

# **Policy on Child Supervision**

## **Purpose**

*It is the intention of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie to ensure the safety of our children and youth. Whether they are enrolled in our Religious Education program or not, we acknowledge our responsibility to set clear guidelines for our members and friends of all age groups, outlining appropriate behavior and circles of accountability.*

## **General Supervision Guidelines**

1. Children and youth shall be under the supervision of their parents or guardians at all times when they are not in class or in a Religious Education (RE) sponsored activity. Parents are responsible for the safety of their children when the RE program time ends. Parents should keep track of the whereabouts of their children and educate them in personal safety. Unless a child is engaged in an official RE activity, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to supervise their children.
2. When a parent/guardian with children attends any meeting/event at the Fellowship other than a Sunday Service, they shall inquire of the meeting/event organizer regarding the availability of child care, or as to whether children are welcome. If child care is not provided, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to arrange for child care, at their expense. To aid the parent/guardian, the Fellowship Secretary shall maintain a list of approved baby sitters, with whom the parent/guardian can make arrangements. Under no circumstances shall a child/children under the age of 12 be left unsupervised while their parent/guardian is attending a meeting/event at the Fellowship.
3. A parent or guardian should not drop a child off at the Fellowship and then leave unless a prior arrangement has been made with the DRE or another adult. This arrangement must include a means for contacting the parent or guardian in case of emergency.

## **Meetings/Relationships With Children and Youth**

1. Two adults shall be present during all disciplinary meetings. Disciplinary meetings between any adult and a child shall include another adult or the Director of Religious Education (DRE). If such a meeting is necessary, the parents shall be informed and the content of the meeting shall be discussed with them as soon as possible or when they pick up their child.
2. If an adult other than a parent or guardian (see also section below on counseling by DRE or minister), has a private on-site, one-on-one meeting with a child or youth, the DRE or another member of the RE Committee shall be immediately

notified of the meeting and its purpose. Such meetings are strongly discouraged, but if they occur, they shall be conducted in a room with a window or open door. At congregation-sponsored events no adult volunteer or compensated employee, other than the parent or guardian, shall be alone with a child or youth off-site without prior parent arrangement approved by the DRE.

3. The Minister or DRE counseling children or youth shall inform another member of the professional staff, or the Lifespan Religious Education Committee Chair of the counseling meeting and the name of the counseled. Advanced scheduling is strongly encouraged, but notice immediately after counseling is permissible if prior notice is impossible. Standard rules of ministerial confidentiality will be respected. Parents shall be informed of the meeting, again respecting rules of confidentiality, unless it is deemed that to do so would endanger the child or youth

**Implementation/Enforcement:** It is expected that all adults will be aware of the safety of our children. Any violations of this policy must be brought to the attention of the Minister or a member of the Board of Trustees as soon as possible.