

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign
Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures
For Supervision of Children and Youth
Approved by the Board of Trustees - April 13th, 2010

1.0 Policy Statement

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign recognizes the reality of child abuse in our society, its impact on children and families, and the need for a responsible means of addressing this issue. By overcoming secrecy and by providing a framework for addressing problems and concerns, we reflect our commitment to provide protective care for all children, youth and volunteers who participate in church-sponsored activities.

Child abuse means the non-accidental injury, sexual abuse (touching and non-touching), exploitation, neglectful treatment or the maltreatment of a child (from birth to 18 years) by any person under circumstances that indicate that the child's health, welfare or safety are harmed.

In this document "child" shall mean anyone aged from infancy to 12 years, and "youth" shall mean anyone aged from 12 to under 18 years.

We will achieve these goals through:

- Screening all church staff and volunteers who work with children or youth.
- Supervising our children and youth and those who work with them.
- Providing a specific process by which allegations of abuse are reported and investigated.
- Treating all persons with dignity and respect.
- Requiring those at risk of incident or accusation to refrain from contact with children or youth.

These policies are directed at those working with our children or youth. However all members of Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign carry a responsibility to provide a safe and caring community in which our children and youth are respected, in which their self-worth is affirmed, and in which spiritual, social and intellectual growth are encouraged.

We are committed to the care of our children and youth, and to the principles of fairness, kindness and forgiveness that have long been part of our religious tradition. The director of religious education (DRE) will periodically make the congregation aware of these policies and procedures. Each person working with our children and youth will be screened in accordance with this policy, under the leadership of the DRE and minister, who may delegate tasks to responsible individuals. This policy was approved by the BOT on June 10th, 2008 and will be reviewed or revised as needed by the BOT or appropriate designee.

2.0 Selection and Screening of Staff and Volunteers

This policy applies to all committees, task forces and organizations that function under the umbrella of Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign. It also applies to other groups and events sponsored by and using the facilities of Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign. For example, when District Youth Conferences are held at Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign, all adult advisors must complete the screening process described below or be screened by their church or another organization satisfactory to the DRE or minister.

2.1 Particular Requirements

Existing Teachers, Volunteer Nursery Helpers and Employees

Existing teachers, volunteer nursery helpers and employees currently serving as of the date of the adoption of this policy or who have served within the prior two years shall sign the Code of Ethics form annually and have a criminal records check, which shall be updated every three years by the DRE or designee.

Persons New to Positions

Persons regularly scheduled to work or volunteer with children or youth and who are new to positions or who have not served within the two years prior to the adoption of this policy shall be screened and processed in accordance with this policy. This includes: future ministers, directors of religious education, paid staff, volunteer nursery workers, all religious education teachers (except substitutes), youth group advisors and Coming of Age mentors. The following shall be required:

- Primary Screening Form with proof of identity. This form is to be updated by the applicant every 3 years.
- Two oral references requested by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign prior to beginning work with children or youth. The DRE or designee shall personally speak with both of the references
- Applicant's authorization form for criminal records request.
- Criminal records check updated every 3 years.
- Code of Ethics Form (signed annually).
- YRUU advisers, RE teachers and paid nursery workers must attend regular training sessions facilitated by the DRE.
- DRE or designee shall interview paid child care workers, and retain notes of the interviews.

Volunteers Needed on Short Notice

The DRE may utilize adult or teen volunteers satisfactory to the DRE and meeting the requirements set out in this policy.

Under Age 18 Teachers

Volunteers under age 18 shall not supervise high school students. For RE teachers who are under age 18 the following is required:

- Primary Screening Form with proof of identity, signed by parent or guardian and applicant. This form is to be updated by the applicant every 3 years.
- Two oral references requested by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign prior to beginning work with children or youth. The DRE or designee shall personally speak with both of the references.
- Applicant's authorization form for criminal records request signed by parent or guardian and applicant.
- Criminal records check updated every 3 years.
- Code of Ethics Form (signed annually by parent or guardian and applicant).
- YRUU advisers, RE teachers and volunteers and paid nursery workers must attend regular training sessions facilitated by the DRE.
- DRE or designee shall interview paid child care workers, and retain notes of the interviews.

2.2 Implementation Specifics

- The DRE shall be responsible for overseeing completion of the appropriate paperwork, except where noted, and for checking references. The DRE supervisory committee shall follow up to ensure that the reference checks have been completed appropriately.
- The DRE shall verify the identity of anyone working with children or youth by photo identification.
- Anyone expressing interest in ongoing volunteer work with children or youth in the church first must have attended church services regularly for at least six months unless the minister and DRE determine otherwise after screening.
- Criminal records checks including the National Criminal Database, Illinois Sex Offender Database and Department of Children and Family Services' CANTS check shall be initiated and reviewed by the DRE. Results of the reference and database checks shall be maintained in writing and retained in locked files by the minister.
- Conviction of any of the following offenses shall preclude the individual from working with children or youth: (1) Any offenses involving illegal drugs (2) any sex offense, (3) any felony within the past 12 years, or (4) any offense involving violence against any person. The DRE and minister may make exceptions to the foregoing on a case-by-case basis by their unanimous agreement. The DRE may disapprove any person wishing to work with children or youth if there is substantial evidence the person committed any of the crimes listed above, even if there is no conviction.
- If it is determined by the minister and DRE in consultation with the chair of the Board of Trustees that a potential volunteer should have restricted access to children or youth, he/she shall be required to sign a limited access agreement, with such restrictions and limitations as shall be required by the minister, DRE and chair of the Board of Trustees, and that person shall not be allowed to have any further contact with children or youth. If the same is determined for a potential church staff person,

the person shall not be hired.

- The minister/DRE will keep indefinitely all information required to be gathered by this policy.
- We endeavor to have all necessary paperwork completed before beginning work at the church whether as a volunteer or paid employee. However, if after 30 days from the start of work paperwork and phone calls are not completed then work will be restricted, suspended, or terminated.

3.0 Training and Supervision

3.1 Training of Staff Members, RE Teachers, Youth Advisors and Child Care Workers

Staff members, RE teachers, youth advisors and child care workers shall receive a copy of this policy, and shall be trained by the DRE, minister or designee to understand the following:

- The definition of child abuse,
- Sexual and physical abuse symptoms,
- What constitutes inappropriate conduct,
- Church policies and practices that govern working with children or youth,
- That there are civil and criminal consequences of misconduct,
- Reporting procedures for observed or suspected misconduct, and
- The rationale behind screening procedures.

3.2 Children and Youth Supervision Requirements

Nursery

- At least two appropriately screened child care workers (at least one of whom is an adult) will be present at all times in the nursery, and at least two appropriately screened adults shall be present at all times in other classrooms when children or youth are present.
- On occasions when the regular adult is not available for service in the nursery, then another adult approved by the DRE may serve, upon completion of the secondary screening form, or two screened teens may serve.
- All children supervised in the nursery shall be signed in and out by the responsible adult in the nursery. The DRE shall develop a check-in check-out policy to ensure that the child is released only to the parent or guardian bringing the child to the nursery, or by a person authorized by that parent or guardian.

Other Children and Youth Supervision

The building will not be open to children or youth for any activity until two appropriately screened adults are present.

- No child under third grade will be dismissed from religious education class except to a parent, guardian or other appropriate supervisor.
- Church functions providing child care require at least two screened child care workers.
- On occasions when the regular adult is not available for service, then another adult approved by the DRE may serve, upon completion of the secondary screening form; or instead, two screened teens may serve.

Supervision Requirements for Field Trips, Youth Gatherings, Vehicle Rides and Sleepovers.

- Procedures for field trips, youth gatherings, vehicle rides, and sleepovers shall follow the CMWD Youth Con Planning Manual whenever appropriate. A copy of that manual is available in the Church office.
- Permission slip and medical release form is required for each child or youth.
- Proof of at least \$100,000 per person, \$300,000 per incident auto insurance for every driver shall be required.
- Every person transported in the vehicle must wear a seatbelt or be restrained in an appropriate car seat.
- The DRE shall develop written procedures for supervision for field trips, youth gatherings, vehicle rides and sleepovers.
- On occasions when the regular adult is not available for service, then another adult approved by the DRE may serve, upon completion of the secondary screening form.

4.0 Reporting and Responding Procedures.

4.1 Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse.

Anyone who suspects child abuse, including an employee, volunteer, member or attendee of the church should notify the minister, the chair of the Board of Trustees or the DRE as soon as possible. Of these three, whoever receives the information shall be responsible for reporting to the others. In the event that the charges involve a minister, the next point of contact shall be the board chair, who shall then notify and consult with the District Executive of the Central Midwest District or the UUA Department of Ministry.

Procedures for dealing with reports of abuse or neglect and a format for reporting suspected abuse are found in the document, "Form for Reporting Suspected Abuse," which also outlines duties and responsibilities of the person receiving the report, the DRE, minister and the board chair.

If the report involves a church employee or volunteer, then the minister, the board chair and the DRE shall additionally:

- Collect and review all pertinent facts regarding the incident or charges;

- Review application and reference forms kept on the person;
- Determine what, if any, actions need to be taken; and
- Carefully document all meetings, conversations, information, etc. regarding the matter, and keep all related information as confidential as the circumstances warrant.
- In the event that knowledge of the incident becomes public, the minister and the board chair shall designate a spokesperson for the church. The spokesperson shall use the text of a prepared statement to answer the news media and convey the incident to the congregation, taking care to safeguard the privacy of all parties involved.
- The minister, the board chair and the DRE shall carefully document the handling of the incident, and report the incident, as appropriate, immediately to the child's or youth's parents and inform the church's insurance company.
- The minister, the board chair and the DRE (or one of them) shall consult an attorney for advice as to what steps are necessary or prudent to protect the interests of the children and the church.
- The minister, the board chair and the DRE shall determine how to address the incident within the congregation.
- If the accused is the minister, DRE or board chair, that person shall be removed from the decision-making process for the review of the alleged abuse, and the remaining two shall select a third person as a replacement to conduct this process.

4.2 Actions by the Church regarding Employees, Volunteers, Congregants and Attendees.

If the minister, board chair and DRE unanimously conclude that allegations of child abuse or neglect are more likely true than not, then they shall implement one or more of the following actions:

- Require a limited access agreement;
- Determine who in the church and the larger community should be notified, and means of notification;
- Appropriately notify the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS); and/or
- Suspend or terminate volunteer duties or membership, or in the case of an employee recommending termination to the personnel committee. In case termination of membership is the decision of the minister, DRE and board chair, they shall report the decision to the Board of Trustees, and inform the individual of the right to appeal the decision to that body.
- Take any other action(s) which, in the opinion of the minister, DRE and board chair, would be in the interests of the church, the church community, or children or youth.

4.3 Procedures for Working with and Caring for a Person Against Whom Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Have Been Made.

Under this policy, the persons charged with the responsibility for determining, for church purposes, whether allegations of abuse or neglect are more likely true than not are the minister, the DRE and the board chair. Until they have made a decision, all allegations must be considered unproven.

- Throughout the review process, the accused shall be treated with dignity and support.
- If the accused is a paid staff person or a volunteer, that person shall be suspended immediately from all activities involving the supervision or care of children, youth or other vulnerable persons. This is true for an incident that allegedly occurred either within or outside the realm of the church.
- Regardless of where or under what circumstances any incident is alleged to have occurred, if the minister, DRE and board chair have placed restrictions upon an employee or volunteer, those restrictions shall remain in effect until all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the Board of Trustees.
- The minister, DRE and board chair may remove the person from service at their discretion, and for employees, that removal may be with or without pay.

4.4 Procedures for Working with and Caring for a Person Who Has Engaged in Abuse or Neglect.

Because we affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we do not believe any person should be automatically excluded from participation because of their actions. However, we have responsibility to insure the well-being of all of our attendees. The ability of some perpetrators to change their behavior is uncertain. If someone wishes to participate in this church who has been convicted or found “indicated” by DCFS of abuse or neglect, we will welcome that individual. However, the person's participation may be limited to ensure the safety of all.

If it is determined that any person should have restricted access to children, youth or other populations, he/she shall be required to sign a limited access agreement, and shall not be allowed to have access to children, youth or other populations except as consistent with that agreement. The minister, DRE and board chair shall determine if a limited access agreement is necessary, and the terms of that agreement.

5.0 Monitoring Policies and Procedures

The DRE shall provide a copy of this policy to the membership committee and the office administrator. The office administrator shall cause the summary of the policy to be placed in new member packets. The DRE shall have this policy posted on the church website and annually the DRE shall cause a notice and summary of this policy to be placed in the Uniter and a reminder of the policy to be placed in order of service.

The DRE shall have responsibility for implementing screening procedures, reference checks and initial training for all volunteers working with children and youth, and the personnel committee shall have those responsibilities for all employees. The Board shall see that these responsibilities are performed.

The DRE, minister and a personnel committee member shall confer at the request of any of these three persons (that is, the DRE, minister and personnel committee member) to discuss and recommend alterations to this policy, and shall present recommended changes to the Board of Trustees.

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FORMS

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign
New Member Packet Insert**

Statement of Intent to Protect Children and Youth from Abuse

In recent years the topic of child abuse has received much attention in the media. We would like to think that churches are immune from such harsh realities. However, they are not.

Children or youth can be abused in their homes, schools, recreation centers and churches. Certainly we can never guarantee full protection or absolute safety, as the world is not a perfect place. However, as a church we have a moral and legal obligation to reduce the risk of child abuse in our church.

It is also the case that persons who have engaged in abusive or criminal behavior in the past may desire to attend church. Within appropriate limits, such persons will be welcomed.

In 2007-08 a Safe Congregation Task Force developed and the Board of Trustees reviewed and adopted a policy for screening and training volunteers working with children and youth, reporting and handling alleged child abuse, and dealing with these issues of which our congregation becomes aware, whether inside or outside of the church. If you have questions about that policy, you may speak with either of us. The Safe Congregation Policies and Procedure for Supervision of Children and Youth can be viewed on the church web site or in the church office.

We are committed to making our church as safe as reasonably possible. We are committed to the care of our children and youth, and to the principles of fairness, kindness and forgiveness that have long been part of our religious tradition.

Rev. Axel Gehrmann
Director of Religious Education, Renée Papini Cogil

CONFIDENTIAL
Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign
Primary Screening Form for Working with Children or Youth

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision of minors. This form is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs.

Date _____

Name _____
Last First Middle

Present Address

City State Zip Code

Home Phone _____ When is the best time to reach you at home? _____

Work Phone _____ May the DRE phone you at work? _____ When? _____

How long have you lived at your present address? _____

If you have not lived in your current town for 5 years, please list the cities and states where you have lived for the last 5 years.

How long have you attended the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign _____

Are you a member here? _____

List names and addresses of all other churches you have attended regularly during the past 5 years.

List all previous church and non-church work whether paid or volunteer involving children or youth (name, address, contact person and phone number of each church or organization, type of work performed, and dates)

List 2 adult references whom you have known for at least 2 years and are not related to you

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

List a 3rd reference who is a family member.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Driver's license or state ID number _____

Have you ever been found "indicated" by the Department of Children and Family Services (or similar agency in any other state or country) as a person who has committed child abuse or neglect, OR have you ever been disciplined or re-assigned as an employee in respect to harassment of another individual, OR have you ever committed or been convicted of a crime involving violence or dishonesty (If yes to any of these, please provide details). _____

If you answered "yes" to the previous question, you will also be contacted by the DRE or by the minister concerning the circumstances of the incident.

All of the above information I have given is truthful and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references, churches, organizations and employers, whether or not listed in this application, to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth work. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign, I hereby release any person or organization providing a reference from any and all liability for damages arising out of information which any such person may provide, excepting only the communication of knowingly false information.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the "Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures for Supervision of Children and Youth" policy of Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign.

I have received a copy of the Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures. Yes No

Signature / Date

I give permission for my son/daughter to become a member of the volunteer staff and understand that I am legally and financially responsible for his/her actions and conduct.

_____/_____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

[Sample Letter to references. Produce on Church Letterhead]

Name
Address

Date

Dear,

_____ is being considered as a volunteer for our children or youth in our religious education program. Since we are a child-service program and are concerned with child safety, we like to know our volunteers. _____ provided us with your name as a reference. A member of our safety task force will be calling you in the next two weeks to ask you a few questions. For example, how long you have known _____, your relationship to this person, what you consider to be his/her strength with regard to working with children and youth, and to see if you have any concerns. Please know that all references are confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and look forward to speaking with you soon.
Sincerely,

Renée Papini Cogil
Director of Religious Education

Draft script for speaking with references:

Hello _____.

My name is _____. I'm a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign. _____ has applied to be a volunteer religious education teacher with our children and youth. I have the responsibility to contact individuals who know _____ to ask them a few questions. Have I reached you at a good time to ask you a few questions?

What is your relationship to _____?

How long have you known him/her? _____

What do you feel his/her strengths are in relating to children?

Do you have any concerns about _____ working with children? If yes, what are they?

If you were in charge of a program for children and youth, would you want _____ to work with children or youth in your program?

Do you know someone else who might want to speak with us about this candidate? (Ask for name and contact info.)

Thank you for your help and your time.

CONFIDENTIAL
Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign
Secondary Screening Form for Working with Children or Youth
(To be used when seeking volunteers on short notice)

Please answer each question. Your response will be kept fully confidential.

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The following policies reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities.

Persons who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse should not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth.

Volunteers working with children or youth **must** observe the “two persons” rule. This requires that volunteers are never alone with children or youth without a partner.

Volunteers should immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to their supervisor.

As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe all church policies regarding working with youth or children? (Note: a copy of the “Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures for Supervision of Children and Youth” is available for your review in the Church office.)

_____ Yes _____ No

Have you ever committed or been convicted of a crime involving violence or dishonesty involving an amount more than \$100.00 OR been found indicated by the Department of Children and Family Services (or similar agency in any other state or country) as a person who has committed child abuse or neglect, OR have you ever been disciplined or re-assigned as an employee in respect to harassment of another individual. If yes, please provide details).

_____ Yes _____ No

I have read the above policy and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

_____ Date

_____ Name (printed)

_____ Signature

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign
Code of Ethics for**

Working with Children and Youth

As leaders, religious education teachers, advisors, and others working with children and youth are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of children, youth and the community. It is especially important that teachers, advisors and other leaders provide the special nurturing, care and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect.

Teachers, advisors and other leaders should model positive and respectful behaviors. Teachers, advisors, and other leaders will not smoke or drink alcoholic beverages while responsible for RE children and youth, nor will they engage in illegal activities or partake of illegal substances.

Teachers, advisors, and other leaders are expected to maintain oversight and leadership of their group, encouraging active participation and promoting individual and group development. Teachers, advisors and other leaders should maintain confidentiality about personal issues shared by children and youth.

If a teacher, advisor, or other leader witnesses, or discovers that any children or youth have been engaging in unsafe or disrespectful behavior, then the leader will take immediate action as appropriate and necessary and, as soon as possible, inform the director of religious education.

One of the most important areas of growth is the development of self-worth and a healthy identity as a sexual being. Teachers, advisors, and other leaders will not engage in any kind of sexual behavior with children or youth. Teachers, advisors, and other leaders will not sexually harass children or youth nor engage in verbal, physical or emotional abuse.

Teachers, advisors, and other leaders shall be informed of this Code of Ethics and agree to it before assuming their roles. In cases of violation of this Code of Ethics, appropriate action will be taken by the director of religious education, minister and/or board chair.

I have read the above Code of Ethics and agree to abide by this Code while serving as a religious education teacher, advisor, or other leader at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign.

Signature _____

Date _____

Print name _____

AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK
Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS)

For Programs NOT Licensed by DCFS

NOTE: Do not use this form if you are an applicant for licensure or an employee/volunteer of a licensed child care facility. Please contact your licensing representative.

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Date of Birth: _____ Gender (circle): Male Female Race: _____

Current Address: _____
Street/Apt #
City State Zip Code

List all addresses at which you have resided in the past five years:

List maiden name and/or all other names by which you have been known: (last, first, middle)

I hereby authorize the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to conduct a search of the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking system (CANTS) to determine whether I have been a perpetrator of an indicated incident of child abuse and/or neglect or involved in a pending investigation. I further consent to the release of this information to the agency listed below.

Mail this request to:
Department of Children and Family Services
406 E. Monroe – Station # 30
Springfield, IL 62701

Signed _____ Date _____

Please type, use bold letters or label:

(Agency Name)
(Contact Person)
(Address)
(City/State/Zip)



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION RELEASE
AND AUTHORIZATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT**

I, _____, represent that I am the parent/guardian of _____. I grant permission for my son or daughter to participate in the following supervised activity:

This activity will take place at _____ from _____ AM/PM to _____ AM/PM on ____ / ____ /20 ____ . I also grant permission for my son or daughter to be transported to and from the location.

I agree to hereby release the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign from any and all liability which may arise from damages, loss or injuries, either to person or property, which my son or daughter or I may sustain while my son, daughter or I engage in the activity conducted including, but not limited to, any damages, loss or injuries that may be sustained through transportation to and from the activity, except that this release shall not apply to any damages, loss or injuries covered by liability insurance of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign. I further agree to assume responsibility for any liability which may arise from damage to property caused or contributed to by my son or daughter.

Should any injury or illness occur, I grant permission for my son or daughter to receive treatment from a health care provider to be selected by a supervisor of the activity, when in such supervisor's opinion the need for such treatment is immediate, and when efforts to contact me/us are unsuccessful. I also agree to pay and be responsible for all medical, hospital or other expenses that may be incurred as a result of such treatment.

Home Address _____

Home Phone _____ Emergency Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Employer _____

Family Physician _____ Phone _____

Health Insurance Provider and Record Number _____

Child's Allergies _____

Medication child is currently taking _____

I HAVE PROVIDED ALL NECESSARY MEDICATIONS FOR MY SON OR DAUGHTER, INCLUDING WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE PHYSICIAN REGARDING SUCH MEDICATION. MY SON OR DAUGHTER WILL HAVE THE MEDICATIONS WITH HIM OR HER, AND MY CHILD IS CAPABLE OF *SELF-ADMINISTERING* THE MEDICATION *OR* I HAVE PROVIDED INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF MEDICATION, WHICH THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HAS APPROVED FOR THIS ACTIVITY.

Signature _____

Date _____

Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign Form for Reporting Suspected Abuse

Child abuse means the non-accidental injury, sexual abuse (touching and non-touching), exploitation, neglectful treatment or the maltreatment of a child (from birth to 18 years) by any person under circumstances which indicate that the child's health, welfare or safety are harmed.

If any religious education (RE) teacher, other classroom volunteer, advisor, child care worker, or RE committee member or church employee (other than the minister or DRE) is in a situation where a child, youth or other person discloses information that causes suspicion of abuse, the recipient should do the following:

1. Listen carefully.
2. Provide an appropriate setting. If, for example, a child begins to reveal possible abuse during a RE program, have the assistant teacher or another appropriately screened leader take over your supervising responsibilities, and take the child out of the room but stay with him/her.
3. Be open to his/her story and affirm his or her courage; do not be surprised by silences or tears.
4. Be honest with the person telling the story. Don't make promises you can't keep, such as guaranteeing confidentiality in all circumstances. Offer support and hope.
5. Write notes on what is said. If it is not possible to take notes while the story is being told, write them immediately afterward, so you can record the person's story as accurately as possible. Include all details offered. (*Remember, however, that you are recording, not investigating.*) If you ask questions, they should be open-ended, for example, "And then what happened?" or "How did you feel?" Be sure to indicate in your notes your name, the victim's name and the time and date you received the story. Your notes will enable you to make an accurate report. You will need them if you are asked to testify later on.
6. Tell the person, if you have not already done so, that you won't be able to help him/her by yourself and will have to tell someone else.
7. If you feel the child or youth is in imminent danger, report *immediately* to the DRE, the minister or the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If you feel it is safe to allow the child or youth to go home with the person scheduled to pick him/her up, do so, but *do not mention the incident to the parent, guardian or other supervising person at this time.*
8. Whether or not you believe the child or youth is in immediate danger make your report as soon as possible to the DRE, minister or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
9. Whichever church leader receives this information is responsible for informing the others, and one or more of them should report the matter to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) by calling the child abuse hotline (800 25-ABUSE). In the event that the charges involve a minister, the church leader should contact the District Executive of the Central Midwest District or the UUA Department of Ministry.
10. The Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act states that *any person* who has reason to

suspect that a child or youth has been abused and/or neglected may make a report to DCFS. The law also provides that people who report alleged child abuse or neglect in good faith cannot be held liable for damages under criminal or civil law. In addition, their names are not given to the person they name as the abuser or to anyone else unless ordered by a hearing officer or judge. Members of the general public may make reports without giving their names.

11. The person who received the information in conjunction with one or more of the church leaders shall make the DCFS hotline call immediately. They should also consider calling the police -- especially in emergencies or when the child or youth has been injured.
12. Keep careful notes of the conversation with the DCFS caseworker, including the time and date of the call, and the name of the caseworker.
13. It is important not to disclose the contents of the report except as required by the courts, police or DCFS caseworkers, since careless recital of the report of abuse may, by rumor or otherwise, come to be known by the abuser, resulting in increased risk to the child or youth.

Your Name _____

Date and Time _____

Victim's Name _____

Story exactly as it is told to you:

[Sample form to be modified by minister, DRE and board chair as appropriate to the circumstances]

**Confidential
Limited Access Agreement**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign has reason for concern that your contact with children, youth, or other persons who may be vulnerable in our congregation potentially places both you and them at risk of incident or accusation. The Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign specifies that the following is required of you. Within these terms, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign welcomes your participation in worship services, committee meetings, adult discussion groups, and adult social events.

Unless in the presence of a church-approved chaperon you must:

1. Avoid all contact with children and youth on church property or at church-sponsored events:
2. Not enter the nursery or religious education classes (except adult religious education classes).
3. Not attend coffee hour or intergenerational events.
4. Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign must provide safety for a variety of groups that use the building during the week. To that end, you are not allowed in a church building unsupervised when activities involving children or youth are in session. You may not possess or borrow a key to any church room.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign will attempt to keep this matter as confidential as deemed prudent by the minister, DRE and board chair, while ensuring the church remains a safe place for our children and youth. Please contact the minister or the board chair should you have questions or are unsure of how to handle a particular situation.

Agreement

I have reviewed these terms, and I agree to abide by them. If I do not follow these terms, I will relinquish my participation and/or membership in this church.

Signature

Date

Board Chair

Date

**ANNUAL NOTICE FOR UNITER REGARDING
THE SAFE CONGREGATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOR SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

All members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign have responsibility to provide a safe and caring community in which our children and youth are respected, in which their self-worth is affirmed, and in which spiritual, social, and intellectual growth are encouraged.

We will achieve these goals in part through the implementation of the Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures (SCPP) for Supervision of Children and Youth. A complete copy of the SCPP is available on the church web site and the church office. Some important highlights are:

- Staff and volunteers working with children or youth will be screened and trained, and volunteers will have attended the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign regularly for at least six months.
- Two appropriately screened supervisors will be present at all times in the nursery, religious education classrooms and during any church-sponsored activity involving children or youth.
- The church building will not be open to children or youth for any activity until two screened supervisors are present.
- No child younger than third grade will be dismissed from religious education class without an appropriate parent, guardian or other supervisor.
- Other children will be dismissed without supervision to join their parent/guardian or other appropriate supervisor.
- All children in the nursery will need to be signed in and out.
- Church functions providing child care require at least two screened child care workers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of accident _____ Time of accident _____

Place(s) where accident occurred:

Name(s) of person(s) involved:

Brief description of accident:

Treatment for injuries was:

(Use the back of this form as needed, or attach any supporting materials when completing.)

Did you observe the described accident directly? Yes No

If not, who or what was your source of this information?

Did you notify parents? Yes No When? _____

Signature _____

Signed date- _____

(Please return this completed form with any supporting material to the Director of Religious Education.)