

# Safe Congregation Policy

*Approved by KUUF Board 11-15-2020*

## 1. Purpose

Physical, emotional and sexual safety is necessary for a healthy congregation. With the incorporation of this Safe Congregation Policy, the Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (KUUF) seeks to ensure the safety of the children, youth and adults of our religious community.

## 2. Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior

We, the members and friends of the Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, are a caring community where mutual respect prevails. We believe in the democratic process in human relations. Each committee/organization is encouraged to adopt and agree to ground rules for their meetings/events, including Sunday services. When participants in these meetings/events do not follow the rules, a five-step process has been developed to deal with these problems of unacceptable behavior.

1. Disruptive behavior does not need to be tolerated by a committee/organization, or those attending a Sunday service. When it occurs, a member of the leadership should draw the disruptive person aside and state that the behavior is not acceptable.
2. If a second complaint about the behavior occurs, a formal letter will be written by the appropriate leader to the person, stating that the behavior needs to be corrected, with copies to the Fellowship President, who will forward copies to the Board of Trustees. The letter should state that if the individual chooses to do so he/she can request that the Board mediate the dispute. The individual needs to state the problem to the Board in writing.
3. The Board will discuss the problem and assign a member(s) to meet with the person and the committee/organization leadership to resolve the problem.
4. If, after making all reasonable attempts and consulting with the Board of Trustees, the problems seem unresolvable, the leadership of the complaining committee/organization should request the Board's permission to deny the person access to the committee/organization's meetings/events.
5. If, in time, the person reconsiders and wishes to reenter the group, the person may meet with the leadership of the committee/organization to request reentry, subject to Board approval.

In some situations, immediate action is warranted and should be taken. It is appropriate for anyone to call the police to remove a person exhibiting physically threatening or violent behavior. The five above steps may be accelerated if the behavior is threatening

### 3. Responding to the Disclosure of Harm

#### Process

1. All complaints shall be given prompt and fair consideration. People presenting complaints shall be free of discrimination or reprisal.
2. A complaint can be made verbally or in writing to any member of the Committee on Ministry. That member will then contact the Chair, who will arrange for the Committee to meet. Except under extenuating circumstances, the Committee will meet within ten days of the complaint, and will address the complaint within ten days of that meeting. (At any point, the Committee may determine that the Committee is not the appropriate body to address or deal with the complaint.)
3. The Committee on Ministry will endeavor to act with sensitivity, objectivity and with fairness. Decisions will reflect a quorum of the Committee members and the Minister or, in the case of a complaint about the Minister, the Board Chair.
4. If the Committee indicates disciplinary action toward the offender, that recommendation will go to the Board of Trustees. If not, the Committee can close the complaint process.
5. A written record will be kept using a standard form developed by the Committee on Ministry. Unless otherwise required, this confidential record will only be available to Committee on Ministry members, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Minister.

Access will be further limited if the complaint involves any of these people.

6. In working with any given complaint, the Committee is not required to keep a written record if the complaint is resolved informally or dropped at the request of the complainant. Under these circumstances, the Committee is not required to contact the individual who was the focus of the complaint.

#### Definitions Of Harassment and Abuse

Introduction — Two principal forms of interpersonal violence are harassment and abuse, which are defined below. If an individual feels his/her personal safety has been violated in this congregation by a behavior or form of misconduct that is not specified here, s/he may still file a complaint with the Committee on Ministry.

Harassment — Harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome conduct that in the case of sexual harassment has sexual overtones. All forms of harassment can feel intrusive, intimidating, hostile, offensive and/or humiliating to the victim. This includes physical, psychological, and sexual harassment. Stalking is also a type of harassment. We consider these three areas to overlap, but are focusing on where the primary complaint is. Unwelcome physical touch with sexual overtones would be considered sexual harassment.

*Physical* – Pertaining to unwanted touch, contact, or other physical intrusions on another's space.

*Psychological* – pertaining to emotional and mental levels of harassment, intruding, stalking, etc.

*Sexual* – pertaining to unwanted sexualized behaviors, which may be in the form of:

1. Physical conduct – touching, pinching, brushing against, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual contact, etc.
2. Verbal conduct – sexually suggestive or obscene comments, sexual propositions, threats (including threat of job loss or other punishment if the victim does not agree to engage in sexual relations), jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, etc.
3. Written conduct – sexually suggestive or obscene written material.

Abuse — Abuse is a pattern of behavior that is used to control and/or dominate another person. Abuse can be physical, psychological, and/or sexual.

*Physical*– includes actual or threatened harm, such as hitting, shoving, kicking, or throwing things. The harm or threat thereof may also be against family members, pets, or treasured belongings.

*Psychological*– includes being mistreated mentally and emotionally, such as being insulted, ridiculed, or threatened verbally.

*Sexual*– includes any of the behaviors above. Three major areas of concern are:

1. Sexual relating or contact between an adult and a minor.
2. Sexual relating or contact between minors that violates one of them because of the other's role or position of power.
3. Sexual relating or contact between adults that violates one of them because of the other's role or position of power.

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

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (signed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix available for related documents