



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF UTICA (UUU) Safe Congregation Practices and Policies

The UUU will have a standing Safe Congregation committee, which along with the minister, will be comprised of a member of the Religious Education (RE) committee, a member of the Board of Trustees, and at least one other member of the congregation appointed by the chair of the committee. Members of the congregation will be advised of the Safe Congregation committee meeting annually. Any person in the congregation who has a concern or knowledge of sexual abuse or sexual harassment involving a congregant of the UUU is urged to contact a member of the committee. Appendix A contains a list of current committee members.

All paid RE staff and ministers will be subject to a background check and completion of the screening form (Appendix B). New hires will be contingent on clean reports about sexual offenses. Screening will be conducted by a person designated by the chair.

All RE teachers will complete the screening form and sign the ethics policy (Appendix C) at the time they sign up to teach or before they begin teaching. All adults who interact with children in the RE program will have background checks. Minors who work in RE must attend an education session on child abuse and sign the ethics form. Information for children on child sexual abuse prevention will be integrated into all OWL classes.

Training in sexual abuse prevention will be held each year for RE teachers.

Two adults should be present in all religious education classrooms at all times; this may necessitate a parent volunteer staying. All drivers to RE activities must provide copies of driver's licenses and insurance.

It is expected that a member of the congregation or a potential member/participant with a history or active accusation of sexual misconduct/abuse/sexual offense, will make that history known to the minister, who will follow the procedures below.

Any person accused of a sexual offense of any kind will be placed on a Restricted Access Agreement (see appendix) without prejudice. The Safe Congregation Committee will be convened within 10 days of such a person being made known to any member of the committee to develop the agreement (which may be subsequently revised upon more information). The Restricted Access agreement will remain in effect

until all charges are dropped *or* confirmed (in which case see below). Persons will not continue to attend or participate in any programs or services of the UUU until a Restricted Access agreement is drawn up.

Any person convicted of a sexual offense or a history of known sexual offenses will be placed on a Restricted Access agreement without prejudice. The Safe Congregations Committee will be convened within 10 days of such a person being made known to any member of the Safe Congregations Committee to develop the agreement upon consultation with the person's parole office and/or treatment provider if it is determined that they can participate in the adult life of the congregation safely.

Any person accused, convicted, or with a history of known sexual offenses who will not sign the Restricted Access Agreement will be denied access to any programs or services at the UUU.. For further procedures on responding to a person accused, convicted, or with a history of known sex offenses, the UUU will refer to the procedures outlined in the website *Balancing Acts* (<http://www.uua.org/safe/children/index.shtml>)

This document will be posted on the UUU website, conveyed at the annual meeting, reviewed annually with all RE volunteers, reviewed annually by the Safe Congregations Committee, and presented in the annual report to the congregation, including notice of any persons currently attending who have signed a Restricted Access Agreement.

Approved by Board of Trustees, February 19, 2013



SAFE CONGREGATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

as of February 4, 2013:

1. Mary Drucker
2. Melissa Barlett
3. Stephen Hampe
4. Denise Morgan



Code of Ethics

Adults For and Older Youth Working with Children and Youth

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility.

The relationship between youth and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if positive potential is to be realized. There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care, therefore leaders shall refrain from engaging sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

I have read and understand the above statements of position, expectations, and actions.

Name (printed): _____

Name (signed): _____

Date: _____



**Restricted Access Agreement - Confidential
Allegation**

To _____ :

A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children and youth in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement. Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confession of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known only to the Minister and the members of the Safe Congregation Committee. It will be kept in a locked file in the office.

You understand that you will not be allowed to volunteer or chaperone events for children and adolescents, including children’s religious education classes, talks with children/adolescents during worship, youth group, children’s and adolescents’ activities during intergenerational events, and driving children and young people.

The activities checked “Yes” are activities we feel are appropriate for your participation.				
Worship Services	No	Yes	W/ Support Person*	
			No	Yes
Coffee Hour				
Adult meeting with children in building, such as choir				
Have a Key to the building				
Intergenerational Church Activities				
Intergenerational group outings such as ice skating, baseball games, etc.				
Alone in building with minister or other staff				
Access to church computer				
Social activities in other member’s homes with children present				
**A support person is a person who knows about your history/situation and has been designated by you with our approval to accompany you to activities where children and youth may be present.				

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

I have reviewed this document and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property.

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

(Signature)

(Date)

(Witness)

(Date)

Religious Education Chair

(Date)

(Board Chair)

(Date)