the DLRE.

The SCT will strive to follow the following guidelines with compassion, care and confidentiality for all concerned:

- Any applicant whose CBC report indicates “no record” shall be considered eligible for further consideration for the staff or volunteer position for which they have applied.
- Any applicant whose CBC report indicates a record of sex offenses or crimes against children will be denied further consideration, and indefinitely restricted from staff or volunteer positions working with children and youth at UUCWC. Reports may be retained in a permanent, confidential personnel file.
- Applicants who answer “yes” to any of the criminal record questions on the Screening Form must talk with the DLRE and minister before eligibility is determined. The DLRE and Minister shall present the facts and circumstances of the applicant’s admission to the SCT . When appropriate, the identity of the individual will be protected by the DLRE and Minister.
- Any CBC report that indicates a criminal record not previously reported on the screening form will be subject to further review by the SCT.

Confidentiality of Criminal Records and Implications for Membership

- Authorization forms for background checks will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the SCT will have access to these forms, which will be kept in paper format in a dedicated, locked filing cabinet in the office of the DLRE. These forms will be kept for four years or as long as the individual is in regular contact with children at UUCWC.
- Staff applications are subject to personnel policies as established by the Board of Trustees.
- Applications and BC records for volunteer or staff positions, regardless of the subsequent employment status of the applicant, shall not be used to assess or evaluate an individual’s membership in the congregation, whether the membership is new or continuing, except as outlined in the following section.
- Any applicant whose BC report indicates a record of sex offenses or crimes against children may be subject to a limited access agreement at the discretion of the SCT, in accordance with UUCWC’s relevant policy (See Appendix G) and subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. The process of determining the appropriateness of limited access restrictions will remain confidential, although the imposition of such an agreement is subject to required notifications as outlined in UUCWC’s Policy (See Appendix G).

Appendix G

The UUCWC Safety Policy of Limited Access

It is the intention of this religious community to create an environment that encourages spiritual growth through the promotion of a safe environment in which its members can explore, experience and express what in life that they find meaningful.

As Unitarian Universalists, we strive to value the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." Openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles. However, when any person's physical, sexual, emotional well-being, or freedom to safely express their beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly. Thus, we are compelled to create a safe and nurturing environment that protects both children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth while they are a part of our community.

We offer this policy and Limited Access Agreement as a means of meeting these objectives: (1) protecting the physical, emotional and spiritual growth of children and youth and (2) meeting the ministry needs of individuals.

Discovery of Need for Limited Access Agreement

There are basically three ways in which it may become known within UUCWC that a person has a "prior safety offense" (see list below). In general, when it becomes known, the Minister (or designated staff) and the Safe Congregation Team will meet to determine if it is safe for this person to attend UUCWC and then will decide on a Limited Access agreement for the individual if appropriate. The committee will additionally consult with outside authorities as appropriate.

1. *Self-Disclosure.* A person may initiate the sharing of information that they have committed such an offense, or are in deferred adjudication, or have been accused, to the minister and/or a member of UUCWC, or the Safe Congregation Team. When this becomes known to the Minister (or designated staff) or the SCT through such self-disclosure a Limited Access Agreement shall be agreed upon in order to ensure everyone's safety and security. The committee may consult with outside authorities as well as treatment providers.
2. *Background Check.* An individual may be 'found out' through a reference and/or background check requirement for anyone having regular contact/interaction with children and youth, through information that is in the public domain, or by recognition by another member of the church community. The Minister, or designated staff, and the SCT will meet with the person and either enter a Limited Access Agreement or request that the person not participate in UUCWC or be on its property.
3. *Accusation.* A person may be accused of having committed a listed offense either within the UUCWC or in the community at large. In such cases the Minister, or designated staff, along with the SCT will meet with the person and secure a Limited Access Agreement (see sample with introduction below) to be in effect while an investigation is completed regarding the accusation(s). If a person accused of a listed offense has abided respectfully by the Limited Access Agreement, and is

later proven not guilty, the Limited Access Agreement may be voided at the discretion of the Safe Congregation Team.

List of Safety Offenses (Disqualifying Offenses)

If a person knows of or suspects a disqualifying offense, that person should inform the Minister.

In accordance with NJ Law NJSA I5A (New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Law), the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing declares the following as disqualifying offenses:

- Sexual assault
- Murder
- Aggravated assault
- Aggravated criminal sexual contact
- Aiding suicide of a child or youth
- Stalking
- Kidnapping
- Criminal restraint of a child or youth
- False imprisonment of a child or youth
- Luring or enticing a child or youth by various means
- Promotion of prostitution of a child or youth
- Sexual contact with a child
- Statutory rape
- Endangering the welfare of a child or youth
- Child neglect, cruelty, abandonment, or endangerment
- Contributing to the delinquency of a child or youth
- Indecent exposure
- Involvement in pornography of minors
- Other offenses may be added to the screening criteria, and thus result in disqualification, at the discretion of Safe Congregation Team if they feel that an offense not listed above could compromise the safety of children or youth.

If individuals who have committed disqualifying offenses as named above do not agree to the Limited Access Agreement or fail to comply with the agreement, they will no longer be permitted to attend any events or visit the property of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing.

A sample Limited Access Agreement follows.

UUCWC Limited Access Agreement

The Safe Congregation Team has the authority to establish a Limited Access Agreement similar to the following. The Safe Congregation Team may add or change items based on the circumstances of an individual's crime(s)/allegations and activities in which the individual seeks to participate.

Sample Introductions

“Designated accompanying adults” are individuals approved by the Safe Congregation Team who are familiar with this Covenant and the reasons for it. They will, respectfully and unobtrusively, accompany you while you are on church property.

Introductory paragraph in cases of allegation:

A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the SCT. We are responsible for maintaining the safety and security of everyone in this community. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children and youth in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement. Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confession of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known to the Minister, the DLRE and the members of SCT and may be made known to law enforcement and others as legally required. It will be kept in a locked file in the office.

Introductory paragraph in cases of prior history of safety offense:

UUCWC 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 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. We are responsible for the safety and security of everyone in this community. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and them 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 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

UUCWC Sample Limited Access Agreement

I agree to arrange for a designated adult to accompany me at any events at church where children or youth may be present. This includes Coffee Hour, the annual Church Picnic, and any other events determined by the Safe Congregation Team.

In the event I wish to attend a function or activity at the church, it is my responsibility to arrange to be accompanied by a designated accompanying adult. If none of the currently designated individuals are available, I may ask the Senior Minister to designate someone for purposes of attending the particular function or activity.

I agree never to be in the building or on church property without a designated accompanying adult during a time when the Senior Minister and/or the professional with responsibility for Religious Education have required a designated accompanying adult.

I will refrain from all contact (physical or verbal) with children and youth while on church property or at church sponsored events. If a child/youth approaches me within the church property or at a church related event, I will politely and immediately excuse myself from the situation.

I will not volunteer in any way in the Children/Youth Religious Education program.

I will avoid all spaces in the church where children are present, including but not limited to Religious Education classrooms, youth rooms and the nursery. Exceptions may be made for congregation wide events such as worship and coffee hour as long as a designated accompanying adult is present.

I will not volunteer to chaperone or work with children in the music program of the church.

I will not volunteer to chaperone any trip with children or youth.

I agree that I will not obtain, possess, or borrow keys to the church building.

The Church will attempt to keep this matter confidential to the extent possible, but, as part of this agreement, I agree that the Church may reveal my history and the existence of this Limited Access Agreement to any persons/positions as deemed necessary by the minister and SCT, and I have no expectation of privacy of this information.

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 church functions and church property and notification to law enforcement may be done as appropriate and legally required.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signature

Date

Witness

Date

Minister

Date

Director of Religious Education

Date

Board President

Date

AUTHORIZATION OF BACKGROUND CHECK

Applies to Current Volunteers as of [DATE]

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH AT WASHINGTON CROSSING

Name: _____

Other (last) Names Used: _____

Address _____

Please list any other residences from the last eight years (use back if needed): _____

Social Security Number _____

Gender (Optional) _____

Date of Birth: _____

Phone Number: _____

I hereby authorize the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing to conduct a criminal background check. I understand that this is standard procedure and is for the benefit and safety of the children in our care. I understand that information obtained because of this background check will be handled with respect and confidentiality as much as is possible.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX H

GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AFFECTION

UUCWC is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children's and youth ministries that protect our children and youth from abuse and our Church Personnel/Volunteers from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for children and youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate; otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows us all to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth. These Guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all staff/volunteers working around or with children or youth.

1. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth. **POSITIVE and APPROPRIATE** forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate (for example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

2. The following forms of affection are considered **INAPPROPRIATE** with children and youth in ministry settings because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.



APPENDIX to the PROCEDURE under the SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY SCT

- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing" or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear, whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth.