Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist Congregation Children's RE Safe Congregation Policy Handbook Updated 10/1/2017

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Statement of Philosophy

We, the members of the Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist Congregation, believe that our commitment to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, spiritual growth, and the use of a democratic process within our congregation compels us to create and maintain a safe environment that protects children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth.

We recognize that religious communities, which should be dedicated to the creation of safe environments for all the members, can be vulnerable to incidents of sexual, physical, emotional, or verbal abuse or misconduct. Generally churches promote a high level of trust, a welcoming spirit, and a strong reliance on and need for volunteers, especially in child and youth programs. We realize that entities operating in the best possible manner with all due concern still cannot guarantee an absolutely risk-free setting, and thus we need to adopt policies of "reasonable precaution" regarding the issue of abuse.

We ask that building users are also trained and agree to follow these policies, although they are welcome to submit their own Child Safety Policies to the minister to review. If these policies address the topics in this Policy Guide, she has the authority to approve them as a replacement.

Definition of Abuse, Harassment, and Interpersonal Violence

- 1. Abuse can be mental, emotional, physical or sexual. People may be guilty of abuse if they personally inflict the abuse, or if they cause or permit a child to be in a situation that results in the abuse.
- 2. A mental or emotional injury is one that "results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development or psychological functioning."
- 3. A physical injury is one that results in substantial harm (or the genuine threat of substantial harm) to the child.
- 4. Sexual abuse is any sexual conduct that is harmful to a child's mental, emotional or physical welfare.

Possible Indicators of Child Abuse

Children do not always tell someone they are being abused. They may have been threatened into silence or be too embarrassed or horrified to talk about what is happening. They may exhibit extreme behaviors such as abusing animals, other children, or their dolls, or they may completely withdraw from family and friends. There are both physical signs and behavioral clues that may indicate child abuse or neglect. These indicators are warning signs to look further, ask questions, or seek assistance from a professional.

Physical Abuse

- o Unexplained fractures, burns, bruises, cuts, welts, or bite marks.
- o Explanation for an injury that is inconsistent with the injury.
- o Self-destructive and destructive behavior.
- o Extreme behavior: fear, aggressiveness, withdrawal, or regression.

Sexual Abuse

- o Sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge relative to the child's age.
- o Pain or itching, bleeding, or bruises in or around the genitals.
- o Self-destructive and destructive behavior, such as alcohol or drug use, running away, or promiscuous behavior.
- o Extreme behavior: withdrawal into fantasy play and away from peer relationships, depression, or passivity.

Emotional Abuse

- o Impaired sense of self-worth.
- o Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development or failure to thrive.
- Self-destructive and destructive behavior, such as alcohol and drug abuse.
- o Extreme behavior: unusual aggression or passivity, hyperactivity.

Neglect

- o Constant hunger or fatigue, inappropriate dress, or poor hygiene.
- o Lack of supervision over long periods of time.
- o Unattended physical or dental problems.
- Self-destructive and destructive behavior, such as alcohol or drug use.
 (Taken from the UUA brochure Honoring the Children What We Can Do to Prevent Child Abuse by Patricia Hoertdoerfer and Jade Angelica)

See attached Possible Indicators of Child Abuse from the State of Tennessee.

Screening Procedures

Teachers and other volunteers working with children and youth:

- Will be at least 25 years of age to work with high school youth.
- Will be at least 21 years of age to teach other classes (an 18-20 year old may teach as the second adult with someone who is 21 or older).
- Will be at least 18 years of age to provide childcare.
- At GNUUC: Will have been a participant in GNUUC for at least six months or have childcare references or teaching references from the public or private sector to be a primary teacher.
- Will have completed a screening form. Building users will provide their own screening form.
- Will have passed a criminal background check. Building users will do their own background checks.
- Will have attended at least one training session on child abuse put on by the Greater Nashville UU RE committee.
- At GNUUC: Will have read, understood and signed the Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Children and Youth or the Code of Ethics for Older Youth Working with Younger Youth and Children.
- Will have valid driver's licenses, liability insurance, and current state safety inspection stickers on their vehicles if they are to transport children/youth to sponsored activities.

Paid staff members and other building users who work with children will also meet the above criteria.

Supervision Policies

Policies for Classes and Activities:

- 1. Two-adult rule, preferably not a couple
- 2. Classes: Adult to child ratio generally 1:7, with minimum of two adults present
- 3. Nursery (4 and younger): Adult\Youth to child ratio generally 1:5, with minimum of two adults present or one adult and one youth present
- 4. Windows in doors, or doors open if only 1 adult in classroom
- 5. If 1 adult needs to leave, s/he must make sure the other one knows where they are going and why, and that both understand the second one will return within five minutes. During this time, the other worker is 100% responsible for the safety of every child in the room.
- 6. Adult volunteers are only to leave the room for childcare-related matters not for personal reasons.
- 7. Bathroom policies: adults and older youth must keep door open if helping a child 4 or younger. Children older than 4 should not have an adult in the room.
- 8. Arrival/dismissal policies

Events where the parents provide programs or activities for their own children and youth:

The two adult rule defined above does not apply to events where the parents have responsibility for their own children and youth. This could include outings, campouts, community outreach events arranged by the church or building user, or childcare arranged and funded independently by parents for small meetings.

Before and after programs where parents assume responsibility for their children and youth:

The two adult rule does not apply to situations where the parents have responsibility for their own children and youth. However, the children, youth, and adults are expected to remain in open public areas. Anyone found hanging out in other areas will be expected to return to the public areas.

Policies for Transportation

With written parental consent, one adult driver, meeting the criteria above, may transport two or more children or youth to and from a church-sponsored event. The two adult rule still applies during the destination activity.

- 1. Parental permission/medical release forms required. Drivers carry one copy, extra copy to be kept on file at the church.
- 2. Drivers at least 25 years old.
- 3. Youth/adult ratio in cars: 2 adults per car when possible. If there is 1 adult, there must be at least 2 youth in the car.
- 4. Seat belts required.
- 5. Valid driver's license, registration and proof of insurance coverage checked. Copies kept on file. Note special licenses necessary for over 15 person van.
- 6. Congregational liability insurance for transportation only covers members. Building users must carry their own liability insurance for transportation.
- 7. When possible, at least one cell phone per car.

Policies for Overnights

- 1. Permission slips/medical releases required
- 2. Minimum two adults, 7:1 ratio
- 3. One chaperone of each gender, if mixed group.
- 4. No leaving the building without the group, unless with permission (if appropriate, keys of youth who drove themselves may be collected)
- 5. No sexualized behavior, shared bedding, etc. No exclusive behavior.
- 6. Single sex sleeping rooms available.
- 7. Recommendation: discuss/agree upon rules for showing movies (esp. R-rated) and for use of video games and other exclusive technology. Also recommend keeping parents informed of the group's planned activities and sleeping arrangements.

Risk Factors

Lock-down and evacuations

Make sure both RE doors are unlocked before you teach class

Evacuation: go to the closest door and meet in the middle of the parking lot

Lock-down: lock both RE doors. Move children to the Youth Room near the sink and bathrooms.

Location of Fire Extinguisher: Next to RE front door

If emergency, call 911. In emergency, walkie-talkie the Main Building your status.

FURTHER GOALS: Map of evacuation routes posted in the RE building. This section will be expanded in the future.

First aid and universal precautions (handling bodily fluids)

Certified in First Aid and CPR:

At least two adults should be certified in First Aid and CPR.

At GNUUC: Kristin Reveal, Jennifer Cates-Seidel

Location of First Aid kit: Top shelf in Youth room bookcase. Building user groups should provide their own First Aid kits.

Allergies and Food

Collect information about allergies with class registration.

At GNUUC:

- Our classrooms are currently tree nut, peanut, shellfish, and artificial dye free. If more allergies show up, additional items will be added to this list.
- If you have a guest child, they cannot eat any food without signed permission from the parent.

If a child has a respirator, epi-pen, or requires medication on hand, a medication form must be filled out.

Infection Control Procedures and Universal Precautions

First aid kits, containing among other things latex-free disposable gloves and plastic bags for their disposal, will be maintained in the RE building and in the kitchen. Also included in the first aid kits will be the following instructions for infection control, as well as a notebook or forms for accident reporting:

- 1. Anyone responding to a first aid situation will first put on a pair of latex-free disposable gloves.
- 2. After completing assistance and removing of gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. '
- 3. If there is a spillage of blood, or any blood-contaminated body fluid, the person cleaning the area must follow these steps:
 - a. Wear disposable gloves.
 - b. Spread paper toweling over the spill and allow it to soak up the fluid.
 - c. Wipe up the area and dispose of the material in a plastic bag.
 - d. Clean the area with soap and water.
 - e. Spray a hospital grade disinfectant or use a 10% bleach solution to disinfect the area.
 - f. Remove disposable gloves and dispose in plastic bag and seal.
 - g. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Management of Exposure to Significant Risk Body Fluids

- Immediately after the exposure incident, wash the exposed area thoroughly with soap and water. If blood is splashed in eyes, nose or mouth, flush them with clean water.
- 2. Report the incident to the minister, and assist in documentation of the exposure incident.
- 3. Document the exposure incident as soon as possible and notify parents or significant others.

Building and grounds safety

Teachers can take the children and youth outside during classes. The same Supervision Guidelines apply.

If using the Parking lot, the area for outdoor RE activities must be marked off with chairs, cones, tables, or other large and visible markers.

If using the Memorial Garden, be mindful with the children that this is a place of respect. You are welcome to fill bird feeders, weed, read, and walk on paths.

Children and youth should only go on the path to the meditation area if they have closed toe shoes with socks. Long pants are recommended as poison ivy could be an issue. (Best to pre-warn parents via email during the week.)

Teachers must get permission from the parents to put on bug spray. This is collected once at the beginning of the year on class registration forms.

At GNUUC: Both Deet and Deet-free options are provided. Building users should provide their own bug spray.

If using the Playground, the same supervision guidelines apply. The children should make a Playground Covenant for playground behavior.

The children and youth should not leave the parking lot area around the RE building, the memorial garden, or the meditation area.

Before taking the children outside, leave a note with where the class is going and the adults' cell phone numbers. This note is also useful to make at the beginning of the year, so you can quickly put it up on designated days. Take a walkie-talkie with you.

Internet and Social Media safety

For GNUUC:

- Parents must sign a waiver for photos to be used outside of the RE building (even if displayed in the main building.) First names are OK in the main building, if parents have signed the waiver.
- Parents must sign a waiver for photos to be put on the Internet in any form of social media. If photos are placed on social media, no names can be used.

GOAL: Develop policy for youth and parents who take photos of other youth and non-family children during GNUUC events.

Reporting

State Law

In Tennessee, "A report is required when any person has knowledge of or is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect or that, on the basis of available information, reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect.

A report is required when any person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused."

To Report Child Abuse Or Neglect In Tennessee Call 1-877-237-0004

For GNUUC: If a GNUUC member or friend of the congregation has a suspicion that a child has been abused, either while involved in church programs, events and activities, or at other times, that person must report the incident to state authorities, defined in the state of Tennessee.

At GNUUC: Reporting Within

In addition, if the person with the concern believes the abuse occurred during a church program, event or activity, the individual should report his or her concerns to the minister. Any person who has concerns about inappropriate behavior by teachers, child care workers, or other adults or older youth in our church community should report their concerns immediately to the minister. Inappropriate behavior may include such things as failure to follow the 2 adult rule or physical / verbal interaction with a child that could be construed as sexual in nature (e.g. an adult resting his/her hand on a child's thigh). Such behavior, which is not in itself abuse, is not in the best interest of our children and needs to be addressed and monitored in order to protect both the child and adult involved.

Children's RE Note: Any allegations made to the Religious Education Committee Chair by a parent, teacher, minor, or congregant will be immediately passed onto the minister.

At GNUUC: False Accusations

The protection from false or mistaken allegations of adults who teach in the RE program or otherwise interact with children at GNUUC is also an important goal of this policy. A key way to prevent false or mistaken allegations is to abide by the prevention guidelines outlined in these policies, as well as the Code of Conduct for Adults Working With Children and Youth and the Code of Ethics for Older Youth Working with Younger Youth and Children.

We should be sensitive to the disruption and damage a false accusation may cause to both the adults and the children involved. This is true even when the accusation is one due to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of what seems a child's straightforward report of an event.

For Building Users: If a building user reports child abuse or neglect to the State of Tennessee, we request that the minister is notified in writing. It is likely that the State may contact the minister and she would like to be prepared.

Future Policy Goal

The minister and the Safe Congregation Committee will be forming policies to address the following, according to the UUA Safe Congregation guidelines:

- Structure for making and receiving allegations
- Responding to allegations

Education

Children and Youth, Safety policies

Annually review safety policies with classes at an age appropriate level.

GOAL: At GNUUC: Age-level OWL training (currently we have 7th – 12th grade)

Teachers, Facilitators, and Parents

Annual Training by the RE Committee

GOAL: At GNUUC: Further training using the Safe Congregation workshops.

Larger congregation

GOAL: At GNUUC: Creation of a congregation-wide Safety Policy Handbook.

GNUUC Background Check Screening Form For Religious Educators and Youth Group Staff and Volunteers

Thank you for your interest in working with the children and youth of our congregation. Our congregation takes seriously our responsibility of assuring the safety of our youth.

Please fill out this form and give it to the Religious Educator. Thank you for your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of the congregation's children and youth.

THE INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THIS FORM WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR YOUTH WORK				
(Please list organizations' names, addresses, type of work performed and dates)				
Please list any churches that you have attended regularly during the past 5 years				
If you attended other Churches, please list a Reference or Contact from at least one of these				
churches who can write testament to the work you engaged in at that institution:				
1. Name				
Address				
Email				
Phone #				
Describe any church volunteer work over the past 5 years				
Describe any youth work (at churches or other organizations) over the past 5 years				
In what ways have you participated in GNUUC over the past 6 months?				
PERSONAL REFERENCES (not former employers or relatives)				
1. Name				
Address				
Email				
Phone #				
2. Name				
Address				
Email				
Phone #				

Applicant's Statement

The information contained in this screening form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this form to give GNUUC any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work in an environment where children or youth may be present. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this screening form by GNUUC, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization, excepting only the communication of knowingly false information.

I (c	check one):
	_waive
	_do not waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about
me	by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the Code of Conduct and policies of GNUUC in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I understand that Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist Congregation will obtain information relating to my criminal history record. The criminal history record, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudication. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history records check may be repeated at any time.

I understand that I will have an opportunity to review that criminal history and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I, the undersigned, do, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, hereby remise, release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist Church, and each of their officers, directors, employees, and agents harmless from and against any and all causes of actions, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims and demands whatsoever, and any and all related attorneys' fees, court costs, and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become a volunteer/staff member. I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand. By my signature below, I give Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist Congregation permission to run a background check. Applicant's signature ______Date _____ Witness ______Date _____

GNUUC RE 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 u	understand the above statements of position, expectations, and	l actions.
Name (printed):		
Name (signed):		-
Date:		

GNUUC RE Safe Congregations Agreement For Teachers, Helpers, Childcare Providers, & Youth Leaders

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Cell phone:
Email:
I have read and understand Greater Nashville UU Congregation's policies on keeping children, youth and vulnerable adults safe. These include:
Statement of Philosophy
Definition of Abuse, harassment, interpersonal violence
Screening procedures
Supervision policies
Risk Factors
Reporting
Education
I agree to uphold these principles in my work with Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist children, youth, adults, and families.
I have signed the Code of Ethics statement.
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. 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:

GNUUC SAFE CONGREGATION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

TODAY'S DATE			
DATE AND TIME OF INCIDENT			
YOUR NAME			
NAME OF PERSON WHO INITIATED REPORT			
NAMES OF CHILD(REN) AND ADULT(S) INVOLVED IN INCIDENT:			
WHERE DID THE INCIDENT OCCUR? (BE SPECIFIC)			
DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED			
HAS THE SAFETY OF THE CHILD(REN) BEEN ASSURED?YESNO			
WHO HAS BEEN NOTIFIED ABOUT THIS INCIDENT? (LIST NAMES AND DATES/TIMES)			

GNUUC: CODE OF ETHICS FOR OLDER YOUTH WORKING WITH YOUNGER YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Older youth who are in leadership roles need to be aware of the underlying purpose that we have in our gatherings at church and the special responsibilities that come with your new role in the classroom.

Underlying Purpose: Whenever we gather together at church, we are each involved with our own spiritual journeys as we strive to develop a healthy sense of self-worth, identity, and mutual respect.

Responsibilities:

1. Respect.

The children and youth in our care are still forming who they are and what they believe. As you enter into relationship with the children in your care, ensure that you bring respect of those around you and that you expect others to respect you, so that everyone's positive potential can be realized. When we are not respectful, we can end up being abusive. A person may be guilty of abuse if they personally inflict the abuse, or if they cause or permit a child to be in a situation that results in the abuse. Abuse can be mental, emotional, physical or sexual.

- a. A mental or emotional injury is one that "results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development or psychological functioning."
- b. A physical injury is one that results in substantial harm (or the genuine threat of substantial harm) to the child.
- c. Sexual abuse is any sexual conduct that is harmful.
- 2. Development

Your actions and conversations have a direct impact on how others feel about themselves, how they feel about being at church, what they value, and what they believe. Two key areas of personal growth are a) self-worth and b) a healthy identity as a sexual being. Research shows that children and youth suffer damaging effects when leaders or mentors become abusive or sexually involved with young persons in their care.

3. Agreement:

Therefore, I will not harass or engage in behavior with children or youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. Furthermore, I agree that I will not engage in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children or youth.

I agree to be respectful of those around me, to expect others to be respectful of me, and to use my skills to be kind, truthful, respectful, and nurturing.

Signed	Date
Parent's Signature	Date