



Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa

# CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### Policies Preface

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa adopts the following policies, to be collectively known as Child and Youth Protection Policies, to promote the safety of children and youth as well as that of the staff and volunteers who serve them with respect to health, protection from abuse and harassment, and privacy. Prevention is our major goal. However, when an incident does occur our response will fall within the areas of truth and protection against further harm.

### Policies

#### Policy 1 – Program Administration

- A. The Program shall consist of the Child & Youth Protection Policies and Procedures and their implementation.
- B. There will be evaluations of the program and improvements will be made based upon these evaluations as judged appropriate.
- C. Incidents covered by this policy will be documented. Unless otherwise specified, information regarding incidents will be kept confidential and communications controlled in order to protect all the parties involved.

## Policy 2 – Staff and Volunteer Selection; Agreements and Training; Visitor Regulations

- A. Every prospective staff member and volunteer for activities involving contact with minors will be evaluated for their suitability and capability to work with our minors.
- B. Parents, staff and volunteers shall agree to adhere to the Program.
- C. The Policies and Procedures for children and youth protection will be available for staff, volunteer and parent reference.
- D. Appropriate training will be provided.
- E. Visitors will be governed by the relevant procedures

## Policy 3 – Safety & Health Protection

- A. Parents must register their children by completing applications for each minor, including information that can be used in an emergency and about any special needs or restrictions so that it can be kept available.
- B. There will be Procedures regarding arrival and release of children to and from RE classes or events.
- C. First aid kits and emergency evacuation maps will be available.
- D. Fire drills will be held at determined intervals.
- E. Facility inspections to find and correct safety and health hazards and to meet insurance and regulatory standards will be performed.

## Policy 4 – Travel Safety Protection

- A. Drivers will meet qualifications to transport minors and parents will be required to provide written approval for their minor to be transported and to attend the event.
- B. Information concerning each minor that can be used in an emergency and about any special needs or restrictions will be obtained and kept available.
- C. Need for additional special rules required for the trip will be determined.
- D. All minors will be trained on any applicable rules.

## Policy 5 – Physical, Emotional and Sexual Abuse Protection

- A. Behavioral policy and procedures will be consistent with Unitarian Universalist Principles and will serve to promote the safety of minors from abuse and harassment.
- B. There will be supervision of minors during religious education, trips, overnight and other church events.
- C. There will be Procedures governing publication of pictures and names of minors.

#### Policy 6 – Convicted Sex Offenders & Violent Criminals

- A. Convicted sex offenders and violent criminals (CSO/VC) will have their status made known and reviewed so as to determine what restrictions to set on the CSO/VC.

#### Policy 7 – High Risk Individual Protection

- A. Anyone who has reason to believe that someone is an actual or potential danger to minors will inform the UUCT Minister or a member of the Board so that an investigation can take place to determine if this seems to be the case.
- B. If such a determination is made, a decision will be made as to the status of that individual and any other actions that might seem appropriate.

#### Policy 8 – Incident Management and Report

- A. Immediate care will be given to minors who are affected by an accident or by a health or by an abuse incident, including seeking professional treatment if needed.
- B. A written incident report will be filed and the parents and such authorities as required or needed will be notified.
- C. Each incident will be evaluated by the DRE and such authorities as are appropriate.

#### Policy 9 – Ineligibility of Designated Individual

- A. If an individual herein designated to be responsible for a particular task is restricted in some manner from carrying it out due to some form of physical or other incapacitation, the person, if able, shall suggest a substitute and the highest ranking Board Officer available will ultimately make a decision regarding the substitute.
- B. If an individual herein designated to be responsible for a particular task is restricted in some manner from carrying it out due to a conflict of interest, the highest ranking Board officer available shall ensure that there is an appropriate transfer of responsibility.



**Child & Youth Protection**

**Policies**

**Board Approved**

**Procedures**

**Procedure 1 - Program Administration**

**A. Program Implementation**

1. The UUCT Director of Religious Education (DRE) shall assume primary responsibility for the implementation of the Program but can delegate responsibility to others while remaining in a supervisory role.
2. The UUCT Religious Education Committee shall resolve any conflicts that may arise between the DRE and others concerning the implementation of the Program.
3. If an acceptable resolution cannot be achieved for resolving conflict, then mediation shall be implemented by the Minister.
4. Parents shall be encouraged to take an active role in the implementation of the Program.
5. The UUCT Minister may assume overall lead responsibility for the Program when the DRE is unable to do so or is the subject of an incident investigation. If the UUCT Minister is unable to assume this responsibility or other Program responsibilities, then applicable church policies addressing succession or, in their absence, decision of the Board of Trustees shall govern. The same will apply to the Program responsibilities of the DRE.
6. A copy of the Program's Policies and Procedures shall be maintained in the church for reference by parents, staff members, volunteers, the RE Committee and others. The DRE will let each individual know the location of this copy.

**B. Program Assessment and Improvement**

1. The DRE shall provide advance notification to the RE Committee, the Minister and the Board of the date, objectives and manner of assessment. The DRE will provide a summary of the findings and recommendations for improvement arising from this annual assessment in an annual report to the UUCT Board of Trustees. Annual assessments will include review of the

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content and adherence to the Procedures of the Program, including applications, screening, agreements, maintenance of up-to-date information (child, parent/guardian, staff and volunteer), provision of information (child, parent/guardian, staff and volunteer), as well as other issues.

2. The DRE shall periodically spot check compliance by children, staff, volunteers and parents with Program Policies and Procedures and report the results in the appropriate monthly report to the Board.
3. Parents, staff and volunteers shall assist one another by recognizing situations where the Program may not be properly implemented and provide feedback to the DRE and/or RE Committee in order to help address specific concerns or potential improvements. Recommendations for changes in Policies and Procedures should be made as judged appropriate.
4. If concerns about implementation of changes to the Program cannot be mutually resolved by the above, a mediation process shall be followed. Mediation will be led by the Minister or, if judged inappropriate, by someone appointed by the Board.

**C. Program Development and Approval**

1. Revisions to these Policies and Procedures will be those developed by or presented to the DRE and Religion Education Committee (REC).
2. Revisions to the Policies and Procedures will be submitted for possible revision and for approval to the UUCT Board of Trustees.
3. Parents shall sign an agreement to abide by the Policies and Procedures developed for the Program and to take appropriate actions to ensure compliance by their minors. A summary of the Program's Policies and Procedures shall be made available to each family for self-study and each family will be told where the entire document can be made available.

**D. Documentation, Confidentiality, and Communication**

1. Documents related to incidents identified by the DRE or substitute shall be maintained in locked file cabinets for a period of at least 3 years. Access to the documents shall be on a need-to-know basis as determined by the DRE and/or UUCT Minister with the exception that the Board by majority vote can designate that someone have access to this information and can ask for a report back to the Board.
2. The details of a specific accusation or complaint shall be treated in complete confidence with only a need-to-know basis for their release. The DRE and /or UUCT Minister shall determine the timing and extent of disclosure of

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information unless directed otherwise by law enforcement or other government agencies with the exception that the Board by majority vote can designate someone to have access to this information and can ask for a report back to the Board.

3. Communication with the public, (e.g., the media), on specific incidents shall be managed by the UUCT Minister or, if judged inappropriate, by a person selected by the Board. This individual may appoint a Communication Team to provide support or assume communication responsibility. The Board will approve the Team and be kept apprised of these efforts and may provide input if it wishes.

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Procedure 2 - Staff and Volunteer Selection, Agreements and Training; Visitor Regulations

- A. Every person being considered for a staff or volunteer position working with our children and youth will be evaluated to assess their suitability and capability to work with our minors by the DRE.
  - 1. Each individual will be asked to complete a disclosure statement (including names of spouses, relatives and partners in the congregation) and a summary of his/her qualifications. Individuals will also be asked to complete an application providing details to help determine their suitability and acceptability to work with our minors, including the names of references and a release to perform formal Background checks. The disclosure statement will include a request to list and provide a description of all criminal convictions (except for minor traffic violations and those convictions which by law they need not disclose) and any self-knowledge, accusations, or convictions of sexual abuse by the applicant or a statement denying these. This disclosure statement should be signed by the applicant.
  - 2. Additional background check may be performed on each individual to the extent and in the manner determined by the DRE except that all staff will necessarily undergo a formal Background check.
  - 3. Each volunteer shall have been known by the DRE, congregation, and/or minister for a minimum of 6 months before they may begin their work. Exceptions can be made by the DRE for volunteers provided that the individual shall always be accompanied by an unrelated/non-partner church member of at least 12 months who has been approved for that role by the DRE. All volunteers and staff shall be approved by the DRE.
- B. The DRE shall perform an evaluation of each approved individual, staff and volunteer, to determine how they may best work with children and youth, as well as to determine if limits need to be applied to their interaction with minors.
- C. A summary of the Program's Policies and Procedures shall be made available to each staff member and volunteer for self-study and they will be informed where a complete version can be reviewed.
- D. After receiving and reading copies of the documents, individuals approved to help with our minors will sign agreement to a code of ethics and sign an agreement stating that they understand and will comply with the Children and Youth Protection Policies and Procedures as well as any limitations applied to their interactions with minors.
- E. The DRE shall provide Program training to staff and volunteers as needed, based on their specific areas of responsibility.

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- F. Visitors wishing to observe church classes or events will also be exempted from these requirements provided that they are escorted by an approved staff member or volunteer.

Procedure 3 - Safety & Health Protection

- A. Parents shall complete an annual registration application for each minor, including emergency contacts (including family, guardians, and health care providers), insurance information, list of allergies, special diet instructions, prescribed medications, special needs and restrictions as well as other key information (e.g., emotional, developmental or psychological issues) including such other items as identified by the DRE. Registration shall occur on the initial day of visit to the Program of each child.
- B. Non-member parents will sign a statement that they support the principles of UUCT,
- C. Attendance shall be recorded for each RE event and the record kept on file for at least a year.
- D. Parents shall advise the DRE of any concerns associated with their child. Together, they will work out a plan to address these issues and will advise teachers and youth advisors so that they can be proactive in fulfilling the plan.
- E. Parents are responsible for the delivery of their minors to RE classes and events as well as for obtaining their minors at the conclusion of RE classes and events.
- F. First aid kits shall be available to staff /volunteers in convenient, defined locations. Maps showing the escape routes shall be posted in key locations so that each group knows what exit to take and where they are to assemble afterwards.
- G. Fire drills shall be held at least annually but no less often than required by law and conducted by the DRE.
- H. A yearly inspection of the church buildings and grounds shall be done by the Buildings and Grounds Chair to assure that the physical surroundings are in compliance with the Program and any applicable insurance company and regulatory requirements.
- I. Staff, volunteers, minors and their parents or guardians shall be reminded by the DRE to review established safety and health Procedures at the beginning of each school year and as needed throughout the year. Staff, volunteers and minors shall adhere to established safety and health rules, which shall be posted.



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Procedure 4 – Travel Safety Protection

- A. Drivers transporting minors shall: have a valid driver's license; have active automotive liability insurance; and be qualified to operate the vehicle that they will drive. The DRE may perform motor vehicle record searches as needed to assess the driver's ability to safely transport our minors. Drivers will be considered volunteers. They will be subject to the same qualifications and constraints and have filled out the same forms and signed the same agreements as other volunteers. Drivers shall be of age 25 years or more.
- B. For each trip, parents/guardians must give permission for the trip. No adult may transport an unrelated child alone, in a vehicle without specific parental permission.
- C. Drivers shall obey all traffic laws. All vehicles must contain one working seatbelt for each passenger.
- D. Drivers, staff members and volunteers accompanying minors shall follow Procedures and any special child and youth protection rules for managing minors when traveling and during trips, including keeping emergency contact information provided by the parents with the leaders responsible for the specific minors.
- E. The DRE shall determine special child and youth protection rules, if any, for each trip and advise all drivers, staff and volunteers who will accompany the minors.
- F. Drivers, staff members and volunteers accompanying minors shall not smoke or drink alcohol in the hours before or during the time they accompany minors. All adults and minors attending a trip must stay with the group unless given specific permission from an adult advisor and any sponsor of the event. No tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons or fireworks are allowed. Community breaking behaviors, such as sexual activity, destructive actions or attitudes are prohibited.

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Procedure 5 - Physical, Emotional and Sexual Abuse Protection

- A. Rules for dealing with minors include the following:
  - 1. Corporal punishment shall never be used to discipline a minor.
  - 2. Staff, volunteers and minors shall never emotionally harass any minor or adult, or threaten or imply physical, verbal or sexual action, even in jest.
- B. Anyone accused of abuse or anyone who repeatedly harasses a minor shall be treated as though they are a High Risk Individual until the DRE and the Minister have completed their evaluation, which may include investigations by law enforcement, other government agencies and/or insurance authorities.
- C. Publication of pictures of a minor as well as listing their names and/or other pertinent information, (e.g., phone numbers), shall only be permitted with the approval of the DRE and within the specific limitations for the minor requested by their parents.

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Procedure 6 - Convicted Sex Offenders & Violent Criminals

- A. Convicted Sex Offenders and/or Violent Criminals (CSO/VC) shall make their status known to the Minister (in all references to the Minister, if the Minister is not available the President or another member of the Board of Trustees will substitute until the Minister is available). Anyone in the congregation who knows of a CSO/VC who does not seem to have been identified as such to the congregation shall notify the UUCT Minister.
- B. Until it is judged by the Board that the resources necessary to provide sufficient safety and supervision that allow for a change in Policy and Procedure, the UUCT will deny all Convicted Sex Offenders or Violent Criminals access to UUCT property, functions and membership.
- C. In such cases, the Minister will inform the CSO/VC of the corresponding UUCT procedures regarding CSO/VC. In particular, the UUCT Minister will inform the CSO/VC that his/her identity and history as an CSO/VC will be shared with the congregation, that he/she is not to return and is denied access to all UUCT property, functions and membership. Notification of this decision to the CSO/VO shall include written notification from the Minister and Board President. The Minister will then inform the congregation by letter or other appropriate means.
- D. Anyone shall advise the UUCT Minister or, if the Minister is unavailable, an officer of the Board, if they have reason to believe that a CSO/VC has attempted to access minors on Church property or Church functions or otherwise disregarded the limits on CSO/VC's activity.
- E. Should a CSO/VC be judged to have failed to adhere to the limits set upon his/her association with UUCT, the Minister and the Board will consider whether other measures, including but not limited to police notification and applying for a court injunction, are to be adopted.

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Procedure 7 – High Risk Individuals

- A. The Minister and DRE, collectively, shall ensure that those who they believe could be a possible threat to our minors are not on the list of approved staff and volunteers maintained by the DRE and are not allowed access to minors. This should include children if they have been known to repeatedly harass a minor. Anyone who knows of a Known Offender in the congregation, or otherwise has reason to believe that an individual should not be in contact with minors, shall advise the UUCT Minister or, if the Minister is unavailable, an officer of the Board.
- B. Individuals who have had no criminal conviction but who have been identified as possible risks for contact with minors or those accused of behaving inappropriately with a minor will be temporarily assigned the category of High Risk Individual until a complete investigation, including a Background check, has been made. The Minister and DRE with a member of the church community appointed by the Board will constitute a Committee to discretely investigate the High Risk Individual to determine if there is a reason to assume that a risk exists. Procedures and responses for this investigation are described below in the section listed as Procedure 8 - Conduct of Investigations and Responses.
- C. While this decision is being made, the High Risk Individual shall be informed that he/she is not to have communication or any other contact with minors except for the minimum required by attendance at adult Church functions and then only when in the immediate presence of a group of unrelated adults. These restrictions are to remain until further review of their status has been completed and a decision about that status reached by the Committee. Notification of this decision to the High Risk Individual shall include written notification from the Minister and Board President. And, at least to the extent required by law, the appropriate authorities will be notified. See Procedure 8 - Conduct of Investigations and Responses.
- D. If the Committee decides that the individual is not a risk, the individual will be allowed to assume whatever role in the church he/she would like. Notification of this decision to the Individual shall include written notification from the Minister and Board President.
- E. If the Committee cannot reach a clear conclusion but remains with a concern judged as serious, the individual will be told that because of the resources necessary to provide adequate safety and supervision, the individual is not to return and that UUCT denies the person access to all UUCT property, functions and membership. Notification of this decision to the High Risk Individual shall include written notification from the Minister and Board President. And, at least to the extent required by law, the appropriate authorities will be notified.
- F. If it is concluded by the Committee that the individual is a significant risk, the High Risk Individual will be denied access to UUCT property, functions and membership.

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The High Risk Individual will be contacted by the UUCT Minister who will convey this decision and tell the High Risk Individual that because of the resources necessary to provide adequate safety and supervision, the individual is not to return and that UUCT denies the person access to all UUCT property, functions and membership. The individual will also be told that the UUCT Minister will inform the congregation of his/her being determined to be a High Risk Individual. Notification of this decision to the High Risk Individual shall include written notification from the Minister and Board President. The Minister will then inform the congregation by letter or other appropriate means. And, at least to the extent required by law, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

- G. Anyone who has reason to believe that a High Risk Individual has attempted to access children or otherwise disregarded rules that limit their access and activities shall advise the UUCT Minister or, if the Minister is unavailable, an officer of the Board.
- H. Should a High Risk Individual be judged to have failed to adhere to the limits set upon his/her association with UUCT, the Minister and the Board will consider whether other measures, including but not limited to police notification and applying for a court injunction, are to be adopted.

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Procedure 8- Conduct of Investigations and Responses

A) Investigations and decision making as well as responses to challenges to investigations, conclusions or restrictions made in accordance with this Child and Youth Protection Policies and Procedures shall be governed by these Child and Youth Protection Policies and Procedures and otherwise by the General Safety Policies and Procedures.

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Procedure 9 - Incident Management and Report

- A. In all accidents, health and abuse incidents, the leaders responsible for the minor shall immediately advise the DRE.
- B. To the best of their ability, responsible leaders shall perform first aid and provide emotional support to the affected minor until further help arrives.
- C. In cases of an accident, the DRE shall determine if professional help is required beyond the first aid that can be administered at the time. The medical and/or dental contacts on the minor's application shall be notified. In cases where no contact is provided, the DRE may choose the appropriate medical or dental professionals.
- D. The parents will be contacted as soon as possible in cases of accidents, illnesses or incidents of abuse. Other staff and volunteers not directly associated with the incident shall be advised, on a need-to-know basis, that an incident has occurred and what steps are being taken to address it. The DRE will take the lead in notifying parents and such authorities as required or needed unless expediency dictates otherwise.
- E. The DRE, with the assistance of the UUCT Minister and other available Church resources, shall provide emotional and spiritual support, as well as provide guidance on available counseling services, to the affected minor, leaders, other minors and parents.
- F. All incidents shall be documented by the DRE. An incident report shall be developed for all accidents, health and abuse incidents.
- G. Any accidents, health and abuse incidents shall be reported to the UUCT Minister, the UUCT Board President, and other appropriate parties (e.g., including the insurance company and government authorities).
- H. The DRE shall investigate the cause of any accident, health or abuse incident and provide recommendations for resolving any outstanding issues associated with it. The results shall be documented and provided to all receiving the incident report. The evaluation may be supplemented or performed in entirety by government and insurance company representatives as defined by law and insurance policy instructions. Lessons learned will be used to revise existing Policies and Procedures.

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**Related forms and materials:**

The following are examples of the type of documents that might be used in carrying out the above Procedures:



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UUCT Confidential Incident Report for Religious Education Program

Part A: Data on person filing the report and parental notification.

Date and Time of report: date \_\_\_\_\_ ; at time \_\_\_\_\_

Person filing the report

Name of person filing the report:

Job title:

Telephone number: home \_\_\_\_\_ ; cell \_\_\_\_\_

Name of church:

Address of church: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # of church: \_\_\_\_\_

Notification of parent/guardian

Name and phone # of parent/guardian notified: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of parental notification: \_\_\_\_\_

Part B: (if more than one minor was affected in this incident, attach part B and C for each).

The affected minor

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address:

Telephone number: home \_\_\_\_\_ ; cell \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ ; Gender: Male \_\_\_\_ or Female \_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: home \_\_\_\_\_ ; cell \_\_\_\_\_

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Part C: The incident. Details of the occurrence

Date incident occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Time incident occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident occur: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you observe this incident directly \_\_\_ or was it reported to you \_\_\_ and if so, by who?

\_\_\_\_\_

Was the incident a (an)? Accident \_\_\_; Health issue \_\_\_; Abuse \_\_\_; Unclear \_\_\_

If accident or might have been, how did it occur? If this was abuse or might have been, describe the incident (use back of page if necessary, fill in part D).

If there was an injury (e.g., fracture of leg, laceration of face, etc.) or health issue, describe it (use back of page if necessary):

Describe any first aid given on site and by whom.

Describe what was done if not already provided (can use back of this or another page)

Initial outcome of the occurrence

What was the result of the incident?

Required a trip to the hospital for treatment \_\_\_

Minor first aid treatment on site sufficient \_\_\_

Other \_\_\_

Notification of health provider? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_ -- Medical \_\_\_ or Dental \_\_\_ or Other

Name of provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: home \_\_\_\_\_; cell \_\_\_\_\_

In case of abuse, notification of governmental authorities? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_

List those notified and when (date and time): \_\_\_\_\_

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Other (explain, use other side of this or another page if needed):

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**Part D** Person(s) suspected of abuse (if known). Attach a separate part D for each suspect.

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: home \_\_\_\_\_ ; cell \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ ; Gender: Male \_\_\_\_ or Female \_\_\_\_

Physical description of suspected person(s) if suspect is not known:

Estimated Height: \_\_\_\_\_ ; Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Hair color \_\_\_\_\_, length \_\_\_\_\_, type-- curly \_\_\_\_ or straight \_\_\_\_

Hairdo \_\_\_\_\_ ; Baldness pattern \_\_\_\_\_

Facial hair (details— color, shape, ...):

moustache \_\_\_\_\_

beard \_\_\_\_\_

Complexion & skin color: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of clothing worn:

Other, including this particular suspect's role:

**Part E** Other Witnesses (give name, address and phone number).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2.

3.

4.

**Part F**

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date completed \_\_\_\_\_

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**Part G**

Please list any outstanding issues you have noticed about this incident and write out your recommendations for resolving them. Please offer any other suggestions you might have.

Provide copies of this report to:

UUCT Minister \_\_;

UCT Board President \_\_;

Insurance companies (list those you have sent them to):

Appropriate government authorities (list those you have sent them to):

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION RELEASE AND AUTHORIZATION FOR
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned represent that I am the Parent/Guardian of
\_\_\_\_\_ -my son/daughter/other \_\_\_\_\_. I grant permission for my
child to participate in the following adult supervised activity:

\_\_\_\_\_
The activity will take place at the following location(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ (date & time) to \_\_\_\_\_ (date &
time) , and I grant permission for my son/daughter/other \_\_\_\_\_ to be transported to and from
the location by reasonable and safe means.

I agree and hereby do release and hold harmless the and/or any and all adult supervisors for the
activity, from and for any and all liability which may arise for damages, loss or injuries, either to
person or property, which my son/daughter/other \_\_\_\_\_ may sustain while engaged 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.

Should any injury occur, I grant permission for my son/daughter/other \_\_\_\_\_ to receive
emergency treatment from an appropriate health care provider to be selected by the adult
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 which the and/or any and all adult
supervisors may incur as a result of securing such treatment.

I further agree to assume responsibility for any liability which may arise for damages, loss or
injuries, as described herein which may be caused or contributed to by my son/daughter/
other \_\_\_\_\_ to the person or property of others.

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

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Physician/Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian's Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insurance provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy/Group#: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical limitations: \_\_\_\_\_

Medicine Child is currently taking: \_\_\_\_\_

Other needs \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHILDREN AND YOUTH'S COVENANT OF THE  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF TAMPA**  
*(adopted from Rev. Chris Fry, Minister of Religious Education  
Unitarian Church of Davis, CA)*

We come to church to celebrate, to learn, to make friends, and to be of service. We come to explore life's ancient questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? What happens when we die? How shall we live our lives? We come to church to hear stories, to light candles, to have a moment of quiet, to sing a song, and to notice the wonder and mysteries of the world. We come to church to be together in a loving, caring community, young and old together.

When we come to church, we make promises to each other, spoken and unspoken. These promises are sometimes called a "covenant." A covenant describes how we will treat each other, what we will do to create a safe and sacred space where all may learn and grow. Our covenant, in this church, is grounded in our Unitarian Universalist Principles.

*Our Unitarian Universalist Principles Children's Version*

**PRINCIPLE #1: WE BELIEVE THAT EACH AND EVERY PERSON IS IMPORTANT.**

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect, to have a chance to share, to be heard, to be included in the day's activities at church. This means that we don't call people names, interrupt teachers or one another, or talk when someone else is talking. This means we take turns so every person has a chance to talk, to play on a certain piece of equipment or do a special activity.

**PRINCIPLE #2: WE BELIEVE THAT ALL PEOPLE SHOULD BE TREATED FAIRLY AND KINDLY.**

This means everyone is welcome at church. It means everyone -- no matter what their age or sex, race or family, abilities or differences -- deserves to be treated fairly and with kindness. This means we pay attention to those around us, welcome those who are new, help those who are lonely or hurting, and deal with our anger and disappointments in honest, caring ways. It means we use don't use hurtful words or hit or throw things at one another. It means we take turns, share our snacks, leave something for the next person. It means we speak out and get help when we see someone being treated unfairly.

**PRINCIPLE #3: WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND LEARN TOGETHER.**

Church is a place for fun and friendship, for learning and service. This means we need to listen to our teachers and one another, to participate in group activities to the best of our abilities, to help someone who is new or struggling, to share what we are thinking or feeling. It means we challenge one another to do our best and apologize when we fail to treat others the way we would like to be treated. It means we listen to adults, follow their instructions, and seek them out for help when we are troubled or need assistance.



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**PRINCIPLE #4: WE BELIEVE THAT EACH PERSON MUST BE FREE TO SEARCH FOR WHAT IS TRUE AND RIGHT IN LIFE.**

This means everyone is encouraged to share their own thoughts and feelings without fear of being laughed at or criticized. It means activities will be planned at church that are varied, that appeal to different people for different reasons. It means people of all ages will be given choices, whenever possible, so they can follow their own interests discover what is true and right for them. It means that we will behave in ways that allow other people to be themselves, to explore and do the things that have meaning to them, without judging or making fun of them.

**PRINCIPLE #5: WE BELIEVE THAT ALL PERSONS SHOULD HAVE A SAY ABOUT THE THINGS THAT CONCERN THEM.**

Adults in this church -- especially teachers, ministers, and parents -- have a special responsibility to provide a safe and loving space for children, where all can learn and grow. This Principle reminds us though that children -- even at a young age -- ought to have a say about what happens at church, to be encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings, to offer their ideas for new or better ways of doing things. It means we need older children and youth, especially, to contribute their ideas, time, and energy to church activities (e.g., Chalice Council, Stewardship Sundays, Community Service Projects). It means all of us, young and old, need to listen to one another, ask for suggestions and advice, and work together to make church a safe and special place.

**PRINCIPLE #6: WE BELIEVE IN WORKING FOR A PEACEFUL, FAIR AND FREE WORLD.**

This means we settle our disagreements in honest, caring, peaceful ways at church. We don't fight, push, shove, or throw things at one another. We do not bring toy guns or knives to church or play in violent ways. We don't use hurtful words or talk about people behind their backs or exclude them from our activities. We don't destroy or damage what belongs to the church or other people. And, if we do, it means we apologize, talk over our problems, fix what has been broken, or get help in doing so. It means we speak out and get help when we see a fight occurring or someone being treated unfairly. It means we learn how to express our anger and disappointments in healthy ways, taking time to sit down, to breathe, to be quiet, asking a friend or adult to help us.

**PRINCIPLE #7: WE BELIEVE IN CARING FOR OUR PLANET EARTH, THE HOME WE SHARE WITH ALL LIVING THINGS.**

This means we enjoy our beautiful church, the buildings and grounds, and all the creatures who share this space with us. It means we help with clean-up on Sunday mornings and after special activities. It means we clean up our messes, don't waste food or supplies, and recycle whatever we can. It means we don't jump on furniture, climb on the roof, or play on equipment that is meant for people much smaller (or younger) than us. It means we don't step in squirrel holes or put sticks or hands in the places where animals may live. It means we help with the garden or volunteer our time to work with the Grounds Committee or clean and scrub on "work/party" days.

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Living our UU Principles in our daily lives -- at church and at home -- can be hard work. All of us, young and old, will make mistakes at times, will fail to live up to the promises we have made to one another. At those times, it is important for us to talk honestly, with respect and love; to get the help from someone we trust; to listen to one another; to apologize and make amends; to explore what we can do differently next time. In this way, we learn and grow. In this way, we keep our church a safe and special place. In this way, we make a difference in the world.

If we see these Principles not being followed in our church we have a responsibility to respond. If we are children, we can: name the behavior (e.g., "I don't like being called names"), walk away (e.g., from the one doing the name-calling), offer or model an alternative behavior (e.g., offer to play a different game); ask an adult to help stop the behavior; share our feelings with a peer and/or adult (e.g., "it scares me when you shout at me.") If we are adults, we must take immediate action whenever the safety of our children is involved (e.g., stopping a fight, taking a dangerous item from a child, etc.).

We will also, depending on the situation, take other actions to ensure a safe and sacred space for all. Such actions may include: naming the behavior and asking that it be stopped; having a child sit quietly for five minutes in a specified place, talking with them afterward about what happened, offering an alternative activity in the group and/or outside, speaking with a child's parent about the troubling behavior, asking the parent to attend the child's group next time, or getting parent from worship service.

If a child is chronically disruptive and/or unable to participate in a positive manner in the group, his/her parent(s) will be contacted by the Director of Religious Education to discuss the problem, explore alternatives, and agree upon a plan that meets the needs of the child, his/her peers and the church.

I HAVE REVIEWED THIS COVENANT AND TALKED WITH MY CHILD SO THAT S/HE UNDERSTANDS THE BEHAVIOR WE EXPECT OF HIM/HER AT CHURCH. I WILL HELP CHILDREN (MY OWN AND OTHERS) FOLLOW THESE PRINCIPLES AND RULES WHENEVER I AM AT CHURCH.

Parent's Signature:

Date:

I HAVE TALKED ABOUT THESE PRINCIPLES (AND HOW I AM TO BEHAVE AT CHURCH) WITH MY PARENT AND WILL DO MY BEST TO FOLLOW THEM.

Child's Signature:

Date:

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**Code of Ethics Covenant for Leadership Roles**  
**UUCT Ministry of Religious Education**

In response to an increased awareness and understanding of the importance of relationships between adults, youth, and children in the church environment, the DRE and Religious Education Committee is asking all staff and volunteers to sign a Code of Ethics. Please read this carefully. You are asked to embrace these standards and covenant to follow these behavioral guidelines as you engage in the shared ministry of religious education at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa.

Adults and older youth in leadership roles are in positions of stewardship in fostering spiritual development. It is especially important that those in leadership positions provide appropriate nurture, care, and support. Spiritual growth in human beings involves, physical, emotional, intellectual, and sexual identities. Please be mindful that all communication has the potential to carry harmful messages. Communication includes body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice, as well as the choice of words in written and verbal expression.

Children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders engage in physical, emotional, verbal, or intellectual abuse of any kind. In addition, behavior that is seductive or erotic or contains sexual innuendo can be especially damaging. As a leader and role model in the Religious Education program at UUCT, you are asked to enter a covenant to follow these guidelines.

**As I engage in the shared ministry of religious education I covenant to:**

- **be mindful that spiritual growth, both my own and that of others, encompasses all of the following aspects of relationship (spiritual).**
- **be consciously gentle and non-threatening in all physical contact and proximity with children, youth, and adults (physical).**
- **communicate in a manner that is positive and affirming, as feelings and ideas are shared most honestly in a safe environment (emotional-intellectual).**
- **refrain from all behaviors, verbal and physical, that are in any way erotic, seductive or sexual in nature; including sexual innuendo (sexual).**
- **refrain from behavior that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse or harassment.**
- **I understand that in case of violation, appropriate action will be taken.**

Welcome and welcome back to the adventure of teaching religious education at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa. Thank you for sharing your time and gifts and engaging in this most important ministry to the youngest members of our congregation. The director of religious education and your RE Committee are always available to answer any questions you may have and to serve as support and touchstone resources as the year unfolds.

*Sunday Morning Time Commitment*

On scheduled teaching days, I agree to arrive at church 15 minutes before the service begins to prepare the classroom and materials. I understand that on most Sundays, the children and youth

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participate in the service opening or youth worship from about 11:00 to 11:15. Religious education in-class time is typically 11:20 to 12:00.

*Weekly Classroom Clean-up*

I understand it is my responsibility to leave my class space in order and free of clutter each week. I will return all supplies to the appropriate storage spaces and dispose of extra paper materials in the recycling bin. If snacks or 'glitter type' projects have resulted in the need to sweep, I agree to do so and/or to recruit kids to help. The broom and the dustpan are located in the youth room storage closet.

*Document Checklist/References*

My signature at the bottom of this form indicates that as a religious educator at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa, I have read and agree to follow these policies and this code of ethics. My signature also grants permission to contact the references I have provided and to have a background check initiated.

I have received and read a copy of the following documents.

1. Code of Ethics for working with children and youth
2. Religious Education Teacher Covenant
3. UUCT Safety Policy, Fire Drill/Field Trip Procedure
4. Copy of Required Field Trip Permission Form
5. Registration Form for Students

I have received, read, and agree to abide by the information contained in the documents listed above.

Printed

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa

Thank you for your interest in working with the children and youth of our congregation. Our congregation takes seriously our responsibility to assure the safety of our youth. Please fill out this form and give it to the Director of Religious Education. Thank you for your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of the congregation's children and youth.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been attending this congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

A. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense? \_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain:

B. Have you ever been accused of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, 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. Have you ever been convicted of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor? \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please provide details:

**E. Is there any issue regarding your health, medication you take, or with ingestion of drugs or alcohol that might interfere with your ability to be entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth? If yes, please provide details.**

F. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background, that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth? \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please provide details.

Please list two references who are not relatives who have known you for at least three years and who are familiar with your character as it pertain to your experience with children or youth:

1) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand our congregation's policies on keeping children and youth safe.

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I agree to uphold these principles in my work with children, youth, adults, and families of The Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa.

I have signed the Code of Ethics statement.

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.

I authorize the congregation to contact references to obtain information about my background regarding my character and fitness for work with children and youth. 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 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 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM DEFINITIONS**

1. **Parent** – a natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a child or youth.
2. **Staff** – any person hired by the church to work with children and/or youth.
3. **Volunteer** – any non-paid person who works with our children and/or youth.
4. **Leader** – any individual approved by the DRE to be responsible for children and/or youth.
5. **Child** – typically, any minor below the age of 12.
6. **Youth** – typically, any minor between, and including, the ages of 12 and 17, or any minor who is still in high school.
7. **Minor** – both children and youth collectively (when child or youth is noted in lieu of minor, the policy only applies to them and not the other).
8. **Travel** – any church activity away from church property.
9. **Serious Accident or Illness** – one that requires medical or dental care.
10. **Known Offender** – an individual who has been convicted of child abuse, reckless endangerment of a minor, or other related offenses.
11. **Publication** – documents sent through the mail, or similar delivery service; printed in newspapers, or other similar documents; or posted to a web site or sent via email.
12. **Harassment** – verbal or non-verbal abuse or ridicule, offensive physical contact, displaying or distributing pornographic or offensive materials, attempted or actual intimate physical contact, demanding favors (sexual or otherwise), or hazing.