

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio Child and Youth Protection Policy

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Overview

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio (First UU) affirms and promotes the inherent worth and dignity of every person, as well as justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. In that spirit, we are called to encourage the spiritual growth and to ensure the safety of all children, youth, and adults who are a part of our religious community whether for a moment or for life. The following policies and procedures are guidelines for maintaining a safe facility and environment for users of all ages; keeping children and youth safe; educating adults, youth, and children in the congregation about abuse and prevention; and responding to anyone who has been convicted or accused of sexual offenses. These policies and procedures shall be made readily accessible to any person who may wish to see them.

PURPOSE

- 1) To provide guidelines for maintaining a program and facility that provide physical, emotional, and spiritual safety.
- 2) To insure that guidelines regarding appropriate behavior with the children and youth of our church are in place and;
- 3) Through prevention steps, reduce the likelihood that inappropriate behavior toward children will occur and;
- 4) Provide guidance on how to effectively respond to incidents that may occur, whether during a church activity or at other times.

PREVENTING ABUSE

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation, in partnership with parents, to create and maintain a safe environment that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth in our church programs. However, this policy is devoted primarily to situations in which children and youth are in a supervised relationship with church members other than their parents. The child's welfare shall be considered to be the parent's responsibility if the child is on church grounds but not actually in a church-supervised activity.

In an effort to protect our young people as well as our leaders, teachers, contracted child care workers and all other adults who work or volunteer with children and youth in the church will be required to sign the **Code of Ethics (form A)** and pass a criminal background check before they assume child supervision roles.

At least two adults, including child care workers, should be present in each classroom on Sunday mornings, and on every outing, overnight and other church-related activity with groups of children. In events where there is free-flow between rooms, two adults in the

building will be sufficient, as long as doors remain open. Windows must remain uncovered at all times.

Except for brief periods when unforeseen circumstances make it necessary, at no time shall one adult and one child/youth be alone together out of sight of other adults unless the adult is a parent or legal guardian of the child/youth.

Guidelines for adults working with children and youth

1. Teachers and Youth Advisors shall not engage in behavior with children or youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse; this includes behavior and language that is personally threatening or demeaning.
2. Teachers and Youth Advisors shall exercise care to note the location of all fire-safety equipment (extinguishers, etc.) and first aid kits in the space in which they are working. They are encouraged to attend training in basic first aid and CPR. First UU will be responsible for providing such training at least once a year.
3. Teachers and Youth Advisors shall neither indulge in sexually harassing behavior nor engage in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children and youth.
4. Teachers and Youth Advisors shall not use illegal drugs or alcohol or engage in any illegal activities while supervising youth. Teachers and Youth Advisors shall not allow the use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol or any illegal activities among children or youth. They will be familiar with and follow the rules for handling alcohol at church events as set forth in **Document B, alcohol policy.**
5. Youth advisors will be familiar and act in accordance with the Southeastern Unitarian Universalist Conference (SWUUC) Child and Youth Protection policies when taking part in SWUUC events in their role as youth advisors. This policy can be found by following the link at: <http://swuuc.org/pages/lifespan-faith-development.php>
6. Nursery care workers will be familiar and in compliance with **Document C, Nursery Care Guidelines for First Unitarian Universalist Church San Antonio.**
7. The number of children per adult care provider should not exceed the recommended guidelines suggested by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Safe child-staff ratio and group size

Age	Staff-to-child ratio	Maximum group size
Newborn–24 months	1:3	6

25–30 months	1:4	8
31–35 months	1:5	10
3 years	1:7	14
4–5 years	1:8	16
6–8 years	1:10	20
9–12 years	1:12	24

When infants or toddlers are included in mixed age groups, the staff-to-child ratios and group size guidelines for the youngest child should be followed. Mixed age groups that do not include infants or toddlers should follow guidelines that reflect the most common age.

Internet/Media safety: In order for children to have their likenesses portrayed in any church media, web site, newsletter, or any publication, parents must sign a **Media Permission Form (Form D)**. When images are used, names will not be included with photographs, nor will any potentially identifying information.

Forbidden items: For all church activities, the following are forbidden from being brought onto church grounds: weapons of any kind, fireworks including cherry and smoke bombs, illegal drugs, inappropriate materials for age, including cigarettes and sexually explicit materials not used as part of a curriculum. Use of alcohol will conform to the church’s alcohol policy.

Field Trips

1. Parents or guardians must be notified when children are leaving the church premises, and parents or guardians must sign a **field trip permission form (form E)**. For youth events, use **Form F, Rally Retreat** or **Form G, YRUU Travel Permission**, as appropriate.
2. There must be a minimum of two adults with the group. There must be a ratio of one adult to five children. In the event of an emergency, exceptions can be made at the discretion of the responsible adult(s) on the trip.
3. Children must be secured safely in vehicles according to current state regulations for seatbelts and car seat restraint.

Prevention through Training and Education

Greater understanding of the complexities of sexuality and inappropriate behavior will help us to avoid situations that could lead to abuse or to false accusations. For our children and youth, the YRE Committee and DLRE will provide age-appropriate information about development and sexuality. First UU will implement the *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education curriculum for as many age levels as possible, in order to give children and youth life skills and language to avoid, confront and/or report inappropriate behavior. Our children must be empowered to protect themselves and report abuse.

For YRE teachers and other volunteers working with children and youth, the YRE Committee will provide annual training and written information regarding this policy and child abuse prevention.

For new members of the church, the Membership Committee will provide a copy of this policy to be included in all new member packets. This policy will be included in First UU's Manual of Operations and will be available on the church's web site.

Screening and Supervision of Adults Working with Children and Youth

All YRE teachers and other adults working with children and youth:

- A) Will have been attending First UU regularly for at least six months or have references from other Unitarian Universalist churches that include the minister or RE director, or have childcare references from the public or private sector.
- B) Will have completed a **Request for Criminal History Record Clearance (Form H)** and passed a confidential criminal background check
- C) Will have attended at least one training session related to this policy organized by the YRE Committee within 6 months of starting date
- D) Will have read, understood and signed the **Code of Ethics (form A)**
- E) Will have a valid driver's license, liability insurance, and current automobile registration and license plates on their vehicle if they are to transport children/youth to church-sponsored activities.

Nursery care workers will be at least 18 years of age; volunteers working with children ages 13 and below will be at least 21 years of age; volunteers working with youth ages 14 and up will be at least 25 years of age.

Confidential criminal background checks will be conducted for all paid staff and all volunteers working with children or youth.

Any individual who has been convicted of any of the following will be prohibited from teaching/volunteering in any capacity with the YRE program.

- Murder
- Abduction of children
- Sexual assault
- Aggravated assault
- Crimes against children

- Indecency with a child
 - Abuse and neglect of a child
 - Abandoning or endangering a child
 - Injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual
 - Possession of, or trafficking in, child pornography
- Or, any equivalent offense within or outside of the State of Texas

In addition, for youth advisors only we will also check for

- DWI/DUI (Driving while Intoxicated/Driving under the Influence)
- Repeated moving traffic violations

In addition, the Dept. of Justice guidelines <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/fy08appendix6.pdf> for people working with children, elderly, or disabled will also be used. Any of these offenses (including possession/trafficking in controlled substances) will be checked and circumstances (e.g., age at time of offense, time since incident) will be weighed by the minister and DLRE against possible risk to youth. A record of the minister and DLRE's decision will be kept. **(Document I)**

Specific details regarding offenses of any kind, regardless of type, will be kept confidential.

This policy encourages any congregant who has been convicted of, is under current indictment for, or has been involved in any act of sexual misconduct involving a child or of child abuse to make him or herself known to the minister or DLRE. Members or friends of the congregation who become aware of such information should report this to the minister or DLRE, who will then decide how to handle the situation.

REPORTING

In the case of simple accident or injury to a child or adult, the staff member or volunteer in charge of the activity in which it occurred will complete **Form J, Accident Report Form**, which is to be signed by the injured party or his/her parent or guardian, and kept on file in the DLRE's office. For more serious incidents, the staff member or volunteer in charge of the activity in which it occurred will complete **Form K, Incident Report form**, which is to be signed by the injured party or his/her parent or guardian, and kept on file in the church administrator's office.

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Situations of suspected child abuse are seldom simple and straight forward. Religious leaders should be guided by a commitment to the overriding priority of protecting the children. They should also be sensitive to the harm that can be done by false or mistaken accusations. (See **Addendum 1** for a definition of child abuse)

IF A CHURCH MEMBER OR FRIEND OR STAFF PERSON HAS A SUSPICION THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED, EITHER WHILE IN THE CHURCH PROGRAM OR AT OTHER TIMES, THE PERSON WITH THE SUSPICION MUST REPORT THE INCIDENT TO STATE AUTHORITIES BY STATE LAW.

In addition, if the person with the concern believes the abuse occurred during a church program, because the child or youth could be a continued risk, it is recommended that the individual should report his or her concerns to the minister, or DLRE.

When an allegation of child abuse occurring during a church program is reported to the minister or DLRE, the responsible person receiving the allegation should take the necessary steps to

- 1) Abide by Texas law on reporting child abuse;
- 2) Take appropriate action to assure protection of the children in the church.

REPORTING OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR TOWARD CHILDREN

If any congregant witnesses behavior toward any child that could be viewed as inappropriate, that congregant should report that behavior to the appropriate person as noted below. If the perceived inappropriate behavior is by a YRE teacher or a volunteer working with children or youth, the DLRE should be informed. The DLRE may choose to discuss this behavior with the teacher or volunteer and educate that person on appropriate behavior. If the teacher or volunteer does not understand and correct the behavior or if the DLRE believes that the behavior puts children or youth at risk, the DLRE is to report the behavior to the minister. The DLRE, in consultation with the YRE Committee, shall be empowered to remove the teacher or volunteer from the YRE program and recommend that the teacher involved not work with children or youth in any capacity at the church.

If an accusation of abuse of a child by a member of the community has been reported, the minister will ask the accused to sign **Form L: an Interim Agreement Regarding Restrictions with Children**, which would restrict contact with children while the accusation is being investigated. It is designed to protect children from any possible risk, to protect the accused from further suspicion, and to facilitate confidentiality while the complaint is being resolved. This document is kept in a locked file and is reviewed only by the Committee and the President of the Board of Trustees. If the accused is cleared of the accusations or if the complaint is withdrawn, the document is returned to him/her and the formal interim restrictions are terminated. If the accusations are found supported by the relevant authorities, the Committee will ask the offender to sign **Form M: an Agreement for Those Needing Restrictions with Children**. Similarly, should the minister or DLRE become aware that a member of the congregation has, in the past, sexually abused children or if any other reason exists to limit the person's contact with our children and youth, the minister will require the individual to sign the **Agreement for Those Needing Restrictions with Children (Form M)**. This document is kept in a locked file and reviewed only by the minister and the President of the Board of Trustees. Such information may be revealed to others on a need-to-know basis.

If the perceived inappropriate behavior is by the minister, the president of the board should be notified and a meeting of the board of directors held to determine the appropriate response. The Personnel Chair should be present if a staff member is involved. If the Personnel Chair can not be present for the meeting, a report will be made to the Personnel Chair following the meeting.

Confidentiality - Since these matters are sensitive, it is important that all persons involved, including the reporting person and the staff member involved, maintain the level of confidentiality recommended by the minister or DLRE.

False or Mistaken Accusations

The protection from false or mistaken allegations of adults who teach in the YRE program or otherwise interact with children at church is also an important goal of this policy. A key way to prevent false or mistaken allegations is to abide by the prevention guidelines outlined in the Prevention portion of this policy. We should be sensitive to the disruption and damage a false accusation may cause to both the adults and the children involved. This is true even when the accusation is one due to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of what seems a child's straightforward report of an event.

If it is determined that an accusation has not been made in good faith or has been made with malice, the confidentiality of the reporting person will not be protected, except as may be determined by the board in the case of a minor. The minister may determine that a false accusation by a child or youth requires further consideration.

K. Response to Media Inquiries

Only the First UU Minister or the President of the First UU Board of Trustees (or her/his specific designee) may speak for the First UU in response to media inquiries concerning an alleged incident of injury, abuse, or objectionable conduct.

ENFORCEMENT

The YRE Committee

The YRE Committee shall be charged with understanding this Policy and being certain that all its actions and rules governing the YRE program are in agreement with the Policy. The YRE Co-chair will meet with the DLRE when requested by the DLRE to remove a teacher or volunteer from working with youth or children, and advise the DLRE in such matters.

Staff Obligations

All staff are to read and be in compliance with First UU's comprehensive church safety policy, including the child and youth protection policy and the **alcohol policy (Document B)**.

Minister

We as a community expect the minister to abide by the UU Ministers Association's Code of Professional Practice which is published in the *UUMA Guidelines* and is available in the church library and the church office, or from the UUMA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston MA 02108, or at www.uua.com.

The Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE)

We as a community expect the Director of Religious Education and other professional religious education staff, to abide by the Liberal Religious Educator's Code of Professional Practice, which acknowledges that religious educators are also the recipients of special trust. In subscribing to this code, professional religious educators agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles. The complete text of the Code is published in the LREDA Guidelines and Code of Professional Practices which is available in the Church library and the Church office, or from the LREDA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston MA 02108, or at www.uua.com.

The DLRE shall make every effort to ensure compliance with this Policy. The DLRE shall be certain that the teachers and volunteers working with youth and children sign the **Code of Ethics (Form A)** yearly, keep these on file, ascertain that all teachers are in compliance with the Child and Youth Protection Policy, and maintain appropriate confidential records. The DLRE is to seek the advice of the minister on all matters related to this policy. The DLRE shall make certain that Youth Advisors are in compliance with this Policy.

The Role of the Congregation

Maintaining the safety of our youth and children is part of the covenant we all have with the church and with each other. Any member of the congregation or staff should feel free to contact the minister or DLRE with any concerns or ideas that would make First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio a better place for children or youth.

The Role of Parents

Parents should be familiar with, and make sure their children are familiar with, First UU's **Children's Covenant and Rules (Document N)** and the church's policy for enforcement outlined in **Document O, Safety and Behavior Guidelines Policy Violations**. All parents will be asked to agree to this policy when they register their child(ren.) for our YRE program.

Parents are responsible for their own children and youth when that young person is not in a scheduled church activity. Parents are also responsible for their own children and youth before and after scheduled church activities. The church is **NOT** responsible for the safety of children and youth on church grounds at times other than during the time of scheduled church events. If parents are to leave church grounds while their children are in a supervised activity, they should fill out **Form P (Emergency Information)**. No children or youth should be on the church grounds at times when no church events are scheduled unless a parent or adult authorized by a parent is present with the child or youth. Committee/board chairs with youth membership shall see that youth are not left

alone on campus but are attended by at least two adults while awaiting pick-up by parents after meetings.

The role of children

See **Document N: Children’s Covenant and Rules**

The role of youth

See **Document Q: Youth Policies**

The minister will make the final determination of any additional consequences appropriate to the violation of this policy, including, but not limited to, termination of a staff person (except for the minister) and any additional action in the case of volunteers or members. Violation of this policy by the minister or DLRE or other staff persons shall constitute good cause for discipline under the terms of that staff member’s contract. The Board shall also inform the following of any determination of serious violations by the minister of this policy: the Southwest District Executive, the Director of the Department of Ministry of the UUA, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association.

Addendum 1, Definition of Terms:

DLRE: Director of Lifespan Religious Education

First UU: First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio

LREDA: Liberal religious Educators' Association

RE: Religious Education

UUA: Unitarian Universalist Association

UUMA: Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association

YRE: Youth Religious Education

What is Child Abuse?

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) defines child abuse as "an act committed by a parent, care giver, or person in a position of trust that harms or threatens to harm a child's well-being or physical or mental health." Child abuse is also against the law.

There are four categories of child abuse according to the UUA:

Physical Abuse: Deliberately inflicting bodily harm to a child. Instances of child abuse include violent assault with hands, feet, a knife, or other instrument, or burns, fractures, and bruises resulting from being beaten, shaken, or thrown.

Sexual Abuse: Engaging in sexualized behavior, verbal or physical, with a child, using a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Any time a child is used for the sexual stimulation of an adult or a significantly older child, abuse has occurred. The child is powerless either to consent to or resist such sexual acts. Sexual abuse can include the fondling, sexual intercourse, forced participation in sexual acts, incest, and exploitation for the purpose of pornography or prostitution. Child sexual abuse is illegal regardless of whether the child "consents" or not. Consent is not an issue. The offender bears the entire responsibility for the abuse, whatever form it takes. 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 the actions. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects. Types of abuse that involve touching include: sexual fondling; oral, genital, and anal penetration; intercourse, forcible rape. Types of abuse that do not involve touching include: verbal comments such as statements intended to seduce children, pornographic videos, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse may be very difficult to identify and document. Emotional abuse deeply affects a child's self-esteem by subjecting a child to verbal assault or emotional cruelty. It can include close confinement, inadequate nurturing, extreme discipline, or deliberately permitting destructive behaviors such as drug or alcohol abuse.

Neglect: Children have basic physical, nutritional, and environmental needs that must be

supplied. Chronic withholding of food, clothing, medication, and proper living quarters, as well as abandonment are all acts of neglect. Neglect can include physical, emotional, or educational neglect through such actions as inadequate supervision, health hazards in the home, refusing to seek treatment for illnesses, providing inadequate nurturing, and deliberately permitting chronic truancy.

Sexual Misconduct

Any instance of:

- Undesired or inappropriate sexually oriented humor, language, questions, or comments, or
- Undesired or inappropriate physical contact, or
- Inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or
- Intimidation or hostile sexually orientated comments.

A one time occurrence may be sufficiently serious to constitute sexual misconduct.

Sexual Harassment Repeated, ongoing, and unwanted incidents of sexual misconduct.

Addendum 2: Texas State Law

Clergy as Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect

To better understand this issue and to view it across States, see the *Clergy as Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect: Full-Text Excerpts of State Laws* ([PDF](#) - 262 KB) publication.

Citation: Tex. Fam. Code Ann. § 261.101 (West, WESTLAW through End of 1999 Reg. Sess.)

Statute Text:

A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter.

The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, a mental health professional, and an employee of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services.

What's the Law (From Prevent Child Abuse Texas—www.preventchildabusetexas.org)

Anyone “having cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect” must report the case to any state or local law enforcement agency and to the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is punishable by imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$1,000. (Texas Family Code, chapter 34).

Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-252-5400.

FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

A. Code of Ethics Statement for Volunteer Teachers and Youth Advisors

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio
Code of Ethics Statement
For Volunteer Teachers and Youth Advisors

Adults and older youth in leadership roles in this congregation are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the 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 young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized. Respect on the leader’s part must include recognition of the absolute right of children and youth to the privacy of their bodies and minds.

Sometimes a genuine mentoring relationship will develop between a youth and an adult. These can be not only healthy, but also transformative for both parties. However, it is our concern that a “predator,” who does not have the best interest of the youth at heart, will try to disguise an unhealthy relationship with a youth as a mentoring relationship. Therefore, it is imperative that your behavior both be and appear to be above reproach. Any relationship you develop with a youth outside of church-sponsored events must be with the knowledge and consent of the parents. This is for the protection of the youth from potential predators, but also for your own protection. Specific rules governing behavior of adults working with children and youth are stated in First UU’s child and youth protection policy. Questions and concerns regarding what might be appropriate or inappropriate behavior should be directed to the Director of Lifespan Religious Education or the Minister.

I have read and understand the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio’s Code of Ethics and agree to abide by it, as well as by all rules for behavior with children and youth as set forth in the church’s Child and Youth Protection Policy.

Print Name

Date

Signature

B. Alcohol Policy

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio ALCOHOL POLICY

General Statement

It is the policy of the church that the responsible consumption of alcohol by adults at church events is acceptable. If alcohol is to be served at church events, alternative beverages shall also be provided. This policy is applicable to church events occurring off-site as well, unless the other site has a more restrictive policy, in which case the more restrictive policy shall apply.

The following procedures regarding the handling and serving of alcohol are to be followed at any event taking place at the church:

- 1) Alcoholic beverages may not be served by, or to, anyone under 21.
- 2) Adults attending an event in a capacity as teacher or advisor of children or youth may not consume alcohol.
- 3) Alcohol will be served in a separate area from food and other drink.
- 4) No one under 21 may handle any container that has alcohol in it, or has contained alcohol. Persons under 21 who are serving or cleaning up shall not handle glasses or other containers of alcohol left on tables.
- 5) One person (the alcohol custodian, AC) shall be in charge of keeping track of all alcohol containers at an event. Event organizers are responsible for assigning this role. Keeping track of alcohol containers includes bringing them into the building, taking them out of the building, and proper disposal. Any adults assisting the AC shall be informed of their responsibility to maintain custody of alcohol at all times. No container of alcohol shall be left unattended at any time unless it is locked away (e.g., in a car trunk).
- 6) No alcohol or alcohol containers may be left on the premises, unless locked away.
- 7) Because it would undermine the purpose of maintaining control over alcohol on the premises, no one may bring a personal container of alcohol onto the church premises or consume alcohol on the premises that has not been handled in accordance with this policy.
- 8) Any church member or employee who becomes aware of any violation of this policy, or of any person who appears to be intoxicated to the point of being disruptive or posing a danger to anyone, shall bring it to the attention of the AC who shall take appropriate action, including if necessary requiring the violator to leave the premises. It is the responsibility of the AC to offer alternative transportation to anyone who appears to be intoxicated when leaving the premises. The church will reimburse for taxi fare, if necessary, for such expense when incurred at a church-sponsored event.
- 9) All groups using the church shall abide by this policy. The church administrator or any other person who makes arrangements for other groups to use the church will inform them of this policy and give them a copy. It shall be attached to any written agreement that is signed.

C. Nursery Care Guidelines for First Unitarian Universalist Church San Antonio

Nursery Care Guidelines for

First Unitarian Universalist Church San Antonio

Parents leaving their children in the care of our nursery staff can be assured that the safety and welfare of their children is our highest priority. To that end, nursery staff and church administration will observe the guidelines.

Procedures:

Parents will sign their child(ren) in on the sign-in sheet when entering. If any person other than the person dropping off will pick up the child, the caregivers must be explicitly notified.

The sign-in sheet will have a space for parents to write their cell phone number so caregivers may contact them if needed. (Parents should be sure to put their cell phones on vibrate!)

Nursery staff are responsible for ensuring the cleanliness and safety of the premises and users at all times. There must always be at least two caregivers in the nursery during nursery hours. Children are supervised at all times.

Nursery staff will have completed a request for background screening and passed a confidential criminal background check

Reporting suspected abuse:

Most injuries to children are accidental and can be simply explained. Bruises, scrapes and cuts are part of the normal rough and tumble of a young child's life. There are, however, some children who suffer injuries which are not accidental. The nursery staff has a duty to report any serious concerns they may have about a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective services at 1-800-252-5400. Caregivers are aware of the sensitivity of this issue and of the confidentiality involved. The nursery staff's duty must be to support the family but above all, to ensure the protection of the child at all times.

Sanitation:

Caregivers will wipe down all surfaces with disinfectant after the last child has left the nursery each Sunday. Diaper-changing surfaces must be changed after every use.

Caregivers are encouraged to wear sanitary gloves when changing diapers or coming into contact with any bodily fluids. If this is not practicable, the caregiver will wash hands

with disinfecting soap or use an instant hand sanitizer after each exposure. Hazardous materials like cleaning fluids must be kept where children can not reach them.

Children who manifest a fever or other signs of possible infectious disease should not be cared for in the nursery. If a caregiver sees signs of illness, the parent will be called.

Fire safety

Fire exits are clearly marked and are free from obstructions. A fire drill procedure is on display in all rooms in the nursery. Fire fighting equipment is serviced regularly.

Environment and equipment:

Plug protectors will be placed in all unused electrical outlets.

All equipment used in the nursery should be safe.

Donated equipment will be examined for adherence to safety standards before being used. Standards for a wide variety of nursery equipment can be found at

http://ae.medseek.com/healthwise/media/pdf/hw/form_ue5205.pdf

All toys should be age appropriate. Small toys will be tested to make sure they are not small enough to present a choking hazard.

All toys in a nursery should be washable. Smooth, plastic-covered toys are best because they can be easily cleaned.

Walkers are not recommended for church use.

Accidents and injuries:

All accidents are recorded on an accident report form which is to provide details of dates, times, nature of incident and injury, any treatment given, and is to be signed by the member of staff who administers First Aid. A First Aid box is available in all rooms and is replenished regularly. In case of serious injury 911 will be called and parents will be called in from the sanctuary.

Parent Concerns:

Parents may feel confident that concerns expressed to our nursery caregiver staff will be taken seriously. Concerns may also be addressed to the Director of Lifespan Religious Education (344-2431; cell: 361-947-0863) or the Director of Worship and Education.

D. Media permission form

MEDIA PERMISSION

Yes _____ No _____ I grant permission for photos of my child in RE activities to be published on the church website, church-only e-mails, or in the church building. I understand there will be no names attached.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date _____

Dr. Sheri Phillabaum
Director of Lifespan Religious Education
First Unitarian Universalist Church of san Antonio
dlre@firstuusanantonio.org

E. Field Trip Permission Form

**First UU San Antonio
Field Trip Permission Form**

Your child's Religious Education class will be going on a field trip to

On _____ from _____ to _____ o'clock.

The purpose of the trip is _____

Transportation will be provided by _____

Adults responsible for this trip are _____

Please feel free to contact them for further information.

If your child has a medical condition or other concern that we need to be aware of for this trip, let us know.

Your signature gives us permission to take your child on the above mentioned field trip. Feel free to accompany your child on this trip.

Child's name _____

Phone number where you can be reached at the time of the field trip: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date _____

F. Permission Slip – Rally Retreat

PERMISSION SLIP

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SAN ANTONIO
7150 IH 10 West; San Antonio, Texas 78213

My child/ward _____ has permission to participate with the YRUU activity _____ on _____ (date). I understand that this event will be held at _____ and will include _____ (activities). He/she is in good physical condition and has not had any recent or relevant serious illness or operation. **I wish to inform you that my child has the following medical or physical condition(s) which may affect his/her participation (if none, so state) including prescription and over-the-counter medication:**

SHOULD ANY ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS OCCUR TO HIM/HER ON THIS ACTIVITY, I SHALL NOT HOLD THE ADULT CHAPERONE(S), HIS OR HER AGENTS, OR THE FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SAN ANTONIO, COMMUNITY UNITARIAN CHURCH OF SAN ANTONIO OR FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AUSTIN RESPONSIBLE, INCLUDING THOSE INJURIES RESULTING FROM THEIR OWN NEGLIGENCE. I authorize the adult chaperone(s), if necessary in their opinion, to obtain medical services of a doctor or healthcare practitioner.

During the activity, I may be reached at (phone no.): _____

If I cannot be reached, please call _____ (name) at _____ (phone number).

HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDER:

HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY & GROUP NUMBER:

DATE: _____ PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

G. YRUU Travel Permission

General Permission for Travel to Sponsored Events

I hereby give my permission for my child/ward

[name] _____

to travel from First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio and or Community Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio to rallies and/or other YRUU-sponsored events during the course of the 2007-2008 church year, from this date until August 1, 2008.

This permission slip is to be used for the travel to and from those events. I understand that specific attendance permission slips will be issued for each rally and for other sponsored events.

I understand that the churches do not accept responsibility for any bodily injury incurred during the event and during travel to and from any event. I give my consent and authority for the Religious Education Staff (paid or volunteer) of these churches and for the adult chaperones to take any reasonable action to help ensure the safety, health and welfare of my child/ward, and absolve the staff of liability. I give permission for any emergency medical, surgical, diagnostic and hospital care, treatment, or procedures deemed immediately necessary or advisable by emergency medical technicians, a physician or hospital to safeguard my child/ward's health when I cannot be contacted. I agree to be responsible for any medical expenses not covered by my insurance.

My child has the following allergies, dietary restrictions, or medical conditions **(if none, so state):**

Medications _____

In case of emergency, I can be reached at (_____) _____ - _____

or (_____) _____ - _____

If unable to reach me, please contact:

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone (_____) _____ - _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date

____/____/____

H. Request for Criminal History Record Clearance for First UU Church Employees and Volunteers

Request for Criminal History Record Clearance for First UU Church Employees and Volunteers

First UU Church screens prospective employees and volunteers to evaluate whether an applicant poses a risk of harm to the children and youth it serves. Information obtained is not an automatic bar to employment or service, but is considered in view of all relevant circumstances. All applicants are required to complete this disclosure in order to be considered for employment or service. Any falsification, misrepresentation, or incompleteness in this disclosure alone is grounds for disqualification or termination. **Personal information such as social security information and driver's license number will remain confidential.**

Applicant's Full Name:

Last First Middle

Any Alias(es)/Former Name(s), including Maiden Name:

Address: _____ phone number _____

Social Security No.: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Please check the appropriate statement:

I have ____ I have NOT ____ been convicted of a crime for which incarceration was a sentencing option.

Date & Place of Conviction	Offense	Sentence/Fines
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

I declare under penalty of perjury that the above statements are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Youth advisors only:

Driver's license number: _____ State issuing license: _____

License expiration date: _____

States of residence other than Texas during the past five years: _____

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for, authorize, and consent to have an investigation made as to my record of prior convictions for any crime except for: (1) offenses for which incarceration was not a sentencing option, (2) juvenile offenses, and (3) arrests or convictions that have been expunged or sealed, or are otherwise not permitted to be released pursuant to the law of the releasing state.

I understand that the contents of the reports are confidential, and will be reported to and shared between FUUCSA and the applicant only. I hereby release, discharge and exonerate FUUCSA, its employees and agents, and any person furnishing information from any and all liability of every

nature and kind arising out of the furnishing or inspection of such documents, records, and other information or the investigation made by FUUCSA.

Applicant's Signature:

_____ Date: _____

I. Background check results form

On _____ (mm/dd//yy) the DLRE and office administrator at First UU San Antonio performed a background check on _____ (name) using ChoicePoint. The results contained one or more reports.

On _____ (mm/dd//yy), the undersigned participated in careful review of the charges, the disposition of the charges, and the number of years which have passed since such charges were filed. It has been deemed that the individual named above

_____ may

_____ may not

Work with children or youth in our church.

Rev. Bret Lortie

Minister

Dr. Sheri Phillabaum

Director of Lifespan
Religious Education

J. Accident or injury report form

Name of person filing report: _____

Name of person(s) involved in accident or injured:

If child, name of parent(s): _____

If child, name of teacher in charge: _____

Date of accident: _____

Witness(es): _____

Brief description of accident/injury: _____

Extent of injury: _____

Was the person taken for off-site treatment? _____

If so, where? _____ By whom? _____

Medication or treatment, if any: _____

Additional comments: _____

Date of report: _____ signed: _____

K. Incident Report

Incident Report

Date of Report: _____

Name of **person reporting incident**: _____

Person affected by incident: Name: _____

Address (street, city, state, zip): _____

Is age of person affected less than 18? yes no

Location of incident (please be specific): _____

Date of incident: _____ **Time** of incident: _____

Describe exactly **what happened**: _____

Property or equipment involved: _____

Owner of property or equipment: _____

Witness (name, address, phone) _____

Witness (name, address, phone) _____

Injury / Treatment

If injury, describe: _____

Referred for treatment (please circle one):

None private physician emergency department ambulance

Insurance Company Contacted (please provide details): _____

Action Taken (use additional sheet of paper, if necessary)

Resolution (use additional sheet of paper, if necessary)

In addition to completing this form, the incident should be reported to the DLRE, the Minister or to the church board president.

L. Interim Agreement Regarding Restrictions with Children

Interim Agreement Regarding Restrictions with Children and youth

CONFIDENTIAL

A complaint has been made to the DLRE or minister which is now under investigation. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children in our programs from potential risk, to protect you from further suspicion, and to maintain confidentiality, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement. Signing this document in no way constitutes an agreement with or acceptance of the accusations made. Instead, this interim restriction is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals. This document will be reviewed only by the minister and the President of the Board of Trustees. If the accusations are unfounded or withdrawn, this document will be returned to you.

Within these guidelines, the church welcomes your participation in worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult discussion groups, adult social events, and well-supervised intergenerational events. The guidelines are as follows:

1. Avoid all contact with children on church property or at church-sponsored events. This restriction includes the following:
 - Refrain from contact with children.
 - No volunteering or chaperoning for children's events (including children's religious education classes, talks with the children during worship services, specific children's activities at intergenerational events, and driving children to church activities).
 - Remain in the presence of another adult when children are present in the building or at church sponsored events.
 - Avoid conversations with children on church property or at church-sponsored events.
2. The church will attempt to keep this matter as confidential as possible, while ensuring that the church remains a safe place for our children. Consider the Minister and the President of the Board of Trustees as your contact persons should further questions arise. Failure to abide by this agreement may result in termination of your membership and/or refusal of access to church events.

Agreement

I have reviewed this **Interim Agreement Regarding Restrictions with Children** and agree to abide by it.

Signature

Date

M. Agreement for Those Needing Restrictions with Children

Agreement for Those Needing Restrictions with Children

CONFIDENTIAL

As we have discussed, _____ has serious reasons for concern that your contact with children and youth at First UU San Antonio potentially places both you and them at risk of incident or accusation. For this type of situation we have developed the following guidelines. Within these guidelines, the church welcomes your participation in worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult discussion groups, adult social events, and well-supervised intergenerational events.

The guidelines are as follows:

1. Avoid all contact with children on church property or at church-sponsored events. This restriction includes

the following:

- Refrain from contact with children.
- No volunteering or chaperoning for children's events (including children's religious education classes, talks with the children during worship services, specific children's activities at intergenerational events, and driving children to church activities).
- Remain in the presence of an adult designated by the Board and within hearing distance at all times when children are in the building or at church sponsored events.
- Avoid conversations with children on church property or at church-sponsored events.

2. The church will attempt to keep this matter as confidential as possible, while ensuring the church remains a safe place for our children. Consider the Minister and the DLRE as your contact persons should further questions arise.

4. Inform the minister of any further developments which may influence our concerns about your possible impact on the well-being of the children in this church.

Failure to abide by this agreement may result in termination of your membership and/or refusal of access to church events.

Special Note: If, due to the seriousness of the circumstances, these guidelines are determined insufficient, the individual may lose his or her right to be a member of this congregation and may be refused access to church events.

Agreement

I have reviewed this **Agreement for Those Needing Restrictions with Children** and agree to abide by it.

Signature

Date

Children's Covenant and Rules

Youth Religious Education Behavior Guidelines for First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio, adapted from a policy by JoAnne Weber-Baligad, DRE, Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church, Costa Mesa, CA

The Youth Religious Education Committee encourages talking together to learn from each other in search of our own beliefs. We respect others and each person's right to speak. At the beginning of each church school session the teachers and students will discuss the Behavior Guidelines each family is required to sign as well as the following guidelines.

- Respect yourself and each other.
- One person talks at a time. Raise your hand to be recognized.
- Listen quietly when another person is talking.
- Make only positive comments about another person.
- Use indoor voices.
- Each person has personal space. Control your own body.
- Follow teacher's first request.
- You are "allowed to pass" during discussion.
- You are to remain in the group during all activities.

Each class will then adapt them appropriately to their class and post in a conspicuous place in the classroom. All participants must agree to follow these guidelines. Teachers will remind students periodically of their agreement.

Safety Policy

The Children's Religious Education Program at First UU San Antonio provides a safe place for your child to grow and thrive physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The policy below helps us insure the physical safety of everyone.

To insure the safety of all participants the following are considered intolerable: possessing any of the following- weapons of any kind, materials for producing fire, fireworks including cherry and smoke bombs, illegal drugs, inappropriate materials for age, including cigarettes and sexually explicit materials not used as part of a curriculum. These are all strictly forbidden.

Intolerable behavior includes the following- violent behavior towards oneself or others, inappropriate sexual behavior, threats or threatening behavior, leaving supervised areas (classrooms, playground, church buildings, and patios) without approval from teacher or parent, and destruction of personal or church property.

Behavior Guidelines based on our seven UU principles:

1. **We believe that each and every person is important.**
Safety is our first concern! Children must remain in classrooms or supervised areas until picked up by parents. Only gentle play is appropriate on church grounds. Treat everyone with respect. Use caring language and behavior.
2. **We believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly.**
Listen and follow directions. Be polite. Take turns. Care about one another.
3. **We believe that we should accept one another and keep on learning together.**
Make a commitment to regular attendance. Your friends and teachers depend upon you. Include everyone in activities and planning. Friends are welcome. Let them know our rules. Participate with enthusiasm.
4. **We believe that each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.**
Share your ideas and respect the ideas of others.
5. **We believe that all persons should have the right to speak out and have a vote about what concerns them.**
Express your opinions constructively. Respect the decision of the group.
6. **We believe in working for a peaceful, fair and free world.**
Ask for help when you need it. Do your best to get along with others and to be helpful. Be willing to listen to reminders about your behavior.
7. **We believe in caring for our planet earth, the home we share with all living things.**
Take good care of our church. Help clean up. Be careful with our space, furniture and materials. Use only what you need. Be gentle with the plants and animals.

If behavior guidelines are not followed there is a three-part discipline procedure.

Part One- if a problem arises, teachers will refer to the class guidelines and specify which one(s) is/are not being followed. If the problem continues, give one verbal warning. If the problem still continues, remove the child from class to the care of the DLRE or designated person. DLRE will discuss behavior with child and either the child will be returned to classroom or continue time with DLRE. DLRE will bring the behavior problem to the attention of the parent after the service.

Part Two- if a child is sent to the DLRE a second time; the DLRE will discuss the behavior problem with the parent and child.

Part Three- if problem continues a meeting will be scheduled with all parties to develop a partnership and plan for improvement.

Children's Covenant and Rules

for First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio

Acknowledgment

Our family has reviewed the Children's Covenant and Rules for youth religious education at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio, including the policies regarding violations, and we agree to support them. We understand that the complete text of our church's safety policy may be found on the church's web site at <http://www.firstuusanantonio.org/> and will be supplied in hard copy upon request.

Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian

Child

Child

Child

Child

P. Emergency Information

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio
Youth Religious Education Program
(One Per Child)

Date_____

Child's Name_____ Date of Birth __/__/____ Grade _____

Street Address_____

City _____ Zip Code _____ Home Phone(____)_____

Parent/Guardian's Name_____

Home Phone(____)_____ Other Phone(____)_____ (cell or work) Email_____

Parent/Guardian's Name_____

Home Phone(____)_____ Other Phone(____)_____ (cell or work) Email_____

Emergency Contact

Name_____ Phone(____)_____

Relationship_____

Medical Information

Allergies/Medical Conditions_____

Current Medications_____

Doctor_____ Phone(____)_____ Dentist_____ Phone(____)_____

Insurance Carrier_____ Number_____

Group Number_____

Name of primary insured person_____

Insurance Company's Phone(____)_____

Parent/Guardian Authorization

I am the parent or legal guardian of _____ (child's name). I hereby give my consent and authority for the Director of Religious Education or a member of the Youth Religious Education Council of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio to take any reasonable action to help ensure the safety, health, and welfare of my child/ward. I hereby do absolve the staff and First

Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio of liability. I give my consent for any necessary medical treatment, including emergency surgical care, if needed.

Print Name

Signature

Q. Youth Policies

- At overnight events, youth may not come and go. Once they arrive at the event they may leave only with parental permission or as part of the normal activities of the event (e.g., social action or going out to eat).
- All youth events shall be non-smoking
- There shall be a minimum of 2 adults with youth at all times. If an adult needs to meet one-on-one with a youth that meeting should take place in a public space where they are visible to others. If for some reason it is not possible to meet in a public place (e.g., one adult and one youth are attending a conference and the adult is providing transportation), the adult advisor shall notify the DLRE and shall obtain permission from the parent.
- All youth who attend overnight high school events shall sign the current **YRUU code of conduct (Form R)**.
- When advisors or chaperones take a group of children or youth off-campus they shall leave a copy of the travel permission slips and a complete list of all persons in the vehicles with the DLRE.
- Weapons of all kinds are prohibited at youth events.
- All transportation at youth events shall be provided by adults who are at least 25 years old. In the event that a youth must drive (e.g., they need to come home before the rest of the group), there shall be explicit and written permission from the parent or adult guardian. In addition, a youth may not provide a ride for another youth unless there is explicit and written permission granted from the parent or guardian of both youth (the driver and the passenger).

R. YRUU Rules of Conduct

YRUU Rules of Conduct

A. Alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons, violence or sexual activity will not be allowed under any circumstances. No use of drugs or medications (this applies even to over-the-counter medication) without prior notification to and permission of youth's advisor(s). Abuse of even legal drugs will be considered illegal drug use.

B. ANY inappropriate, demeaning, derogatory or offensive behavior will be unacceptable.

C. Any one member of our community is empowered and encouraged to voice their opinions, objections or concerns at any time. The Local YRUU officers will then be responsible to take swift and appropriate action.

D. In accordance with SWUUC YAC and the First UU Church of San Antonio Board, this will be a tobacco-free activity. Due to the unhealthy and addictive nature of smoking, the San Antonio YRUU and the Church have adopted a tobacco-free policy for all youth events. Violation of this policy will result in the following actions (per event):

1st offense: Confiscation of cigarettes, lighters, tobacco products, etc.

2nd offense: A serious meeting with your advisor will be held. Parents will be notified of this violation. Also, you will make an apology to the community at large

3rd offense: Suspension from local YRUU events for a period of up to six months.

In extreme cases, these steps may be skipped.

I have read and understand the rules of the YRUU event, and I understand that the consequences of failing to follow them could include my removal from the event. I agree to help promote a positive community and do all I can to protect the physical property of the church.

DATE: _____

YOUTH'S SIGNATURE: _____

