

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie (UUFP)

Safe Congregation Policy

Purpose

To provide for the overall safety of all those involved with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie, including congregants, teachers, youth, employees, volunteers, etc. This covers not just personal relationships and interactions, but also the physical plant and use of the facilities.

Underlying Principles

Unitarian Universalists have a covenant with one another. Our covenant is not a creed. It does not dictate correct doctrine or belief. It does outline our relationship with one another. It is a voluntary and unconditional agreement to act in ways that express the values of our Unitarian Universalist Principles:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Structure

The Safe Congregation Policy is an umbrella policy incorporating the following specific policies (Policies in bold currently exist):

1. Religious Education Policies (adopted by the Lifespan Religious Education Committee):
 - a. **Policy on Sunday School Hours of Operation and Classroom Dismissal**
 - b. **Policy on Staffing of Classrooms and RE Sponsored Special Events**
 - c. **Policy on Classroom Management**
2. Child Safety Policies (outside of RE.):
 - a. **Policy on Child Supervision**
 - b. Policy on Child Abuse
 - c. **Policy on Conduct with Children**
3. Building Safety Policies:

- a. Policy on Fire Safety**
4. Congregational Conduct Policies:
 - a. Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior**
 - b. General Conduct Policy**
 - c. Policy on Conflict Resolution**
5. Agreements:
 - a. Code of Ethics for Those Working with Children and Youth
 - b. Youth Code of Ethics
 - c. Adult Sponsor Responsibilities
 - d. Consent Form (for field trips, special events, etc.)
 - e. Limited Access Agreement

Implementation of the Policy

1. Announcements of the Policy will be made in the order of service for two consecutive Sundays and copies will be made available to the congregation in the sanctuary entry
2. Upon implementation, parents, teachers, and volunteers will be mailed a copy along with a letter from the board and appropriate forms to sign. Subsequently, parent, teachers and volunteers will receive a copy of this Policy each year at registration. As new children enroll in the RE program their parents will receive copies of the Policy.
3. The Policy will be included in all new member information packets.
4. The Policy will be available on the UUFP web site (www.uupok.org) in the Members Only section.
5. A summary of the Policy will be distributed to all members and friends through the newsletter.
6. The Lifespan Religious Education Chair will discuss the relevant parts of the Policy in her newsletter article in the month following its approval.
7. The Policy will be provided to and discussed with all workers and volunteers who supervise or care for the children and youth of our congregation.
8. Each Policy included in this Safe Congregation Policy names the committee responsible for the implementation and enforcement of that Policy. The designated committee shall report the implementation status to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.
9. The Board will conduct an annual review of the entire Safe Congregation Policy, based on the input from all of the responsible Committees, the Minister, and the Director of Religious Education. The Board will assess how well this Policy has met its goals.