

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation Child & Youth Protection Policy

As a Unitarian Universalist congregation, All Souls covenants to “affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.” Such dedication requires more than a generalized desire to be kind and just; it also requires clear policies to protect people, particularly those most vulnerable to harm. This Childcare Protection Policy is part of All Souls’ commitment to uphold the worth and dignity of children as well as those who care for children.

This policy is not only intended to minimize the risk of children being harmed by accident, carelessness, or malice, but also to prevent the risk to caretakers of being wrongly accused of harming children.

This policy, in requiring groups to plan ahead for childcare, thereby makes it more likely that the children will feel their worth upheld in a safe and stimulating environment. To that end:

- 1) Childcare will be provided for children only when there is an adult in the building who is responsible for that child. However, the parent / guardian has sole responsibility for the child on church property except when a child is in formal childcare.
- 2) In all childcare, Religious Education and programming circumstances, there shall be two caregivers with the children and youth at all times.
- 3) It will be the responsibility of each committee sponsoring an event, meeting, class, choir rehearsal, etc. to select qualified childcare providers for these events and to adhere to these policies.
- 4) There will be no use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or firearms/weapons at any event sponsored for children or youth.
- 5) If any person providing childcare, parent, or adult of the congregation has concern about a child’s safety and well-being, this information must be passed on to the minister or Director of Religious Education as soon as possible. If after further investigation child abuse is suspected, the Department of Children and Families must be informed.
- 6) Every religious education teacher / youth advisor will sign the Child and Youth Protection Policy and the Code of Ethics (Attached)
- 7) All people assisting with children will observe universal precautions when providing assistance requiring contact with body fluids. Universal precautions involve thorough hand washing before and after care, use of gloves, and otherwise avoiding direct contact

of body fluids between teacher/caregiver and child. Nursery care providers are asked NOT to change diapers but to seek out that child's parent or guardian to do so.

Approved May 10, 2001, to be in effect September 1, 2001, Updated 2005; Updated March 2012

8) Qualifications for volunteer teachers / caregivers:

Ø An individual must have been affiliated with All Souls for at least six months.

Ø No person shall be a child care provider or teach who has been convicted or is presently accused of a crime involving a minor or other violent crime. If accused of such a crime while in service as a teacher or care giver, the individual will notify the DRE of this fact and will resign from all responsibilities immediately.

Ø All persons working with children and youth must have a background check. Parents of youth who work with children will be responsible for disclosing their youth's criminal or problematic behavior. *

* See Criminal Background Check Policy, attached.

I have read and understand this statement and agree to abide by it.

Signed _____

Date _____

Full Name (please print)_____

Address _____

Date of Birth _____

Social Security Number _____

Approved May 10, 2001, to be in effect September 1, 2001, Updated 2005; Updated March 2012

Criminal Background Check Policy – All Souls UU Congregation

Statement of Intention

Adult volunteers will be required to have a criminal background check. Only after the background check is performed will the individual be permitted to work with children and youth.

The decision to implement criminal background checks in this congregation has not been made lightly. Criminal background checks will be accompanied by a congregation-wide dedication to protecting children and youth. Other policies are in place to ensure the highest degree of quality and safety. It is our intention to provide children and youth with the best programming in the healthiest environment possible.

Background checks will be conducted by an appropriate professional company or agency.

Focus of the check:

The criminal background check covers criminal records in all 50 states.

Confidentiality

Only the minister, director of religious education, and Board president are authorized to view the record received from the reporting agency. Specifically, no All Souls volunteers are authorized for access. This includes the Board, RE Committee, and any other All Souls groups or individuals.

After a criminal background investigation report arrives, special provisions are made to treat all correspondence with utmost attention to protecting the privacy of those involved. Mail related to criminal background investigations is kept separate and reasonably secure against unauthorized access. The criminal backgrounds investigation reports will not be photocopied or otherwise duplicated. Electronic reports are confidentially and securely stored in the system of the agency conducting the background checks.

After the criminal background check is received, the authorized person(s) will make a determination immediately whether the adult volunteer being considered is suitable or unsuitable.

Approved May 10, 2001, to be in effect September 1, 2001, Updated 2005; Updated March 2012

All Souls UU Congregation Code of Ethics

for people working with children and youth

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles play a key role in fostering spiritual development of individuals and community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the particular 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 children and youth and adults must be one of mutual respect if positive potential is to be realized. The development of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being are important areas of growth. Adults play a key role in assisting youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates and research has demonstrated that children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when their leaders become sexually involved with persons in their care. Therefore, leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth under the age of 18. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with children or youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. Leaders shall be informed of this Code of Ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In case of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

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I have read and understand this statement and agree to abide by it.

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Approved May 10, 2001, to be in effect September 1, 2001, Updated 2005; Updated March 2012