

## **Child and Youth Protection Policy/Procedures**

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Approved 08/13/2009 by Board consensus

### **Preamble**

We the members of Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent, as a religious community, strive to create an environment upholding Unitarian Universalist principles by living in respectful relationship with one another. Our welcoming spirit and volunteer commitment is necessary to our congregational growth and health. Part of a healthy congregation is attention to safety. Safety is a condition in which individuals and a community experiences a freedom from danger or injury.

In this spirit, we endorse the following procedures for church sponsored events.

### **Procedure Statement**

The child and youth protection procedures contain the following sections;

1. Screening and Selection of Workers with Children and Youth
2. Supervision Requirements
3. Transporting Children and Youth
4. Procedures for Reporting, Response, and Removal of a Worker
5. Removal of a worker with Children or Youth

These procedures apply to all Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent and Ohio Meadville District sponsored events in which children and youth are present.

#### **1) Screening & Selection of Workers with Children & Youth**

With the exception of parents assisting in their own child's program as required or as requested, all other workers, defined as those persons both volunteer and compensated who provide direct care or supervision of children and/or youth at Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent's events must meet the following criteria:

- Adults working with children (infant –12 years of age) must be at least 21 years of age. An 18-20 year old may teach as the second adult with someone who is 21 or older.
- Adults working with youth (13-18) must be at least 25 years of age.
- Youth (12 – 18) may work as helpers with younger children.
- All compensated and volunteer workers (*all persons working with children and youth programming in positions of leadership*) will be asked to :
  - complete an application,
  - read and sign the code of ethics,
  - provide a copy of a photo ID,
  - provide 3 references, and
  - consent to a criminal background check.

- attend orientation/ training for their position. (Orientation will cover portions of the Ohio Revised Code pertaining to Mandatory Reporting Laws in Ohio, Unitarian Universalist principles and values, teaching expectations, and additional information)
- All documentation will be reviewed and updated yearly.
- All documentation including but not limited to: applications, code of ethics, and ID photo copies will be kept locked in the office of the Director of Religious Education. The Minister, Director of Religious Education, Religious Education Committee portfolio holder, RE Committee Chairperson and the Moderator of the Board of Trustees shall have access to the files.
- The Minister and/or the Director of Religious Education may, based on demonstrated and/or documented maturity and life experience of an individual seeking to work with youth and children waive an age requirement. This is not done lightly and must be done well in advance of the individual being able to serve in children and youth programming.
- Volunteer workers must be a member in good standing at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent or in agreement with Unitarian Universalist values.

## 2) Supervision Requirements:

A minimum of two adults will be scheduled to supervise/ lead groups of children and youth. This policy protects both the children and the adult by minimizing the opportunity for abuse as well as false accusations.

The minimum age of adults is to be consistent with the guidelines in section 1. Youth (12 to 18) may work as helpers with younger children, though they cannot be used to satisfy the two adult rule. *See section one guidelines.*

*For the purposes of these requirements a “group” is defined as those children and youth who have been assigned to a nursery, or individual class or specific program or activity with the context of that class, program or event, as well as youth who are taking part in a planned, organized component of a program or event.*

**Minimum** adult to child/youth ratio is as follows:

Infants through age 5:	2:12
Elementary through grade 8:	2:16
Senior High:	2:20

- Corporal punishment may not be used under any circumstances.
- No worker is to be alone with a child or youth either on site or off site except in case of an emergency.
- No worker(s) shall take children and/or youth off site without signed parent/guardian consent.

## Ohio Meadville District events:

All youth lead activities, such as cons (conferences), shall adhere to the Ohio Meadville District guidelines for said events.

Youth attending an Ohio Meadville District sponsored event, must have an on-site sponsor per Ohio Meadville District policy. It is up to the registrar of each event to verify to the best of their ability that each youth has an adult sponsor.

### **Parental/Guardian Expectations**

- Complete and turn in Religious Education forms or event forms with accurate information.
- Remain on site for length of Religious Education programming unless other arrangements have been made, such as 7-9 grade *Our Whole Lives*, or Hogwarts Kent Branch.
- Be available during Religious Education programming should your child/youth have a need, for example; diaper changes, inconsolable child, and behavioral issues.
- Support children/youth to arrive on time and to get settled in their classroom.
- Pick up children on time at the end of Religious Education Programming.
- Create opportunities for children/youth to discuss their religious educational experiences.

### **3) Transporting Children and Youth**

It is the responsibility of the church and/the parents or guardians to provide safe transportation to and from all church events. All youth and children being transported will ride with adults who meet the requirements below.

*Individual arrangements made between church members outside of scheduled church events are the responsibility of the parents of the children involved and are outside the scope of this policy.*

### **Transportation**

- All drivers of vehicles containing minors (other than their own children)
  - must be at least 25 years of age
  - provide proof of insurance and driver's license
- Each passenger must have and wear a working seatbelt in accordance with OHIO STATE LAW.
- Car seats and booster seats must be used in accordance with Ohio State Law.
- For trips less than one hour, one adult per vehicle is sufficient. A vehicle should not contain one adult and one youth/child unless the youth/child is the driver's own youth/child.
- Written permission will be given by parents/guardians of all minors prior to being transported.
  - Written permission will include:
    - Relevant details pertaining to event – time, date, location, etc.
    - Emergency contact information including physician's name, health insurance, consent to treat in case of emergency.

- **Emergency Contact information will be kept by the driver or the responsible adult traveling with the group using an alternate form of transportation, i.e. bus or train.**
- Each adult driving or in charge will leave the names of all children/youth accompanying them and emergency contact numbers with the Director of Religious Education.
- No driver may be sleep deprived, consume alcohol or be under the influence of any illicit mood altering chemicals or otherwise have their physical or mental performance compromised while carrying out this leadership position.

#### **4) Reporting Incidents**

All incidents of concern regarding volunteer workers shall be documented in writing (signed and dated) by those witnessing and/or experiencing the event. The documentation will be given to the Director of Religious Education. The incident shall be kept confidential and shall not be discussed with persons not involved in the incident.

The Director of Religious Education shall be notified within 24 hours of the event. In the absence of the Director of Religious Education, the minister shall be notified.

All reporting will be in accordance with Ohio State Law (covered in the mandatory Teacher Orientation Training).

A committee comprised of church leaders: Minister, Director of Religious Education, Chair of Religious Education Committee and Board Moderator or appointed designee shall review the incident and seek council as needed.

#### **5) Removal of a Worker with Children or Youth**

Such an action will be handled with due caution and discretion, in compliance with Ohio State Law and the Unitarian Universalist principles.

The Director of Religious Education and/or the Minister shall afford the affected individual(s) an opportunity to know the accusations and supporting evidence and the right to reply to or rebut such charges.

The committee cited in section 4 will convene and complete an assessment regarding the documented incident. A Worker with Children or Youth may be temporary and/or permanently removed from the post.

*This policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary.*