

SAFE CONGREGATION GUIDELINES:

**A Guide Book to Preventing
Child Sexual Abuse & Sexual Harassment
In the Church**

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley

Bethlehem, PA

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Mission	4
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Guideline Overview	5
Definitions and Indicators	
Definitions of Child Sexual Abuse	8
Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect	9
Possible Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse	10
Description of the Selection Process for Workers with Children and Youth	11
Age Group/Activity Guidelines	
Toddler Nursery Guidelines	12
Diapering and Diaper Changing Guidelines	13
Pre K – Fourth Grade Church School Guidelines	14
Fifth through Junior High Sunday Church School Class Guidelines.....	15
Senior High Sunday Church School Class Guidelines.....	16
Youth Advisors and Mentors Guidelines	17
Overnight Activities	18
Drivers Policy	19
Response Plan	
Activities That May Lead to Allegations	20
Response Plan: Steps to Take if Child Sexual Abuse is Suspected	20
Steps to Take Upon Receiving Allegations or Observing Sexual Abuse.	21
Intervention Plan	22
Unsubstantiated and Substantiated Claims	23

Ministry and Support.....	24
Verbal, Physical or Sexual Harassment	
Definition	25
Harassment & Sexual Harassment Prohibition Statement.....	25
Complaint Procedures	25
Action Plan.....	26
Statement of Protection for the Victim	26
Statement of Ministerial Support for the Accused	26
Disciplinary Action	27
Acknowledgments.....	28
Forms.....	29
Volunteer Covenant Agreement.....	29
Confidential Screening Form.....	30
Volunteer Code of Ethics Statement.....	32
Reference Contact Form.....	33
Registration Procedures.....	34
Registrant Permission Forms.....	35
Emergency Contact Information Form.....	36
Field Trip Procedures.....	37
Event Permission Form.....	38
Driver's Policy.....	39

Introduction

Child sexual abuse is a subject not many want to talk about, dwell on, or believe can happen to them or their church. However, child sexual abuse does occur and is happening in ever increasing numbers in homes and churches across the United States. Statistics show that one in every four girls and one in every six boys will be sexually abused before they reach the age of eighteen.

Because of the seriousness of this subject, the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley (UUCLV) tries to make its places of ministry safe for all children, youth and church volunteers. By being proactive and taking precautionary measures that screen and train workers with children and youth, and providing guidelines and procedures that offer assistance to parents and volunteers, the UUCLV can hopefully prevent such atrocities from ever occurring in our church community.

We encourage everyone in the church to be informed about child sexual abuse. You are asked to embrace the standards set forth in our Safe Congregation Guidelines and covenant to follow these procedures as you engage in the shared ministry or religious education at the UUCLV.

Therefore, everyone who participates in an on-going volunteer position will be asked to attend a Volunteer/Teacher Orientation at which time they will receive an overview of these guidelines. Anyone who is going to be a worker with our children or youth over an extended period of time will be required to read and sign a Volunteer Code of Ethics Statement, Volunteer Covenant Agreement, Confidential Screening Form and Criminal History as well as Sexual Abuse Clearance checks in addition to participating in a training session about our child sexual abuse prevention guidelines every 3 years.

It is especially important that volunteers recognize their roles as leaders who must take seriously their responsibility to 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 expression and tone of voice, as well as the choice of words in written and verbal expressions.

Children, youth and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders engage in physical, emotional and 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 the UUCLV, you are asked to enter a covenant based on the guidelines and procedures set forth in this manual. This covenant is entered into willingly by all those who wish to volunteer and is affirmed in the volunteer's signature of the Volunteer Code of Ethics Statement on file with the Director of Religious Education.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a physical, social and spiritual environment that encourages an atmosphere of trust, safety through education, understanding of power dynamics and the setting of appropriate boundaries.

Our intention is to strengthen our community and keep it safe for all, especially children and youth. Recognizing that touch can be healing and is a human need, we are encouraging appropriate touch.

Sexual Abuse Prevention Guideline Overview

I. Recruiting, Selecting, and Training Volunteers and Paid Staff

A. Minimum Qualifications: Every person (volunteer or employed) who works with children and youth will:

1. Adhere to the ethical standards set forth by the UUA as contained in the 7 Principles of our shared Unitarian Universalist Faith and those set forth by the UUCLV in the *Volunteer Code of Ethics Statement* and the *Volunteer Covenant Agreement*.
2. Be known and active in this church community for at least six months or provide references from their past UU Church and, for volunteers only, be encouraged to obtain membership to the UUCLV.
3. Be screened through written application and will agree to reference checks listed in *Confidential Screening Form for Positions Working with Children and Youth*.
4. Report their criminal history on their application including allegations or charges of committing previous acts of sexual misconduct. Those with serious allegations will not be permitted to work with children or youth.

B. On-going volunteer and staff members, including but not limited to RE Teachers, Youth Advisors, Coming of Age Mentors, Sleepover Chaperones and adults in a congregation-sponsored role beyond the church grounds shall be subject to these additional screening procedures as follows:

1. Agreement to a *PA Criminal Background and Sexual Abuse History Report*, in which payment for half the cost of obtaining these reports will be the responsibility of the volunteer.
2. Adhere to the ethical standards set forth by the UUA as contained in the 7 Principles of our shared Unitarian Universalist Faith.

C. Volunteer and staff members driving RE Participants, including but not limited to RE Teachers, Youth Advisors, Coming of Age Mentors, Sleepover Chaperones and adults in a congregation-sponsored role beyond the church grounds shall be required to provide driver release information in addition to the information listed in part B as follows:

1. All drivers must have a current license and be 21 or older to transport youth to and from events and are subject to all recommendations outlined in the Driver's Checklist, including current registration, updated maintenance, seat belts and be free from violations.
2. All drivers should provide proof of car insurance, provide current PA Driver license number, license plate and description of the vehicle being used.

II. Procedures

A. Avoid Isolation:

1. There shall be two adults present in each classroom during church school. This requires that volunteers should not be in an isolated setting with children or youth without another volunteer. In the event that two adults are not available for a given class, the DRE shall be informed to find a replacement not excluding herself, and, if no replacement can be found, children will be sent to the sanctuary to attend services with their parents.
2. Events: When away from the church on an outing or at a church “overnight”, volunteers and staff are to work together as a team and not be isolated with a child or adolescent.
3. If it is necessary for a volunteer or staff member to meet individually with a child or youth, the recommendation is that it be done so in a public setting or where they are clearly visible by others. In such instances that a public place is chosen, it is further recommended that transportation be provided by the parent of the child.
4. Volunteer or staff member should not spend time alone with a child or adolescent without the awareness and written consent of that individual’s parent/guardian.

B. Preschool Bathroom Procedures

1. Parents should be asked to take their children to the bathroom before Sunday school so that the child won’t have to leave the room.
2. Children are taken only upon request or if the child shows obvious signs of needing to use the restroom.
3. If the child requests a Worker’s help in the bathroom, try to teach the child how to help themselves as much as possible.

C. Release Guidelines: Creating and following guidelines for releasing children after classes reduce the opportunities for both abuse and abduction. **Two** Workers should remain with all children when dropped off until they are picked up.

1. Nursery: No child will be released from the nursery except into the care of the person who signed them in, unless noted at the time the child is signed in that another person, named in writing will be picking the child up.
2. Children (Ages 2 through 6th Grade)
 1. At the beginning of the Sunday school year, and first time users, each parent/guardian should sign a Registration Form, on which is a portion designating who should be allowed to pick up their children in their absence.
 2. Parents/Guardians or other appointees, should promptly pick up their children after class is over at 11:45 am.
 3. Junior and Senior High Classes: These youth may be released after the class is over. If the parents wish the students to remain in the classroom until picked up by parent/guardian that should be made known to the Youth Workers.

D. Reporting Procedures

1. Reporting Obligations: Volunteers and staff are to immediately report any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate, or any incident reported by a child or adolescent.
2. Line of Reporting
 1. Workers shall report alleged abuse to the DRE or leader of the activity, Senior Pastor, or other adult as is appropriate, followed by a written statement documenting the account.
 2. The pastoral staff shall report the abuse directly to ChildLine and/or the police department or witness the Volunteer or Staff member making the report. The reporter may remain anonymous to the outside authorities, the victim and alleged perpetrator if they wish.

E. Response Plan

1. When an allegation of abuse by a church Worker is brought to the attention of pastoral staff, a Crisis Task Force will be convened. This Task Force will meet separately with the victim and family.
2. The Task Force will meet with the volunteer or worker who is the alleged abuser to discuss the allegation and inform them that they may not participate in children's or youth ministry until the investigation into the allegation is complete.
3. The Task Force will document all of its activities.
4. The pastoral staff will also make note of the allegation and its outcome on the volunteer's confidential application form.

III. Training and Education

- A. Once every other year all volunteers and staff who work with children will attend training to educate them on the guidelines and procedures for reducing the risk of abuse.
- B. Appropriate church staff members will review together the guidelines and procedures for reducing the risk of abuse on an annual basis.
- C. All church staff and volunteers, including committee chairs, will have a copy of these policies in print form.
 1. Copies of the guidelines, in short brochure form as well as full guidelines, will be available for any church attendee through the church office or the church web site.

Definitions of Child Sexual Abuse

The precise legal definition of child sexual abuse or molestation varies from state to state, but in general includes any form of sexual conduct or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Services defines child sexual abuse as:

1. “The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in sexually explicit conduct.”
2. “The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage or assist in simulation of sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photography, videotaping, computer depicting and filming.”

In 1992, the National Resource Center on Sexual Abuse defined child sexual abuse as, “any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, in a church, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.”

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child’s vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for his/her actions. Child sexual abuse is a criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include:

- Fondling
- Oral, genital, and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos or pictures
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

Child sexual abuse occurs in all demographic, racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups. Strangers account for less than 20 percent of the abusers. Estimates indicate that when a known assailant commits the abuse, half of the time it is a father or stepfather, and the rest of the time it is a trusted adult who misuses his or her authority over children.

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) defines as follows five types of abuse, all of which must result from an act or failure to act by a perpetrator:

1. **Non-accidental Serious Physical Injury:** A recent* injury that causes the child severe pain or significantly impairs the child's physical functioning, either temporarily or permanently.
2. **Serious Physical Neglect:** Prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide the essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which results in the child sustaining a condition that endangers the child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.
3. **Sexual Abuse or Exploitation:** Rape, sexual assault, statutory sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, indecent assault, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, promoting prostitution, pornography, or other form of sexual exploitation of children.
4. **Serious Mental Injury:** A psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, that renders the child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that his or her life or safety is threatened, or seriously interferes with the child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.
5. **Imminent Risk:** A recent* act or failure to act that creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury or sexual abuse/exploitation of the child that occurs during an incident or series of incidents.

*Within two years of the date of the report.

Possible Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse

Most cases of child sexual abuse go undetected. There may be no apparent physical signs, or there may be physical signs that are detected only through a medical examination. However, there are some signals that a worker may observe that will indicate whether sexual abuse is occurring.

High indicators of abuse which may warrant a report are:

1. A child reports being abused.
2. A child has unusual and repeated bruises, welts, or burns. A child gives varied or different reasons for the same injury.
3. A child has explicit sexual knowledge above age expectations. This includes extensive knowledge of sexual acts, slang/technical terms and/or demonstrated sexual behavior in conversation or play.

The following should raise your concern for the possibility of abuse and could suggest the need to explore further. **The presence of several of these could warrant your making a report.**

Child's Appearance	Child's Behavior	Caretaker's Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in walking or sitting • Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing • Pain, bleeding or swollen genitalia • Semen around mouth, genitalia or on clothing • Venereal disease, especially in preteens. • Pregnancy • Lacerations around mouth • Warts around genital area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suddenly withdrawn; engages in fantasy or infantile behavior • Poor peer relationships • Unwilling to participate in physical activities • Engages in delinquent acts or runs away • States he/she has been sexually assaulted by parent/caregiver • Fear of rest rooms, a particular place, or being left alone • Unusual sexual knowledge • Does not want to go home from church • Becomes self-abusive: pulling hair out, banging head, cutting themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely protective or jealous of child • Experiencing marital difficulties • Misuses alcohol/drugs • Frequently absent from home • Experienced sexual abuse as a child

Description of the Selection Process for Workers with Children and Youth – Staff and Volunteers

Description of Screening Procedure

1. To be an Ongoing Teacher, COA Mentor, Youth Advisor, Sleepover Chaperone or childcare supervisor you must be a member in good standing and to attend UUCLV regularly for a **minimum of six months**. Occasional Substitute teachers or event volunteers need to attend regularly for a **minimum of six months**. In the case of guest ministries and new staff hires, exceptions might be made (with due diligence to background screening and references from previous churches).
2. All volunteers who are serving our children and youth over any period of time are required to fill out a ***Confidential Screening Form for Positions Working with Children and Youth*** which is kept in the office in a locked file. All references will be checked and a written record of results will be maintained confidentially with application.
3. Volunteer and staff members driving RE Participants, including but not limited to RE Teachers, Youth Advisors, Coming of Age Mentors, Sleepover Chaperones and adults in a congregation-sponsored role beyond the church grounds shall be required to provide **driver release information** in addition to the information listed in part B as follows:
 1. All drivers must have a current license and be 21 or over to transport youth to and from events and are subject to all recommendations outlined in the **Driver's Checklist**, including current registration, updated maintenance, seat belts and be free from violations.
 2. All drivers should provide proof of car insurance, provide current PA Driver license number, license plate and description of the vehicle being used.
4. Ongoing volunteers will agree to a ***PA Criminal Background and Sexual Abuse History Report***, in which payment for half the cost of obtaining these reports will be the responsibility of the volunteer. They must adhere to the ethical standards set forth by the UUA as contained in the 7 Principles of our shared Unitarian Universalist Faith.
5. Any people who are known to have committed previous acts of sexual misconduct, or where serious allegations have been made, will be strictly prohibited from serving with youth.
6. Confidential, personal interviews of all volunteers may be conducted and documented at the discretion of the Minister, Religious Education Professional or RE Committee.
7. RE Teachers, Youth Advisors, Coming of Age Mentors and those serving in on-going roles working with children and youth, will be required to attend a training session(s) every other year to equip them to carry out these guidelines. Occasional Substitute teachers or event volunteers and those serving in occasional roles with children and youth, will be encouraged to attend these training sessions as well.

Toddler Nursery Guidelines

1. There should be at least **two (2) Childcare Aides** and **one (1) Adult Supervisor** in the room before, during and after each Sunday Service until the last child is picked up. The adult advisor is subject to the screening procedures for an on-going volunteer, and should be visibly identified as the Adult Supervisor.
2. For all events including Adult Religious Education Programs or non-RE related church activities where child care has been requested, there shall be at least **two (2) Child Care Aides** in the room 30 minutes before the event and until the last child is picked up scheduled by the Adult Supervisor.
3. No one, other than children or youth 5 years of age or younger, should be allowed in the nursery except the two designated Childcare Aides. Parent(s) or guardian(s) of nursery participants are welcome to stay and observe but should not be put in a supervisory position if they have not been properly screened.
4. Childcare aides or Adult Supervisor, should not accept any child whose parent, guardian or designated caregiver will not remain within the physical confines of the church. This is to ensure that the child's parent(s), guardian(s) or designated caregiver can be immediately contacted in the event of an emergency.
5. Diaper changes must be done **in** the Nursery Room according to the posted guidelines, unless by parent(s) or guardian(s).
6. Nursery staff should have first time users of child services complete a Permission and Registrations Form, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren).
7. Parents, guardians or designees must provide contact information and medical information (i.e. Information on Registration Form about allergies, mental health diagnosis, medical issues that would preclude participation in certain activities, or any other special needs) on the Permission and Registration Form.

Toddler Nursery Diapering and Diaper Changing Guidelines

1. Diaper changing surface must be:
 - a. smooth, non-absorbent (waterproof) and easily cleanable (no cracks or tears).
 - b. kept free of storage and easily accessible.
 - c. cleaned with a mild solution of water and an eco-friendly detergent after each use which will be clearly labeled.
 - d. sanitized at the end of each session. No chlorine or bleach shall be used to clean or sterilize the changing surface. A hospital grade germicide or disinfectant that has been determined safe for use in schools, childcare centers, institutions or restaurants shall be kept in a properly labeled, spray bottle.
2. All cleaning solutions and sanitizers should be kept out of reach of children and stored in a locked area when the Nursery is not open.
3. Caregivers must use non-latex disposable gloves if they have cuts or sores on their hands and if they have chapped hands.
4. Hands must be washed before and after each diapering with a mild soap and hot water even after utilizing the gloves for changing.
5. Caregivers must always keep one hand on the child while diapering to insure the physical safety of the child. The child shall never be left unattended on the changing surface even if a strap is provided for their safety. (Diapers, wipes and clothing should readily accessible and in reach when diapering unless there is another individual there to assist the process).
6. Caregivers should dispose of all feces in the toilet but should **not** rinse out clothes, training pants or clothes diapers in the sink or toilet. These articles should be stored in a closed plastic bag and sent home with the child.
7. Disposable diapers should be disposed of in an individual plastic bag, sealed and removed from the exterior garbage area daily.
8. Toddler's hands should be washed in the lavatory after each individual diaper changer or infant's hands may be cleaned using a single use, pre-moistened towelettes.
9. These guidelines shall be clearly posted in the Toddler Nursery showing the proper diaper changing and hand washing techniques.

Pre K – Fourth Grade Church School Guidelines

1. There should be at least **two** Teachers in the room before, during and after each church event until the last child is picked up. At least one of these Teachers should be an Ongoing Child/Youth Volunteer and not two substitute teachers in the room.
2. No one other than the DRE, Teachers (Ongoing Child/Youth and Aides), parent(s) or guardian(s) should be allowed in the classrooms (unless previously agreed to, e.g. guest speakers or extra/alternate helpers).
3. Lavatory Guidelines:
 - a. **Parents** should be asked to take their children to the bathroom before Sunday school so that the child won't have to leave the supervised room.
 - b. Children should be taken to the lavatory only upon their request or if the child shows obvious signs of needing a lavatory. The **Teacher** will summon the **Hall Monitor** who will escort the child to the lavatory.
 - c. A **Hall Monitor** should be available in the hallway to make sure the child goes into the lavatory (and does not wander). The Hall Monitor will remain in the hallway right outside the bathroom and make sure that the child returns to their class in a timely manner.
 - d. If a child requests assistance, the Hall Monitor should encourage that child to act independently with clothing or cleanliness. In the event that encouragement does not fill the need of the given situation, the Hall Monitor shall use their best judgment to assist the child with his/her clothing and shall utilizing the hand over hand method to clean the child as best as this process allows. This technique enables you to place your hands over the child's hands in helping with fastening clothes, wiping skin, and the like. Spend as little time in the bathroom as possible.
 - e. If a Hall Monitor is not available, the Teacher should decide if the child needs to be escorted to the bathroom. When a child is being escorted to the bathroom, that teacher shall remain in clear view of the classroom with the classroom door open.
 - f. Both the Teacher and the child should wash their hands after using the restroom.
4. Teachers should not accept any child whose parent, guardian or designee will not remain within the physical confines of the church. This is to ensure the Teachers can immediately contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) in the event of an emergency.
5. Classroom discipline should always be non-violent and non-threatening consistent with the standards of our Unitarian Universalist Principles.
 - a. In case of discipline problems, the Teacher shall refer to the classroom covenant and behavioral guidelines.
 - b. When unacceptable behavior persists, an **in-room** time-out period should be used (one minute per age of the child is acceptable, unless otherwise directed by the parents).
 - c. If the behavioral problem escalates or is consistently reoccurring, the Teacher will summon the DRE or Hall Monitor to either find the parent or bring the child upstairs to the sanctuary. The DRE will then work with the parents to form an individual behavioral covenant with the child whose participation in Sunday Church School will be contingent on agreement with the individual covenant.
 - d. Workers should have first time users of child services complete a Permission Form and Release Form, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren). It is recommended that a first time user should accompany his or her child to the classroom to introduce themselves to the teachers.

Fifth through Junior High Church School Guidelines

1. There should be at least **two** Teachers in the room before, during and after each church event until the last child is picked up. At least one of these Teachers should be an Ongoing Child/Youth Volunteer and not two substitute teachers in the room.
2. No one other than the DRE, Teachers (Ongoing Child/Youth and Aides), parent(s) or guardian(s) should be allowed in the classrooms (unless previously agreed to, e.g. guest speakers or extra/alternate helpers).
3. Lavatory Guidelines:
 - a. Children should use the bathroom before Sunday school so that the child won't have to leave the supervised room.
 - b. Children can use the lavatory only upon their request or if the child shows obvious signs of needing a lavatory. The **Teacher** will summon the **Hall Monitor**.
 - c. A **Hall Monitor** should be available in the hallway to make sure the child goes into the lavatory (and does not wander). The Hall Monitor will remain in the hallway right outside the bathroom and make sure that the child returns to their class in a timely manner.
 - d. The Hall Monitor should not have to assist a child of this age in the lavatory and should therefore remain outside in the hallway.
 - e. If a Hall Monitor is not available, the Teacher should decide if the child is capable of escorting themselves. When a child is being escorted to the bathroom, that Teacher shall escort the child downstairs and then allow the Hall Monitor to supervise so the Teacher can return to the classroom promptly.
 - f. The Teacher or Hall Monitor should insure that the child washes his or her hands after using the restroom.
4. Teachers should not accept any child whose parent or guardian will not remain within the physical confines of the church. This is to ensure the Teachers can immediately contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) in the event of an emergency.
5. Classroom discipline should always be non-violent and non-threatening consistent with the standards of our Unitarian Universalist Principles.
 - a. In case of discipline problems, the Teacher shall refer to the classroom covenant and behavioral guidelines.
 - b. When unacceptable behavior persists, an **in-room** time-out period should be used (one minute per age of the child is acceptable, unless otherwise directed by the parents).
 - c. If the behavioral problem escalates or is consistently reoccurring, the Teacher will summon the DRE or Hall Monitor to either find the parent or bring the child upstairs to the sanctuary.

- d. The DRE will then work with the parents to form an individual behavioral covenant with the child whose participation in Sunday Church School will be contingent on agreement with the individual covenant.
- e. Workers should have first time users of child services complete a Permission Form and Release Form, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren).

Senior High Sunday Church School Class Guidelines

1. Two Advisors should be in the classroom before, during, and after each class period. One of these Advisors should be an Ongoing Child/Youth Worker.
2. No youth should enter the room without two Advisors present in the room. Youth must wait outside in the hallway which is a public area.
3. No one other than the DRE Advisors (Ongoing Child/Youth and Aides), parent(s) or guardian(s) should be allowed in the classrooms (unless previously agreed to, e.g. guest speakers or extra/alternate helpers).
4. Youth should remain in the Sunday school room during class and not leave the room unless there is an emergency (e.g. feeling sick) or parent/guardian comes to pick up. Youth should use the restroom prior to the beginning of class.
5. A Hall Monitor should be available in the second floor hallway to make sure the youth goes into the lavatory. The Hall Monitor will make sure that they return to their class in a timely manner by watching the youth exit the double doors and descending the stairs towards room 100.
6. Classroom discipline should always be non-violent and non-threatening in consistent with the standards of our Unitarian Universalist Principles.
 - a. In case of discipline problems, the Teacher shall refer to the classroom covenant and behavioral guidelines.
 - b. When unacceptable behavior persists, an **in-room** time-out period should be used (one minute per age of the child is acceptable, unless otherwise directed by the parents).
 - c. If the behavioral problem escalates or consistently reoccurs, the Teacher will summon the DRE or Hall Monitor to either find the parent or bring the child upstairs to the sanctuary.
 - d. The DRE will then work with the parents to form an individual behavioral covenant with the child whose participation in Sunday Church School will be contingent on agreement with the individual covenant.
 - e. Workers should have first time users of child services complete a Permission Form and Release Form, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren).

6. Workers should have first time users of youth services complete a Parental Consent and Release Form, which among other things, will have space to designate permission to release child after class on his or her own.

Youth Advisor and Mentor Guidelines

1. When possible, Youth Advisors or Mentors should not transport a student alone. At least two adults or at least two students should be present.
2. At least two Youth Advisors (adult leaders) must be present at youth activities.
3. Youth Advisors should not leave students alone at the church waiting for transportation. If only one student remains, two leaders should remain when possible.
4. A Youth Advisor must not interact with a student in any sexual manner (e.g. physical, verbal, visual) or engage in a romantic relationship with any youth.
5. A Youth Advisor or Mentor should avoid one-on-one meetings in private places with youth (same or opposite sex). If this is unavoidable, the DRE as well as the parent(s) or guardian(s) should be made aware in writing of the time, date and place where the meetings take place.
6. When a Youth Advisor or Mentor has a legitimate reason to be alone with a student, they must first:
 - a. Obtain the written consent of the student's parent or guardian before going out alone with or spending time with the student in an unsupervised situation. (For students who come on a regular basis, this can be done yearly).
 - b. Notify the DRE of such meetings in advance.
7. Any **non-scheduled, or improptu** meetings (one-on-one, etc.) should have an adult chaperone of the same sex as student participants.
8. Youth Advisors and Mentors should have parental permission for each student's involvement in church sponsored programs or activities. For students who come on a regular basis, this can be done yearly. If this is not received from a first-time student, they should bring a permission slip with them the next time they come. For overnight or out of town activities separate permission forms should be obtained and copies received by the DRE at least a week prior to the activity or event.
9. Youth Advisors and Mentors must have criminal and sexual abuse clearances at least one week in advance before they can chaperone an overnight activity that involves youth. These chaperones are required to fill out any and all clearances, the same as On-going Child/Youth Volunteer Applicants and if possible, have a background check before the activity.

Overnight Activities

1. Adult chaperones must attend the screening and background check process prior to the overnight activities.
2. Volunteers are to work together as a team and not be isolated with an adolescent.
3. The Youth-to-Worker ratio should be no higher than 5 to 1.
4. Take care that small numbers of youth are not alone together for long periods of time.
5. Sleeping arrangements are to be separate by gender by room if at all possible and, if not because of the number of adult chaperones, be delineating sides of the room.
6. Youth should not be released from an overnight activity to anyone but the parent or guardian during the night unless there is notification of or permission by that parent or guardian.
7. In the event of a physical, emotional or medical emergency, the parent or guardian should be notified immediately and the child shall be released to the parent or guardians or, by the parent and guardians wishes, to any authorities that could provide the proper attention to the emergency.

Drivers Policy

For the protection of our youth and our drivers, the following guidelines should be observed.

1. When possible, Youth Advisors, Mentors or Volunteers should not transport a student alone. At least two adults or at least two students should be present.
2. If not already a Cleared On-going Volunteer, then church drivers are required to fill out a *Confidential Screening Form for Positions Working with Children and Youth*, as well as an *Acknowledgement of Driving Responsibility* form. The following forms must be signed and on record in the church office.
 - a. PA Criminal Background Check
 - b. PA Sexual Abuse History Clearance
 - c. Signed Driver's Policy
 - d. Driver Acknowledgment of Responsibility
3. If inappropriate behavior is observed in the vehicle (e.g. sexual harassment, bullying, demeaning, or other discipline problems) the driver should reprimand the student(s) and report the behavior to the Youth Advisor, DRE and Parent. Appropriate documentation of the event should also be received by the DRE to file in the office.
4. All drivers must have a current license and be 21 or older to transport youth to and from events. See the driver's checklist for further details.
5. Prior to the trip, driver must provide evidence that car is current in registration and the car has received scheduled maintenance and is up to date.
6. The capacity of the vehicle is determined by the number of seat belts such that no individual in the car should be without a seat belt (1:1).
7. The driver should obey all state driving and speed regulations (any violation that constitutes a fine will be the responsibility of the driver), and should drive defensively and carefully.
8. If a rental vehicle is being used, it should be organized at least a week prior to the event for picked up the day of the event.
9. The driver will log his/her mileage and keep receipts of tolls, gas and costs to be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses. The driver will be reimbursed for costs incurred by driving to event upon completion of the reimbursement sheet and submitting it to the Current Treasurer of the UUCLV.
10. A driver shall in no way be under the influence of drugs, alcohol or prescription medications that might impair vision, judgment or motor skills.
11. The driver will wait until each child has been picked up by a parent or guardian unless prior arrangements have been made with the parent/guardian's written consent. **By no means is a youth to be released to another youth unless there is written permission by the participant's parents acknowledging the release.**

Activities That May Lead to Allegations

There are many situations that could lead to an allegation of child sexual abuse. Please take time to study the Definitions and Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse earlier in this packet. It is important to recognize that there are “gray areas” that may lead to allegations. Workers with children and youth may not realize when their actions could be interpreted as inappropriate (e.g. excessive tickling or hugging). Mutual supervision is important to this process, thus each volunteer is encouraged to carefully, but clearly, bring this to the attention of the person who is acting inappropriately. If questionable behavior is persistent, or if overt sexual abuse occurs you must report it to the Minister, DRE or a Board of Trustees member as detailed below. If this is implemented with care and sensitivity, actual instances of abuse or molestation can be avoided.

Response Plan: Steps to Take if Child Sexual Abuse is Suspected

The primary responsibility of someone reporting suspected sexual abuse is to ensure the safety of the child while attending UUCLV or church sponsored activities. Discrete and confidential reporting of suspected sexual abuse is critical to abuse prevention. Please understand that reporting abuse reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty. If you witness or hear about a sexually abusive situation and do not report it, the safety of our children may be compromised.

Anyone may report child abuse and anyone working with children or youth is considered a mandated reporter in the state of PA. As long as the report is based on a good faith suspicion that abuse is occurring, the reporter will be immune from any civil and criminal proceedings that could result. When the person hearing the allegation or witnessing abuse tells the Minister, DRE or Board of Trustees Member of the abuse, these individuals are legally mandated to report this information if the witness does not. The paid church staff or Board Member must make this report immediately by phone and in writing within forty-eight hours. It is considered an obligation of our all of UUCLV staff (paid or volunteer) to follow these guidelines.

Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse immediately to Pennsylvania’s Child Line based on their medical or professional training or other experience. They also must make a written follow-up report to the investigating County Children and Youth Agency within 48 hours. Mandated reporters who make a report in good faith have immunity from civil and criminal liability that might otherwise result from their actions.

MANDATED REPORTERS INCLUDE:

- Health Care Professionals – physicians, medical examiners, dentists, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, psychiatrists, psychologists, interns, nurses, public health department personnel, funeral directors, and hospital personnel.
- Law Enforcement Officials – police officers, sheriffs, county detectives, coroners, and court officials.
- Social Services Professionals – social services workers, childcare workers, and clergy.
- Education Professionals – teachers, principals, school nurses, school administrators, and counselors.
- Anyone who as part of his or her job, paid or volunteer, has contact with children.

Steps to take upon receiving allegations or observing sexual abuse:

1. Anyone who becomes aware of suspected sexual abuse by staff or a volunteer is to report it directly to the Minister, DRE or a Board of Trustees Member, and communicate their intention to file a report. This is so the suspected perpetrator of abuse can be removed from his or her proximity to children at UUCLV during their investigation.
2. The Minister, DRE or a Board of Trustees Member will not in any way hinder the filing of the report. For the protection of all involved, it is strongly recommended that the notification to authorities be made in the presence of the Minister, DRE or a Board of Trustees Member. As mandated reporters, these individuals should be able learn the final legal status of the report and what services have been or will be provided to the child and family as a result of the initial report. The volunteer would not be eligible to receive such information. The reporting party can still remain anonymous to the authorities.
3. If the volunteer suspects abuse or hears an allegation of abuse *occurring in the home of one of the children or youth*, the volunteer is encouraged to file a report as detailed below. In this case no one in the church need be notified, unless the alleged perpetrator is a child/youth volunteer at UUCLV. It is all right to make a report on a reasonable suspicion. You do not need actual evidence to call. Give the information you have, and the authorities will determine if the suspicion warrants an investigation. You may call ChildLine just to ask if the information you have warrants a report.
4. The report is to be filed as soon as possible with **ChildLine 1-800-932-0313**. This toll-free number is staffed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week by Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare. This is the number to call for child abuse in the state of Pennsylvania, regardless of the county the child lives. If the alleged perpetrator is not related to the victim, ChildLine will direct the reporting party to call the police department where the alleged crime took place.
5. Be prepared to answer as many of the following types of questions as possible:
 - a. ****Why do you suspect abuse has occurred?**
 - b. ****Name of child.**
 - c. ****Address, phone, school – as much information as you have so that the child can be reached in the next 24 hours.**
 - d. **Who is alleged perpetrator of abuse?**
 - e. **How did you find out?**
 - f. **Who else knows about the abuse?**
 - g. **Parents names and address(es), any siblings in the home?**

***Most important information. The rest is helpful but not necessary to make a report*
6. **You can choose to remain anonymous when calling ChildLine or the Police.** ChildLine will then do a perpetrator search to find out if they have previous information of this child being abused or the perpetrator being accused. Then ChildLine contacts the County Department of Children and Youth for the County in which that child lives, and the police if necessary.
7. If you choose to identify yourself, this gives a County Department of Children and Youth Investigator and/or Police the option to call you to clarify any information you give. They will keep your name and information confidential from the child, their family, and the alleged perpetrator. The Investigator is obligated to see the child within 24 hours of receiving the report.

Intervention Plan

If charges of child sexual abuse by a staff member or volunteer are reported to the Minister, DRE or Board of Trustees member the following actions will be taken:

1. The Minister will call Child Line and the police if the staff member or volunteer has not. In the event that the Minister is the alleged perpetrator, a Board of Trustees member will make the calls.
2. The individual reporting the alleged abuse will convene a Crisis Task Force consisting of any three of the following in addition to one staff member: the Settled Minister, DRE, Interim Minister, Board President, Church Attorney, Counselors or Teachers or Youth Advisor(s), unless any of these individuals were named an alleged perpetrator.
3. This Task Force will outline the necessary steps in response to the filed report. It will not attempt an in-depth investigation. That will be left to the appropriate government authorities.
4. It is recommended that this task force:
 - a. Document all efforts at handling the incident (e.g. who was contacted and when, using specific times and dates) while maintaining strict confidentiality.
 - b. Notify UUCLV's liability insurance carrier.
 - c. Take the advice of the police or ChildLine (for the specific situation) as to whether to notify the parents or guardians.
 - d. Confront the accused after the safety of the child or youth member is secured.
 - e. Designate a specific spokesperson for the church if media become involved.
 - f. Discretely remove the alleged offender from their UUCLV position(s) while the investigation is being conducted.

Unsubstantiated and Substantiated Claims:

*If the allegations become legally **unsubstantiated**:*

1. The accused person will need to provide official evidence, if they can obtain this, that they were innocent. This information would be placed in the accused's file along with their application. Once the investigation is begun by civil authorities, the details and information are kept confidential from the public, including UUCLV. In the majority of cases, the allegations become unsubstantiated from a legal standpoint. If this occurs, **but** the accuser remains steadfast in their allegation, the Worker will be prohibited from working with children at UUCLV.
2. If the accuser recants the allegation, then every effort will be made to exonerate, reconcile and restore the accused person. Also, a public statement by the Crisis Task Force will be made if the accused person desires.
3. The Task Force will respond with concern, care and love for the complainant(s), for the congregation, and for the accused and their family.
4. The accused will be notified in writing that a copy of the filed report and investigation's findings will be retained for legal purposes by the church. The report will be confidential and only the Minister or DRE will have access to the file.

*If the allegations and investigations **substantiate** abuse:*

1. The offender will be permanently removed from susceptible environments and offices in the UUCLV ministry.
2. The victim(s) and their family/families will be given utmost consideration and pastoral care.
3. Continued pastoral care and counseling can be extended to the offender and family during rehabilitation.
4. The Board of Trustees will weigh the risks and make a determination regarding church membership status of the offender.

Ministry and Support

To the victim who has been abused by a staff member or volunteer:

1. Confidentiality will be maintained in all cases.
2. A person from UUCLV will serve as an advocate and a support to the victim(s) and their family/families, preferably a member who has experience in a mental health field or counseling setting.
3. Sensitivity, care and love will be extended to the victim(s) and their family/families.
4. A list of qualified counselors will be provided.
5. Our church will provide some financial assistance for counseling if necessary, the amount of which shall not exceed any per visit co-pays or, if the victim is uninsured, the amount shall not exceed 80% for the cost of the first 10 counseling sessions.
6. In case of multiple victims, opportunities will be offered for these persons to meet together for support, prayer, healing and encouragement.

To the accused and his or her family:

1. Confidentiality will be maintained in all cases.
2. A person from UUCLV will serve as an advocate and support to the accused and his or her family.
3. A list of qualified counselors may be provided but the church will not assume any liability for referrals or recommendations.
4. UUCLV may provide some financial assistance at the discretion of the Board of Trustees for counseling and/or rehabilitation if necessary the amount of which shall not exceed any per visit co-pays or, if the victim is uninsured the amount shall not exceed 80% for the per visit cost, of the first 10 counseling sessions.
5. Sensitivity, care and love will be extended to the accused and his or her family.

VERBAL, PHYSICAL & SEXUAL HARRASSMENT A Guideline to Protect the Congregants and Staff

Definition

Harassment is defined as the verbal, physical and sexual conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of that person's race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nation of origin, age or disability for the purpose of one or more of the following:

1. Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment such that it interferes or unreasonably effects the individual's participation in the life of the UUCLV community.
2. Using intimidation, threats or coercion to influence a person's decisions, action or speech which may include but is not limited to epithets, slurs, stereotyping or threatening that is degrading or subjugating to a persons race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nation of origin, age or disability during committee meetings, social gatherings, isolated conversations, internet, newsletter or any other context that is a communication on behalf or representative of the UUCLV Community.
3. Making sexually explicit comments, gestures or unwanted signs of affection, whether they involve physical contact or not, as well as exposure to graphic material either in person, through correspondence or via the internet, that make a person feel uncomfortable or violated.

Harassment & Sexual Harassment Prohibition Statement

Verbal, physical or sexual harassment is specifically prohibited according to the mission and vision of creating a Safe Congregation, maintaining compassionate communication and healthy relationships among the membership of the UUCLV. The ministry of the church is guided by the responsibility to take action against any verbal, physical or sexual harassment that occurs among its congregants regardless of the context in which such behavior occurred.

Complaint Procedures

Any congregant, staff member or visitor has the right at any time to raise the issue of verbal, physical or sexual harassment without the fear of reprisal or retaliation.

The verbal, physical or sexual harassment of a staff member or congregant should be reported by either the victim or his/her witness following the procedure below:

1. The Minister or a member of the Board of Trustees should be informed of the incident date, time, location and context of the violation.
2. The Minister or a Board Member will convene a Crisis Intervention Task Force consisting of the three of the following including at least one staff member: Settled

Minister, DRE, Interim Minister, Board President, Church Attorney and those in the membership who may have experience in counseling or social work.

3. This Task Force will outline the necessary steps in response to the filed report to the degree which fits the violation. It will not attempt an in-depth investigation. That will be left to the City of Bethlehem Police Department or Northampton County Criminal Justice System.

Action Plan

1. It is recommended that this task force:
 - a. Document all efforts at handling the incident (e.g. who was contacted and when, using specific times and dates) while maintaining strict confidentiality.
 - b. Determine if the situation warrants notification of UUCLV's liability insurance carrier, police or JPD Executive.
 - c. Take the advice of the officials, police or attorneys (for the specific situation) as to whether to notify the families of either the victim or the accused.
 - d. Confront the accused about the behavior in a private intervention.
 - e. Designate a specific spokesperson for the church if media become involved.
 - f. Discretely remove the alleged offender from their UUCLV position(s) while the investigation is being conducted.

Statement of Protection for the Victim

To the victim who has been abused by a staff member or volunteer:

1. Confidentiality will be maintained in all cases.
2. A person from UUCLV will serve as an advocate and a support to the victim(s) and their family/families, preferably a member who has experience in a mental health field or counseling setting.
3. Sensitivity, care and love will be extended to the victim(s) and their family/families.
4. Opportunities will be offered for these persons to meet together for support, prayer, healing and encouragement.

Statement of Ministerial Support for the Accused

To the accused and their family:

1. Confidentiality will be maintained in all cases.
2. A person from UUCLV will serve as an advocate and support to the accused and their family.
3. A list of qualified counselors, programs or support groups may be provided for the purpose of rehabilitation but the church shall not be held liable for any referrals or recommendations provided.

Disciplinary Action

Individuals who have proven claims of verbal, physical or sexual harassment against them may be disciplined in one or more of the following ways as determined by the task force:

1. This individual will have to agree and sign a behavioral covenant specific to the level of harassment charged against that individual.
2. This individual may be asked to abandon his or her position on a committee or in leadership of the church.
3. This individual may be asked to leave the congregation for a period of time determined by the task force.
4. This individual may be asked to resign his or her membership to the church.
5. This individual may be asked to resign his or her membership to the church and may not be permitted on church property.
6. In most severe cases, a court order may be obtained or police action be acquired to protect the church and its congregants from such measures of harassment deemed threatening to the personal well-being and safety of the congregation, staff and property.

Acknowledgments

These Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Guidelines for the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley were compiled by Tara M. Zrinski, Director of Life Span Religious Education, in conversation with the members of the RE Committee for children and youth and under the guidance of Lisa Pawlowski, a Licensed Social Worker, who would like to acknowledge the following:

- Hoertdoerfer, Patricia and Frederic Muir. *The Safe Congregation Handbook: Nurturing Healthy Boundaries in our Faith Communities*. Boston: UUA, 2005.
- Hoertdoerfer, Patricia, and William Sinkford. *Creating Safe Congregations: Towards and Ethic of Right Relations*. Boston: UUA, 1997.
- Haffner, Rev. Debra W. *Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations*. [Internet Resource: <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/balancingacts>]. 2009.
- Hammar, Richard R., Steven W. Klipowicz and James F. Cobbler, Jr. *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church: A Complete and Practical Guidebook for Prevention and Risk Reduction*. North Carolina: Christian Ministry Resources, 1993.
- Klipowicz, Steven, W. *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse Training Manual*. North Carolina: Christian Ministry Resources, 1993.
- Organizations giving input to specific questions we had were: LREDA, Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth Services, ChildLine, Pat Infante of the JPD.
- Joanne Nigito-Rafta at Project Child—The Child Abuse Prevention Coalition of the Lehigh Valley whose course on Positive Parenting had a great impact on the behavioral covenants and guidelines created in this document.

Although much thought, research and energy has gone into the preparation of these guidelines, we expect that this document will change and evolve with time and experience. There will be an ongoing review of the effectiveness of these guidelines including assessment of how they impact our ability to minister in our congregation.

Volunteer Covenant Agreement

Welcome back to the journey of Religious Education for Children and Youth at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley. Thank you for sharing your time and gifts in this important ministry dedicated to children and youth. The DRE and RE Committee are always available to answer questions and to serve as support as the need for additional resources unfolds.

Position Overview

I understand that I am a member of the teaching team for one or more of the following:

PreK- K 1st & 2nd Grade 3rd & 4th Grade
 5th & 6th Grade COA/OWL Sr. High Mentor

I commit to the FALL (Sept 21-Jan 11) SPRING (Jan 11- May 27)
 8 RE classes (Sept 21- may 27)

I agree to coordinate with the other members of my team, to schedule the teaching rotation and lesson plans for the year. A copy of the completed schedule will be given to my DRE by September 21, 2008.

If I am unable to teach a Sunday I have agreed upon, I understand it is my responsibility to contact another team member first to arrange a schedule change. When substitution within the team cannot be accomplished, I will then contact my team leader first then the DRE to find a replacement.

I understand that I am not responsible to teach on Intergenerational Sundays.

Sunday Morning Time Commitment

On scheduled teaching days, I agree to arrive at church at least 15-30 minutes before the service at 10:30am to prepare the classroom and materials. I understand that on most Sundays, the children and youth participate in the first 15 minutes of the worship service or until the end of the Youth Focus.

Weekly Classroom Clean-up

I understand that 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 located in the church office. If snacks or 'glitter type' projects have resulted in the need for a vacuum, I agree to do so.

Document Checklist

My signature at the bottom of this form indicates that as a Religious Educator, I have read and agree to follow all policies and procedures indicated in this Teacher Orientation as well as those of the Safe Congregation Policy.

SIGNATURE DATE

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley
Confidential Screening Form for Positions Working With Children or Youth

This application is to be completed by all volunteers participating involving the supervision or care of minors. This is not an employment application but is being used to help the church provide a safe environment for the children and youth who participate in our program and use our facilities. The DRE reserves the right to request that a formal criminal background or sexual abuse history be provided. All information given below will be kept confidential.

Name: _____ Member of UUCLV since: _____

Phone number: (w): _____ (h): _____ (cell): _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Other Addresses in the past 5 years, if applicable on the reverse side of this sheet:

Driver's License # _____ SS# _____

Area of youth work at the UUCLV: _____

List any training or education in youth-related work: _____

Prior Experiences working with children or youth? (Please include dates, other churches, names of supervisors) _____

Personal References

1. Name _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

In what capacity did you know this person? _____

2. Name _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

In what capacity did you know this person? _____

3. Name _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

In what capacity did you know this person? _____

I authorize the DRE or designee to contact my references. I have received and read a copy of the Safe Congregation Policy and Code of Ethics Statement and I agree to the expectation and actions applied therein. The information in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley
Confidential Screening Form for Positions Working With Children or Youth

The following guidelines reflect our commitment to provide protective care to all children, youth, volunteers, and staff who participate in church-sponsored activities.

1. All adult volunteers and staff shall be a member in good standing and attendee of UUCLV for at least six months.
2. Adults who have perpetrated and/or been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of a child or children will not be permitted to serve as volunteers in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth.

Have you ever perpetrated any of these crimes?

Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever been accused of or been convicted of any of these crimes?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Adult volunteers and staff are to observe the “two adult” rule. This requires that adults make every reasonable effort to avoid being in an isolated setting with children or youth without another youth/child Worker.
4. Volunteers or staff are to immediately report to the DRE any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate or any incident reported by a child or adolescent.
5. When an allegation of abuse is brought to the attention of the staff, it will be reported to outside authorities (ChildLine and/or the Police). The volunteer or staff member accused will be informed that he/she may not minister to children or adolescents at UUCLV during the investigation.

Do you have any questions about these guidelines? Yes _____ No _____

As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe all church guidelines regarding working with youth or children: Yes _____ No _____

Do you have any personal history of abuse (sexual abuse or abuse any kind) **that you feel would prevent you** from complying with these guidelines working with children or reporting child abuse? Yes _____ No _____

Are you willing to fill out a consent form for a criminal and child abuse background check? Yes _____ No _____

For your interview process, do you have a preference for who would conduct the interview? Yes: _____ A Male _____ A Female or No preference _____

Are you willing to attend a training course(s) to become familiar UUCLV’s Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Guidelines? Yes _____ No _____
(This is not mandatory for Occasional Child/Youth Workers)

I certify that the information contained in this application is correct, complete, and accurate. I give my permission for any references checked to give the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley any information they may have regarding my suitability and fitness for children’s or youth work. I have read the above guidelines and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS STATEMENT

The relationship between young people and their leaders is based on mutual respect.

I am committed to a physical, social and spiritual environment to trust and safety for all.

I understand that at least two adults are present in any gathering of children and that all classrooms are monitored regularly.

I affirm that there is nothing in my background that would call into question my being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of children and youth.

I affirm that I have never been convicted of a crime involving a child or welfare of a child nor has a court or child welfare agency determined that I have abused or endangered a child.

I understand that this congregation’s Safe Congregation Policy authorizes criminal background checks and child abuse histories of its volunteers. Should there be an incident whereby the congregation deems it necessary to check my criminal and sexual abuse history, I give my full cooperation in helping the congregation obtain criminal background checks and sexual abuse clearance for the State of Pennsylvania or any other state of prior residence.

Should I be disallowed to work with children and youth, I understand that I shall have no recourse against the congregation, its clergy or its staff.

SIGNATURE

WITNESS

DATE

** If you are unable to complete this form, please see a member of our clergy before volunteering to work with children in any capacity.

Reference Contact Form
FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Person making contact _____

Name of Applicant _____

Reference: Church _____ Person Contacted _____
Date and Time of Contact _____
Method of Contact: Phone _____ Letter _____ Personal Conversation _____
Summary of Conversation (the reference's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for youth or children's work):

Reference: Church _____ Person Contacted _____
Date and Time of Contact _____
Method of Contact: Phone _____ Letter _____ Personal Conversation _____
Summary of Conversation (the reference's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for youth or children's work):

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Requirements for RE Participants Pre K - Sixth Grade

1. Registration Form
2. Permission/ Emergency Information

Requirements for Youth Grades Seven through Twelve

1. Registration Form
2. Permission/ Emergency Information
3. Code of Ethics Statement for UU Youth
4. Any form necessary to participate in given curriculum

Requirements for Adult Volunteers and Teachers

1. Volunteer Covenant Agreement with References
2. Code of Ethics Statement for Children and Youth
3. PA Criminal Background Check
4. PA Sexual Abuse Clearance
5. Volunteers must be known and active in the church community for at least 6 months or provide references from their past UU Church
6. Membership to the UUCLV is encouraged

**UUCLV RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
REGISTRATION AND PERMISSION FROM**

Child's Name _____ / _____
(Last) (First) (Nickname)

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Grade in Fall 2007: _____ **Birthday:** _____

Parent/ Guardian: _____

Known Allergies? _____

Medications?: _____

Medical Conditions: _____

Learning/Emotional needs: _____

Any other needs which may be important for a teacher to know while participating in RE with your child? _____

I DO wish my child's name to be included in the church directory.

I DO NOT wish my child's name to be included in the church directory.

I hereby give my permission for the aforementioned child to participate in all activities on or around the church during RE. If for some reason the class would attend an event off church premises, I understand I will be informed and an additional permission slip will be required for my child(ren) to attend the event. I understand that all teachers are required to sign a Code of Ethics statement that reflects the values and trust within which I place my children in their care during class time. I also recognize that any information on this sheet may be shared with the RE teachers, Committee or Ministerial Staff as it fits the needs of my child's participation in RE.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Parent/ Guardian)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Parent/ Guardian)

Note: Please inform the office of Religious Education of any change to the information stated on this sheet including mailing address or phone number as well as the special needs of your child.

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

I hereby give my son/daughter _____ permission to attend events that are sponsored by the UUCLV. I understand that I will be informed of each individual event.

In the event of an emergency, I hereby grant permission to the chaperones to make a decision in the best interest of my child and have provided the following contact information to be used in the event of an emergency.

Primary Contact: _____ Alternate: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Cell: _____

Please indicate any allergies or medication the child may be on of which the chaperones should be aware in the event of an emergency:

Allergies: _____ Medication: _____
_____ Medical

Conditions: _____

Insurance Information Provider: _____

Policy Number: _____

Group Number: _____

Please indicate whether you agree to the provision of emergency first aid or treatment:

_____ No, please contact me first _____ Yes, administer Emergency Care First

If there are any persons to whom your child should not be relinquished to at, during or after the event, please list them below and provide any necessary documentation that accompanies this request (PFA, Custody Order, etc.)

_____, _____, _____

I _____ hereby state that all of the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge and that any care necessary will be in the hands and at the discretion of the chaperones within whom I place the trust and safety of my child. I relinquish the right to seek legal recourse or financial retribution for the decisions made pertaining to emergency medication attention by the chaperones and who I trust will act in accord to the best of their ability and knowledge towards the well being and safety of my child.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

Each child is required to provide these forms prior to or the day of the event so that either the church or the chaperone have signed copies for their records.

1. Registration Form
2. RE Emergency Contact Information/ Medical History Form
3. Event Permission Form
4. Driver Release Form
5. Code of Ethics Statement for UU Youth (If between 7th and 12th Grade)

If transportation to and from the event is necessary. The following Drivers Policy should be followed.

DRIVERS POLICY

All drivers must have a current license and be 21 or over to transport youth to and from events. See the driver's checklist for further details. The following forms must be signed and on record in the church office.

1. Volunteer Covenant/ Code of Ethics Statement
2. PA Criminal Background Check
3. PA Sexual Abuse History Clearance
4. Signed Driver's Policy
5. Driver Checklist

DRIVER CHECKLIST

Prior to the trip:

1. Car must have current registration
2. Car should be up to date on scheduled maintenance
 - a) Capacity of the vehicle is determined by the number of seat belts (1:1)
 - b) Obey all State Driving and Speed Regulations. (Any violation that constitutes a fine will be the responsibility of the driver).
 - c) Drive defensively and carefully.
3. If a rental vehicle is being used, it should be organized at least a week prior to the event for picked up the day of the event.
3. Driver must have current License and be over 21.
4. Driver will log his/her mileage and keep receipts of tolls, gas and costs to be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses.
5. A driver shall in no way be under the influence of drugs, alcohol or prescription medications that might impair vision, judgment or motor skills.
6. Driver must sign acknowledgements of driving responsibilities.

After the trip:

1. Driver will wait until each child has been picked up by a parent or guardian unless prior arrangement have been made with the parent/guardian's written consent.
2. Driver will be reimbursed for costs incurred by driving to event upon completion of the reimbursement sheet and submitting it to Allen Zinnes or the Current Treasurer of the UUCLV.
3. By no means is a youth to be released to another youth unless there is written permission by both participant's parents acknowledging the release.

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY
EVENT PERMISSION FORM

I hereby give my son/daughter permission to attend the following event:

Event: _____
Location _____: _____

Activity/ Purpose: _____
Start Time: _____ End Time: _____
Chaperone 1. _____ 2. _____

In the event of an emergency, I hereby grant permission to the chaperones to make a decision in the best interest of my child and have provided the following contact information to be used in the event of an emergency.

Primary Contact: _____ Alternate: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____
Cell: _____

Please indicate any allergies or medication the child may be on of which the chaperones should be aware in the event of an emergency:

Allergies: _____ Medication: _____

Medical Conditions: _____

Insurance Information: Provider: _____
Policy Number: _____
Group Number: _____

Please indicate whether you agree to the provision of emergency first aid or treatment:

_____ No, please contact me first _____ Yes, administer Emergency Care First

If there are any persons to whom your child should not be relinquished to at, during or after the event, please list them below and provide any necessary documentation that accompanies this request (PFA, Custody Order, etc.)

I _____ hereby state that all of the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge and that any care necessary will be in the hands and at the discretion of the chaperones within whom I place the trust and safety of my child. I relinquish the right to seek legal recourse or financial retribution for the decisions made pertaining to emergency medication attention by the chaperones and who I trust will act in accord to the best of their ability and knowledge towards the well being and safety of my child.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

DRIVER RELEASE FORM

To accompany Event Permission Form if Event is Off Church Premises

Event: _____

Destination Address: _____

Activity/ Purpose: _____

Start Time: _____ Meeting Location: _____

End Time: _____ Return Location: _____

Type of Transportation : _____ Car _____ Rental Van _____ Bus _____ Other

Driver Vehicle 1 _____ PA License ID _____ Plate: _____

Driver Vehicle 2 _____ PA License ID _____ Plate: _____

Driver Vehicle 3 _____ PA License ID _____ Plate: _____

Driver Vehicle 4 _____ PA License ID _____ Plate: _____

Group Contact: _____

Please **KEEP** this above portion for your reference while your child is on the above Trip:

(Tear along the line and return the lower portion with your child's event permission form)

Participants Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

My _____ has my permission to participate in the
(Son or Daughter's name)

_____ on _____. I understand my
(Event name) (date)

Child will be in Vehicle # _____ driven by _____.
(Name of driver)

I have read and accept the Driver's Policy and have reviewed the Driver Checklist which acknowledges the responsibilities of the designated Driver. In consideration of the UUCLV organizing certain activities and events and allowing my child to participate in an event off church premises, neither my child nor I will hold the UUCLV or its agents/volunteers responsible or institute suit for damages, loss or injury that may be sustained as a result of my child's participation in the activated identified at the top of this page. I realize precautions will be taken against accident or injury. I give my permission for emergency medical treatment for my child.

Signature Print Name Date

DRIVER CHECKLIST

Prior to the trip:

1. Car must have current registration
2. Car should be up to date on scheduled maintenance
 - a) Capacity of the vehicle is determined by the number of seat belts (1:1)
 - b) Obey all State Driving and Speed Regulations. (Any violation that constitutes a fine will be the responsibility of the driver).
 - c) Drive defensively and carefully.
3. If a rental vehicle is being used, it should be organized at least a week prior to the event for picked up the day of the event.
3. Driver must have current License and be over 21.
4. Driver will log his/her mileage and keep receipts of tolls, gas and costs to be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses.
5. A driver shall in no way be under the influence of drugs, alcohol or prescription medications that might impair vision, judgment or motor skills.
6. Driver must sign acknowledgements of driving responsibilities.

After the trip:

1. Driver will wait until each child has been picked up by a parent or guardian unless prior arrangement have been made with the parent/guardian's written consent.
2. Driver will be reimbursed for costs incurred by driving to event upon completion of the reimbursement sheet and submitting it to Allen Zinnes or the Current Treasurer of the UUCLV.
3. By no means is a youth to be released to another youth unless there is written permission by both participant's parents acknowledging the release.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DRIVING RESPONSIBILITY

I have read and will adhere to the responsibilities outlined in the driver checklist while transporting the youth to and from any church-sponsored events.

I am aware that my auto insurance is current and that, in the event of an accident, it is my responsibility to seek reimbursement from my own and/or the other parties insurance company for any damages, loss or injury that might occur regardless of whether I am at fault for the accident. I am aware that transporting youth as such subjects me to certain liability risks for which I will not hold the UUCLV, its staff members or congregation responsible.

1. Vehicle Owner _____ Year _____
2. Make _____ Model _____
3. License Plate # _____
4. Driver License ID _____
5. Auto Insurance Provider _____
6. Insurance ID # _____

Signature of Driver _____ Date _____
Print Name _____

**UUCLV RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
PHOTO & IMAGE RELEASE FROM**

Child's Name _____ / _____
(Last) (First) (Nickname)

Grade in Fall 2008: _____ **Birthday:** _____

Photos of your child may be taken throughout the year, documenting special events, classroom activities and church services. These photos will be used to represent the UUCLV and its activities in a photo archive and within the classroom. These photos will never be distributed through mail or over the internet or used in any other way to promote the church including the churches website. These photos may be on display in the church or placed in a church photo album so as to create a visual, institutional archive of church life.

_____ **I hereby give permission to the UUCLV to take photos of my child to be used for the purposes outlined in the aforementioned paragraph.**

_____ **I DO NOT give permission to the UUCLV to take photos of my child to be used for the purposes outlined in the aforementioned paragraph.**

By indicating my preference above, I acknowledge that I am aware that photos will be taken during RE and other church activities but that any photos of my child may or may not be included according to my request.

I release the UUCLV from any liability of damages, injuries or fault that may occur from the usage of these photos for the documentation of church life with my signature below.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Parent/ Guardian)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Parent/ Guardian)

Note: Please inform the office of Religious Education of any change to the information stated on this sheet for any reason.