

**First UU Austin
Child and Youth Safety Policy**

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Introduction

First UU Austin is committed to providing a safe environment for children and youth. We recognize that religious communities should be sanctuaries in every sense of the word, and we appreciate and recognize the intelligent, dedicated, caring, and generous adults who devote time away from their families and work obligations to minister to and with the children and youth of our congregation. Our programming and events would not be possible without these committed persons.

Adults working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one that may carry with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether in the role of youth advisor, chaperone, childcare worker, teacher, mentor, choir member, or any other capacity, the adult has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways that are affirming and inspiring to the young people and to the adult.

It is important that adults maintain meaningful relationships with the young people they work with. In this context, adults must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom and have awareness of their influence with children and youth. Every child and youth must experience physical, emotional, and sexual safety while participating in First UU Austin activities.

It is unfortunately necessary to recognize the reality of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of children and youth in our society. It exists throughout society, including religious communities. In fact, religious communities are particularly vulnerable to incidents of abuse because of the high level of trust, the welcoming spirit, and the strong reliance upon volunteers, especially in programs for children and youth. We further acknowledge that institutions operating in the best possible manner with all due concern still cannot guarantee an absolutely risk-free setting.

Because of the potentially devastating impact of abuse upon children and youth and the religious society to which they belong, we are willing to make the changes and sacrifices of convenience that this policy will require. We seek to preserve the spirit of welcome, respect, and trust in balance with our concern for the safety of our children and apply reasonable and thorough precaution to any policies and guidelines we adopt.

Therefore, this policy applies to all events conducted under the purview of First UU Austin, including events off-site in which children and youth are under the protection of members of First UU Austin and where the event is sponsored by a Unitarian Universalist organization such as any camp or conference hosted by any district, region, or member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

II. SCREENING AND SELECTION OF WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Assistant Minister is responsible for ensuring that all adults working with children and youth are carefully screened and selected with due diligence according to the procedures outlined in this policy.

Adults in a leadership position, paid or volunteer, working with children and youth must meet the following criteria:

- All adults working with high school aged youth must be at least 25 years of age.
- All adults working with middle school aged youth must be at least 21 years of age.
- All adults working with elementary School aged children, nursery workers, and other childcare workers must be at least 18 years of age.

All compensated and volunteer workers, must

- Consent to a criminal background check
- Read the FUCCA Child and Youth Safety Policy, which includes the Code of Conduct for workers with children and youth, and sign a form which indicates understanding.
- Attend training and read the Teacher's Manual.
- Present a photo ID
- Interview with the Assistant Minister or the Religious Education Coordinator.

Criminal background checks will be conducted at First UU Austin's expense. The Religious Education department will maintain application, interview, background check, and endorsement records. A record of all disqualified applicants will also be kept on file at First UU Austin indefinitely.

Reasons for the disqualification of an applicant may include but are not limited to:

- Any accusation in the past of inappropriate interaction with a minor, including assault or abuse of a sexual, physical, or emotional nature.
- Any arrest or conviction involving inappropriate or illegal interaction with a minor or other adult, including abandonment, endangerment, assault, or abuse of a sexual, physical, or emotional nature.
- Any arrest or conviction involving abuse of alcohol, including driving while intoxicated.
- Any arrest or conviction involving the possession, use, or abuse of illegal drugs.
- Any arrest or conviction of murder or aggravated assault.
- Any arrest or conviction involving injury to an elderly or disabled person.
- Any arrest or conviction for possession of or trafficking in child pornography
- Any equivalent offense within this state or any other.

All applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If a reason for disqualification surfaces, the Assistant Minister will meet with the Senior Minister to determine the worker's suitability for future involvement in the congregation.

Any person who has been disqualified has the right to request the information upon which that decision was made. A meeting to disclose that information will be held in a timely manner with the Assistant Minister and the Minister.

Any member of the congregation has the right to contest the appropriateness of any adult or youth to

participate in programming at or sponsored by the church. Disputes regarding the appropriateness of workers or attendees will be heard by the Assistant Minister, the Senior Minister, and any other parties these two staff members deem appropriate.

III. SUPERVISION

The Religious Education staff, both paid and volunteer is responsible for children and youth on Sunday mornings from the time they leave the sanctuary until they are reunited with parents/guardians. Before and after that time, the parent/guardian is responsible for the safety and supervision of their children.

Children and youth who are not participating in RE activities must be supervised by their parent/guardian at all times. Children are not permitted to roam or gather unsupervised in the building or on church property at any time.

In all cases where children and youth are supervised by the RE staff, there will be a minimum of two screened adults.

For groups involving children ages 0 – 13, the adult-to-child ratio is one adult per every six children (1:6). For groups involving children ages 14 – 18, the adult-to-child ratio is one adult per every eight children (1:8).

Children and youth will only be released into the custody of their parent/guardian. Adult leaders will not release children at the end of class without a parent/guardian escort. Children and youth will not be allowed to walk to the Howson Hall by themselves once class is over.

If unforeseen circumstances¹ arise where it becomes impossible for two adults to be present, the door to the room will remain open and the remaining adult will do everything to maintain complete transparency in the situation until another adult rejoins the gathering.

No adult will ever be alone or meet one-on-one with a child or youth. The only situation where an adult and a child are allowed to be alone is when the adult is the parent/guardian of the child.

No meetings between a worker and a child, including meetings correcting inappropriate behavior, will be held in a one-on-one situation; another worker or the Assistant Minister, or someone authorized by the Assistant Minister, will be present for all such meetings. If such a meeting has been deemed necessary, the parents will be informed and the contents of the meeting will be discussed with them when they pick up their child. Corporal punishment or abusive language will not be used under any circumstances.

If an adult other than a parent or guardian meets with a child or youth, such as a Coming of Age mentor, that meeting, its location, and its purpose will be disclosed to the parent/guardian of the child or youth and the Assistant Minister. The meeting will take place in a public venue such as a restaurant or a coffee shop. If at all possible, the parent or guardian of the youth will be in the same room or area as the meeting and the meeting will take place within the sight of the parent or guardian. Meetings

¹ For example, if a child needs to be escorted to the restroom or needs first aid administered. All efforts should be made to return to class as soon as possible. All attempts will be made to maintain a two-adult presence in the classroom before such a decision is made.

between adults and youth will only be conducted in this manner if an official and approved relationship has been established. Informal meetings between an adult and a youth for social reasons are not allowed.

In counseling situations, the Senior Minister or Assistant Minister who is providing the counseling will inform the parent/guardian of the meeting before it occurs. The adult and the youth will not be alone in the building together; another adult will be present on church grounds. In such situations, standard rules of ministerial confidentiality will be respected. Parents will be informed of the content of such meetings only if the child is deemed to be in danger of hurting him/herself or another person.

IV. CODE OF CONDUCT

Adults and older youth working with children in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role that carries with it a great deal of power and influence. This role can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime of benefit to the young person.

Adult and youth leaders play a key role in fostering the spiritual and character development of individuals. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurturing, care, and support that will benefit a young person for a lifetime.

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.

All adults, children, and youth at events sponsored by First UU Austin will adhere to all federal, state, and local laws as well as the “Big Four”:

1. Practice respect for self and others
2. NO exclusive relationships, including but not limited to sex or sexual behavior, bullying, acting in a prejudiced manner, any behavior which makes any one person feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, or any behavior which passively or actively excludes any person or persons from participating in an activity or discussion.
3. NO weapons, violence, or threats of violence.
4. NO possession, distribution, or use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.

Friendship with Youth: Although we hope that youth and adults will have mutually beneficial relationships that may come in the form of a mentoring relationship or other genuine interest, any adult who looks to youth for friendship is not sufficiently mature to be in a position of responsibility over them. A “friendship” is reciprocal, where neither person has more responsibility for the health of the relationship than the other. Friendships, therefore, are antithetical to the adult/youth relationship, where the adult is the one who assumes primary responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries and cultivating an atmosphere of health and trust. Therefore, it is the adult's responsibility to avoid or discourage inappropriate relationships.

Once a youth graduates from high school or becomes 18 years of age, it is still not appropriate to engage in a friendship with adults who served as advisors, mentors, teachers, or leaders of any kind in the congregation. Adults will not seek out friendships with youth who have graduated or engage them on an adult level. Likewise, young adults will not seek out friendships with adults who were in a

mentoring or advisory role while that young adult was a youth. Recognizing that a power inequality still exists in these relationships, youth and adult leaders will not engage each other socially for seven years after the youth has turned 18, or until the age of 25.

Unofficial Contact with Youth: Sometimes, a genuine mentoring relationship will develop between a youth and an adult. These can be not only healthy, but transformative for both. It is our concern, however, that a person who does not have the best interest of the youth at heart will try to disguise an unhealthy relationship with a youth as a mentoring relationship. In order to establish healthy mentoring relationships, the following steps will be taken:

- The adult will get written permission from the parent/guardian to meet with the child/youth for mentoring purposes outside of scheduled or organized events.
- The meetings will take place in a public setting. Preferably, the parent/guardian is in the same area and can monitor the meeting by sight.
- The adult will never be alone with the child/youth.
- The adult will notify the Assistant Minister before the meeting occurs.
- No adult will meet with a child/youth outside of structured events for social reasons. Only mentoring relationships are allowed, and only within these guidelines.
- The behavior of the adult will both be and appear to be above reproach.

Sexualized Behavior: It is never appropriate for adults to engage in any manner of sexualized behavior with a child or youth. This behavior refers not only to explicitly sexual behavior, but also to sexually provocative behavior or language. It includes jokes with sexual content and double entendres. Physical expressions of affection such as hugs are to be allowed only when initiated by the youth or child, and the adult must be sensitive not to allow them to be prolonged.

Confidentiality: An adult working with children and youth will not keep secrets for the children and youth and will not give the impression that secrets will be kept. A covenant of confidentiality is actually considered a “privileged conversation,” meaning that no one repeats information told in confidence. An adult leader, has a responsibility to report some information in a timely and appropriate manner. This information includes any occurrence of abuse, the potential of harm to self or others, problems with drugs or alcohol, or any type of threat or extortion. Adults working with children and youth must be clear on these guidelines and clearly explain them to children and youth. For more information, please see the section of this policy on reporting.

Sleeping Arrangements at Overnights: Only one person will be allowed under a blanket or in a sleeping bag. Two or more sleeping bags connected to make one large sleeping bag is considered one sleeping bag. The sleeping rooms will be open and monitored. Sleeping rooms may be segregated by gender and may include an all-gender sleeping area. At least two adults, called “Roamers,” will remain awake during all hours. Roamers can work in shifts so that no adult must stay awake the entire night. Roamers will monitor all rooms, including those not in use, to ensure that all children/youth are complying with this safety policy at all times. Visibility and accessibility will be maintained in all rooms at all times, including sleeping rooms and movie rooms, via an open door or unobstructed interior window into the space. All doors must remain unlocked. There must be enough light in all rooms for roamers to identify the people in the room.

Possession of Contraband Items: Adults, children, and youth may not be in possession of the following: firearms, fireworks, other explosives, knives, weapons of any kind, illegal drugs, alcohol, or

pornography. First UU Austin reserves the right to search any person² and their belongings that might harbor such items, and the owner of the items must either leave immediately or destroy or dispose of the dangerous substances, including illegal drugs and alcohol, and turn over weapons or offensive materials to a paid or volunteer staff person. If any person refuses consent to search their person or belongings, that person will be sent home immediately at their own expense or the expense of their parent/guardian. First UU Austin will decide if, how, and to whom confiscated materials will be returned at the conclusion of the event. Possession of contraband will be reported to the Assistant Minister, the Minister, and the parent/guardian if the person in possession of such items was a youth or child. The Assistant Minister and the Minister will determine the eligibility of the offender to participate in future events sponsored by First UU Austin.

Contraband may be protested by anyone who is offended and the adults in charge of the event may confiscate it.

An incident report of possession of contraband, other infractions of event rules, or injuries requiring medical care, will be completed by the persons involved and will be kept on file by the Assistant Minister, indefinitely.

Permanent Modification: Adults, children, or youth may not offer or receive body piercings, permanent tattoos, or other permanent body modifications at RE events. It is the responsibility of the adults who staff an event to return youth to their parents/guardians without any new permanent physical modifications.

Code of Conduct at Off-Site Events: First UU Austin encourages participation in all district, regional, and continental Unitarian Universalist events. All adults, children, and youth who attend these events are representatives of First UU Austin and are expected to continue to abide by all guidelines contained in this policy in addition to any policies and guidelines set forth by the specific event staff, district, region, or local congregation that is hosting the event.

Additional Guidelines for Conduct: In addition to the above explicit guidelines, adults in leadership positions will:

- Provide nurturing care and support to all children and youth and work to help children develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence.
- Respect the self-hood of each child or youth, including the absolute rights to privacy of their own minds and body.
- Refrain from any behavior with children or youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.
- Refrain from any behavior or language that is personally threatening or demeaning.
- Refrain from any sexually harassing behavior, nor any other sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children or youth.
- Refrain from encouraging or condoning any sort of illegal or unethical activity on the part of children or youth.

² “Person” here refers to anyone attending an event of the First UU Austin’s Children and Youth Religious Education Program.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Recognizing that the means for communication, especially electronic communication, are changing rapidly, First UU Austin upholds the principle that parents are the final arbiter of how and when their child or youth should receive communication from adults.

Adults who initiate individual communication with children or youth must first obtain written permission from the parent/guardian. Otherwise, adults communicating with individual children or youth, whether by mail, telephone, or electronically, will always include the parent.

Adults in leadership positions who initiate electronic communication with children or youth must copy the child or youth's parent/guardian or Assistant Minister. This includes email, text messaging, and private messaging on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and other social media platforms.

Adults will not initiate instant messaging with children or youth.

Electronic and phone communications to children and youth initiated by adults in leadership will only be used for the purpose of conducting the business of the group involved, such as scheduling upcoming events, distribution and discussion of minutes, announcement of schedule or location changes, etc).

An adult in leadership may not “friend” a child or youth on Facebook, “follow” a child or youth or be “followed” by a child or youth on Twitter, or add a child or youth to a circle on Google+. All correspondence via these social media venues will be public, via posting in groups or on walls.

Adults will maintain an appropriate level of disclosure or block children and youth entirely from seeing personal posts. Adults will not advertise, promote, or publish links to their own personal journals, blogs, or websites to children and youth.

Adults responding to communication from a child or youth will maintain appropriate boundaries and use discernment. The adult who receives the communication will immediately tell the child or youth that all communication between them will be public and will include the parent/guardian, Minister, or Assistant Minister.

Parents/guardians will either give written “blanket” permission or request notification concerning each adult contact in leadership at First UU Austin.

VI. TRANSPORTATION

Adult drivers to, from, or during events sponsored by First UU Austin, including cluster, district, regional, and continental events of the Unitarian Universalist Association, must meet the following guidelines:

- Be at least 25 years of age
- Present proof of current liability insurance that meets at least the minimum coverage required by the laws of the state of Texas
- Submit to a driving record background check
- Abide by all posted speed limits and abstain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drowsy-

inducing non-prescription drugs while on any trip. Abstinence includes the 12 hours immediately preceding the trip in the case of alcohol and prescription and non-prescription drugs that may impair judgment while driving.

- Ensure that the vehicle is in good maintenance and repair, and that all safety precautions are taken. A first aid kit will be kept inside the vehicle at all times.

The Assistant Minister will obtain photocopies of each driver's proof of liability insurance and driver's license and keep these documents on file at First UU Austin indefinitely.

In every vehicle in which seat belts are required by law, vehicle occupancy shall not exceed the number of seat belts, and all occupants must be properly secured in the seat belts while the vehicle is in motion.

At no point will child or youth participants in an event sponsored by First UU Austin leave the campus of the hosting institution, except as part of planned and previously announced off-site event under the leadership of the host institution (First UU Austin, camp, conference, or other congregation).

A minimum of two adults must accompany a group going off-site. At all times, the appropriate youth or child-to-adult ratio must be maintained.

In the event of an emergency, the primary on-site adult leader or staff member may make an exception for a person who needs leave campus to seek medical attention.

Adult advisors will have in their possession signed medical release forms for all children and youth with whom they are traveling and they shall be responsible for obtaining appropriate medical care for any child or youth in their custody. After arrival, the host institution is responsible for assisting that adult in obtaining such care. A parent/guardian will be notified of the need for and provider of care as soon as possible without endangering the child or youth. In the absence of a parent/guardian, an adult advisor will accompany the child or youth to the medical care facility.

All off-site functions begin when the child or youth arrives at the rendezvous point of travel and is remanded to the care of the adult chaperones. All church responsibility at off-site events ends when the child or youth is picked-up by the parent/guardian.

All children and youth attending an off-site event must be registered in full, having completed the entire registration packet.

Each off-site event will have its own permission form that grants permission for the child/youth to be transported by the named drivers and permission for the child/youth to attend the specified event.

Side trips³ en route to or from an event are prohibited unless authorized in advance and noted on the trip's specific permission form.

Youth will not drive themselves or ride with a youth driver to an off-site event.

Two adults must be in each car. In the instance a multiple-car caravan, one adult may drive a car containing two or more children or youth. Care must be taken that the caravan stays together and that no one vehicle takes a side trip or stops unexpectedly. One adult will never drive one child or youth

³ Practical exceptions, such as restroom, gas, and motion-sickness stops are not considered "side trips."

unless that adult is the parent/guardian of the child or youth.

If renting a vehicle, only full-sized vans or mini-vans may be rented. Fifteen-passenger-vans are not to be used.

All adult drivers will sleep for at least eight hours on the night prior to departure from an event. The hosting institution will be responsible for providing adequate adult roamers to monitor the facility during drivers' sleeping hours. Each adult will take individual responsibility for getting adequate sleep to promote good judgment and clear thinking.

VII. RESTROOM ASSISTANCE

It is often necessary to assist young children in the restroom to provide support for toilet training or to escort school-age children to the restroom. In order to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all persons, adult leaders who assist in this way will:

- Encourage the parent/guardian to take their child to the restroom prior to leaving the child in the classroom.
- Inform the other adult in the room that they are leaving to assist a child in the restroom. Adults will ask if any other children need to use the restroom at that time.
- Respect individual child's independence and needs by not assuming the assistance that is required and allowing the child to lead.
- Allow the child to take care of his or her own wiping needs.
- Provide clothing assistance when necessary.
- Give the child privacy, but maintain proper supervision for safety.
- Monitor the room primarily by listening.
- Never close the door when they are in the restroom with a child.
- Assist with hand washing, assuring that all children and adults have washed their hands before returning to the classroom.
- Allow only one child per stall at a time.

VIII. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Fire evacuation routes will be posted prominently in each room and hallway of the building. The evacuation route will contain information for gathering locations. It is the responsibility of the RE Administrative Assistant to post, maintain, and update these notices.

All adult leaders will understand the evacuation procedure for the room or rooms in which they are leading programming. All adult leaders will also know the location of fire-safety equipment such as extinguishers and fire blankets.

In the event of evacuation, adult leaders will take the attendance rosters and emergency release forms to the gathering site and take roll immediately to assure all children and youth are accounted for. An adult will be assigned to check closets, restrooms, and corners on the way out of the building to ensure no children are left in danger. Adult leaders will remain responsible for children and youth on their attendance roster until the "all-clear" is given. Parents/guardians will pick up their children/youth when the "all-clear" is given.

Adult leaders of all events at First UU Austin are responsible for making sure that fire exits are not blocked at any time during the event or activity and that all participants understand evacuation procedures.

In the case of a tornado, adult leaders will assist children in gathering in the hallways, away from windows. All persons, upon seeing or being notified of a tornado warning, will sit with their backs against the RE wing hallway walls and cover their head and neck with hands. No one in this emergency situation, including adults, children, or youth, will attempt to leave the building, move to another room of the building, or reunite with family members. Parents/guardians will not attempt to pick up their child or youth from programming until the “all-clear” is given.

In the event of a medical emergency, an adult leader will contact the Assistant Minister immediately. The Assistant Minister, or a staff person entrusted by her, will retrieve the medical release information and join the adult leaders. Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible given the immediacy of the situation. The adult leaders in the situation will do whatever is necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and youth and will seek whatever medical care is necessary.

To ensure the safety and proper administration of all prescription medication, all medications and their administration must be documented by a parent/guardian and given to the lead RE staff for the event or activity prior to leaving children and youth in their care. Full disclosure is necessary, including the types of prescription medication a child or youth takes regularly, how these medications are to be administered, and what possible interactions these medications could have with other drugs, including non-prescription drugs. If the guardian of the child or youth is leaving the church grounds (such as in the case of an overnight event), the full prescription bottle or box, complete with label, will be the responsibility of the lead RE staff person onsite for the duration of the event. Children and youth will only be allowed to carry their prescriptions themselves if the prescription is an asthma inhaler, or other such prescribed emergency, life-saving interventions.

IX. ACCOUNTABILITY

Parents/guardians are responsible for their dependent children and/or youth and are required to ensure that those dependents are in compliance with all policies and procedures.

All adults, whether compensated or volunteer, who work with children and youth have responsibilities to the children and youth, to First UU Austin, and to the larger Unitarian Universalist faith. They must balance these responsibilities at all times. Adults have the responsibility of keeping and being accountable to one another as well as to the congregation.

Due to the inherent power imbalance between adults and children or youth, adults will assume the primary responsibility for setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries and cultivating an atmosphere of health and trust.

X. REPORTING OF AND RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED ENDANGERMENT

If any adult becomes aware or suspects that a child is or has been the victim of abuse, the adult will immediately report this abuse to the Assistant Minister and the Senior Minister. After the Assistant Minister and the Senior Minister have been notified, the reporting adult(s) and the aforementioned staff will determine the next steps. If necessary, the Assistant Minister and the Senior Minister will assist the

adult(s) in reporting the abuse to Child Protective Services.

Adults in leadership will report any signs of:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Threatened or attempted suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as cutting, drug abuse, or signs of an eating disorder

All adults will act in accordance with the reporting laws of the state of Texas. The Assistant Minister and the Minister are mandated to report any information they have about the abuse of a child to Child Protective Services.

The definitions of abuse that First UU Austin will use are those created by the state of Texas.

Other than the aforementioned reporting, the matter is to remain confidential. Release of information could interfere with successful prosecution, could result in unwarranted damage to the reputation of the accused, or may endanger the child.

If the abuse involves an adult working within the RE program at First UU Austin, that individual will immediately be relieved of any duties involving supervision, care, or teaching of children and/or youth until the matter is resolved.

If the adult reporting the abuse, the Assistant Minister, or the Senior Minister ascertains that a child or youth is at immediate risk, these adults shall take any necessary steps to protect the minor.

In the event that a child/youth discloses abuse to an adult, that adult to whom the child/youth has disclosed abuse will:

- Remain calm and not show strong reaction.
- Request the presence of the Assistant Minister or the Senior Minister as a second adult during the conversation.
- Put the child at ease by listening and seeking to understand.
- Ask permission before touching the child, including reassuring pats. Any touch may be associated with physical or emotional pain.
- Reassure the child/youth that he/she is not in trouble.
- Use the child/youth's vocabulary.
- Let the child/youth know what you will do: "We are going to tell Mari and Sean, and then they will decide what to do from there."
- Support the child: "I am very sorry that has happened to you. Do you need anything right now?"
- Do what you can to make certain the child is safe from further abuse.

The adult to whom the child/youth has disclosed the abuse will NOT:

- Press the child/youth for details. It is not the adult's responsibility to prove abuse has occurred.
- Ask "why" questions. These questions require children/youth to explain actions they may not understand.
- Promise that you will not tell anyone else about the disclosure.
- Ask leading or suggesting questions.

- Make angry or critical remarks or comments about the alleged perpetrator. The child/youth often knows, loves, or likes this person.
- Disclose information indiscriminately, keeping in mind the rules of confidentiality in this policy.
- Make the child feel different or singled out.
- Investigate a case him/herself. That is the job of the police and Child Protective Services.

If the media contacts First UU Austin's administrative office during business hours or approaches any member of the congregation individually, the person being approached is not to speak to the media under any circumstances.

In general, the following guidelines apply for these situations with regard to public media:

- Only the Minister may speak for First UU Austin.
- Because of the issue of confidentiality, in the best interest of the child, specific cases cannot be discussed in a public context. Particularly, if litigation seems possible, it is important to protect both First Unitarian Universalist Church and the interest of the child.
- The Minister, Assistant Minister, or designated spokesperson may freely discuss what steps have been taken to guard against abusive situations, including the content of this policy.

XI. CONSEQUENCES

Violation of the Law by an Adult:

In the event that an adult has violated city, state, or federal law while at First UU Austin or an event sponsored by First UU Austin regarding the endangerment, abuse, neglect, or harm of a child or youth:

- Police will be notified.
- The adult will leave the premises immediately, or as soon as is safe.
- The Assistant Minister will be notified immediately to arrange for adequate adult supervision/transportation of children and youth, if required.
- The adult is immediately relieved of all duties involving supervision of children/youth, pending investigation.
- The Senior Minister will be notified within 24 hours.
- The incident will be reported on an incident report form within 24 hours after the incident.

Violation of Policy by an Adult:

In the event that an adult has been found in violation of this policy but has not broken the law:

- The Assistant Minister will be notified immediately.
- The Assistant Minister will hear input from the adults present during the incident and will decide if the adult will be permitted to stay at the event.
- If the adult is asked to leave, the Assistant Minister will arrange for adequate adult supervision/transportation of children and youth.
- The Senior Minister will be informed within 24 hours.
- The incident will be reported on an incident report form within 24 hours after the incident.

- The Assistant Minister will determine further consequences related to attending, participating, or leading First UU Austin RE events.

Violation of the Law by a Child or a Youth:

In the event that the adults in charge of an event at First UU Austin determine a law has been broken by a child or youth:

- The adult leadership will immediately notify the Assistant Minister and the child/youth's parent/guardian.
- A safe route home will be established, and the child/youth will leave the event in the custody of a parent/guardian as soon as possible. Transportation will be at the expense of the parent/guardian of the child/youth.
- The Senior Minister will be notified within 24 hours.
- The Assistant Minister may decide to impose a period of suspension or additional consequences.
- The incident will be reported on an incident report form within 24 hours after the incident.

Violation of Policy by a Child or Youth:

In the event that a child or youth has been found in violation of this policy but has not broken the law:

- The Assistant Minister and the child/youth's parent/guardian will be notified immediately.
- The Assistant Minister will hear input from the adults and children/youth present during the incidence of violation and will decide if the child/youth will be permitted to stay at the event.
- If the child/youth is asked to leave, a safe route home will be established, and the child/youth will leave the event in the custody of a parent/guardian as soon as possible. Transportation will be at the expense of the parent/guardian of the child/youth.
- The child or youth will be offered the opportunity to apologize to the community, either in person or in writing. Further, the child or youth will be offered an opportunity to perform an act of reparation.
- The Senior Minister will be informed in a timely manner.
- The incident will be reported on an incident report form within 24 hours after the incident.
- The Assistant Minister will determine further consequences related to attending, participating, or leading at First UU Austin events.

XII. IMPLEMENTATION AND EDUCATION

Once this policy is accepted by the First UU Austin,

- The policy will be posted on the First UU Austin website.
- The Assistant Minister will send the policy to registered families as an attachment the week following approval.
- Copies of the policy will be available in print in the First UU Austin administration office for a month following approval. After that month, hard copies of the policy can be obtained upon request.

At least every three years, this policy will be reviewed by the ministers. Recommendations for changes can be sent at any time to the Assistant Minister for review.

APPENDIX A: PARENTAL CONSENT FOR COMMUNICATION WITH CHILD OR YOUTH

In an attempt to be a responsible steward by setting a good example and in accordance with the First UU Austin Child and Youth Safety Policy, I would like your permission to communicate with your child from _____ (Date) to _____ (Date).

Since I am an adult who is working with children and youth this year, I need to let you know ahead of time, that I will be in contact with your child/youth over this church year using the following means unless you specify otherwise.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (phone number) _____ or (email) _____.

You may contact the Assistant Minister to hear references for me or to get information about the process I have undergone to be trusted as a leader with children and youth.

Please return the following permission to First UU Austin RE office at your earliest convenience. This permission form will go into effect as soon as it is received.

Thank you so much for your trust in allowing me to work with your child/youth. It is a privilege that I will not abuse.

Respectfully,
ADULT NAME

I, _____ (parent/guardian) am comfortable with you, _____ (adult leader's name) contacting my child, _____ (child's name printed) by the following means (check all that apply):

___ Email ___ Please continue to copy me on all email communications.

___ Home phone, no later than ___

___ Cell phone, calling

___ Cell phone, texting

___ Facebook, public group messages only (**no private messaging**)

___ Twitter, public group messages only (**no private messaging**)

___ Google+, public group messages only (**no private messaging**)

___ U.S. mail

___ all of the above

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B: TRANSPORTATION COVENANT FOR DRIVERS OF CHILDREN/YOUTH

I, _____ (PRINT NAME), promise to provide safe transportation of these children/youth:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

From: _____ (Location of Rally Point)

To: _____ (Location of Event).

As the driver, I understand that I am primarily responsible for the safety and well-being of my passengers. I promise to abide by all posted speed limits and traffic laws.

I promise to abstain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, and non-prescription drugs that impede driving capability while on this trip, and I understand that abstinence includes the 12 hours immediately preceding the trip.

I can attest that the vehicle I am driving is in good maintenance and repair and that all possible safety precautions have been taken to ensure a safe trip.

I have a first aid kit in the vehicle.

I have provided proof of insurance and my driver's license for First UU Austin's files.

I have been properly screened using the methods in First UU Austin's Child and Youth Safety Policy for workers with children/youth and have been found to be suitable for leadership and supervision with children and youth.

I agree to abide by all guidelines as stated in First UU Austin's Child and Youth Safety Policy, including Section V: Transportation, for the duration of this trip.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: EVENT-SPECIFIC PERMISSION FORMS

**FIRST UU AUSTIN
SPECIAL EVENT PERMISSION FORM**

(Sections I, II, and III will be completed by the RE Coordinator)

SECTION I: EVENT INFORMATION

Name of Event: _____

Hosting Location: _____

Hosting Address: _____

Start Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Date: _____ End Time: _____

SECTION II: TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

The following adults will provide transportation to and from this event:

(1) Name: _____ Phone: _____

(2) Name: _____ Phone: _____

(3) Name: _____ Phone: _____

(4) Name: _____ Phone: _____

Rendez vous Point: _____

Time of Departure: _____ Approximate Time of Return: _____

SECTION III: ADULT CHAPERONE INFORMATION

The following adults are chaperones for this event (may be different from above):

(1) Name: _____ Phone: _____

(2) Name: _____ Phone: _____

(3) Name: _____ Phone: _____

(4) Name: _____ Phone: _____

SECTION IV: CHILD/YOUTH INFORMATION

Youth Name _____ Birth Date _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s) _____

Parent home phone _____ Mobile phone _____

In the event of an emergency and the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, who else can we contact?

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Does this Child/Youth take any medication regularly? _____ If yes, please list them: _____

Does this Child/Youth need assistance in administering any medication? _____

Allergies this Child/ Youth has: _____

Does this Child/ Youth have any other special dietary needs? _____

Does this Child/Youth have any medical or psychological conditions that would prevent him or her from participating in any part of this event? If so, please explain: _____

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about this Child/Youth to ensure that he/she has a positive experience during this event? _____

Health Insurance Carrier: _____

Policy Number: _____ Group Number: _____

Does this Youth carry an Insurance Card for this policy? _____

Does this Youth wear a medical alert bracelet? _____

In the event of an emergency, is there any information a medical professional would need to know before treating this youth? _____

SECTION V: LIABILITY RELEASE

I hereby grant permission for my Child/Youth, _____, to participate in activities sponsored by First UU Austin (First UU). I understand that all reasonable health and safety precautions will be taken, but in the event of an emergency, this form will release First UU, its staff, and its volunteers of all liability claims not covered by current First UU insurance coverage. In the event that an emergency should occur while my Child/Youth is participating in activities sponsored by First UU, I hereby grant my permission to the person(s) in charge of the activity to do whatever is deemed necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of my Child/Youth, and I hereby authorize said person(s) to seek whatever medical care is necessary. I agree to assume all responsibility for any such medical expenses. This agreement shall remain in effect for the duration of the activity. This consent may be photocopied, with photocopies authorized to be as binding as the original.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

SECTION VI: YOUTH AGREEMENT (For Youth ages 14 to 18)

I wish to participate in the aforementioned activities sponsored by First UU Austin (First UU). I agree to follow the rules of the event, respect the decisions of the advisors, and do my best to enhance the positive spirit of the youth community during this event. I agree to uphold the Covenant of Behavior and abide by all parts of the Child and Youth Safety Policy as it pertains to me while at this event, including but not limited to showing respect for myself and others, refraining from exclusive relationships or behavior, practicing non-violence, and abstaining from all tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs. I understand that I represent First UU Austin and the Unitarian Universalist faith as a whole and will conduct myself in an appropriate manner.

Signature of Youth

Date

NOTE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS: This form will accompany the adult chaperones to the host location or be kept with the adult chaperons during an overnight. After the event is over, this form will be destroyed.

NOTICE TO ADULTS

I. Child Safety: First UU Austin operates under a Child and Youth Safety Policy. A copy of the policy can be found on the First UU Austin website (austinuu.org) for review. By signing this page, you indicate you have read and understand the policy and agree to abide by its contents.

II. Clothing: Please send your child in play clothes for arts and crafts and movement activities.

III. Picking Up Your Child After Religious Education: At First UU Austin, our children are fully integrated members of the congregation. Out of respect for both our children and our volunteer teachers, parents are expected to pick up their children no earlier than 10:30am (9:15am worship service) and noon (10:45am worship service.) Children are invited to participate in social hour after the service under parent supervision.

IV. Field Trips: Your child will only be allowed to participate in off-site activities if he or she has been registered IN FULL, including both registration in First UU's RE program, as well as for the particular field trip event, as required.) In addition, we require that you sign a permission form specific to each off-site activity sponsored by First UU Austin, which describes the activity, method of transportation, and names of participating adults.

V. Behavior: Children participating in the First UU Austin RE program are expected to follow a covenant of behavior. They are expected to show respect for all other participants and teachers. No violence of any kind, physical or otherwise, will be permitted in RE classrooms.

Appendix D: Incident Report

Incident/Injury Report
Religious Education Department
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin
4700 Grover Ln. Austin, Tx 78756
512.452 6168

Date/time/location of incident:

Reported by:

Description of incident:

Immediate action:

Follow-up:

Incident witness (printed name)	Initials	Date
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Incident witness (printed name)	Initials	Date
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Incident witness (printed name)	Initials	Date
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Assistant Minister	Initials	Date
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