

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE DESERT
CHILD and YOUTH SAFETY POLICY

SUPERVISION

Each group of children should have at least two adult workers (one must be 18+ years of age, and one must be 21+ years of age) present at all times. The Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) may make exceptions for Sunday morning Religious Education classes, where classes are in close proximity. If adequate adult supervision cannot be secured, the CRE may cancel the class.

All RE volunteers are to be supervised by the CRE.

SCREENING and SELECTION OF WORKERS

CRE must complete an application for employment, and must consent to a reference check and background check. All volunteers who wish to assist with Religious Education for youth must be screened by the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Criminal background checks may be made for all workers as the CRE and/or Minister deem necessary and appropriate. All volunteers and paid workers who work with Religious Education will have a Predator Megan's Law Background Check.

Paid workers who have contact with children or youth are required to complete the training and provide appropriate Certificates of Completion of Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training approved or provided by the California Department of Social Services within thirty days after the first day of employment. All paid employees are required to complete and provide the Certificate of Completion of the General Training Module or equivalent training. In addition, the Minister is strongly recommended to complete and provide the Certificate of Completion of the Clergy Professional Module or equivalent training.

<https://mandatedreporter.ca.com/training/training.htm>

All workers (paid or unpaid) must read this Child and Youth Safety Policy and agree to follow it.

OFF-SITE EVENTS AND TRANSPORTATION

All RE-related outings must be pre-approved by the CRE and the Board President.

Participating children must have a signed permission slip from parent or guardian and a medical release form on file with the CRE.

All drivers must submit a current driver's license and proof of insurance (in the amount of \$100,000/300,000/100,000) before being assigned driving responsibilities and must bring the license and insurance information to the event.

Drivers must be at least 25 years of age.

Unless it is their own child, drivers should have two or more children in the car, and preferably another adult.

Each vehicle must have child safety seats, as appropriate and seat belts for every passenger. All passengers must wear safety belts and infants must ride in child safety seats as required by law.

MEDIA

Photography or Videos taken by parents, Legal Guardians, and/or additional UUCOD congregants are to remain private.

For those parents and/or Legal Guardians who give their written permission for each venue, their child(ren's) photos or videos may be posted to UUCOD's Website, UUCOD's private or public Facebook page or in other public and private venues (i.e. Facebook).

No child is to be identified by name.

DISCIPLINE

Corporal punishment and abusive language shall not be used under any circumstances. This includes language and gestures that are threatening or demeaning.

MAINTAINING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert (UUCOD) seeks to create an environment in which children can explore the spiritual and religious nature of their lives. We encourage mentoring between children and adults with inter-generational gatherings. Mentoring relationships are subject to the same safety guidelines applicable to other UUCOD activities.

However, the monitoring of any outside interactions between children and adults of the congregation are the responsibility of the parents/guardians of the children. The foremost goal of adult/child interactions must always be the best interests of the child.

In healthy adult/child relationships, the adult must assume responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries in order to maintain an atmosphere of trust.

Physical expressions of affection are acceptable, but it is best to allow the child to initiate contact. It is never appropriate to engage in any manner of sexualized behavior with a child. This refers not only to explicitly sexual behavior, but to language, jokes and connotations.

Children are prohibited from using tobacco, drugs or alcohol, and should be barred from exhibiting illegal behavior while engaged in UUCOD activities. Workers should at all times be aware that their own behavior is a powerful statement to children as to what is acceptable and responsible. Workers should not smoke or drink alcohol while supervising children.

All unpaid workers who have repeated contact with children or youth are strongly encouraged to read “*The California Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Law: Issues and Answers for Mandated Reporters*,” a copy of which is kept in the CRE’s filing cabinet. It is also available at this link:

<http://mandatedreporterca.com/images/Pub132.pdf>

This booklet contains guidelines for determining reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, along with other useful information.

BEHAVIOR POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

At UUCOD, we strive to live the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism, including respect for others, and supporting one another’s learning and spiritual development. Children and adults are expected to behave in ways that are consistent with these principles in Religious Education classes and at RE events. Appropriate behavior includes:

- Listening to others who are speaking
- Speaking respectfully to others
- Taking care of physical space and materials
- Helping the teacher and children when asked
- Taking responsibility for one’s words and actions

Periodically, (and soon after a new class member arrives) each class will review the Seven Principles and discuss how the Principles apply to their class. Infractions/ abuses will be pointed out by the teacher or a class member. If the behavior continues, the teacher will explain the possible consequences. If there is still no improvement in behavior, the teacher may take the following actions:

Separate the child from the group for a short, age-appropriate time out, so they can think about their behavior and how it affects others. (A time out is not called for if behavior is not disruptive, but simply a matter of opting out of participation.)

By insisting that each of us respect the dignity of every person, we teach one another to live according to UU principles. We also ensure that classrooms are a safe place for our children, not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1) If a volunteer worker has reason to believe abuse has occurred during a Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert (UUCOD) program or event, the worker must immediately report it to the minister or Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE).

If the worker ascertains that the child is in a situation of imminent risk, he/she (or another responsible person) should immediately remove the vulnerable child from the situation, contact the authorities, the CRE, and the minister and take steps necessary to protect the child.

2) If a worker has reason to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred outside of UUCOD-sponsored programs, the worker must immediately report it to the minister or CRE. All paid workers who work with children and youth are mandated reporters of child abuse under the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, California Penal Code sections 11164 – 11174.3. While not mandated reporters, volunteer workers should also report suspicions of child abuse or neglect occurring outside of UUCOD programs to the minister or CRE.

3) The minister or CRE will assess whether there is reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect or imminent harm to a child. If the minister or CRE suspects abuse or neglect they shall report it as soon as reasonably possible to the Riverside County Department of Social Services Child Abuse Hotline, currently (800) 442-4918, and will alert the President of Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert (UUCOD) Board of Directors that a suspected abuse situation has been brought to their attention. Within 36 hours following the phone call to report the suspected child abuse or neglect, the minister or Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) shall submit the written Suspected Child Abuse Report to Riverside County Department of Social Services. If the incident occurred during a UUCOD program or event, the church's insurer must also be notified as the matter requires. Otherwise, the matter is to remain confidential.

Release of information could interfere with successful prosecution of the offender, result in unwarranted damage to the reputation of the accused, and/or endanger the child.

4) If the incident involves a UUCOD worker, that worker will be relieved immediately of further duties involving the supervision, care or teaching of children until the matter is resolved.

5) The minister or CRE shall keep a confidential written record of all suspected cases of abuse including the names of the child and of the alleged perpetrator, the name of the person who reported the incident, the date and details of the incident, the investigation conducted, any findings and conclusions, and what action was taken.

6) Should the media contact UUCOD about an alleged incident of abuse, only the Minister or President of the Board of Directors shall represent UUCOD to the public. In general, while no identifying information should ever be disclosed, the president *may* disclose steps taken to prevent such incidents and to guard against abusive situations in the future.

A copy of this Child and Youth Safety Policy will be given to anyone falling within its definition of "paid worker." New and existing workers are expected to comply with the expectations in this Policy.

Criminal background checks may be made for all workers as the CRE and/or Minister deem necessary and appropriate. All volunteers and paid workers who work with Religious Education will have a Predator Megan's Law Background Check.

Signed copy on file at the church

11/20/2018

Sarah Gonzales, Board President

Date

11/20/2018

Jane Zaun, Board Secretary

Date

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE DESERT
CHILD and YOUTH SAFETY POLICY**

I have read the UUCOD Child and Youth Safety Policy and I agree to follow it:

Signature & Date

Print Name