

Safe Congregation Policy Regarding Children and Youth

KUUF Board Approved 11-15-2020

1. Purpose

Physical, emotional and sexual safety is necessary for learning and growth. 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. Procedure

The following procedures should be followed to protect the physical, emotional and sexual safety of children and youth in our care.

A copy of any formal accident report will be sent to BHK (use BHK's form.).

General Guidelines for Teachers and Childcare Providers

1. The KUUF R.E. Committee will plan for proper ratios of caregivers to children when making class size decisions and curriculum choices. Two caregivers with adult on-site supervision should be present at all times with children.
2. Teachers and childcare providers will follow positive discipline guidelines to be developed by the RE Committee. If teachers or childcare providers are unable to maintain safety and a positive learning environment using these guidelines, the parents of the child will be asked to come upstairs to help.
3. The KUUF R.E. Committee will establish criteria for drivers.
4. Teachers and childcare providers will ensure that age appropriate playthings and materials are used. They will safeguard BHK property and facilities and report any damage to the RE Director, the Minister and/or the Board President.

Physical Safety of Children and Youth

1. In order to protect the physical safety of children, the KUUF Religious Education (RE) Committee will examine the BHK emergency procedures for response to fire and other emergencies. Where the committee finds these policies inadequate, they will write additional ones. The RE Committee will arrange with the Minister, or KUUF President for the periodic practice of evacuation and communication drills.
2. The RE Committee will collect and maintain registration forms for each child regularly in our care. Forms will include: emergency contact information, allergy alerts and names of individuals other than parents to whom the child(ren) may be released. A separate permission to transport form will be completed by parents prior to a planned offsite RE activity.

3. The KUUF RE Committee will examine the First Aid and Emergency Response kits available (i.e. the ones that BHK supplies) in the childcare classrooms, large motor skills room, and general meeting areas. When these kits are found inadequate, they will ask for the supplies and materials to create adequate First Aid and Response Kits.
4. Teachers and childcare providers will inspect facilities for safety hazards before they are used.
5. Teachers and childcare providers will adopt Universal Precaution Procedures for the handling of potentially infectious materials.
6. The KUUF Board of Trustees, the R.E. Committee, or the Minister will document accidents and incidents, including the response and plan for future prevention.
7. The KUUF Board of Trustees will review legal responsibilities regarding personal safety and equipment and property; and how claims are handled for accidents (vehicular, play area, outdoors, meeting rooms.)

Digital Safety for children:

1. The private online information of any minors will never be released by KUUF.
2. Permission from a parent or guardian will be obtained before RE staff engage in online communication with a minor involved in KUUF activities.

Selection and Management of Teaching and Childcare Volunteers

In order to assure that trustworthy members are caring for and teaching the children of our Congregation, the RE Committee will adhere to the following procedures regarding volunteer and staff management:

1. While working with children, Religious Education Volunteers will be accompanied by RE staff or RE Committee members.
2. Each year adult staff and volunteers will sign this Safe Congregation Policy document. Volunteers must also disclose any formal charges of child abuse or violent offense in their past.
3. Volunteers will attend training, provided by the RE Committee in: The Safe Child Policy, Ethics of Sexual Abuse, Mandatory Reporting Procedures and Response to Disclosure of Abuse, Emergency Procedures, Universal Precautions, positive discipline strategies, the year's curricula and RE program plans.
5. The KUUF Minister or Board President, will establish where and by whom files will be maintained and how they will be safeguarded for confidentiality regarding: voluntary disclosure statements, consent for and results of criminal background checks, driving records, child abuse history, reference checks, accident and incident reports, and documentation of disclosures of abuse.
6. Mandatory Reporting
Any teacher, volunteer or administrator of the KUUF Religious Education Program is required to report any suspicions of abuse and/or neglect of a child or youth who is involved in KUUF activities. Such suspicions should be discussed in

confidence with a member of the RE Committee, the minister, and/or president of the board. The Michigan DHHS “Guide to Detailed Reporting” will be consulted for guidance in any situation of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth Working with Children

1. Adults and older youth who work with youth are in positions of power and play a key role in the spiritual and identity development of younger members of the community. It is important that adults be qualified to provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable youth to develop a healthy, positive sense of self and responsibility.
2. Youth and adults are damaged when adults become sexually involved with young persons in their care. Adults will not engage in any physical, sexual, seductive, erotic or romantic behavior with youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth which 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.

Name (printed): _____

Name (signed): _____ Date: _____

Appendix of related information

1. Youth Inclusion and Safety Guidelines for Staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association
Updated October 2015
https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/y/youth_inclusion_guidelines.pdf
2. UUA Youth Safety Guidelines
<https://www.uua.org/youth/adults-ministry/safety-guidelines>
3. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Mandatory Reporting Guide
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/MR_Guide_to_Detailed_Reporting.3.14.19_653727_7.pdf