

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills

SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY

Adopted December 14, 2015

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I. Preamble

We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills, as a religious community, recognize the importance of creating communities where everyone, and especially our children and youth, are safe. We recognize that religious communities - which should be dedicated to the creation of safe environments for all their members - are particularly vulnerable to incidents of abuse because of the high level of trust, the welcoming spirit, and the strong reliance on volunteers, especially in children and youth programs.

We recognize the importance in a religious community of those very factors of trust, welcome, and volunteer commitment, and the necessity to adopt procedures to guard against incidents of abuse. We further realize that institutions operating in the best manner possible with all due concern still cannot guarantee an absolutely risk-free environment.

As a people of faith, we look to our Unitarian Universalist Principles to guide our policy-making. We apply our affirmation of the worth and dignity of all people and our search for justice to these procedures, which support our being together in community.

In this spirit, we endorse the following procedures for congregation-sponsored events.

II. Bylaws

These policies exist within the context of the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills. Bylaw sections which it may be helpful to consult include:

- A. Article IV.G Cancellation of Membership
- B. Article V.D.6-7 Special Congregational Meetings called to discuss actions of the Minister, the Board, or Committees
- C. Article VI.A.4 Failure of an Officer or Trustee to meet his/her responsibilities

D. Article VIII.E.2 Describing the Committee on Shared Ministry (currently in the Bylaws as the "Pastoral Committee)

III. The Safe Congregation Response Team

A. Function

This policy shall be carried out with the help and guidance of a Safe Congregation Response Team. The function of the Team shall be to lead the Congregation's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence and abuse.

B. The Response Team will be in place at all times, with the names and phone numbers of team members available to all members and friends of UUCC.

C. Members

The team will be composed of:

1. the Minister
2. the President of the Board
3. the Coordinator of the Religious Education Program
4. the two at-large members selected by the Board from a list supplied by the Minister, RE Coordinator and Board President.
5. In cases of a conflict of interest, a team member may be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate, at the discretion of the Board.

D. Routine Responsibilities of the Team

1. Members of the Team will be well educated in the Policy
2. Members of the Team will become knowledgeable about:
 - a. sexual misconduct: abuse, harassment, exploitation, violence;
 - b. healthy childhood sexuality,
 - c. sexual offenses and offenders
3. Members of the Team will develop processes that will help us make good decisions about the actions that we are called to take.
4. The Team will keep a list of available resources for adults and children and specific mandated reporting procedures for children. This list shall be created and maintained by the Minister, with help from the Team as needed. All members of the Team will have access to a copy of this list.
5. The Team will be available to individuals within the congregation for compassionate listening and referral to services. An individual member of the team may decide to refer specific situations to another member of the team.

E. Responsibilities of the Team in Case of a Report or Suspicion of Abuse or Misconduct

1. If an adult in the congregation tells you a child/youth has made an allegation of abuse:
 - a. Have a conversation to get clarity on the details of the allegation
 - b. If the allegation is against someone unconnected to the congregation, help the adult to make a report to Child Protective Services.
 - c. If the allegation is against someone in the congregation:
 - 1) As soon as possible in the process, assemble as many members of the Safe Congregation Team as possible to work together to handle the situation appropriately.

- 2) work with the adult to whom the allegation was reported to decide if it is safe for the child to bring the accused into the conversation.
 - 3) If it is, bring that person into the conversation and work with them to make sure the incident is reported to Child Protective Services.
 - 4) If it is not safe for the child to bring the accused into the conversation at this point, work with the adult to report to Child Protective Services.
 - 5) If the child is not safe returning home, work with Child Protective Services to get the child to a safe place.
 - 6) Begin the process of creating a Limited Access Contract with the accused, using the Bylaws and the sample in Appendix 6 for reference.
- d. If the child's parent(s) are not the accused, let the parents know what is happening as soon as possible.

2. If an adult in the congregation tells you they suspect a child is being abused or neglected
 - a. Work with the adult to determine if a report to Child Protective Services is indicated
 - b. Call upon other members of the Safe Congregations Response Team as needed for consultation and assistance.

3. If an adult in the congregation reports abuse or misconduct on the part of a member of the congregation against an adult
 - a. Listen compassionately and supportively, and with the permission of the person making the report, convene the Safe Congregations Response Team. If the person making the report is unwilling for the team to be activated, explain that the congregation cannot act to limit the access of the person accused.
 - b. Invite the accused person to a conversation to hear their side of the story.
 - c. Decide as a team whether the incident rises to the level of abuse or misconduct. If not, refer the incident to the Committee on Shared Ministry and/or the Minister for conflict-resolution.
 - d. If so, work with the person bringing the report to determine if they want to pursue legal action, and support them as much as possible if they do.
 - e. Regardless of any legal action taken, if the accused person plans to remain active in the congregation, work with the person bringing the report to determine what would need to be included in a Limited Access Contract with the accused in order for the person making the report to feel safe in the congregation.
 - e. Work with the accused person to create a Limited Access Contract, and let the person making the report know the details of that agreement.

4. If an adult in the congregation reports abuse or misconduct unconnected to the congregation
 - a. Consult with the victim and anyone they have reported to, as called upon
 - b. Keep all information shared in strict confidence, bringing others into the conversation only with the victim's permission
 - c. Help the victim to connect with resources, and work with that person to report the incident to police or other authorities if/when the victim is ready to do so.

5. If any report is made of abuse or misconduct on the part of the Minister or any other member of the staff of the congregation
 - a. Team member notifies the rest of the Team except the accused, and the Board immediately, within 12 hours.

- b. Representatives of the Board and Team meet with the person making the report to generate a record of the incident
- c. The staff member should be notified of the complaint by the Board as soon as the record is in place
- d. Further action is the responsibility of the Board, and is strongly recommended to suspend the staff person while investigating the report.
- e. The Board is strongly encouraged to seek the support of UUA regional staff.

F. Responsibilities of the Team in Relationship to Sex Offenders (See also Section VI.)

In accordance with the details in Section VI:

- 1. Members of the Team will decide on what should be included in a Limited Access Contract
- 2. Members of the Team will decide who should be informed of the existence and contents of a Limited Access Contract
- 3. Members of the Team will meet with an offender to create a Limited Access Contract
- 4. Members of the Team will meet with anyone who has an active Limited Access Contract twice a year to review it
- 5. Outgoing members of the Team will inform incoming members about the existence and contents of active Limited Access Contracts

G. Other Situations

If a situation arises in the congregation that is not specifically covered by this policy, but which could benefit from the intervention of the Safe Congregation Team, the team may convene itself and suggest action to the Board. The Board may also ask the Safe Congregation Team to become involved in a situation that comes to the attention of the Board.

IV. RE Program Policies

A. Screening and Selection of Workers with Children and Youth

All workers, defined as those both volunteer and compensated who provide direct care or supervision of children and/or youth at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills events must meet the following criteria:

- 1. Adults who work with youth must be at least 25 years of age and have been active in the congregation for at least six months. Adults who work with children under 11 must be at least 16 years of age.
- 2. All potential paid employees of the Congregation must complete:
 - a. An application form (Appendix 2)
 - b. A voluntary disclosure form (Appendix 3)
 - c. A signed consent for UUCC to perform a criminal background check
- 3. All potential paid employees who will be working with children and youth must also complete:
 - a. A signed copy of the Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth Working with Children and Youth (Appendix 4)
 - b. Agreement to Teach (Appendix 5)

4. All potential volunteers who will be regularly scheduled to work with children and youth must complete:

- a. A volunteer teacher application form, including two references
- b. A voluntary disclosure form (Appendix 3)
- c. A signed consent for UUCC to perform a criminal background check
- d. A signed copy of the Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth Working with Children and Youth (Appendix 4)
- e. Agreement to Teach (Appendix 5)

5. These forms will be considered confidential, will be kept in a locked file, and will be reviewed only by members of the Safe Congregations Response Team.

6. All volunteers and staff working with children and youth will be required to attend an annual UUCC sponsored training relating to the Safe Congregation Policy, the Code of Ethics, and reporting abuse and neglect.

B. Supervision Requirements

1. Requirement of Two Adults

Best practices for safety require that there will be a minimum of two adults scheduled to supervise groups. No worker is to be alone with a child or youth either on-site or off-site. This policy protects both the children and the adult in that it minimizes the opportunity for abuse as well as minimizing the risk of false accusations.

2. Minimum adult-to-children/youth ratios are as follows

- a. Infants through age 5 - 2 adults : 12 children
- b. Age 5 through grade 8 - 2 adults : 16 children
- c. Senior High - 2 adults : 20 youth

C. Transporting Children and Youth

1. This policy applies only to transportation provided by the UUCC.

2. All drivers of vehicles containing minors other than their own children must be at least 25 years of age and must provide proof of insurance and a valid driver's license.

3. At no time will a vehicle contain one adult and one child unless that child is the driver's own child.

4. There must be enough functioning seatbelts for everyone, and everyone must wear a belt. When transporting young children, the driver must follow state laws for use of car seats and booster seats as well as regulations about where children should be seated in the vehicle.

5. While carrying out his/her duty as a driver, no driver may be sleep-deprived or under the influence of alcohol, any illegal substance, or any prescription medication which includes a warning not to drive.

6. Forms

- a. Written permission of the parent/guardian of all minor passengers must be obtained prior to their being transported. This permission will include all relevant details pertaining to the event, such as date, location, name of driver(s) wherever possible, time of departure, and time of return.
- b. Emergency contact information including the name of a physician, health insurance information and consent to treat in case of an emergency must accompany all minors who are being transported by adults other than their parents. During travel, a copy of this form will be kept by the driver of the vehicle, or the responsible adults traveling with a group using an alternate form of transportation (i.e. bus or train).
- c. Each adult driving will, if possible, leave an emergency contact number, such as a cell phone or pager, and will leave a list of the names of all children/youth accompanying them with the Coordinator of Religious Exploration.

D. Education about Sexuality

1. The Religious Exploration Program will include age appropriate education in human sexuality, including information about sexual abuse, such as periodic offering of Our Whole Lives curricula for various age groups.
2. Parents/Guardians will have access to all educational material offered by the Religious Exploration Program
3. Written permission of parents/guardians is required for participation by children/youth in Our Whole Lives or other sexuality education

V. Reports of Abuse or Misconduct - Directions for Teachers, Volunteers, and Others in the Congregation not on the Response Team

A. Philosophy

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.

B. Definitions

1. Child Abuse includes any of the following:
 - a. Physical Abuse – bodily injury to a person. This includes, but is not limited to hitting, biting, scalding, burning and strangulation or suffocation.
 - b. Physical Neglect – the failure to adequately provide the essentials of life, such as food, shelter, clothing, and medical care.
 - c. Sexual Abuse – the exploitation of a child or youth for the gratification of an adult. It includes, but is not limited to inappropriate touching, intercourse, incest, rape and sodomy as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism and the use of children in pornography.
 - d. Emotional maltreatment – the failure to provide love, care, support and guidance necessary for healthy psychological development. This includes, but is not limited to verbal abuse, such as excessive teasing, belittling, and rejection.

2. Sexual Misconduct includes any of the following:

- a. Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, minor or adult, 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 in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, colleague or congregational relationship between the persons involved, including but not limited to, undesired or inappropriate sexually oriented humor or language; inappropriate questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualifications; undesired physical contact; inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance; conduct or communication which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or ‘
- c. Sexual exploitation, including but not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship by ministers, counselors, youth leaders, church school teachers, and others, with a person with whom they have a caretaking or supervisory role, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual. .

C. If a Child/Youth Makes a Report of Abuse, Exploitation, Harassment, Violence to you (any adult in the congregation):

1. If a child/youth tells you his/her story, listen carefully and empathically. Record details as soon as possible, such as what was said, with names, dates, times, locations, etc. Without making any accusations, affirm the courage shown by the child/youth in sharing his/her story and let him/her know that you will contact a member of the Safe Congregation Response Team, who will take action.
2. Within -12 hours, report the story to one of the members of the Safe Congregation Response Team (Minister, President, RE Coordinator, 2 at-large members).
3. Other than as above, keep all information strictly confidential.
4. After discussion with the Safe Congregation Response Team (Minister, President, RE Coordinator, 2 at-large members), a verbal report may be made to Child Protective Services, followed by a written report within 36 hours. A copy of the report will be kept in a locked file in the congregation office. If the allegation is against a member of the congregation, ideally, the reporting will take place with that person's awareness and involvement.

5. IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THE CHILD/YOUTH WOULD BE ENDANGERED BY RETURNING HOME, leave the class with the other adult present, find the floater in the RE farmhouse and get a member of the Safe Congregation Response Team (Minister, President, RE Coordinator, 2 at-large members). The person from the Safe Congregation Response Team will consult as needed with other members of the team as possible, and will take responsibility for addressing the situation appropriately.

D. If you suspect abuse/neglect of a child who has not made a report:

1. Write down any relevant details that have led you to this suspicion
2. Share your concerns with a member of the Safe Congregations Response Team who can help you to determine if your suspicions need to be reported
3. Be aware that sharing details of your suspicions may create a situation in which the Response Team member is required to make a report; if you want to explore a hypothetical situation, the Response Team is available.

E. If an adult in the congregation reports an incident of abuse or misconduct against themselves as an adult:

1. Listen carefully and empathetically. Affirm the courage shown by the person in sharing their story.
2. Bring others into the conversation only with the permission of the one making the report. Explain that the congregation cannot act to limit the access of the person accused, if the person making the report does not give permission to bring the matter to the Safe Congregation Response Team.
3. If you have permission, contact a member of the Safe Congregation Response Team for advice and counsel. You can also refer the person making the report to the Team.
4. If you need advice and counsel, but do not have the victim's permission to bring others into the conversation, you can have a conversation with a member of the Team about a hypothetical situation.

F. If anyone reports abuse or misconduct on the part of the Minister or any other staff member of the congregation

1. Report the incident to a member of the Response Team who is *not* the accused, immediately.
2. The Response Team will initiate the procedure described at III.F.6.

VI. UCC Conduct toward Sex Offenders

A. Philosophy

We are called to treat every person with worth and dignity, and to offer a congregational home to all who are seeking one like ours, while honoring that in the case of an individual with a history of sex offenses, there must be limitations to congregational involvement, to That commitment means that only in rare cases will a person be denied access to ministry and fellowship.

B. Restrictions for those convicted or with unresolved accusations of sexual offenses

1. A person with a history of sex offense against children should never be allowed to be with children, work with children and youth, or socialize with children at the congregation.
2. No person who has been convicted of, or with an unresolved accusation of, any sexual misconduct can be permitted to be involved in any religious education or youth group activities.
3. If the Board or the Response Team becomes aware of a conviction or unresolved accusation of sexual offenses *against children* on the part of a member or friend of the congregation, the Congregation *will require* that person to sign a Limited Access Contract to remain involved in the congregation.
4. If the Board or the Response Team becomes aware of a conviction or unresolved accusation of sexual offenses *against adults* on the part of a member or friend of the congregation, the Congregation *may require* that person to sign a Limited Access Contract to remain involved in the congregation.

C. Limited Access Contract

A. Purpose of a Limited Access Contract

The purpose of a Limited Access Contract is to enable a sex offender to participate in activities and ministries of the congregation where such participation is appropriate, and to make sure that the offender does not participate in any activities of the congregation involving children or

youth, nor any other activities which may be restricted depending on the circumstances (e.g. seeking out vulnerable adults in the congregation for one on one meetings).

D. Creating the Limited Access Contract

1. The first step in the creation of a Limited Access Contract is for the Safe Congregation Response Team to meet and determine the items which the Team feels must be included in the Contract, and to determine who the Team feels will need to be informed of the existence and contents of the Contract. Those who need to know will depend on the situation. The whole Safe Congregation Response Team and the Board will always be informed of all Limited Access Contracts. The Chair of the RE Committee, and some or all of the members of the Committee on Shared Ministry may also be informed. In rare cases, it may be necessary for the whole congregation to be informed of the existence and contents of a Limited Access Contract.
2. A meeting will then be held with the offender and at least two members of the Safe Congregation Response Team to finalize the language of the Contract.
3. The conversation creating the Contract will also make it clear who will have access to the knowledge of the existence and contents of the Contract.
4. The Contract will then be signed by any relevant parties. This will include the person convicted or accused, the members of the Team who helped in the creation of the Contract, and the Minister. Signatories may also include the RE Coordinator, Chair of the RE Committee, President, or members of the Board or COSM, as appropriate.
5. Once the Contract is created and signed, appropriate parties will be notified of its contents, and the signed copy will be kept in a locked drawer.
6. Sample Limited Access Contract language can be found in Appendix 6.

E. Maintaining the Limited Access Contract

1. The Safe Congregation Response Team should meet at least twice a year with any individual with whom it has a Limited Access Contract to review the arrangement and address any concerns.
2. Outgoing members of the Safe Congregation Response Team will inform the incoming member of the existence and terms of any active Limited Access Contracts.

F. Reasons to Revoke Membership or Take Other Action

1. Refusal to sign or abide by a Limited Access Contract may lead to removal from membership, exclusion from all congregational activities, or to legal measures to prevent contact with the congregation.
2. A person convicted of sex offenses may also be removed from membership and excluded from all congregational activities for:
3. Refusal for the minister to contact the treatment provider and parole officer.
4. Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
5. Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high risk for recidivism.

Appendix 1: Letter to Applicants for Paid Employment

MAKING OUR CONGREGATIONS SAFE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND ADULTS

A Dear Applicant:

The Unitarian Universalist Association and its member congregations are committed to ensuring the safety of their community members. It is our practice, therefore, to require all prospective staff members and all volunteers who are likely to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults to provide information that will help us fulfill this desire.

There are four parts to this effort:

1) The first involves completing a fairly standard "Application for Paid Employment".

Please note that this form must be completed and signed - attaching a resume is not sufficient.

2) The second involves completing a "Voluntary Disclosure Statement". This form requires answering explicit questions to raise the comfort level of congregational leaders that children, youth, and vulnerable adults are being protected from potential harm. The third part involves signing a release that authorizes congregational leaders to explore your background sufficiently to document that there is no cause for concern about your suitability for paid employment or volunteer work within our congregation.

4) The fourth part involves reference checks being conducted by congregational staff or congregational volunteers. Your only role will be to provide contact information for those references in your application form. Be aware that individuals other than those whose names you give as references maybe contacted.

To ensure the safety of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults, completing these steps are required to serve in certain roles in our congregation. In most instances, members of the governing board of the congregations will have already submitted themselves to this same process, as a way of "modeling" the importance of the effort.

We thank you for your willingness to serve our congregation, and for your role in assuring it is a safe and nurturing place.

Name and Title: _____

Appendix 2: Application for paid employment

Name _____ Birth Date ___ / ___ / ___

Home Address _____

Social Security # _____ - _____ - _____ E-mail _____

Home Phone _____ - _____ Cell _____ - _____

I can begin work: _____

What type of position or role are you applying for? _____

Salary desired _____

Past work history: Provide 'a full record of all employment -- paid and volunteer -- and explain any gaps in employment. (use a separate sheet if needed)

Dates	Employer/Supervisor	Address & Phone	Position	Reason for Leaving
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Indicate any employer you do not wish us to contact, and the reason:

References: Give names, addresses and phone numbers of three persons [not relatives] having knowledge of your character, experience, work habits, and ability. (use a separate sheet if needed)

Name	Address	Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Education: Beyond High School

Year	School	City and State	Degree Granted
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Answer these questions only if applying for a position requiring driving:

Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes ___ No___ State _____

Do you have a current chauffeur's-type license? Yes ___ No___

Do you have a commercial driver's license? Yes ___ No___

Criminal Record:

Have you ever been convicted of a crime, other than a minor traffic offense? Yes ___ No___

If yes please describe. (note: a prior conviction is not an automatic bar to employment. The type of conviction and when it occurred will be evaluated by the congregation before any decision is made.)

Applicant's Statement and Release I certify that the information in the Application for Paid Employment and in the Voluntary Disclosure Statement is true and complete and I understand that misrepresentation and/or withholding of information will result in the rejection of this application or my discharge if discovered after employment begins. I authorize the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills or related organization to make inquiries regarding my history and character of prior employers, schools, etc. and hereby release employers, schools or individuals from all liability in responding to inquiry in connection with my application and release the employer from all liability with respect to such inquiries.

I understand that if employed, and unless my employment is under a contract or agreement, employment may be terminated at any time with or without cause or notice and that the employer has that right. I also understand that no representative of the congregation or related organization, other than _____, has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to make any agreement contrary to the foregoing and that such agreement must be in writing. If I am employed, I agree to abide by the employer's policies, rules and procedures and any changes thereto.

Applicant signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 3: Voluntary Disclosure Statement

Name _____ Birth Date ____ / ____ / ____
Home Address _____
Social Security # _____ - _____ - _____
Other names used (e.g. birth name) _____
Home Phone () _____ Cell () _____
Drivers Lic. # _____ State issued _____ A Expiration ____ / ____ / ____

1. Previous residence(s) for last 7 years (include college and home residences):

Address _____ State _____ Years _____
Address _____ State _____ Years _____
Address _____ State _____ Years _____
Address _____ State _____ Years _____

(continue on a separate sheet if needed)

2. Have you ever been convicted of any crime whatsoever relating in any manner to children, youth, or vulnerable adults and/or your conduct with them? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)

3. 'Have you ever been adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children, youth, or adults? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)

4. Are you now or have you ever been subject to any court order involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor, youth, or adult, including, but not limited to a domestic order for protection?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)

5. Have your parental rights ever been terminated or has care of your children ever been removed from you? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)

I understand that:

a. The congregation may deny employment, paid or volunteer, to any person who answers "yes" to any one of questions 1-5. If hired or engaged for a paid or volunteer position and the congregation later discovers circumstances that would indicate a "yes" answer to any of the above questions, my services may be terminated immediately.

b. The congregation may terminate employment or volunteer services of any person if that person is found, regardless of when discovered, to: _

1) have a history of complaints of abuse of a minor

2) have resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position whether paid or unpaid, due to complaint(s) of sexual abuse of a minor, youth, or adult; and/or 3) have falsified or omitted information in this disclosure statement.

c. The information provided on this form is subject to verification, which may include a criminal history check and request from any central registry of child abusers.

d. This disclosure must be updated yearly.

Signed _____ Date _____

Print name _____

Signed by Minor's Parent or Guardian _____ Date _____

Appendix 4: Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth 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 spiritual development of both individuals and the 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 youth and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if positive potential 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; therefore leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

I have read and understand the above statements of position, expectations, and actions.

Date _____ Name Printed _____

Name Signed _____

Appendix 5: AGREEMENT TO TEACH: RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS AND YOUTH GROUP LEADERS

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

I have read and understand our congregation's Safe Congregation Policy on keeping children, youth and vulnerable adults safe. I agree to uphold these principles in my work with Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills' children, youth, adults, and families.

I affirm that I have never been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty to any sexual crime. I also have not pled guilty to a lesser charge after having been charged with a sexual crime. I have never engaged in any form of child abuse, including sexual abuse. I have never been determined to have engaged in any sexual offenses in any civil, administrative, or ecclesiastical forum or other forum. If there are any facts or circumstances in my background that call into question my being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children, youth, or vulnerable adults, I have met to review this information confidentially with the Minister and the Religious Educator. Further, I agree to notify the Minister and the Religious Educator immediately should I be accused of sexual abuse, sexual offenses, sexual harassment, or other sexual improprieties in the time that I am working with children and youth in this congregation.

Signature

Date _____

Appendix 6: Sample Limited Access Contract

Introductory Paragraph in cases of allegation: A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the Safe Congregation Response Team. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children and youth in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement. Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confession of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known only to the Safe Congregation Response Team. It will be kept in a locked file in the office.

Introductory Paragraph in cases of convicted sex offender: The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshiping with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and them of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our congregation and our membership but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to assure that you will not be 'subject to future accusations. Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult education, all adult social events, and well supervised inter-generational events.

I, [name] agree to avoid all contact with children on congregation property or congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

*I will not talk with children.

*I will not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during inter-generational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.

*I will remain in the presence of a Board appointed adult who knows your situation at all times when children are present. If a child in the congregation approaches me, either at the congregation or in a community place, I will politely and immediately excuse myself from the situation.

*I will avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session, such as nursery school or youth group.

I accept that the following people will be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care:

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future congregational functions and property. I understand that this contract will be reviewed at least every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

