

## SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND ABUSE POLICY

July 12, 2007

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## **I. Message from the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy Committee**

At the Annual Meeting on May 19th, 2002, members approved a Mission Statement which called for the development of a policy regarding:

- The recruitment, hiring, and conduct of employees and volunteers.
- The special relationship of adults working with children.
- Procedures for reporting complaints and concerns dealing with sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and abuse.
- A process of response that respects the safety of all involved.

In response to this mission statement a task force was formed to develop such a policy. The Policy consists of a philosophy statement, guidelines, procedures, and documents to be used for hiring and recruiting.

This policy is a living document and the congregation may in future years wish to amend it to reflect changing needs. Requests for such amendments should be made to the Board of Trustees and voted upon at scheduled or special meetings of the Congregation.

## **II. Philosophy Statement**

We, the members of Second Unitarian Church, are aware of the prevalence of sexual abuse and harassment in our culture; that it crosses gender, race and class lines; and that we as a congregation ought to address these issues. Our commitments, as Unitarian Universalists, to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to justice and compassion, compel us to create a safe environment that protects children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth.

We believe our church is uniquely poised to respond to this challenge. It is a special place that highly values the ideals of community and the search for truth. It is a place that encourages personal growth, allows for personal truths, and supports individuals and families in their efforts to build better lives and a better society. As a caring, intergenerational community we can respond to those in need in broader, more flexible ways than many other institutions.

### **III Affirmation of Responsibility and Commitment**

We accept the responsibility to educate ourselves and our children about sexual misconduct, abuse, molestation, harassment, exploitation and violence. We also pledge to do our best to protect and support those who come to us either at risk or in crisis.

Additionally, we affirm our commitment to maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, handicap, gender, or sexual/affectual orientation. We pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner which conveys mutual respect and consideration.

We acknowledge our responsibility to support this Policy and to work with the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team so that concerns may be addressed and appropriate response made.

*Second Unitarian Church (hereinafter referred to as "the Church") is committed to maintaining an environment that encourages and fosters appropriate conduct and safety among employees and all other persons and respect for individuals' reasonable sensibilities and safety. Accordingly, the Church intends to enforce this Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy at all levels within the Church in order to create an appropriate environment free from sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment) abuse, violence and any other behavior set forth in paragraph IV herein.*

#### **IV. Definitions**

*With respect to children, “Abuse” means: any situation where any person does any of the following:*

- a. inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted upon a child physical injury, by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function*
  
- b. creates a substantial risk of physical injury to a child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;*
  
- c. commits or allows to be committed any sex offense against a child, as such sex offenses are defined in the Statutes of the State of Illinois, as amended, and extending those definitions of sex offenses to include children under 18 years of age;*
  
- d. commits or allows to be committed an act or acts of torture upon a child;*
  
- e. inflicts excessive corporal punishment;*
  
- f. commits or allows to be committed the offense of female genital mutilation, as defined in 720 ILCS §5/12-34, against the child or*
  
- g. causes to be sold, transferred, distributed, or given to a child under 18 years of age, a controlled substance as defined in Section 102 of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act in violation of Article IV of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act, except for controlled substances that are prescribed in accordance with Article III of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act and are dispensed to such child in a manner that substantially complies with the prescription. \**

*This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).*

- Source: Illinois Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act 325 ILCS §5/3 (See Document F in the Appendix)*

*With respect to adults, "Abuse" means: any situation where any person does any of the following:*

*any act of "abuse" as defined by the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986, as amended (750 ILCS §60/101-60-401). (See Document G in the Appendix)*

**Sexual Misconduct means any:**

- A. Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent; or
- B. Sexual harassment, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Illinois Department of Human Rights, and the Cook County Commission on Human Relations, and for purposes of this policy, consists of Sexual harassment, defined as follows: *unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any conduct of a sex-based nature, where*
  - (1) *submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual's employment or enjoyment of the privileges of this Church's employment; or*
  - (2) *an employment decision affecting an employee (or any other decision is made concerning an individual's enjoyment of the privileges of this Church's employment) is based on the individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct; or*
  - (3) *such conduct interferes with an individual's work performance or enjoyment of the privileges of this Church's employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.*

*Sexual harassment can occur between men and women, or members of the same gender. This behavior is unacceptable in the work place.*

*It is also unlawful to retaliate in any way against anyone who has complained about sexual harassment or discrimination, whether that concern relates to harassment of or discrimination against the individual raising the concern or against another individual.*

*Sexual harassment affects the victim and others as well. Each incident of harassment contributes to a general atmosphere in which everyone suffers the consequences. Sexually-oriented acts or sex-based conduct have no legitimate purpose. Where such conduct is initiated by a member of the Board of Trustees or a supervisor toward a subordinate, or the minister, said individuals will be held to a higher standard of accountability because of the degree of control and influence he or she has over the employment conditions and the welfare of this Church.*

*Prohibited acts of sexual harassment can take a variety of forms ranging from subtle pressure for sexual activity or contact to physical contact. Examples of conduct which could be considered sexual harassment include:*

- (a) persistent or repeated unwelcome flirting, pressure for dates, sexual comments or touching; inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance; inappropriate questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualifications.*
- (b) unwelcome sexually suggestive humor, jokes, language, gestures or sounds directed toward another or sexually oriented or degrading comments about another;*
- c) preferential treatment of an employee, or a promise of preferential treatment to an employee, in exchange for dates or sexual conduct; or to the denial or threat of denial of employment, benefits or advancement for refusal to consent to sexual advances;*
- (d) the open display of sexually oriented pictures, posters, or other material offensive to others;*
- (e) retaliation against an individual for reporting or complaining about sexually harassing conduct;*
- (f) conduct or communication which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.*

*This policy covers all Church employees, volunteers, and all other persons. The Church will not tolerate, condone or allow sexual harassment, whether engaged in by fellow employees, supervisors, members of the Board of Trustees, the minister, volunteers and any other person, or by outside personnel or other non-employees who conduct business with the Church. The Church supports and encourages reporting of all incidents of sexual harassment, regardless of who the offender may be, and will promptly investigate all reported incidents.*

- C. Sexual exploitation, including but not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between ministers, counselors, youth leaders, church school teachers, etc. and a person with whom they have a teaching, guidance or caretaking role, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.*

## V. Preventing Sexual Misconduct and Abuse

We at Second Unitarian Church acknowledge that preventing future sexual abuse and harassment in our church, communities and in society is a complex goal. In exploring this issue we have learned that preventive education, careful hiring procedures, and policies regarding the circumstances of youth/adult interactions are concrete steps toward creating a safe environment for all concerned.

### A. Education and Training

We see education at all ages and levels of development as critical to the creation of a safe environment for growth. Information, knowledge, and understanding support the development of healthier relationships based on self-esteem and respect for others. Greater understanding of the complexities of “sexuality” and “abuse” will make us better able to avoid situations that could lead to abuse, and to move more effectively toward justice and healing for us all

Inasmuch as it is the intention of our religious education program to promote self-esteem and personal responsibility among our children and our adult membership, we will attempt to provide the following as part of the educational program:

1. Age appropriate programs about development and sexuality for our children, teens (youth), and adults that are offered on a regular basis and include greater clarification and understanding of the complex aspects of sexuality, including a focus on sexual abuse prevention.
2. General training and support for our religious educators, youth leaders, and parents in areas of parenting skills, growth and development, sexuality, and related issues.
3. Specific training each Fall for leaders of youth programs. At this meeting, sponsored by the Religious Education Committee and any other committee responsible for youth programming, all youth leaders will discuss in detail the **Code of Ethics for Working with Children and Youth** (See Document B in the Appendix) and ways to create safe spaces for both youth and leaders.
4. Information for all parishioners regarding resources within the community that address the issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse.
5. *Training and education of all employees of the Church, members of the Board of trustees, persons in supervisory roles and the minister on issues related to sexual harassment and workplace violence.*

## **B. Procedures for Recruiting Volunteers and Hiring Staff**

Churches are particularly at risk for sexual misconduct because they make such valiant efforts to welcome everyone and automatically assume a level of trust. Since incidents of sexual abuse take place in the context of an ongoing relationship, it is essential that recruitment and hiring procedures be established that protect the children in our programs, protect staff and volunteers from false accusations, protect the church from liability, and protect church employees, volunteers and others from sexual misconduct and abuse. We feel a legal and moral responsibility to approach this directly, though we feel a deep sadness that it is necessary. The following procedures will be used by committees and individuals responsible for hiring employees and for recruiting volunteers. The documents specified in bold are all attached to this Policy.

### **1. Employees of the Church**

All persons seeking paid employment at Second Unitarian Church, including (but not limited to) the Church Secretary, Director of Religious Education, Pianist, Custodian, Musical Director, and Minister will complete an application for employment that will include; **Documents A, B, C, H and I in the Appendix.** They will be screened by the appropriate hiring committee who will contact references, record the contact, and conduct a formal interview with the candidate. The application forms will be considered confidential. They will be kept in a locked file in the church office to be viewed only by the appropriate hiring committee and an advisor from the Response Team.

Persons already employed by the church *shall* complete **Document A: The Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Questionnaire for Employment** and sign **Document B: The Code of Ethics for Working with Children and Youth** as well as **Documents C, H and I in the Appendix.**

### **2. Volunteers Working with Adolescent Youth** (read “Working with Youth”, Section IX of this manual)

All persons volunteering with youth, including youth group leaders, counselors, mentors, and any other curriculum for youth will sign **Document B: The Code of Ethics for Working with Children and Youth** and complete **Document C: The Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy Questionnaire for Those Working with Adolescent Youth and Documents Hand I.** These documents will be considered confidential, will be kept in a locked file in the church office and will be reviewed only by the Minister, the Director of Religious Education and the President of the Board of Trustees. The volunteers will also be required to attend a church sponsored training.

### **3. Religious Education Teachers**

Sunday School teachers and other persons volunteering to work or spend time with children at Second Unitarian Church will be given a copy of the Policy, will be asked to read **Working with Youth** (Section IX in the manual) and sign **Document B: The Code of Ethics for Working with Children and Youth and Document I: Receipt of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy.**

### **C. Supervision**

Various supervision methods are listed below. All will help leaders and teachers avoid setting up situations in which personal boundary issues can become a problem. Some of these methods will help leaders and teachers decrease the risk of misunderstandings and false accusations and some offer ongoing support for handling concerns.

1. Regular consultations with the Director of Religious Education
2. On-going training
3. Leader, teacher, and mentor teams
4. Parental permission whenever necessary
5. Open-door policy in classrooms

## VI. THE SAFE CONGREGATIONS RESPONSE TEAM

Members of the Safe Congregations Response Team will be well educated in the Policy and will become knowledgeable about available resources for adults and children and specific mandated reporting procedures for children. Guided by the *Philosophy Statement* and *Affirmation and Commitment*, their function, individually and collectively, will be to offer confidential support, advice, and counsel, with concern for the safety and well-being of all parties involved.

### A. Composition

1. The Response Team will be established and in place at all times, with the names and phone numbers of team members available to all members and friends of Second Unitarian Church.
2. The Response Team will be composed of the Minister, two members of the church, a first alternate member of the church and a second alternate member. All members and alternates shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and serve two-year terms commencing July 1<sup>st</sup> of the first year and ending on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the concluding year. The Board of Trustees, in appointing members shall assure that the service terms of the members are staggered, so an experienced member is on the Team at all times. Regular members and alternates may serve consecutive terms on the Response Team at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. In cases of a conflict of interest or other unforeseen circumstances, a team member may be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate.
3. The Role of the Director of Religious Education: The Director of Religious Education (DRE) serves as an advisor to the Response Team. The Response Team consults with the DRE on an as-needed basis. In addition, the DRE is responsible for managing the administrative and training aspects of the Safe Congregations Policy. The DRE ensures that all volunteers working with children and youth have undergone the requisite background checks and have signed all of the appropriate paperwork. The DRE also conducts Safe Congregations training for all volunteers working with children and youth and families at least once a year.

### B. Purposes: The Response Team serves two purposes.

1. Resource  
First, they will serve as a source of general information about the Safe Congregations policy of Second Unitarian Church, and a link to available resources. The Response Team will be responsible for maintaining updated information regarding relevant agencies and educational resources. The Response Team will make this policy

available upon request by any member. Copies will be provided to Sunday School volunteers.

The Response Team will be available to consult with members of the congregation, church employees and any other persons about questions and concerns. For example, the Response Team would be available to discuss concerns regarding situations that have felt uncomfortable, but may not constitute abuse or sexual misconduct as defined in this Policy. The Team's function would be to help individuals clarify the source of their discomfort, to brainstorm effective means of resolving the problem, and to share information about appropriate resources.

2. Response

Second, if a member of the congregation, church employee and any other person feels that there has been a violation of this policy, the Response Team is the appropriate committee within the Church community to be contacted and to investigate any incidents reported.

## **VII. RESPONDING TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND ABUSE**

As members of Second Unitarian Church, it is our goal to educate and prepare ourselves so that we can respond rationally, compassionately, and with unity of purpose should we suspect or be confronted with an incident or disclosure of sexual abuse or harassment.

We wish to respond to individuals in crisis in a spirit of support and understanding, and to further justice and healing, remembering that:

- “Support” is staying engaged with someone in the search for truth and healing.
- The sources and solutions of the problem are diverse and involve us all.
- We desire to protect the children in our care, church employees, volunteers and all other persons to support survivors and foster an environment within which they can continue to heal, and to support offenders in their treatment and healing.

It is our sincere belief that by honoring these commitments we will make a substantial contribution to the creation of a spiritual community that reflects our highest ideals and goals.

One of the first steps in creating a healing community is to create an environment of trust within which both victims and offenders feel safe enough to break the silence about what has happened. Given the obstacles that victims and offenders must overcome in order to break their silences, any disclosure should be viewed as a remarkable event. It is essential that disclosures be met with an appropriate and supportive reaction on the part of the receiver and the community. Inappropriate reactions or a lack of reaction can have the

impact of repeating the abuse for victims and may inhibit the victim or offenders from seeking help in the future.

The Safe Congregations Response Team has been established to meet these goals.

**A. THE SITUATION OF ABUSE OF A CHILD**

1. Upon receiving a report or complaint, the Response Team shall convene within 48 hours to determine the appropriate response. The Response Team will work together to gather facts, evaluate the situation, consult with the appropriate professionals available as resources (including, as necessary, the UUA, the Church's legal counsel, or other professionals who are experts in the field). In the absence of two members of the Response Team (see Section VI(1)(c) above) (two members constituting a quorum) at least one member of the Team may meet with elected members of church leadership to evaluate the situation and take appropriate action, until a quorum of the Response Team is available.
2. At its first meeting, the Response Team will determine roles and points of contact with e.g. the distinct involved parties, the congregation, outside agencies, legal counsel, and/or the UUA. It is recommended that a Chair be named to coordinate the Response Team's activities in response to the incident.
3. When the Response Team is called upon to respond to a report of sexual misconduct or abuse, a Full Narrative written report may be generated to record the circumstances, facts gathered, statements provided, and actions taken. In determining whether a report should be written, the Response Team should balance all relevant considerations. Among the concerns to be balanced are the need for an institutional record (for example, in the case of a series of small incidents over a period of time that begin to show a pattern of behavior) against the need to protect privacy/confidentiality, and the need to protect the Church from slander and libel suits. In light of these concerns, among any others that might arise, if a Full Narrative written report is created, the Response Team should also carefully consider the entities to which such a written report should be disseminated.
4. Upon its first meeting, the Response Team shall inform a person in a leadership position on the Board of Trustees that an incident has been reported and that the procedures outlined in this policy have been initiated.

5. Where appropriate, the Response Team may aid in the process of filing a report to the appropriate agency. (In the case of suspected abuse or neglect of a child, any allegations would be reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)). Unless there is a requirement by law mandating otherwise or to prevent immediate danger to the victim, calls to DCFS will not be made except by decision of the Response Team. The Response Team does not have the legal authority or the expertise to determine guilt or innocence. It is designed instead to protect members of the community, both children and adults, both victims (potential or actual) and the accused.
6. While the charges are being investigated, the Response Team will work to protect and support all involved parties, in a way which allows the community to go about its business in a non-persecutory but safe atmosphere. If a call is made and a formal report is taken by DCFS, such that DCFS initiates an investigation, the Response Team would expand at this point to include a member of the Board of Trustees and a member of the Lifespan Religious Education Council.
7. Regardless of the action or inaction of DCFS or any other relevant agency, if an accusation of abuse of a child by an adult member of the community has been reported, the Response Team, in its discretion, may ask the accused to sign **Document D: Interim Agreement Regarding Restrictions With Children**, which would restrict contact with children while the accusation is being investigated. This procedure in no way constitutes a presumption or a confession of guilt. This interim restriction is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals. 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 will be shared with the Director of Religious Education and the Chair of the Board of Trustees only and will be kept in a confidential file. If the accused is cleared of the charges or if the complaint is dropped, the document will be returned to him/her and the formal interim suspension will be terminated. If the accused person is found guilty by the relevant authorities, the authorities find the charges to be credible, the Response Team finds that the charges are otherwise substantiated, or the accused pleads guilty or otherwise acknowledges his or her responsibility for the alleged offense, the Response Team will ask the offender to sign **Document E: Members of the Congregation Needing Restrictions With Children**.

8. Similarly, should the Response Team become aware that a participant of the church has, in the past, abused children, the Response Team will require the offender to sign **Document E: Members of the Congregation Needing Restrictions With Children**. This document will be reviewed only by the Minister, the Director of Religious Education and the Chair of the Board of Trustees and will be kept in a confidential file. Such information will be revealed to others on a need-to-know basis.
9. Where the suspected abuser is also a minor, care will be taken to maintain the privacy of the accused while any investigation is conducted. Every effort will be taken to engage the minor and his/her parent or guardian in the investigation in a spirit of support and understanding, so as to further justice and healing. In acting upon its best judgment, the Response Team may be guided by legal counsel and/or appropriate professionals to determine the appropriateness of requiring the accused to sign Documents D or E, taking into account such factors as the age and mental/emotional maturity of the accused minor.
10. The Response Team will maintain a list of individuals against whom complaints have been made under this Policy. The list will be called the "Safe Congregations Response Team Complaint List." All complaints received will be recorded, regardless of the result of the complaint. A copy of the list will be maintained by the minister and another member of the Response Team, who will be known as the "Safe Congregations Report Custodian." It is recommended that the Report Custodian store the list off-premises, preferably in a safe deposit box. The Minister should keep his/her copy in a confidential location, and should be treated in the same manner as other confidential documents, such as personnel files. The Director of Faith Development will cross-check the list with the minister or the Report Custodian at least twice a year or when new volunteers are added (i.e. when security checks are conducted) but not possess a copy of the list. It is the obligation of the Director of Faith Development to contact either the Minister or the Report Custodian to cross-check the list. It is recommended that the list include a notation of "A" where adults were involved or "C" where children were involved, and where relevant note on the list when multiple reports have been made relating to a given individual. The purpose of maintaining such a list is to preserve, in a brief and confidential format, an institutional record of individuals about whom complaints have been made.

11. In addition to the list of individuals described in paragraph 10, the Response Team will prepare a Summary Report regarding each complaint or where an individual has been asked to leave the church. Such a report is required because maintaining a list of names is not helpful without a description of what happened. The Team must make a Summary Report if there is a complaint, and may prepare a full narrative report. All Summary Reports should be written in a neutral manner.
  - a. The Summary Report will include the following:
    1. Date
    2. Time
    3. Location
    4. Name of subject of report
    5. Description of incident
    6. Follow-up taken
    7. If possible and appropriate, attach a photo of the alleged perpetrator
  - b. The Full Narrative report will be prepared where necessary based on the considerations listed in the Safe Congregations policy (see paragraph 3 above). The determination whether to prepare the Full Narrative report will be decided on a case by case basis, but it should be prepared if the individual is asked to leave the church and/or if legal action is taken. The Full Narrative Report should be written in a narrative though neutral form.
12. To ensure due process, the Response Team will take responsibility for:
  - 1.) coordinating support for all parties involved, including the reporter of the incident;
  - 2.) overseeing a process in which all parties are treated with dignity and respect;
  - 3.) responding to questions from the public media; and
  - 4.) facilitating a healing process for the church community.

Due to the sensitive nature of such a matter, it is imperative that the Response Team function as a team. The goal of this provision is to allow for group reflection and consultation regarding the situation. All efforts should be made to maintain open communication and an honest exchange of ideas in order to foster the greatest sense of support and healing. In the situation of exigent circumstances and/or immediate risk of harm to the victim, nothing in this policy should restrict church staff and/or church leadership from taking steps necessary, in their good judgment, to protect the welfare of the victim and/or the church environment.

## **B. THE SITUATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT.**

While the Church encourages employees and other individuals who believe they are being sexually harassed to firmly and promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome, the Church also recognizes that power and status disparities between an alleged harasser and a target may make such a confrontation difficult. In the event that such informal, direct communication between individuals is either ineffective or problematic, or even when such communication has occurred, the following steps should be taken to report a sexual harassment complaint.

### **1. Complaint Process**

- a. **Reporting of Incident:** All employees and other individuals are urged to report any suspected sexual harassment or other inappropriate sexual activities by anyone to the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Team (hereinafter referred to as "the Response Team"). The report may be made initially either orally or in writing, but reports made orally must be reduced to writing before an investigation can be initiated and a resolution achieved. All complaints and proposed resolutions shall be reviewed by the Response Team.
- b. **Investigation of Complaint:** When a complaint has been reduced to writing, the Response Team will initiate an investigation of the suspected sexual harassment within five (5) working days of notification. If any member of the Response Team, including the minister, is the subject of the investigation, then said member shall be replaced by a person selected by the Board of Trustees. The investigation will include an interview with the person(s) or employee(s) who made the initial report (unless pending litigation prevents such interview), the person(s) towards whom the suspected harassment or inappropriate sexual activity was directed and the individual(s) accused of the harassment or activity. Any other person who may have information regarding the alleged sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity may also be interviewed.
- c. **Report:** The Response Team shall prepare a report within ten (10) working days of its notification of the suspected harassment unless extenuating circumstances prevent it from doing so. The report shall include a finding that sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity occurred, sexual harassment or inappropriate activity did not occur, or there is inconclusive evidence as to whether sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity occurred. The report will be made to the employee or other individual who made the initial report, the employee or other individual to whom the suspected harassment or inappropriate sexual activity was directed, and the individual accused of the harassment or inappropriate sexual activity.

- d. **Records; Confidentiality:** Every effort shall be made to keep all matters related to the investigation and various reports confidential. In the event of a lawsuit, however, the Church advises that records it maintains may be considered privileged from disclosure. Written records will be maintained for two (2) years from the date of the resolution unless new circumstances dictate that the file should be kept for a longer period of time.
- e. **Timeframe for Reporting Complaint:** The Church encourages a prompt reporting of complaints so that rapid response and appropriate action may be taken. However, due to the sensitivity of these problems and because of the emotional toll such misconduct may have on the individual, no limited time frame will be instituted for reporting sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity complaints. Delayed reporting of complaints will not in and of itself preclude the Church from taking remedial action.
- f. **Protection Against Retaliation:** The Church will not in any way retaliate against an individual who makes a report of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity nor permit any individual or employee to do so. Retaliation is a serious violation of this sexual harassment policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity will be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity offenders.

## **2. Discipline/Sanctions**

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or other individual found to have engaged in sexual harassment of any other employee or other persons. The extent of sanctions may depend in part upon the length and conditions of employment or other service to the Church of the particular employee or other individual and the nature of the offense. The Church has the right to apply any sanction or combination of sanctions, including termination, to deal with unreasonable conduct or discrimination. Where a hostile environment has been found to exist, the Church will take all reasonable steps to eliminate the conduct creating such an environment. If an investigation results in a finding that the complainant falsely accused another of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual activity knowingly or in a malicious manner, the complainant will be subject to appropriate sanctions, including the possibility of termination.

**NOTE:** This policy is not intended as a contractual obligation. The Church reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.

## **C. THE SITUATION OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

Second Unitarian Church is aware of the increase in workplace violence and homicide in the United States. Domestic violence plays a role in the increasingly violent workplace. The Church is aware of the high incidence of domestic violence and the potential entry into the workplace. Therefore, the Church prohibits violence and "abuse" as defined in the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986 (750 ILCS §§60/101-60/401). This includes, but is not limited to, physical force or restraint, harassment, intimidation, and interference with personal liberty. The Church also prohibits possession of weapons of any kind on Church premises and at any Church function or activity. The Church encourages employees and any other persons to report any activities and incidents that constitute violence or abuse or that could lead to violence or abuse.

### **1. Complaint Process**

- a. Reporting of Incident: All employees and other individuals are urged to report any suspected violence, abuse or any activity that could lead to violence or abuse (hereinafter "inappropriate activity") by anyone to the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Team (hereinafter referred to as "the Response Team"). The report may be made initially either orally or in writing, but reports made orally must be reduced to writing before an investigation can be initiated and a resolution achieved. All complaints and proposed resolutions shall be reviewed by the Response Team.
- b. Investigation of Complaint: When a complaint has been reduced to writing, the Response Team will initiate an investigation of the suspected inappropriate activity within five (5) working days of notification. If any member of the Response Team, including the minister, is the subject of the investigation, then said member shall be replaced by a person selected by the Board of Trustees. The investigation will include an interview with the person(s) or employee(s) who made the initial report (unless pending litigation prevents such interview), the person(s) towards whom the suspected inappropriate activity was directed and the individual(s) accused of the inappropriate activity. Any other person who may have information regarding the alleged inappropriate activity may also be interviewed.
- c. Report: The Response Team shall prepare a report within ten (10) working days of its notification of the suspected inappropriate activity unless extenuating circumstances prevent it from doing so. The report shall include a finding that inappropriate activity occurred, or inappropriate activity did not occur, or there is inconclusive evidence as to whether inappropriate activity occurred. The report will be made to the employee or other individual who made the report, the employee or other individual to whom the suspected inappropriate activity was directed, and the individual accused of the inappropriate activity.

- d. **Records; Confidentiality:** Every effort shall be made to keep all matters related to the investigation and various reports confidential. In the event of a lawsuit, however, the Church advises that records it maintains may be considered privileged from disclosure. Written records will be maintained for two (2) years from the date of the resolution unless new circumstances dictate that the file should be kept for a longer period of time.
- e. **Time frame for Reporting Complaint:** The Church encourages a prompt reporting of complaints so that rapid response and appropriate action may be taken. However, due to the sensitivity of these problems and because of the emotional toll such misconduct may have on the individual, no limited time frame will be instituted for reporting inappropriate activity complaints. Delayed reporting of complaints will not in and of itself preclude the Church from taking remedial action.
- f. **Protection Against Retaliation:** The Church will not in any way retaliate against an individual who makes a report of inappropriate activity nor permit any individual or employee to do so. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting inappropriate activity will be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for inappropriate activity offenders.

## **2. Discipline/Sanctions**

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or other individual found to have engaged in any activity prohibited by this Policy against any other employee or other persons. The extent of sanctions may depend in part upon the length and conditions of employment or other service to the Church of the particular employee or other individual and the nature of the offense. The Church has the right to apply any sanction or combination of sanctions, including termination, to deal with unreasonable conduct. Where a hostile environment has been found to exist, the Church will take all reasonable steps to eliminate the conduct creating such an environment. If an investigation results in a finding that the complainant falsely accused another of any activity prohibited by this Policy knowingly or in a malicious manner, the complainant will be subject to appropriate sanctions, including the possibility of termination.

**NOTE:** This policy is not intended as a contractual obligation. The Church reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.

## D. HEALING AND JUSTICE-MAKING

The following is adapted from “The Elements of Justice-Making” published by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. It is included in the Policy to guide the congregation as a whole, and the Response Team in particular, in their efforts to facilitate a healing process within our congregation.

1. **Truth-Telling**: This element of justice-making is concerned with breaking the secrecy that usually surrounds abuse, the silence that allows it to continue. Truth-telling is not the same as fact-finding. By “truth” we mean not only the facts about the abuse, but also the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the person’s experience. When people can speak about abuse, the abuse loses some of its potency.
2. **Acknowledging the violation**: The victim must feel heard—and be heard. The individuals and the institution to whom the victim tells the truth must listen and then acknowledge that what happened was abusive and should never have happened. If the individuals and the institution listen to the victim’s account but never condemn the alleged behavior, they are in essence sanctioning the behavior and participating in the injustice. Acknowledging the violation means saying, in essence, “We believe you. You have been harmed by these actions. This behavior is wrong and should never happen. We regret that it happened to you. It was not your fault.” Setting in motion the appropriate procedures as soon as a complaint is made can provide a partial acknowledgment of the violation.
3. **Compassion**: Compassion means “suffering with.” In other words, empathy. Unfortunately, when we hear accounts of others’ suffering, we often try to explain it away, minimize it, avoid dealing with their emotions, or take action too quickly so as to avoid our own anger or pain. If we can instead listen empathetically and communicate our emotion about what the person tells us, and be present to her/his pain, we help counteract the isolation which victims and offenders feel. Compassion creates a connection between ourselves and the victim or perpetrator, which is the first step toward healing the damage brought about by the abuse.
4. **Protecting the Vulnerable**: Once we are aware of the potential of abuse, we must do whatever we can to prevent it. If someone is accused of sexual abuse, steps should be taken to prevent further harm. If we do not do so we are colluding in the harm done.
5. **Accountability**: Institutions rightfully hold their representatives accountable for their actions in their institutional role. When individuals violate their role, the institution should confront them officially and, based on their misconduct, impose consequences. If the consequences are minimal, the behavior is likely to continue. Negative consequences may be the most direct route to true repentance. They are an opportunity for the abuser to acknowledge what he/she has done and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Holding an abuser accountable is the first step in restoring him/her to health. It is also essential for the victim’s healing.

6. **Restitution**: What is damaged or lost when sexual abuse occurs can never be fully restored. Nevertheless, some restitution can and must be made. Restitution does not mean “fixing”; it is “returning to the rightful owner what was taken away” or “payment for damages.” Restitution is a concrete means of acknowledging the harm done and helping to repair the damage. In addition to its symbolic value, it is helpful in a material sense, since victims often incur expenses such as therapy costs, doctor’s bills, and time off from work.

7. **Vindication**: Vindication for the victim is the ultimate goal of justice. Vindication and vindicate have no relation to the word vindictive, which is related to the word revenge. Rather vindication and vindicate derive from the Latin root meaning “to set free” or “to claim.” When a violation has occurred, the key to physical, emotional, and spiritual healing is to be set free from the multiple layers of suffering it created.

## VIII. The Special Relationship Between the Minister and Congregants

*Congregations confer powers upon their ministers through roles which the minister is expected to assume—worship leader, teacher, counselor, representative in the larger community... The powers of ministry have great potential for good if they are used responsibly, and potential for damage if they are abused... Ministers need to be fully aware of those powers and use them responsibly for the building of spiritual community, not for personal gratification. Exploiting ministerial powers for personal advantage abuses those congregants who become the inappropriate sexual objects of a minister's personal interest. Such abuse damages the religious community of which the abuser is minister.*

Excerpted from Thomas Mikelson, "Reflections Toward a Unitarian Universalist Theology of Clergy Misconduct through Sexual Abuse", December, 1992

We as a community expect the minister to abide by the UU Ministers Association's Code of Professional Practice which acknowledges that ministers are the recipients of automatic trust, and comments directly on the issues of clergy sexual misconduct and the abuse of the trust congregations place in their ministers. In subscribing to this code, ministers agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

Following are excerpts from the UU Ministers Association's Code of Professional Practice which bear directly on the issues of clergy sexual misconduct and the abuse of the trust congregations place in their ministers.

### 1. Self

As a sexual being, I will recognize the power that ministry gives me and refrain from practices which are harmful to others and which endanger my integrity or my professional effectiveness. Such practices include sexual activity with any child or with an unwilling adult, with a counselee, with the spouse or partner of a person in the congregation, with interns, or with any other exploitative relationship...

### 2. Colleagues

I will strictly respect confidences given me by colleagues and expect them to keep mine.

Should I know that a colleague is engaged in practices that are damaging, as defined in our Code of Professional Practice, I will speak openly and frankly to her/him and endeavor to be of help. If necessary, I will bring such matters to the attention of the UUMA Board.

### 3. Congregation

I will respect absolutely the confidentiality of private communications of members\*

I will remember that a congregation places special trust in its professional leadership and that the members of the congregation allow a minister to become a part of their lives on the basis of that trust. I will not abuse or exploit that trust for my own gratification.

I will not invade the private and intimate bonds of others' lives, nor will I trespass on those bonds for my own advantage or need when they are disturbed. In any relationship of intimate confidentiality, I will not exploit the needs of another person for my own.

I will not engage in sexual activities with a member of the congregation who is not my spouse or partner, if I am married or in a committed relationship. If I am single, before becoming sexually involved with a person in the congregation, I will take special care to examine my commitment, motives, intentionally, and the nature of the activity and its consequence for myself, the other person, and the congregation...

Note: The complete text of the code is published in the UUMA's Guidelines, which is available from UUMA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108. A copy of which is in our church files.

***\*Although it is not clear that ministers are legally mandated to report suspicions or disclosures of abuse to the Department of Children and Family Services in Illinois, we believe that they have a moral mandate to report when the safety of the victim could be jeopardized by maintaining this rule of confidentiality.***

In the case of violation of this code, the Response Team will contact the Midwest District Executive and Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA who will initiate an investigation. The Response Team will then work with the Board of Trustees to establish the most appropriate methods of communicating, counseling and responding to reactions within the congregation and the community.

## **IX. WORKING WITH YOUTH**

### **A. The Role of the Volunteer**

Those working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one which may carry with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, child-care worker, teacher, minister or in any other role, the volunteer has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways which are affirming and inspiring to all involved.

While it is important that volunteers be capable of maintaining meaningful friendships with the young people they work with, they must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with children and youth and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with people older than themselves, and may find it difficult to speak out about any inappropriate behavior of their leaders, teachers and caretakers.

Teachers, helpers, or youth group leaders who have gained the trust of young people are in a unique situation to observe behavior or be party to a conversation in which a possible abusive situation (either within or outside of the church) is revealed. In this situation it is the teacher/leader's responsibility to report any such concerns immediately to the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team. The Religious Education Committee will provide regular training each year on the issues relating to the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy, the Code of Ethics, the reporting mechanism, and the need to create safe places for children and their adult and adolescent volunteer leaders, teachers and caretakers.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation, not just those in leadership and teaching positions, to create and maintain a climate which supports the growth and welfare of children and youth. In an effort to protect our young people as well as our leaders and teachers, we encourage all church members to read and sign **The Code of Ethics for Working with Children and Youth**.

### **B. The Special Case of Working with Adolescent Youth**

Adults who volunteer to work with adolescent youth (individuals between the ages of 11 and 18 years) at Second Unitarian Church often fall into a special category. They may meet with their groups away from the church in buildings and homes where there are few other adults present. The topics discussed and curriculum used with these groups may deal with sensitive, personal, and private issues. This situation mandates that the leaders of our adolescent youth be carefully screened in advance and trained to be aware of situations which could create discomfort or misunderstanding for either the leader or the youth. For this reason, members of Second Unitarian Church ask adults working with adolescents to complete **Document C: Questionnaire for Those Working with Children and Youth at Second Unitarian Church** and participate in training programs for youth leaders.

### **C. One-on-One Leader/Youth Relationship**

Adults who volunteer to work with youth of all ages at Second Unitarian Church may at times find themselves in a one-on-one leader/mentor type of relationship. This may be either through circumstances where a formal advisor/mentoring relationship has been developed or, through the initiative of a youth seeking the adult's advice. Regardless of how the relationship is initiated, the adult should always immediately inform the DRE of any highly sensitive issues discussed with the youth. If the issues involve a problem with the DRE, a member of the Response Team should be informed.

### **D. Non-Member Adult Teachers and Advisors Working With Youth**

This paragraph shall apply to all adult person (hereinafter referred to as "Outside Teachers") who are not members of Second Unitarian Church who come from other churches, organizations or otherwise to work with, teach, advise or otherwise be present with youth of all ages at Second Unitarian Church or at any other locations where youth activities sponsored by Second Unitarian Church occur.

It is the policy of Second Unitarian Church that at least one member or non-member of the church approved by the Director of Religious Education who has been successfully screened under all of the terms of this Safe Congregations Policy shall be present at all times when any outside teacher is teaching, advising or otherwise present with youth.

Prior to any outside teacher being permitted to teach, advise, or otherwise be present with youth, said outside teacher shall be required to sign a document entitled "Notice to and Agreement by Persons Working with Youth at Second Unitarian Church of Chicago and Elsewhere," a copy of said document being attached to this Safe Congregations Policy as Document J of Section XI. Said document shall provide as follows:

1. That the outside teacher acknowledges being notified of the existence of the Safe Congregations Policy.
2. That the outside teacher understands that the Safe Congregations prohibits certain enumerated behavior.
3. That the outside teacher agrees not to engage in any of said behavior.
4. That the outside teacher agrees to abide by the Safe Congregations Policy.
5. That the outside teacher understands that the document applies to any location where youth activities sponsored by Second Unitarian Church of Chicago occur.
6. That the outside teacher acknowledges being given the opportunity to read and review the Safe Congregations Policy and that said Policy is both applicable to the

outside teacher and will be enforced against the outside teacher by Second Unitarian Church of Chicago.

7. That the outside teacher affirms and represents that he/she has never engaged in conduct involving child abuse, sexual misconduct, or sexual harassment and has never been convicted of a felony.

Any outside teacher who fails or refuses to execute the aforesaid document shall not be permitted to participate in youth activities sponsored by Second Unitarian Church.

It is the policy of Second Unitarian Church of Chicago that outside teachers shall **not** be required to undergo criminal background checks or additional screening (other than is set forth in this paragraph) required by the Safe Congregations Policy for persons working with youth at the church. Requiring criminal background checks or additional screening would frustrate and inhibit the encouragement, promotion and occurrence of youth conventions and other meetings involving youth at Second Unitarian Church of Chicago.

#### **E. Hosting Youth In The Homes of Members and Non-Members**

This paragraph shall apply to any church members or non-members approved by the Director of Religious Education (hereinafter referred to as “**youth hosts**”) who provide housing for or otherwise host youth overnight in their homes in conjunction with youth conventions/meetings or other activities sponsored by Second Unitarian Church or otherwise.

Prior to any youth host being permitted to provide housing for or otherwise hosting youth in their homes overnight, said youth host shall be required to execute the document entitled, “Notice To And Agreement By Persons Working With Youth At Second Unitarian Church Of Chicago And Elsewhere,” a copy of said document being attached to this Safe Congregations Policy as Document J of Section XI.

Any intended youth host who fails or refuses to execute the aforesaid document shall not be permitted to provide housing for youth or otherwise host youth in their homes overnight in connection with church sponsored youth conventions, meetings or other activities.

In addition, prior to any youth host being permitted to provide housing for or otherwise hosting youth in their homes overnight, said youth host shall submit to a criminal background check for sexual offenses in such manner as is requested by the Director of Religious Education.

**See Document J.**

## **X. POLICY REGARDING VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

### **A. Preamble**

Second Unitarian Church recognizes that openness to a wide variety of individuals, and the free expression of a wide variety of beliefs, are among the prime values held by our congregation. These values are expressed in our church bylaws and in our denomination's purposes and principles. However, it is the policy of the Church that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. Consequently, the church prohibits violence and disruptive behavior, as detailed below. The Church encourages members, employees and others to report any violations of this policy.

### **B. Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. **“Abuse”** means physical abuse, harassment, intimidation, or interference with personal liberty.
2. **“Disruptive behavior”** means threats to any person's well being, threats to any person's freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions, disruption of any Church activity, or the substantial diminishment of the appeal of the Church to a significant portion of its potential or existing membership.
3. **“Harassment”** means knowing conduct which is not necessary to accomplish a purpose that is reasonable under the circumstances; would cause a reasonable person emotional distress; and does cause emotional distress to the person harassed. Harassment includes, without limitation, sexual harassment.
4. **“Interference with personal liberty”** means committing or threatening physical abuse, harassment, or intimidation so as to compel another to engage in conduct from which she or he has a right to abstain or to refrain from conduct in which she or he has a right to engage.
5. **“Intimidation”** means coercive or threatening behavior which causes another to engage in conduct from which she or he would prefer to abstain or refrain from conduct in which she or he would prefer to engage.
6. **“Physical abuse”** includes sexual abuse, the knowing or reckless use of physical force, confinement or restraint, and knowing or reckless conduct which creates an immediate risk of physical harm.

### **C. Policy Statement**

The possession of weapons of any kind, or actions which constitute abuse or disruptive behavior (collectively inappropriate behavior), are prohibited on Church premises and at all Church functions and activities.

#### **D. Complaint Process**

1. **Reporting of Incident.** Inappropriate behavior by persons other than employees of the Church may be reported to the Minister or anyone on the Misconduct and Abuse Team (the Response Team). The report may be made orally or in writing, but reports must be reduced to writing and delivered to a member of the Response Team before an investigation can be initiated. Complaints reported to the Minister must be transmitted to the Response Team before an investigation can be initiated. All complaint shall be reviewed and resolved by the Response Team.

2. **Investigation of Complaint.** When a complaint has been reduced to writing, the Response Team will initiate an investigation of the suspected inappropriate activity within five (5) working days of notification. If any member of the Response Team is the subject of the investigation, that member shall be replaced by a person selected by the Board of Trustees. The investigation will include an interview with the person(s) who made the initial report (unless pending litigation prevents such an interview), the person(s) towards whom the suspected inappropriate activity was directed and the person(s) accused of the inappropriate activity. Any other person who may have information regarding the alleged inappropriate activity may also be interviewed.

3. **Report.** The Response Team shall prepare a report within ten (10) working days of its notification of the suspected inappropriate activity unless extenuating circumstances prevent it from doing so. The report shall include a finding as to whether inappropriate activity occurred, and a recommendation as to what remedial action, if any, should be taken. The report will be made to the employee or other person who made the report, the employee or other person to whom the suspected inappropriate activity was directed, the person accused of the inappropriate activity, and the Board of Trustees.

4. **Remedial Action.** The Response Team may recommend to the Board of Trustees any remedial action deemed necessary, including without limitation termination of membership, or restriction of access to the Church. The Board of Trustees may adopt the recommendation of the Response Team in its sole discretion. The Response Team may, of its own accord, issue verbal or written warnings to members, or seek to conciliate disputes involving members, but in all cases the Response Team shall advise the Board of Trustees in writing of the action taken.

5. **Records; Confidentiality.** Every effort shall be made to keep all matters related to the investigation and various reports confidential. In the event of a lawsuit, however, the Church advises that records it maintains may not be considered privileged from disclosure. Written records will be maintained for two (2) years from the date of the

resolution unless new circumstances dictate that the file should be kept for a longer period of time.

**6. Time for Reporting Complaint.** The Church encourages a prompt reporting of complaints so that rapid response and appropriate action may be taken. However, due to the sensitivity of these problems and because of the emotional toll such misconduct may have on the individual, there shall be no time limit for reporting inappropriate activity complaints. Delayed reporting of complaints will not in and of itself preclude the Church from taking remedial action.

**7. Retaliation Prohibited.** The Church will not in any way retaliate against a person who makes a report of inappropriate activity nor permit any person or employee to do so. Retaliation is a serious violation to this policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another person for reporting inappropriate activity may be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for inappropriate activity offenders.

**8. False Accusation of Inappropriate Behavior.** If an investigation results in a finding that the complainant falsely accused another of any activity prohibited by this Policy knowingly or in a malicious manner, the complainant may be subject to appropriate sanctions, including the possibility of termination of membership.

#### **E. Amendments**

This policy does not create a contractual obligation. The Church reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.

#### **F. Scope of Policy**

This policy and the procedures and remedies described herein are inapplicable to the Minister or other employees of the Church.

**XI. DOCUMENTS**

**Document A.: The Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Committee of Second Unitarian Church**

**Employment Questionnaire**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

References

Please list those who are familiar with your character as it relates to working with children and youth, and as it relates to working with adult volunteers.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions (see Notice below):

- A. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Have you ever engaged in sexual harassment, or has any civil action ever been filed against you for the reason that you engaged in sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or child abuse? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Other than the above, are you aware of any information which indicates that you have ever actually engaged in conduct involving sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or child abuse?

I understand that the information I have provided may be verified, if necessary, by contacting persons or organizations named in this application, or by contacting any person or organization that may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless the Second Unitarian Church trustees, the employees, and the volunteers thereof. In signing this application, I affirm that the information I have given is true and complete.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

NOTICE

- A. You may refuse to answer or may answer “no record” to any question, or eliminate any information regarding:
- (1) an arrest, detention, or disposition with respect to a criminal matter where there is no conviction;
  - (2) a first conviction for , speeding or, minor traffic violations, or
  - (3) any conviction of a misdemeanor where the date of such conviction or the completion of any period of incarceration resulting therefrom, whichever date is later, occurred *ten* or more years prior to the date of this employment application. Second Unitarian Church does not request you to furnish, and will not make or keep a record of, any criminal information prohibited by Law.
- B. Conviction of a crime is not an automatic bar to your employment—all circumstances will be considered.
- C. Lying or giving false answers or misleading/inaccurate information or omissions with respect to all facts contained in this Questionnaire may be grounds not to hire you or for discharge.

**AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE**

I hereby authorize Second Unitarian Church to contact my previous employers and/or other individuals concerning my background, and I authorize my previous employers and other individuals to provide such information about me. This information is to be used solely for the purpose of evaluating my application for employment by Second Unitarian Church. I agree to hold harmless the Second Unitarian Church and the officers, the trustees, the employees, and the volunteers thereof, and those who provide information to the Second Unitarian Church, pursuant to this Authorization from any liability arising from the release of this information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Document B:**

**THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Adults working with children and youth in the context of the Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one that can carry a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, childcare worker, teacher, minister, registrant at a youth-adult conference, or in any role, adults have a special opportunity to interact with young people in ways that are affirming and inspiring to young people and adults.

Adults can be mentors, role models for and trusted friends of children and youth. They can be teachers, counselors, and ministers. To help our children grow up to be caring and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person.

While it is important that adults be capable of meaningful friendships with the young people with whom they work, adults must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with children and young adults and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with adults and may find it difficult to speak out about inappropriate behavior by adults.

Adult leaders need to possess a special dedication to working with young people in ways that affirm the Unitarian Universalist Association Principles. Good communication skills, self awareness and understanding of others, sensitivity, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and a positive attitude are important attributes. Additionally, adult religious leaders need to be people who:

- Have a social network outside of their religious education responsibility in which to meet their own needs for friendship, affirmation and self esteem;
- Are willing and able to seek assistance from colleagues and religious professionals when they become aware of a situation that requires expert help or intervention.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation or conference community, not just those in leadership positions, to create and maintain a climate that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth. With the aforementioned in mind, the following statement is a Code of Ethics for adults 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 the spiritual development of both individuals and 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.

There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and 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. Leaders must be careful to protect the children and youth they work with and to protect themselves and their church.

Therefore, I will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall I harass nor engage in behavior with children and youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

I will refrain from being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or any other drug which would impair my judgment or ability to function effectively with children or youth.

I have been informed of this Code of Ethics and agree to it before assuming my roles. I understand in cases of any violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

I hereby agree to abide by this Code of Ethics

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This Code of Ethics of the Second Unitarian Church has been adapted from the Code of Ethics for Persons Working with Children & Youth of the UUA-sponsored Programs and Events, adopted by the UUA in 1986.

**Document C: Questionnaire for Those Working with Children and Youth**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Position Requested \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe below the reasons you are interested in this position.

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References

Please list those who are familiar with your character as it relates to working with children and youth, and as it relates to working with other adult volunteers.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions (see Notice below):

A. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Have you ever engaged in conduct involving sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or child abuse? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

C. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer for the reason that you engaged in sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or child abuse? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

D. Other than the above, are you aware of any information which indicates that you have ever actually engaged in conduct involving sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or child abuse?

If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

---

I understand the information I have provided may be verified, if necessary, by contacting persons or organizations named in this application, or by contacting any person or organization that may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless the Second Unitarian Church trustees, employees, and volunteers thereof.. In signing this application, I affirm that the information I have given is true and complete.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

NOTICE

A. You may refuse to answer or may answer “no record” to any question, or eliminate any information regarding:

- (1) an arrest, detention, or disposition with respect to a criminal matter where there is no conviction;
- (2) a conviction for speeding or minor traffic violations, or
- (3) any conviction of a misdemeanor where the date of such conviction or the completion of any period of incarceration resulting therefrom, whichever date is later, occurred ten or more years prior to the date of this employment application.

Second Unitarian Church does not require you to furnish, and will not make or keep a record of, any criminal information prohibited by Law.

B. Conviction of a crime is not an automatic bar to your employment—all circumstances will be considered.

C. Lying or giving false answers or misleading/inaccurate information or omissions with respect to all facts contained in this Questionnaire may be grounds not to select you or discharge you.

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE

I hereby authorize the Second Unitarian Church to contact my previous employers and/or other individuals concerning my background, and I authorize my previous employers and other individuals to provide such information about me. This information is to be used solely for the purpose of evaluating my application for employment by Second Unitarian Church. I agree to hold harmless the Second Unitarian Church and the officers, the trustees, the employees, and the volunteers thereof, and those who provide information to Second Unitarian Church pursuant to this Authorization from any liability arising from the release of this information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Document D: Interim Agreement Regarding Restrictions with Children

### CONFIDENTIAL

A serious complaint has been made to the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team 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 a presumption or a confession of guilt. Instead this interim restriction is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals. This document will be considered confidential, will be kept in a locked file in the church office, and will be reviewed only by the Minister, the Director of Religious Education and the President of the Board of Trustees. Upon acquittal or if the charges are dropped, this document will be returned to you immediately.

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. *No* contact with children on church property or at church-sponsored events. This restriction includes the following:

*No* 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).

*No* remaining in the presence of children at any time when children are in the building without the presence of an adult at all times.

*No* conversations with children.

2. The church must provide safety for a variety of groups that use the building during the week. To that end, please avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session.

3. The church will attempt to keep this matter as confidential as possible, while ensuring the church remains a safe place for our children. Please consider the minister and the President of the Board of Trustees as your contact persons should further questions arise.

Agreement

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

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Document E. Members of the Congregation Needing Restrictions with Children**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

As we have discussed, the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team has serious reasons for concern that your contact with children and/or adolescents in our congregation potentially places both you and them at risk of incident or accusation. For this reason 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. *No* contact with children on church property or at church-sponsored events. This restriction includes the following:

*No* 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).

*No* remaining in the presence of children at any time when children are in the building without the presence of an adult at all times.

*No* conversations with children.

2. The church must provide safety for a variety of groups that use the building during the week. To that end, please avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session.

3. The church will attempt to keep this matter as confidential as possible, while ensuring the church remains a safe place for our children. Please consider the minister and the President of the Board of Trustees as your contact persons should further questions arise.

Agreement

I have reviewed this Members of the Congregation Needing Restrictions with Children and agree to abide by it.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Document H. Notice To Employees, Volunteers And Others Of The Sexual Misconduct And Abuse Policy Of Second Unitarian Church**

*In order to promote and maintain an environment that encourages and fosters appropriate conduct and respect for individual sensibilities, the Second Unitarian Church has adopted a written Sexual Misconduct And Abuse Policy, a copy of which is delivered to you herewith. It is important to all of us that each of you understand that the Second Unitarian Church intends to take this Policy very seriously and to enforce its provisions with respect to violations by anyone. Please review the entire Sexual Misconduct And Abuse Policy and sign the enclosed receipt indicating that you have read the Policy and that you understand that you will be expected to abide by the Policy and that you agree to conduct yourself consistent with the Policy and return the signed Receipt.*

*Sincerely,*

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*Second Unitarian Church*

**DOCUMENT I. RECEIPT OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND ABUSE POLICY**

*I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) have received a copy of the written Sexual Misconduct And Abuse Policy of Second Unitarian Church. I understand that the terms of this Policy will be enforced and I will be expected to conduct myself consistent with the provisions of this Policy. I agree to abide by the terms of the Policy.*

*Dated:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Document J:** To be filled out by outside teachers and advisors who come to Second Unitarian for conferences or other youth events.

**NOTICE TO PERSONS  
WORKING WITH YOUTH AT  
SECOND UNITARIAN CHURCH  
OF CHICAGO AND ELSEWHERE**

I hereby acknowledge that I have been notified that the **Second Unitarian Church of Chicago** has adopted a written Sexual Misconduct And Abuse Policy (hereinafter “**Safe Congregations Policy**”).

I understand that said **Safe Congregations Policy** prohibits certain behavior, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Abuse of children
- Intentional injury or harm of any kind to children
- Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of children
- Sexual harassment of children
- Violence, harassment, intimidation, interference with personal liberty and any other inappropriate activity with children

**I agree to not** engage in any of the above behavior.

**I agree to** abide by the **Safe Congregations Policy of Second Unitarian Church of Chicago** and to conduct myself consistent with the provisions of said Policy.

**I understand** that this document applies to any location where youth activities sponsored by **Second Unitarian Church of Chicago** take place.

**I acknowledge** that I have been given the opportunity to read and review said **Safe Congregations Policy** and that said Policy is both applicable to me and will be enforced by **Second Unitarian Church of Chicago**.

**I further affirm and represent** that I have never engaged in conduct involving child abuse, sexual misconduct, or sexual harassment, and I have never been convicted of a felony.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **XII. CLOSING**

It is difficult and painful to address the issue of violence in our lives and the lives of children. It is painful to acknowledge that so much of the torment children suffer is inflicted upon them within homes and communities that are expected to nurture and shelter them. However, it is also exciting and renewing to begin seeing this complex issue more clearly and ways that we can evolve into more caring and nurturing communities of support for individual children and their families.

Adults living and working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one that can carry with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperon, child-care worker, teacher, minister, or in any other role, the adult has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways that are affirming and inspiring to the young people and the adult. Adults can be mentors to, role models for, and trusted friends of children and youth. They can be teachers, counselors, and ministers. Helping our children grow up as caring and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation, not just those in leadership positions, to create and maintain a climate that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth. Such a climate promises the greatest potential for growth and fulfillment of us all. It is our belief that by honoring these commitments we make a substantial contribution to the creation of a spiritual community that reflects our highest ideals and goals.