

Operations Policy and Procedures:

Congregational Health and Safety

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm the Seven Principles, including the “inherent worth and dignity of every person.” One of the ways that we put this principle into practice is by taking the health and safety of each of our community members seriously, especially our children and youth. When we have a sense of physical and emotional safety, we can move toward creating life-affirming connections and freely exploring our spirituality.

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A Note on COVID-19

Much of this policy was written before COVID-19 altered the global landscape, including how UUAA functions as a spiritual community. The content has been updated to reflect more of the online aspects of how we gather, many of which will continue even after a vaccine becomes widely available.

However, because of the constantly changing nature of the pandemic, it is beyond the scope of this document to address all of the measures needed to keep our members, friends, visitors, and staff healthy and safe. UUAA's COVID-19 Advisory Team, which includes lay public health experts from within our community as well as key staff operational leaders, has been monitoring the situation on behalf of the congregation. Their recommendations — based on the latest science about the coronavirus, public health requirements from federal, state, and county agencies, and our principles as Unitarian Universalists — will offer the most current guidance.

Teams Focused on Health and Safety

There are several teams whose charges focus on maintaining the health and safety of UUAA.

Living Our Values (LOV) Team

The purpose of the lay-staffed Living Our Values (LOV) Team is to serve as partners in building, maintaining, and repairing congregational relationships to ensure that we are living in alignment with our UUAA covenant. The LOV Team is committed to supporting and nurturing healthy, right relationship, and for embodying and modeling the fact that our community cares when harm has been caused, whether intentional or not, whether initially recognized or not.

The team engages in its work of supporting covenant-based relationality through three modalities:

- Supporting covenant-based relationship in the absence of harm or conflict, through such proactive, skills-building activities as workshops, seminars, and discussion circles, among other possibilities.
- Addressing potential or actual harm in the moment, serving as proactive bystanders and reminders of healthy covenant and mutual care.
- Serving as facilitators and guides who assist/support the conversation, healing, recommittal to covenant, and affirmation of love and care that are sometimes needed after harm has been caused.

Shared Ministries Team (SMT)

The primary goal of the lay-staffed Shared Ministries Team (SMT) is to receive, reflect on, and directly respond to feedback from the congregation related to processes, activities, and communication within the community, with an eye towards supporting and productively enhancing these.

The SMT serves as an open channel in responding to feedback, questions, or the need for additional information that may arise in our increasingly complex organization, in particular paying attention to areas/issues where there may be a significant critical mass of congregational interest.

The SMT works collaboratively with the staff to find a way forward on issues that warrant an adjustment of congregational policies or processes, and provide clarifying information to inquiring parties when such would be helpful.

Healthy Congregation Response Team

This policy requires that a Healthy Congregation Response Team (HCRT) be convened on an as-needed basis. The HCRT should consist of five members:

- Two members of the senior staff, at least one of whom must be a minister. The senior staff includes the Senior Minister and those full-time staff members who report directly to the Senior Minister;
- The President or Vice President of the Congregation (as decided between themselves);
- The Chair of the Living Our Values Team (or their designee); and,
- The Chair of the Shared Ministries Team (or their designee).

The charge of this team is to:

- Receive initial reports of alleged professional misconduct by a member of UUAA's clergy or staff team;
- Receive initial reports of alleged harassment and/or abuse that has occurred within the UUAA community;
- Receive escalated reports, from the Senior Minister or their designee, of alleged offensive, disruptive, or dangerous behaviors that have occurred within the UUAA community;
- Determine an appropriate response to the above situations, which may include setting boundaries or limitations on: an individual or individuals' participation within the UUAA community; access to UUAA events, services, or resources; and/or, the implementation of a Limited Access Agreement (see page 15), among other possibilities; and, to
- Annually review this policy and propose changes as may be needed.

If a member of the HCRT is involved in a complaint, the member must be recused from responding to that complaint. If the incident or allegation involves one of UUAA's ministers, then that clergy person will be removed from the HCRT and the Board will be notified.

Upon learning that a member or friend of the congregation has been charged with or convicted of child abuse or is registered as a sex offender, the HCRT will be notified and convene to determine appropriate responses.

The HCRT does not have the legal authority or the expertise to determine guilt or innocence in a given situation. Its role is to research an issue that rises to its consideration and determine an appropriate response, in support of the overall health and safety of the UUAA community.

The HCRT should endeavor to make its determination in a timely manner, based on the possible threat to UUAA's health and safety, the credibility and seriousness of the situation, and other factors as deemed appropriate. Any determination made by the Healthy Congregation Response Team will be shared with UUAA's Board of Trustees. In exceptional circumstances, the HCRT may make formal recommendations to the Board of Trustees to suspend, terminate, or reinstate UUAA membership.

Safety Team

This policy requires the establishment of a Safety Team, which consists of the Spiritual Growth and Development (SGD) Minister/Director, Administrator, Building Manager, and at least two members of the congregation. This team will meet at least quarterly. The charge of this team is to:

- Coordinate yearly safety drills and trainings.
- Focus on building improvements to improve safety.
- Create and update the Emergency Manual and Classroom Safety documents.
- Annually review and update safety procedures.

Collaborative Roles

While each of these teams has its own primary focus, UUAA recognizes that different aspects of congregational health and safety often intersect and overlap. For example, there is often no way to discuss healthy relationship and interpersonal dynamics (LOV Team) without also discussing the very specific programmatic or operational matters which are often the context in which relationship has gone awry (SMT). To that end, the various teams will work together closely when needed, modeling healthy, ongoing communication, collaboration, and when appropriate, joint action between/among the groups.

Special Relationship Between Congregants and Professional Staff

Ministers

As a faith community, we expect our ministers to act in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry. These guidelines state:

Recognizing that ministers are called to nourish the health and wholeness of the communities they serve, and recognizing the fiduciary nature of our profession, and as stated in our actionable Code of Conduct, ministers will not engage in sexual contact, sexualized behavior, or a sexual relationship with any person they serve as a minister.

The full text of the Code of Conduct can be found on the UUMA website:
<http://www.uuma.org/?page=guidelines#Ethical%20Standards>.

Professional Religious Educators

As a faith community, we expect our Spiritual Growth and Development Minister/Director and other professional religious education staff to act in accordance with guidelines set forth in the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Code of Professional Practice.

These guidelines set up expectations around healthy behavior and communication, including the statement: “I will not engage in sexual contact, sexualized behavior, or a sexual relationship with any person I serve as a religious professional.”

The full text of the Code of Professional Practices can be found on the LREDA website:
<https://www.lreda.org/professional-standards>.

Concerns About Misconduct

Concerns about professional misconduct by one of the ministers or a religious educator should be brought to the attention of the Healthy Congregation Response Team, and/or the President of the Board of Trustees, who will contact the appropriate staff at the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

The process for handling complaints of professional misconduct can be found on the UUA’s website:

<https://www.uua.org/safe/misconduct>

Unhealthy Communications and Behaviors

Communications

A healthy congregation must rely on healthy communications among its members, friends, visitors, and staff, and will address, in a civil manner, conflict that may arise from time to time within its community. (See also Teams Focused on Health and Safety.)

Many instances of unhealthy communications begin with triangulation. That is the circumstance where Person A is having a conflict with Person B, but tells Person C instead of first going directly to Person B. Healthy communications would require that aggrieved parties talk to one another before including others, though Person A may use a thought partner specifically to help figure out how to approach the conversation with Person B.

In the event that, in the midst of conflict, a direct conversation with the concerned community member(s) is either unsatisfactory or not possible, for any reason, the Living Our Values (LOV) Team may be drawn upon as a resource, for covenant-based feedback and facilitation. (Please see *Teams Focused on Health and Safety, Living Our Values Team.*)

Another form of unhealthy communications is the anonymous complaint. This congregation will not act or react to anonymous complaints, nor will much regard be paid to the complaint that begins, "People are saying..." or "I heard that..." as these are merely another form of anonymous complaint. The exception to this is any complaint requiring mandatory reporting per the state of Michigan.

Behaviors

Anyone attending in-person or virtual UUAA-sponsored activities or engaging with official UUAA social media, listservs, and other congregation-sponsored communications is entitled to physical and/or emotional well-being. People should feel safe in expressing their beliefs or opinions without being disrupted, experiencing pain or harm, or feeling threatened by the behavior of others in their activity, group, or the larger UUAA community.

Should such occur, congregants are urged to immediately notify an appropriate activity or group lay leader, a relevant staff member, and/or the Chair of the Living Our Values (LOV) Team.

Definitions

- **Disruptive Behavior:** Behavior that is experienced as interfering with a virtual or in-person event (programs, activities, or services) or via UUAA electronic communications.
- **Offensive Behavior:** Behavior that is experienced as inappropriate for virtual or in-person events or via UUAA electronic communications; or, behavior that is experienced as causing pain or harm.

- **Dangerous Behavior:** Behavior that is experienced as a threat to the safety and well-being of persons during a virtual or in-person event, via UUAA electronic communications, or to the congregational property itself.

Responses

The Senior Minister, their designee, and/or the Healthy Congregation Response Team will gather information and determine what set of responses may be warranted.

An emphasis on mutual care within the UUAA community and the restoration of healthy relationships, for all involved, will be a guiding principle as UUAA responds to emergent situations.

Ongoing unhealthy behavior may result in the withdrawal or limitation of access to UUAA resources, activities, and/or programs as deemed appropriate by the Senior Minister, their designee, or the Healthy Congregation Response Team.

Responses to Disruptive or Offensive Behavior

- **Informal Conversation/Facilitation.** In cases where individual(s) have reported an experience within the UUAA community of pain or harm, the individual(s) will be encouraged to directly speak to the concerned parties, share their experience, seek to build a deeper understanding about our diverse community's needs, and foster healing. In instances where the concerned individual(s) feel unprepared or not equipped to have what might feel like a difficult conversation, members of the Living Our Values (LOV) Team can provide advance coaching/support and/or serve as dialogue facilitators or conveners.
- **Formal Communication/Conversation.** The Senior Minister, their designee, and/or the Healthy Congregation Response Team may formally communicate concerns in-person and/or in writing to parties that have engaged in disruptive or offensive behaviors and discuss remedies to the problem behavior. Remedy, at this stage, may include formally inviting the concerned individual(s) or parties to work toward the healing and restoration of healthy relationship within community, establishing clear expectations moving forward, and/or setting boundaries, as needed. The Living Our Values (LOV) Team and/or the Healthy Congregation Response Team may serve as resources for and/or as facilitators/conveners of needed conversations.
- **Withdrawal/Limitation of Access.** Depending on the severity, frequency, and/or repetition of the behavior, remedy may include limiting the possibility of ongoing harm to the UUAA community by limiting access to UUAA activities, programs, services, electronic communications, and/or other community resources.
- **Removal.** In the rare event that disruptive or offensive behavior cannot be redirected or sufficiently managed in the moment, threatening the ability of the activity, program, or gathering to continue without disruption, the offending individual may be removed from the activity, program, or gathering by the Senior Minister, their designee, or an appropriate staff or lay leader. Such instances will be promptly reported to the Senior Minister, their designee, and/or the Healthy Congregation Response Team for review and additional response, as warranted.

- **Suspension or Termination of Membership.** In exceptional circumstances, typically ones in which there is an established record of multiple attempts at intervention to correct or redress ongoing disruptive or offensive behavior, the Senior Minister, in collaboration with the Healthy Congregation Response Team, may recommend to the Board of Trustees the suspension or termination of UUAA membership. Any recommendation of suspension or termination of UUAA membership will be submitted in writing along with supporting documentation for Board of Trustees review and action. Only action by the Board of Trustees may suspend, terminate, or subsequently reinstate UUAA membership.

Responses to Dangerous Behavior

- **Expulsion.** If the offending person's actions are dangerous, as defined above, they will be asked to immediately leave congregational grounds or a virtual UUAA activity, program, or gathering by the Senior Minister, their designee, or the activity's leader. The Senior Minister, their designee, or the Healthy Congregation Response Team will review the incident and determine what additional response or action may be needed. Behavior that is deemed dangerous to the UUAA community, its members, or friends may result in a recommendation to suspend or terminate UUAA membership, and/or referral to appropriate local authorities for additional legal, civil, or criminal action, as warranted.

Good Standing and Covenant

Members of the UUAA community may or may not be in good standing. They may also be in or out of covenant with the congregation.

A member in good standing is an individual who has signed the membership book and maintained the qualifications of membership. The main responsibility of a member is to make a financial pledge every year or to obtain a waiver of such from a minister.

A congregant in covenant with the congregation is an individual who has honored and maintained the covenantal nature of our community, one that is grounded in an ethic of mutual care. This includes having participated in any healing or restorative processes that one has been invited into for the sake of honoring and maintaining the community's sense of covenant; and, that there is not a Healthy Congregation Response Team (HCRT) process unresolved or actively underway concerning the individual.

Note: Being in conflict with another congregant does not make someone out of covenant with the congregation. A person is out of covenant with the congregation if the individual refuses to participate in a healing or restorative process, aimed at preserving the health of the fabric of our community; or, if a complaint or pattern of unhealthy communication and/or behavior is actively under review by the HCRT and/or unresolved. The vast majority of congregants are in covenant with the congregation at any given time and actively exercise appropriate relational care for one another.

Questions related to the good standing of a member are verified by the Executive, or their designee, as needed. Determinations related to a member's state of covenant with the UUAA

community are referred to the Executive, who may draw on the Living our Values (LOV) Team and/or the Healthy Congregation Response Team (HCRT) in making a determination. The Healthy Congregation Response Team may recommend to the Executive operational boundaries and limitations for individuals who engage in patterns of unhealthy communication and/or behavior. In the rare event that there are questions about, or recommendations related to, the removal or revocation of membership, in connection with patterns of unhealthy communication and/or behavior, such will be referred to the Board of Trustees.

Children's Spiritual Growth and Development Program

Children and youth are among our most vulnerable participants, and are especially entitled to be safeguarded from perceived, threatened, or actual harm. This section addresses many ways that we can protect our youngest members.

Staff, Teachers, and Other SGD Volunteers

- Volunteers must attend UAAA for at least one year prior to their service, unless prior experience and recommendations allow the SGD Minister/Director to determine otherwise.
- All volunteers must sign and abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct (see *Appendix B*).
- All volunteer teachers must participate in yearly Abuse Prevention training provided by the Spiritual Growth and Development program.
- All adult volunteers working with children/youth must undergo a yearly national criminal and sex offender background check. Volunteers under the age of 18 must be approved by the SGD Minister/Director and always work with at least one adult. Any current staff and volunteers must disclose new or pending legal actions to the SGD Minister/Director.
- Only those formally hired as childcare providers are allowed to provide childcare, unless pre-approved by the SGD Minister/Director.
- At least two adults are required to be present during all children/youth classes and activities, including online. This includes childcare for congregational events and instances when only one child is present. The only exception is for adult mentors and youth mentees formally participating in the Coming of Age program. Even in these cases, mentors should arrange for activities/meetings to take place in public places or within the sightlines of other adults whenever possible, or notify the youth's parents/guardians about online activities/meetings. The parent/mentor covenant created at the beginning of the congregational year should guide all mentor/mentee communications, both online and in person.
- When any class leaves the classroom (for example to go outdoors), teachers should take a headcount before leaving and before returning, and also leave a sign on the classroom door informing others where the class is.
- Diapers are changed where two adults (who are not married or in a committed partnership) are present and whenever possible, only changed by paid staff. Under no circumstances should one volunteer take a child into a bathroom or other separate room for a diaper change. For children 5 years or older, parents/guardians or a designated assistant are required to handle all bathroom needs. Volunteer rovers are allowed to escort children to the bathrooms.
- The SGD wing, with the exception of Fahs Chapel, is a nut-free zone. If a child has food allergies, parents/guardians are asked to list these on the registration form so that appropriate accommodations can be made whenever possible.

Parents/Guardians

- If a child has a contagious condition or has experienced fever, vomiting, or diarrhea in the past 24 hours, they may not participate in SGD-related activities.
- Visitors with children/youth must fill out the Visiting Families form available at the greeters desk. After three visits, children and youth who plan to attend classes must be registered using the online or paper forms.
- For children grades 5 and younger, at least one parent/assigned guardian must remain on site during programming and provide lead volunteers/staff with a cell phone number or description of the location where they can be reached. During service times, children must be in the classroom with their teachers or under the direct supervision of their parent/guardian.
- The parent/guardian must pick up the child(ren) at the designated end time of any programming or child care. Assigned guardians cannot include siblings under the age of 18 unless permission for an exception has been obtained by the SGD Minister/Director. Youth grades 6 and older can be released without a parent/guardian.

Events that Require Travel

- Adult drivers must provide proof of license, registration, and insurance. They must also complete an SGD volunteer code of conduct form and undergo a national background check that includes their driving record prior to events. Forms are valid for one program year.
- Youth may drive themselves to SGD events, but they may not take passengers unless the location is less than an hour away and all parents/guardians have given permission. For events more than an hour away, youth may drive themselves with written permission from a parent/guardian.
- Two adults (who are not married or in a committed partnership) must be in any car transporting unrelated minors. If this is not possible, there will be at least two unrelated children in a single driver's car, and rest stops will be coordinated with other drivers.
- Drivers must require that seat belts be used at all times and the number of passengers cannot exceed the number of seatbelts.
- Drivers may not text while driving.

UUAA-Sponsored Middle School and High School Youth Overnights or Trips

- Attendees must have all related permissions and registration forms on file.
- Attendees and the adults working with them should agree to a participant covenant that sets out behavioral expectations for youth and adults in relation to themselves and one another. All attendees should sign the behavioral covenant.
- No one under the age of 25 may be an adult leader responsible for youth. The SGD Minister/Director has the discretion to make exceptions for adults aged 21-24, on a case-by-case basis.

- One adult shall be responsible for no more than seven youth for high school events. One adult shall be responsible for no more than five youth for middle school events. No fewer than two adults (who are not married or in a committed partnership) will be present and awake at all times that any number of youth are in their care and awake. In cases where one adult may need to work with a group of youth (such as breaking into small groups), adult leaders will be expected to conduct all interactions in a location that can be observed by other adults.
- When youth are sleeping in our building, at least two adult chaperones (who are not married or in a committed partnership) must sleep in a space positioned strategically for awareness of youth activity. Adult chaperones should create a plan to wake up overnight to check (in pairs) at times not pre-announced to see that everyone is in their own bed space and that boundaries are maintained.
- When youth are sleeping during overnight events outside our building, at least two adults (who are not married or in a committed partnership) must be present within eyesight of each other and the youth. Ideally at least one of those adults should be awake and actively monitoring the youth, but we recognize this is not always possible. If one of the adults is awakened due to a disturbance or report of inappropriate behavior, that adult must immediately awaken the other adult(s) present before proceeding further.
- If the youth are sleeping outside on congregational property and are allowed to access the building during the night for restrooms, all external doors except the lower SGD wing doors must be locked. Also, the lower level inner SGD doors must be locked and at least two adults must be sleeping in the upstairs hallway.
- Youth may not share bedding and there must be visible floor space between all sleepers. No youth may sleep alone with an unrelated adult in the same room.
- Adults are expected to identify and immediately report to the group leader and/or a UUAA staff member any suspicion of use or possession of illegal substances, harassment, abuse, and sexual or other misconduct, and will not engage in such behaviors themselves (as outlined in the volunteer code of conduct).
- Attendees and their parents/guardians must be provided with a cell phone number for the primary adult leader.

Social Media Relating to Children/Youth

General guidelines

- Any social media where the congregation has an official presence is only open to friends and members, age 14 and above.
- Any youth group social media space will be moderated by the YRUU Lead Advisor and/or SGD Minister/Director, and no sexual content will be allowed (unless it is related to the OWL curriculum).
- Adults will not friend unrelated minors in the congregation without explicit permission of parents/guardians.
- No one except staff or designated SGD photographers may take photos of a child under the age of 18 during congregational activities or services without first obtaining parental or guardian consent.
- Parents/guardians must give written permission for use or posting of any minors' photos in any venue; tagging of minors' photos is not allowed in any public venue.
- Any photos taken on behalf of the congregation (for example, by a staff member or designated volunteer SGD photographer) will not be posted in any venue unless a parent/guardian has signed the photo release on the SGD registration form for the minor(s) in question.

For volunteers/staff who work with youth in the congregation

- Adults should only accept "friend" requests from youth on social media networks where:
 - Parents/guardians have given permission.
 - Adults stay in an appropriate adult role in posting, content, discussion, and moderation of comments on their posts.
 - Posts and discussion are visible to others.
 - Posts are not automatically deleted.
- Groups will covenant to use the forms of communication which work best for them.
- Communication with youth should be archived rather than deleted. Archived materials should be saved for no less than 12 years.
- One-on-one communication should be avoided where possible, such as by copying another adult on an email.
- If a youth contacts an adult one on one, the adult has the responsibility to redirect the conversation to an appropriate channel.
- One-on-one communication for the purpose of sharing logistical information or to remind youth to check other forms of communication should only be done via services like Remind so that back-and-forth communication is limited and everything is documented.
- If an adult leader is contacted one-on-one with significant pastoral issues by a youth, they are encouraged to respond appropriately in the moment to support the youth, including assisting the youth in finding local sources of support such as their

parents/guardians, religious educator, minister, teacher, or counselor. The conversation should be documented.

- Staff and parents/guardians have the right to ask to view any communication between adult leaders and youth.
- Parents/guardians have the right to be copied on any communication they request. If they request to be added to group conversations, their role is only to witness and share any relevant logistic information pertaining to their youth. They are encouraged to share any concerns about the group business with adult leaders or staff rather than participating in the conversation.
- The primary means of electronic communication for teams of youth and adult leaders will be:
 - Email lists
 - Group emails
 - Facebook groups and group messages
 - Group text messages
 - Mass reminder texts
 - Conference calls or video conferencing

Harassment and Abuse

This section addresses how UUAA protects adults and children from harassment, abuse, and other inappropriate conduct.

If there is an incident on congregational property or during a congregation-sponsored activity (including but not limited to illness, injury, vandalization, theft, drug/alcohol incident, assault, harassment, or any form of abuse), someone involved in the incident must be appointed to fill out and submit an Incident Report Form (available as a fillable Word file at www.uuaa.org; paper copies are kept in the office next to the mailboxes).

Harassment

Any harassment regarding race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or disability will not be tolerated. Such harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures or physical contact, display or circulation of written or online materials, or derogatory pictures directed at any of these categories. In addition, physical or sexual harassment/exploitation (see *Appendix A: Definitions*) will also not be tolerated. In the event that an incident of harassment occurs at this congregation or during congregation-sponsored activities, the incident should be reported to a minister and/or a member of the Healthy Congregation Response Team as soon as possible.

Abuse of Minors

Regardless of who is specified by the law to be a mandated reporter, any community member or staff member who suspects the abuse of a child/youth should contact one of the ministers with their concern immediately so that required actions will be implemented. If someone working with a child/youth has reason to believe that the child/youth would be endangered by returning home, and they cannot reach any minister on staff, the adult should contact the police or Child Protective Services immediately, and then leave an emergency message for the ministers.

Organizational Response to Allegations of Abuse

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this congregation or during congregation-sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

- All allegations of abuse will be reported to the civil authorities, and the congregation will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse. The congregation will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
- The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
- The alleged perpetrator will be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses. If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member, they will be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the

investigation. If the alleged perpetrator is part of the congregation, they will be asked to sign and abide by an interim Limited Access Agreement.

- The insurance company will be notified, and the congregation will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
- The congregation will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the congregation should refrain from speaking to the media.
- A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
- Any accused staff person who is not cleared of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position. Any accused member of the community who is not cleared of the alleged abuse or misconduct will review the terms of their current Limited Access Agreement with ministerial staff and abide by the outcome of that revision.

Limited Access Agreements

UUAA is committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping with us. However, we also prioritize the safety of each member of our community. Thus, it is expected that any adult using UUAA's building or online spaces (congregants, staff, renters, etc.) with a history or active accusation of sexual misconduct/abuse/sexual offense will make that history or accusation known to one of the congregation's ministers, who will follow the procedures below.

- Any adult, adolescent, or child accused of a sexual offense of any kind will be placed on a tailored, interim limited access agreement without prejudice (that is, the agreement can't be used in court as a binding legal document, nor is it considered the final word on the issue). The Healthy Congregation Response Team will be convened within 10 days of such a person being made known to a minister or any member of the Healthy Congregation Response Team to develop the agreement, which may be subsequently revised. The limited access agreement will remain in effect until all charges are dropped or confirmed (in which case see below). Persons will not continue to attend or participate in any programs or services of the congregation, including those online, until a limited access agreement is drawn up.
- Adolescents or children who are known to have sexually abused or sexually assaulted another youth or child will only be allowed adult-supervised participation in future Spiritual Growth and Development activities unless otherwise recommended by a therapist's evaluation.
- Any person convicted of a sexual offense or with a history of known sexual offenses will be placed on a limited access agreement without prejudice. The Healthy Congregation Response Team will be convened within 10 days of such a person being made known to a minister or any member of the Healthy Congregation Response Team in order to develop a limited access agreement. This will be done upon consultation with the person's parole officer and/or treatment provider so it may be determined that they can safely participate in the adult life of the congregation.
- Any person accused, convicted, or with a history of known sex offenses who will not sign a limited access agreement will be denied access to any programs or services at the congregation, including those online.

For guidelines on creating this agreement, see *Appendix C: Sample Text for a Limited Access Agreement*.

Emergency Procedures

A safe and secure religious community must protect the gathering of members, friends, guests, and staff from the hazards of natural and human-made disaster, including violent intrusion. Accordingly, UUAA has procedures to guide staff members and key volunteers during emergency situations. (These can also be found in the separate *Emergency Manual*.) The judgment of any senior staff members on site during an emergency should also be taken into consideration.

For emergencies that require **evacuating the building**, *immediately* take these actions (as well as any additional instructions for the specific situation):

- Pull the nearest fire alarm station, if one has not already been activated.
- Call 911 and inform them of the emergency or direct someone else to do so.
- Go to the designated command post, which is the entrance to the Main Office. With the assistance of any other UUAA employees, direct all occupants to leave the building by the nearest fire exit.
- Ensure that the building has been searched, including all offices and restrooms, and that everyone has left.

For emergencies that require **remaining and/or taking shelter inside the building**, follow the instructions for the specific situation.

Active Shooter or Other Hostile Intruder

If someone has entered the church intending to do harm to others via weapons or physical violence, time is of the essence. Members of the staff, Safety Team, and volunteer teachers should follow the evacuation procedures outlined in the Safety Manual (for safety reasons, this is a separate internal document). All occupants, however, should be aware of the following general guidelines:

1. If you see someone who appears suspicious, notify a staff member or member of the Safety Team of their location and description immediately. Staff and Safety Team members will immediately notify all those on walkie talkies, as well designate someone to call the Sheriff's Department at 734.971.8400 to request a drive by.

Examples of suspicious behavior include:

- Excessive nervousness, nervous glancing, or other signs of mental discomfort/being ill-at-ease. This may include sweating, "tunnel vision" (staring forward inappropriately), and repeated muttering. This may also include repeated entrances and exits from the building.
- Inappropriate, oversized, loose-fitting clothes (e.g., a heavy overcoat on a warm day).
- Constantly favoring one side or one area of the body as if wearing something unusual/uncomfortable (for example, a holster). Pay attention to a person constantly adjusting waistbands, ankles, or other clothing. Projected angles

under clothing may also be indicative of a firearm (for example, at the waist or the ankle).

- Carrying large duffel bags.
2. If an active shooter has entered the building, or if you hear sounds of gunfire (which can often sound muffled or like firecrackers), decide which of the three options—RUN, HIDE, FIGHT—is your best option based on where the intruder is and where you can go. Whenever possible, choose RUN first (even if it means escaping through windows).
 - **RUN** — If this is your best option, do not attempt to take belongings with you, although if you can grab your cell phone quickly, do that. Do not stop even if other people are unsure about what to do. Encourage them to leave with you. Do not stop until you are safely to the opposite side of the parking lot, across the street from the church, or in the woods. Then call 911 and report what information you know about the situation. Try to prevent others from entering the church.
 - **HIDE** — If this is your best option, choose a location where you cannot be seen through any windows in the door or elsewhere. Barricade the door with the Ramparts provided in each classroom by fitting it under the doorknob, or otherwise find a way to lock the door. Silence your cell phone. Turn out the lights. Be as quiet as possible. Call 911 and whisper to them or just leave the phone line open if the intruder is close by. Law enforcement will let you know when it is safe to come out.
 - **FIGHT** — If this is your best option, do so swiftly and very aggressively. Your life depends on it. If you are with a group, attempt to overwhelm the intruder as a group (even just throwing objects at the person to distract them can be helpful). See what objects are around you that might be used as improvised weapons, especially fire extinguishers.
 3. When the police arrive, they will not stop to assist you. They will be moving to stop the intruder. Do not grab at the officers and keep your hands visible so they know you are not the intruder. If you know the direction of the intruder or a description of the intruder, give it to the officers. Follow their directions to stay put or evacuate.
 4. If you have been injured, try to remain calm and know that medical assistance is on its way. Keep a positive mindset that you will survive this because help is coming.

Bomb Threat

- Do not immediately initiate building evacuation procedures, unless you are certain the threat is real and immediate.
- Call 911 to report the bomb threat and follow their instructions.
- Do not touch or disturb suspicious objects.
- If you receive a bomb threat by telephone, obtain as much information as possible from the caller, including the detonation time, location of the bomb, type and size, and the reason for it being placed in the building. Also note characteristics of the caller's voice.
- If you observe a search or are told of a bomb threat, remain calm and wait for instructions.

- If a building evacuation is deemed necessary and/or the fire alarm system sounds, immediately initiate building evacuation procedures. Direct everyone to take with them personal items such as purses, coats, and book bags, so these items will not have to be examined and cleared during the subsequent bomb search.

Bomb Explosion

- If a bomb explodes without warning, initiate building evacuation procedures and treat the emergency in the same manner as a fire.
- Contact 911 and provide information about the explosion, including the extent of the casualties. Request assistance in treating and evacuating injured persons as necessary. Provide what information you can about possible structural damage to the building.

Civil Disturbance

As a result of the high visibility of the congregation, UUAA may be a target for disruptive actions such as demonstrations.

- Immediately contact the police to inform them of the situation.
- Encourage others to stay calm and to avoid overreaction or confrontation.
- Continue normal operations, if possible and advisable.
- If demonstrators or groups of disruptive persons enter the building, do not try to block or obstruct their entry. Should that occur, defer any action to the police.
- If you are inside, remain there and secure your immediate area by locking your office door, your desk, and file drawers.
- If disruptive groups enter your immediate work area, log off the network and turn off your computer.
- Stay away from all doors and windows.

Earthquake

- Instruct others to stay under cover (such as desks, tables, or doorways); move away from the windows, bookcases, etc. to avoid falling debris.
- Contact 911 and provide information about the earthquake, including the extent of the casualties and damage. Request assistance in treating injured persons as necessary. Provide what information you can about possible structural damage to the building.
- Remain calm and wait for instructions by professional emergency responders. If communications are out and it becomes evident that the building is unstable and is unsafe, initiate an evacuation. Be aware that all occupants may try to evacuate the building at the same time, so it may take longer to clear the building; remain calm, assist others who may need help, and be patient. Do not use elevators. Be prepared for aftershocks.
- Treat or assist injured people with first aid and CPR as needed and as your level of expertise permits. Don't move victims unless they are in immediate danger. If necessary, put out small fires with portable fire extinguishers located throughout the building.

- Avoid areas where structural damage may have rendered the building unsafe. Wait in a safe place for instructions. You and those with you could be there for several hours. Expect fire alarms and other protection systems to activate.
- Do not flush toilets because sewer lines may not be intact.

Fire

- Initiate building evacuation procedures.
- You may use a fire extinguisher, if readily available, to put out small fires.
- Those in the sanctuary should follow the evacuation instructions given from the pulpit and assemble by the solar panel at the front of the building.
- Members of the Safety Team should ensure that those in the halls and social hall evacuate through the nearest exits.
- Teachers should help their classes evacuate through the nearest fire exits and assemble in the lower lot. Teachers should bring their attendance binders and take attendance again once outside.
- Once everyone has been evacuated, safety leaders will bring parents/guardians down to the lower lot to be reunited with their children.

Flooding

- Initiate building evacuation procedures, only if necessary, but do not pull the fire alarm.
- There is a potential for flooding within the building. It may be caused by internal factors such as plumbing problems, or external sources related to weather phenomena. Quick response can prevent extensive damage to church property.
- Take action immediately to limit water damage. Move equipment and furniture as required, turn off and cover computers and other sensitive equipment with plastic sheeting, and assist with protecting vital records, information, and other items.

Medical

- Do not initiate building evacuation procedures.
- Immediately call 911.
- Stay on the line until you are told it is okay to hang up, as there may be other critical information you will be asked to provide.
- Treat or assist injured people with first aid and CPR as needed and as your level of expertise permits. Don't move victims unless they are in immediate danger.

Missing Child

The person who learns about a missing child should immediately broadcast (or find someone with a walkie talkie who can broadcast) the message “missing child.” Walkie talkies are located on the counter in the copy room.

The most senior staff member available becomes the Search Leader. This person should do the following:

- If the situation is a suspected kidnapping, contact law enforcement officials immediately. Assign one person to stay in the parking lot to direct officials as they arrive.
- Assign one person the task of notifying the child's parents/guardians and the SGD Minister/Director (if not already informed). If any of those involved are in the sanctuary during service, enlist the help of ushers to quietly get their attention.
- Assign one person with a walkie talkie to immediately recruit and direct a team of three adults to sweep the inside of the building (two on the top floor and one on the bottom).
- Assign one person with a walkie talkie to immediately recruit and direct a team of 3-5 adults to sweep the grounds (one in the parking lot and the others spread out throughout the property).
- When the child is found, those with walkie talkies should notify the Search Leader and other searchers that the situation has been resolved. If someone has already called law enforcement, the Search Leader should immediately update them.

Power Outage

- Do not immediately initiate building evacuation procedures.
- Call Detroit Edison Energy (800.477.4747) to report the situation and follow any specific instructions given that pertain to the incident, power loss, and anticipated recovery time.
- In the event of a total or near-total loss of power to the building, it is essential for all building occupants to remain calm, especially if it is during the evening. Offer reassurance and speak in a calm voice. Please note that telephones, computers, and plumbing will not be operative during a general power outage.
- If it is determined that the loss of power is extensive and may last for an extended period of time, initiate building evacuation procedures, but do not pull the fire alarm. Be sure to conduct a thorough search to ensure that everyone has left the building before it is secured.

Severe Weather

For severe conditions that are predicted, see *Operations Policy: Inclement Weather*.

For severe conditions that arise unexpectedly:

- Do not initiate building evacuation procedures.
- In the event of potentially destructive weather extremes, such as dangerously high winds or tornados, occupants will be warned to move to an interior location of the building, away from exterior windows, but remain in the building.

Threatening Phone Call

- Do not initiate building evacuation procedures.
- Remain calm and do not react emotionally to anything the caller says.
- Make written notes during the conversation including the types and nature of any threats, names of persons the caller mentions, characteristics of the caller's voice, and any other information that may help identify the caller or assist during a later investigation.
- Ask the caller's identity and to whom they wish to speak.
- Do not give out any information about persons the caller threatens during the call.
- Immediately report the threatening call to 911 as soon as the call has ended.

Appendix A: Definitions

The terms used in this document have the following meanings:

- **Abuse** includes non-accidental conduct that involves bodily injury or impairment; offensive physical or sexual contact, including physical or sexual abuse; physical or sexual harassment; physical or sexual molestation; or physical or sexual exploitation.
- **Minor** is anyone under the age of 18.
- **Physical Abuse** includes offensive contact or activity that causes bodily harm.
- **Sexual Abuse** means any sexual touching of a child or any activity that causes a person to engage in any sexual act or conduct without the person's consent, or in the circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.
- **Physical Harassment or Molestation or Exploitation** means activity that places a person in fear of bodily injury by such acts as threatening or tormenting behavior, compelling a person by force or threat of force to engage in conduct from which the person has a right to abstain, knowingly restricting substantially the movements of another person without that person's consent, communicating to a person a threat to commit an act against the person or another person or entity where the natural consequence of the threat is to place that person in fear or cause that person to engage in conduct which that person otherwise would not engage, or similar repeated offensive physical or verbal conduct.
- **Sexual Molestation and Sexual Exploitation** means activity that places another person in a situation where that person feels compelled to engage in sexual conduct to which that person would not voluntarily consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.
- **Sexual Harassment** means making sexual advances or requests for sexual favors to another person, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where the other person by words or conduct has indicated that such words or conduct are not desired, or when a reasonable person would expect that such words or conduct would not be desirable.
- **Youth** are defined as those in high school grades 9-12 or the equivalent for homeschooled youth, as well as minors of the same age who have left school without receiving a diploma.
- **Vulnerable Adult** refers to someone who is unable to manage their own resources, carry out the activities of daily living, or protect themselves from physical abuse, emotional abuse, active, passive or self-neglect, financial exploitation, or other hazardous situations without assistance from others.

Appendix B: Volunteer's Code of Conduct

Our children are our most important gifts. We want children and young people who participate in our program to have a safe and happy experience. We support and respect our children, young people, staff, and volunteers. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of our congregation.

As a volunteer, I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at congregation activities, except where specifically allowed for programming such as Coming of Age, and with full knowledge and consent of parents/guardians.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardians and ministers or staff.
- Cooperate fully in an investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Model healthy communication – both in face-to-face situations and online/social media – by avoiding gossip, respecting confidentiality, and speaking respectfully to/about others. If conflicts or concerns arise regarding children, youth, parents/guardians, other teachers, or UUAA staff, I will speak directly with the person or people involved. If I do not feel safe engaging in direct conversation, I will reach out to a staff member to request mediation resources.

As a volunteer, I will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use, possess, condone, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while volunteering.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.

I understand that as a volunteer working with children and/or youth, I will be subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer with children and/or youth.

Appendix C: Sample Text for a Limited Access Agreement

Limited Access Agreements include three sections:

- Introductory paragraph
- Agreement
- Closing and Signatures

The following text will be used as a guideline for creating such agreements.

Introductory Paragraph

Introductory paragraph in cases of an allegation

A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the staff, Board, or members of the Healthy 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 ministers, Board President, Welcome Ministries Coordinator, and the Spiritual Growth and Development staff. It will be kept in a locked file in the office.

Introductory paragraph in cases of a confirmed complaint or a convicted sex offender

The First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who want to worship 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.

Agreement

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in adult/multigenerational worship services, social hour, committee meetings, adult education, all adult social events, and well-supervised multigenerational events (with the exception of Friday Fun Nights and events held in congregants' homes where children are present).

You are to avoid all contact with children on congregational property, in online gatherings, or at congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

Please do not talk with children.

Please do 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 intergenerational events, and driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.

Please remain in the presence of an adult who knows your situation at all times when children are present.

If a child in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.

Please avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session, such as our weekday preschool or youth overnights.

Closing and Signatures

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:

- Senior Minister
- Assistant Minister(s)
- Spiritual Growth and Development Coordinator
- Childcare Coordinator
- Welcome Ministries Coordinator
- Board President

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 congregational property.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signature:

Date:

Witness:

Date:

Senior Minister:

Date:

Assistant Minister(s):

Date:

Board Chair:

Date:

These policies are subject to change without notice. Changes in policy must be approved by the Senior Minister or their designee.

Revision History		
DATE	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	REVISED BY
May 22, 2020	Created policy, in consultation with the Spiritual Growth and Development Committee and Leadership Chairs Group	Rev. C. Hartley, Rev. L. Ulrich
February 15, 2021	Turned one bullet point in the charge to the HCRT into two separate bullet points to add clarity	Rev. C. Hartley
June 6, 2021	Added paragraph under Unhealthy Communications referring people to LOV as a resource	Rev. C. Hartley
April 1, 2022	Further clarified the role of the Healthy Congregation Response Team, Behaviors, and Responses.	Rev. M. Mishra-Marzetti Members of the SMT, LAT, GAT, & LOV