

**FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON**

**SAFE CONGREGATION POLICIES**

**Drafted by the Members of the Safe Congregation Task Force\***

(DRAFT May 18, 2013)

\*With acknowledgement to the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for providing us with a model.

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## DEFINITIONS

### Definitions of terms used in this Policy:

**Board** – the Board of Trustees of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont

**Child Abuse** – actual or substantial risk of harm to a child including, but not limited to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of a child’s health, physical or psychological growth, development or welfare

**Children’s or Youth Programs** – activities or events organized for children and youth of the Society, which serve to further the goals and mission of the Society’s Religious Education Program

**Congregant** – a person who participates in a Society Function in any capacity

**Congregation** – the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont; used interchangeably with “Society”

**FUUSB** – the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont; also First UU Society

**Limited Access Agreement** – an agreement allowing a person to participate in some, but not all, aspects of Society Functions (please refer to Appendix 7)

**Meetinghouse** – the building at 152 Pearl Street, Burlington, Vermont, housing the Society’s Sanctuary

**Member** – a person who has satisfied all of the Society’s requirements for becoming a Member

**Policy** - this Safe Congregation Policy

**Policy Standard** – a specific safety standard, as described in this Policy

**Religious Education (RE)** – the Society’s Religious Education program, including, but not limited to, the “OWL” (Our Whole Lives), Coming of Age, and Youth programs

**Report** – a report of actual or suspected Child Abuse or other safety concern made in confidence to any member of the Safety Team

**Safety Team** – the five-member working group comprised of the Society’s Minister, Director of Religious Education (DRE), and three Members of the Congregation appointed by the Board. The Safety Team is responsible for developing and implementing this Policy, and as such, also serves as a resource for the Congregation in the area of child safety.

**Society** – the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont; used interchangeably with “Congregation”

**Society Employee** – a person who is employed on a full or part-time basis by the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, including, but not limited to, the Minister and Director of Religious Education, but not including persons who perform paid services on an independent contractor or casual basis for the Society

**Society Function** – an event or activity that is organized by the Society or any of its Committees, Employees, or Volunteers, for the benefit of the Society, its Members and Congregants, or any sub-group thereof, including, but not

limited to Meetings for Worship, Religious Education classes, the OWL and Youth programs, and the Society's "Vacation" and "Special" Sunday activities for children

**Society Facilities** – the Meetinghouse and the adjacent Clarke Street building

**Society Property** – the land and adjacent buildings located in and around 152 Pearl Street, Burlington, Vermont, owned and occupied by the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington

**Society Volunteer** – a person who gives, without compensation, their time and effort toward a designated task, project, or responsibility as requested and designated by a Society Employee, and/or lay leadership of the Society, including, but not limited to, persons who teach in the Religious Education Program, and Facilitators in the OWL program

**Teaching Team** – a group of adult volunteers who share in the duties of teaching a particular group of children as part of Religious Education

**Youth** – a person in his/her teenage years, and applies to young people up through their graduation from high school. If they are not in high school, it applies until they are 18 years of age, at which time they legally become an adult

**Youth Incident** – an incident in which a teenager or child in the Congregation is reasonably suspected to have had inappropriate sexual contact with another teenager or child in the Congregation, or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in other conduct that constitutes Child Abuse under this Policy

## **PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

### **AUTHORITY AND APPLICATION**

This Policy, created by the Safety Team and approved by the Board, applies to all Society Employees, Volunteers, Members, and Congregants while attending or participating in any Society Function.

### **PURPOSE**

This statement of purpose and all statements of purpose in this Policy are aspirational statements intended to provide context to the Policy Standards that follow. In the event of any discrepancy between any particular Policy Standard and a statement of purpose, the Policy Standard shall govern.

This Policy is designed to:

1. Raise the awareness of our Congregation regarding child safety, and in particular, child abuse and child sexual abuse
2. Assess current procedures and improve the safety of children in Society Functions through the implementation of preventative measures and clear guidelines delineating appropriate behavior with children and youth within all Society Functions
3. Develop a thoughtful approach, with detailed procedures, to lessen the likelihood that false allegations will be made against Society Employees, Volunteers, Members, and Congregants
4. Establish and disseminate clear procedures to respond to alleged incidents and incidents that may occur, whether during a structured Society activity or at other times at Society activities

The promotion of safety and the prevention of all harm to children, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children, is at the heart of our Congregation's effort to put effective safety policies in place. We acknowledge that while it is the ultimate responsibility of the entire Congregation, in partnership with parents and guardians, to create and maintain a safe environment that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth, special care and clear policy needs to be in place when children are in Society Functions with adults other than their parents or guardians. The extensive assessment of our administrative and organizational policies during the interim ministry period has identified the safety of children as a key area for action. While there is no particular incident generating this effort to develop a policy addressing safety for children, the best time to write policy is before a crisis exists.

Public awareness of child abuse and child sexual abuse has been growing since the 1960s. In particular, media reports of sexual abuse at day care centers, scandals in organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, the Big Brother Big Sister organization, the YWCA, athletic organizations, public and private schools, as well as within the Catholic Church have cast light on the sexual victimization of children, more often than not, at the hands of trusted adults. In fact, no organization of any type is immune, including our own Society. The damage done to these children is immense. So, too, would be the damage to our Congregation should an event such as this take place in our community.

Therefore, we, the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington (“FUUSB”), while affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person and committing ourselves to promote justice, equity and compassion, will act together to promote child health, wellness and safety.

In doing so, our work will focus on:

1. Educating ourselves on child abuse and child sexual abuse in order to prevent it within our community
2. Extending the compassion of our community to child victims and adult survivors, and potentially any rehabilitated people who have previously offended, within our community

We understand the importance of, and commit ourselves to providing, a safe and nurturing environment to each and every member of our congregation. We acknowledge the devastation wrought by child abuse and child sexual abuse on all involved, and strive to put education programs, policies and procedures in place to attempt to prevent abuse wherever possible. We gratefully affirm the time and generosity of the many volunteers in our congregational life while acknowledging the potential vulnerabilities we face through our use of volunteers in so many aspects of congregational life, particularly in Religious Education for children and youth and other child-friendly events. In response to this “vulnerability”, we together affirm the need to make a concerted effort to educate our community on these issues and take every precaution to prevent child abuse of any kind among the members of our Congregation. We acknowledge that despite even our best efforts, abuse may still occur. No congregation or organization can guarantee an absolutely risk-free environment.

## I. SAFETY AND PROTECTION IN SOCIETY FACILITIES

### A. PARTICULAR REQUIREMENTS – SOCIETY FACILITIES

- 1. First Aid Kits and Fire Extinguishers** – These items shall be readily available within Society Facilities at all times. They shall be maintained by the Society’s Facilities Manager.
- 2. Fire Drills** – The Facilities Manager (FM) shall develop and maintain a fire drill plan in consultation with the Burlington Fire Department. The FM shall annually cause at least one Society-wide fire drill, with alarm bell, to be held yearly during Meeting for Worship and RE classes during both Sunday services. Evacuation maps shall be posted by each exit within each classroom. Classroom evacuation procedures shall be included in Religious Education classroom binders.
- 3. Lockdown Drill Plan** – The Safety Team, with the participation of the FM, and in consultation with the Burlington Police Department, shall develop and approve a Lockdown Drill Plan setting forth procedures for responding to violent or threatening emergencies that may occur on Society Property or in Society Facilities. See Appendix 12.
- 4. Drugs, Weapons, Explosives** – Illegal drugs, and weapons, including but not limited to firearms and explosives, are not permitted at Society Functions or on Society Property at any time.
- 5. Building and Fire Codes** – Society Facilities will be in compliance with applicable building and fire codes.
- 6. Automatic External Defibrillator** – The Meetinghouse will be equipped with an automatic external defibrillator (AED).

### B. PARTICULAR REQUIREMENTS – INDIVIDUALS, FOOD

- 1. Special Information** – Parents and guardians seeking to register their child for Religious Education will be asked to provide any information or special information that they believe Society Employees, Teaching Teams, and Volunteers may need to know in order to support their particular child’s safety. This includes, but is not limited to: learning differences, behavioral, emotional or physical challenges, medical conditions, allergies (including food allergies), and significant family changes.
- 2. Classroom Binders** – Information provided by parents (above, I.B.1) will be printed and placed in the Religious Education classroom binder in which the child is registered.
- 3. Learner Support** – Teaching Teams will be informed of the location of such information, and to refer to it for the purpose of supporting individual learners effectively.
- 4. Food Restriction Signs** – In the case of children who have food allergies, signs and/or notices to the effect will be placed on or next to the doors of their regular classroom.
- 5. Nuts** – Parents and teachers will be asked not to bring nuts, nut products, or foods containing nuts for snack or craft activities.
- 6. Ingredient Signs** – For events serving food, organizers shall request ingredients signs. The Director of Administration can provide information to support this Policy.

**7. Non-Society Functions** – This Policy cannot ensure that Society Facilities will be “nut-safe” due to groups of persons not bound by this Policy that may use Society Facilities from time to time for non-Society Functions.

## **C. TRAINING OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

**1. First Aid, CPR/AED Training** – First Aid and CPR training (including AED use) from a certified first aid instructor shall be mandatory for the DRE, Childcare Coordinator, any paid youth Employees, and adult childcare Employees. It shall be optional, but offered annually to all other Society Employees. The Society shall pay any fee required for this training and retraining to maintain current certification. It shall also pay time for hourly Employees.

**2. First Aid Kits, AED, Fire Extinguishers** – Employees and volunteers will be informed, when they receive orientation training, of the locations of first aid kits, the AED, and clearly labeled fire extinguishers.

**3. Drill and Emergency Training** – Religious Education teachers will be trained by the DRE on procedures required for drills and emergencies. Ushers/greeters will receive training from the FM and/or Minister. The Property Committee will be trained by the FM.

## II. PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE, HARASSMENT, AND OTHER INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT TOWARDS CHILDREN

### A. PREVENTION THROUGH TRAINING AND EDUCATION

#### PURPOSE

Most organizations that use volunteers who work with children have recognized the need for education and training in some form of child abuse prevention or child protection. Greater understanding of the complexities of sexuality and abuse will help us to avoid situations that could lead to abuse or false accusations. The first line of protection for our children is the community we have built and cherish. While there are many other specific individual responsibilities in the FUUSB Safety Policy, the cornerstone of the Safety Plan is communal. We, as a community, share directly in the responsibility for keeping the children among us safe and thriving. The greater our individual awareness around child abuse and child sexual abuse is, the stronger the web of safety we can create as a community around our children.

At the same time, protecting Society Employees, Volunteers and others who teach in the RE program or otherwise interact with children at Society functions from false or mistaken allegations, 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 this Policy. We should be sensitive to the disruption and damage a false accusation may cause to both the adults and the children involved. This is the case even when the allegation is one due to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of what seems a child's straightforward report of an event.

#### POLICY

**Annual Program:** Each year the Safety Team will ensure that the Society offers a program that addresses the issues of child safety and Child Abuse. This program may be within a worship service, workshop, or other program at the Society.

**Volunteer Training:** In addition, the DRE will oversee the implementation of the following training program for Society Volunteers:

#### 1. Before working with children or youth, Volunteers:

- a. Shall receive a copy of this Policy and acknowledge receipt of the same in writing.
- b. Will have attended at least one training session that addresses:
  - i. The positive roles adults can play with children and youth in a religious community (see Appendix 2)
  - ii. Definitions of child abuse and other inappropriate conduct (see Appendix 3)
  - iii. Society policies that govern working with children or youth
  - iv. The rationale behind screening procedures
  - v. Reporting procedures for observed or suspected misconduct

This training session may be incorporated into a broader orientation session for teachers or youth leaders, and will be offered at least once annually by the DRE.

c. Will have read, understood, and signed the "Code of Ethics" as part of the training.

**2. Children/Youth Sexual Abuse Prevention Training Program** – A minimum of two teachers per Teaching Team will be trained to provide the following for our children and youth. Training will be conducted by the DRE, OWL Facilitators, Safety Team members, or by other leaders in the wider community with relevant training whom the Safety Team may choose to engage. This training will be in the form of an in-service conducted in the fall of each Society year. Training will be designed to allow the following programs to be offered to children in the Society's RE programs:

a. For children in Kindergarten through 6th grade, a yearly, age-appropriate lesson led by their regular teachers, on sexual abuse prevention that has been described in writing to parents beforehand.

b. The congregation's OWL facilitators in conjunction with the Safety Team will lead sessions for 7th grade and 9th-12th grade. It is understood that OWL (8th grade) will receive this as part of their regular curriculum.

**3. Safety Policy Availability** – For the entire congregation, the Board will make available information regarding this Policy and where copies can be located.

**4. New Members** – For new members of the Society, the Society's Membership Committee will include a summary description of this Policy that includes information on where the full Policy is located in all new member packets.

**5. Locations of Policy Copies** – Copies of this Policy will be available in each RE classroom binder, in the main office, in the DRE's office and on the Society's website.

**6. Regular Review** – A notice will be placed in the Order of Service at least twice a year indicating that a copy of the Safe Congregation Policy and Procedure Guidelines is available for review in the Society main office, in the DRE's office, and on the Society website. Congregants may request a copy for their own perusal.

## **B. PREVENTION THROUGH SUPERVISION**

### **1. General Supervision Guidelines**

a. Parents or guardians of children in Religious Education programs are responsible for supervising their children before and after class time and other Sunday morning activities.

- Preschool through Grade Three – Parents of children in preschool through third grade RE classes must pick up their children promptly when classes end.
- Fourth Grade and Up – Parents of children in fourth grade and up may make arrangements with the teachers or activity leaders to have their child dismissed independently.

b. Preschool parents must fill out a pick-up authorization form the first day they bring their child(ren) to RE classes.

c. Infants and toddlers must be signed in and out of the nursery by the adult childcare Employee on duty. There must be at least one caregiver for every four children in the Nursery. Parents will be asked to volunteer to stay in the nursery to meet this ratio, if needed.

## 2. Religious Education Programming Guidelines

- a. Two Unrelated Adults** – At least two unrelated adults, including child care workers, should be present in each RE classroom on Sunday mornings and during any Society Functions involving children or youth, unless the DRE or Minister determines otherwise in his/her sole discretion.
- b. Door Shades** – Shades on the windows of classroom doors shall remain up unless Lockdown Drill procedures apply. (see Appendix 12)
- c. Unavoidable Lone Adult** – If an unforeseen or unavoidable circumstance puts an adult alone with a group of children, the door to the classroom shall remain open. The DRE and/or her/his designated representative and/or a trained RE Volunteer will be with the group as much as overall needs and circumstances allow.
- d. Corporal Punishment/Abusive Language** – Corporal punishment and/or abusive language will not be used under any circumstance.
- e. Two Adults Required** – The Society Facility will not be open to children or youth for any activity unless two adults are present. Parents are responsible for supervising their children or youth until two adult supervisors are present in the Society Facility for any Society Function.
- f. Lavatory Visits** – The DRE or RE Volunteer(s) will be available to help provide supervision for children going to the lavatory as follows:
- i. Infants and babies in diapers** – Diaper changes are handled by child care Employees, using the changing table in the nursery.
  - ii. Toddlers in the nursery** – A childcare Employee will accompany toddlers to the bathroom. The door to the bathroom will be propped open and the Employee will keep the stall door open so as to visually monitor and, if needed, verbally coach the child.
  - iii. Preschool** – We assume that children in preschool are toilet trained. An RE teacher, Society Employee or Volunteer will accompany the preschooler to the bathroom. The door to the bathroom will be propped open and the teacher will keep the stall door open so as to visually monitor the child. If the child needs assistance with toileting, the teacher will verbally support the child.
  - iv. Kindergarten - 2nd grade** – When a child asks to use the bathroom, teaching assistants or other Employees and/or Volunteers will watch to ensure that the child enters the bathroom, and returns directly to class.
  - v. 3rd grade and up** – We will assume that these students will be independent in their bathroom habits unless we are informed otherwise.

### **3. Transportation Guidelines**

- a. Generally, parents or guardians of minor children must supervise their children at all Society Functions. Society Volunteers and Employees shall not be alone in a car with an unrelated child or youth except by prior parental arrangement and notification of the DRE. Whenever possible, two adults per car is preferable to one.
- b. For Society Functions that involve leaving Society Property (i.e. "field trips"), there shall be at least one adult for every five children (preschool - 5th grade), and at least one adult (age 25 or older) for every seven youth (grades 7-12). For trips involving overnights, a ratio of 1:4 adults to children/youth is required.
- c. Drivers who transport children must be at least 25 years old.
- d. Chaperones must have permission slips for each child for all field trips. If the field trip will last more than one day, medical release forms are also required.
- e. Leaders must have a list of names, emergency contacts, and medical conditions with them at all times.
- f. Every driver of any vehicle used to transport children or youth must have valid proof of auto insurance and a valid driver's license. Copies of these must be provided to FUUSB in advance of the trip.
- g. Every person in the vehicle must wear a seatbelt or age-appropriate restraint at all times. The driver must also review the safe driver checklist provided by FUUSB's insurance company.
- h. For overnight field trips or trips with increased risk of physical harm (i.e. a hike), the trip leader must bring a first aid kit. The RE program has kits to loan for trips.

### **C. PREVENTION THROUGH SCREENING**

1. Society Employees and Volunteers who provide direct care or supervision to children or youth for any Society Function must meet the following criteria:
  - a. Society Volunteers working with youth in grades 7-12 must be 25 years of age or older. Volunteers age 18-24 may, at the DRE's discretion, serve as secondary youth advisors with direct supervision from an advisor 25 years of age or older.
  - b. All other Society Volunteers working with children must be at least 18 years old with exceptions made at the discretion of the DRE.
  - c. Society Employees on the childcare team will include several youth less than 18 years of age. Qualifications and hiring procedures for adult and teen childcare Employees are outlined in Appendix 11.
  - d. Read this Policy and sign the Code of Ethics (Appendix 4) included in this Policy.
  - e. It is understood that at times, guests (whether from within the Society, or outside it) may provide one-time presentations to our children and/or youth as part of a Society Function. Guests will not be

required to fill out a screening application. However, a minimum of two screened teachers must be present at times when guests are with the group.

2. In addition, Volunteers who work with children and youth will:

- a. Have completed a background check, such as the National Criminal File background check, to the satisfaction of the Safety Team, or have received a specific written exemption at the discretion of the Safety Team. Background checks may include obtaining information about criminal history, child protection and/or adult abuse history, motor vehicle violations, restraining and/or relief from abuse orders, and past-due child support orders. Background checks will be run every three years, or whenever someone is new to volunteering. Records of such background checks will be maintained in a locked file in the Society office, and will be reviewed only by the Minister, the Director of Religious Education, the Director of Administration, the Safety Team, and/or the President of the Board.
- b. Will complete a screening application form approved by the Board, and reviewed by the Safety Team. (See Appendix 1).
- c. Will have been an active participant at FUUSB or another UU Society for at least six months or have references from other UU Societies that include either the Minister or RE director, before volunteering. Active participants are defined as Society Members or Congregants who are involved with Society committees, activities and/or events on a consistent basis.

3. Individuals who have been convicted of, are subject to pending criminal charges for, or self-disclose any act of, Child Abuse are precluded from participation in the RE program and other Society Functions involving children or youth, and shall be subject to a limited access agreement. (See Appendix 7).

### III. REPORTING PROCEDURE - ADDRESSING AN INCIDENT OR POSSIBLE PROBLEM

#### PURPOSE

Should the Society suspect or be confronted with an incident or report of Child Abuse, we aim to respond rationally, compassionately, and with unity of purpose. One of the first steps in creating a healing community is to create an environment of trust within which both victims and offenders feel safe enough to speak about what has happened. Given the obstacles that victims and offenders must overcome in order to speak up, any disclosure must be met with an appropriate and supportive reaction on the part of the person who has heard the disclosure, as well as on the part of the community. With this concern in mind, the five-member Safety Team is charged with responding to Child Abuse and allegations thereof.

#### POLICY

##### A. SAFETY TEAM

**1. Availability** - The names and contact information of the current members of the Safety Team shall at all times be made available to the Members and Congregants of the Society.

**2. Board-Appointed Member Terms** - The three Board-appointed members of the Safety Team shall serve in staggered three-year terms.

**3. Board-Appointed Member Qualifications** - Board-appointed members shall be qualified by their:

- a. Professional or other experience in working with children and/or child abuse issues
- b. Understanding of this Policy and other UUA "Safe Congregation" material
- c. Knowledge about available resources and reporting procedures for actual or suspected Child Abuse, including applicable state laws

**4. Confidentiality Agreement** - All Members of the Safety Team, including the DRE and Minister, will sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to beginning service on the Team (see Appendix 5).

##### **5. The Safety Team Purposes**

- a. The members of the Safety Team shall provide support, advice and counsel with regard to child safety, and in addressing reports of actual or suspected Child Abuse, with concern for the safety of all parties involved. The Safety Team may be used as a resource for children or adult survivors of Child Abuse, and perpetrators in treatment as they look to their religious community for support until a professional is identified.
- b. The second purpose is to aid in filing a report with the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF) if a Member, Employee, Volunteer or Congregant observes or has reasonable cause to believe Child Abuse has occurred at or in connection with any Society Function.
- c. The third purpose is to periodically review this Safety Policy.

## **B. SUSPICION OF CHILD OR YOUTH ABUSE**

If anyone to whom this Policy applies reasonably believes that that Child Abuse has occurred, or that there is a substantial risk of Child Abuse occurring, in connection with a Society Function, the person must immediately report it to the DRE, the Minister or another Safety Team member. The person receiving the report shall keep a written record of who reported the suspected abuse and the circumstances described by the observer.

In addition, anyone who is involved in Society Functions, whether a child, youth, RE teacher, Society Volunteer, Employee, Member, Congregant, or guest, may choose to make a Report of any safety concern to the DRE, Minister, or other Safety Team member, even if such concern may not rise to the level of Child Abuse within the meaning of this Policy.

## **C. CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **PURPOSE**

We recognize that in order for the Society to encourage reporting of all concerns or suspicions of Child Abuse or other inappropriate conduct, a Report must be handled with the greatest degree of discretion and professionalism possible under the circumstances to minimize fear of retaliation or recrimination. Please see Appendices 5 and 6 for a fuller explanation of our confidentiality Policy.

### **POLICY**

The Safety Team will endeavor to handle a Report that is made in confidence with the greatest degree of confidentiality possible under the circumstances in the initial discussion and written documentation.

All written documents will be kept in a locked file cabinet.

Nonetheless, an incident may need to be disclosed to a wider group of individuals consistent with the procedures described below, and the objectives of this Policy:

1. Confidentiality is maintained within the groups described below, based the particular circumstances and the seriousness of the allegation. The level of disclosure is determined by the Minister and the DRE.
  - a. At the lowest level, only the DRE, Minister, and one other Safety Team member who originally received the Report (if any) will have knowledge of a Report.
  - b. At the next higher level of concern, the DRE and Minister will discuss a report with the full Safety Team, and will inform the President of the Board and the Chair of the Committee on Ministry that a confidential report has been made. The DRE and Minister will discuss the circumstances of the report with the Safety Team, President of the Board, and Chair of the Committee on Ministry without including identifying information.
  - c. At the next level of concern, the DRE and Minister will discuss the details of the concern or allegation and identify those involved with the Safety Team, and will inform the President of the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Committee on Ministry that a confidential report has been made.

d. At the highest level of concern, the DRE, Minister, Safety Team and President of the Board of Directors and the Committee on Ministry will all have identifying information and a report will be made to The Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or law enforcement officials by the DRE or Minister, to be handled with that degree of confidentiality afforded under applicable law.

2) The DRE and Minister will strongly encourage the alleged victim, and the alleged perpetrator identified in a Report, and the person making the Report, to maintain maximum confidentiality within appropriate legal constraints.

3) When it is deemed necessary to disclose the details of a Report to the Safety Team at levels C or D, the reporting person will meet in person with the Safety Team within 24 hours of the Report being made. In order for the Safety Team to respond appropriately and fairly, all members of the Safety Team shall make every effort to be present for the initial interview. The meeting will be held if 60% (i.e. 3 out of 5 members) of the Safety Team is present. All members must make every effort to attend all further meetings.

4) Except for compelling circumstances, no identifying information about the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator or reporting person, or information about the circumstances of the allegations in the Report, will be released to members of the Congregation at large. Compelling circumstances include, but are not limited to, actions that would constitute a crime, criminal charges have been filed, or disregard by the alleged perpetrator of measures that the Safety Team has deemed necessary to protect the wider Congregation.

#### **D. ETHICS OF ADULT LEADERS**

Anyone who has concerns about inappropriate sexual conduct, violence, or physical abuse by child-care Employees, RE teachers, Volunteers or other individuals working with children or youth in the Society will also be able to receive direction from the Safety Team. See Appendix 3 for initial guidance.

#### **E. YOUTH WHO MAY BE ABUSERS**

Youth Incidents will be handled in the discretion of the Safety Team according to the following guidelines, and depending on the seriousness of the incident:

1. If a Youth Incident comes to the attention of the a member of the Safety Team, the Team member should contact the parents of both children to discuss the allegation and next steps. In most cases, the family will be required to demonstrate that the alleged initiator has completed a comprehensive assessment by a child psychologist or appropriate mental health professional before the initiator is allowed to continue to attend Religious Education, OWL, or Youth programs. It is not the responsibility of the Minister or the Safety Team to determine if Child Abuse has occurred, but rather to assure that an appropriate assessment does take place. In some instances, the Safety Team may also determine that the matter should be referred to the Vermont Department of Children and Families.

2. If the evaluation described above (III.E.1) indicates that the child has a sexual behavior problem that is likely to be repetitive, the Safety Team, in consultation with the child's parents and Teaching Team shall determine how and if the child can safely be involved with the Religious Education or Youth Group program. If the Safety Team determines that the child can participate in RE, a modified Limited Access Agreement shall be developed and signed by both the child and the parents. In some cases, it may be necessary to deny the child continued

involvement with other children until psychological counseling, therapy, or other appropriate treatment is completed.

3. In some situations, a family will want to bring a child who has been treated for sexual offenses back into the Congregation after psychological counseling, therapy, or other appropriate treatment is completed. In such cases, the Safety Team, in consultation with the child's parents, shall develop a Limited Access Agreement to be signed by both the child and his or her parents. The Safety Team recognizes that in such cases, pastoral care and support from the wider Congregation for the families involved is an important element of this process.

## **F. OTHER INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

Some incidents or allegations in RE or in other programs involving children or youth may involve behavior that is not clearly Child Abuse, but may be in other ways deemed inappropriate by a parent, by the Safety Team, DRE and/or RE Committee. In such cases, the Safety Team may in its discretion appoint a Response Team, which may include the DRE, the Minister and appropriate members of the RE Committee to review the situation and determine what action may be appropriate.

## **IV. RESPONDING TO A REPORT OF A POTENTIAL PROBLEM**

### **PURPOSE**

Children most often make disclosures to trusted adults. Trusted adults play an important role by listening, fully and carefully, to the child revealing abuse. Sometimes, particularly with very young children, the child does not realize the circumstances of the abuse are abnormal and the disclosure is made in the course of play or unrelated discussion. More often, however the child realizes the circumstances of the abuse are abnormal. In such cases, the child typically bears a great deal of shame, feeling he or she somehow caused or is to blame for the abuse. It is critical in these circumstances to make the child feel safe to disclose the abuse. It is important to provide an appropriate, safe setting and accept the child's story, without disputing the story, or pointing out inconsistencies.

### **POLICY**

#### **A. ROLE OF A PERSON WHO RECEIVES A REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE**

Conduct or conditions constituting Child Abuse may be learned about in a number of ways, including direct observation of a child's behavior or physical signs, a self-report from a child, and secondhand reports of such observations from other adults. Society Employees, Volunteers and other adult Congregants should bring their concerns to the DRE, the Minister, or other member of the Safety Team immediately.

#### **B. ROLE OF THE MINISTER OR DRE, OR OTHER SAFETY TEAM MEMBER WHO RECEIVES A REPORT OF ABUSE**

When a Report of Child Abuse is made to the Minister, or other Safety Team member, the responsible person receiving the allegation should take the necessary steps to:

1. Inform the Minister and DRE (if the Report was not initially made to the Minister or DRE) so that the Minister and DRE can determine:
  - a. what level of confidentiality should apply to the Report
  - b. whether a meeting of the Safety Team should be convened
2. Take appropriate action to ensure safety of the children in the Society pending investigation of the Report
3. Abide by Vermont law on reporting child abuse
4. Where the Report may disclose criminal activity, refer the matter to law enforcement

#### **C. LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND RESTRICTIONS WITH CHILDREN**

### **PURPOSE**

In order to protect the children and youth participating in Society Functions from potential risk and to protect the alleged perpetrator identified in a Report from further suspicion, decisions about removing the alleged perpetrator from interacting with children in the RE program or other Society Functions will be made in the discretion of the Safety Team. Decisions will result from consideration of all the circumstances, including the possible threat to the children, the

credibility and seriousness of the allegation in a Report, and other related factors. Actions other than permanent removal from teaching will be taken at the discretion of the Safety Team depending upon individual circumstances.

## **POLICY**

Determinations will be based on the following guidelines:

1. If the Report involves a Society Employee or Volunteer, the DRE will immediately relieve that person of any duties involving supervision, care or teaching of children and youth at FUUSB until the matter is resolved.
2. If the Report involves a person other than a Society Employee or Volunteer, the adult against whom the allegations are made may be asked to refrain from teaching or otherwise interacting with the child or children in question for the adult's own protection. If a report is made to DCF, this leave will be mandatory.
3. The Safety Team may also determine, even without an accusation of abuse made, that they have reason(s) for concern that a Society Employee or Volunteer's contact with children or youth potentially places both the Employee or Volunteer and the children at risk of harm or accusation. For this reason the Safety Team is authorized to restrict an individual from teaching in the RE program, volunteering or chaperoning children's events, or being present at RE or youth activities, or otherwise restricting contact with children and youth.
4. The DRE and the RE Committee (together) retain the independent right and responsibility to screen and authorize Volunteers for teaching in the RE program. The DRE and the Safety Team will make final decisions about denying an application to teach. The DRE and the Safety Team will also make final decisions about removing a teacher or otherwise restricting an individual's contact with children and youth on Society property or at Society-sponsored events, even in the absence of a Report having been made or received. If disputes arise out of the actions taken by the DRE, the Minister, or the Safety Team, the matter may be appealed to the Board for a final determination.
5. Individuals who have been convicted of sex-related crimes, or who are facing pending charges of such crimes, shall be permitted to attend Society Functions in the discretion of the Safety Team only under the terms of a Limited Access Agreement. The terms of such Agreement shall not permit contact with children at the Society or in any Society Function, including all Religious Education and/or youth group activities.
6. The Safety Team will meet at least quarterly with any individual with whom it has a Limited Access Agreement to review the arrangement and address any concerns, and to ensure provision of pastoral support for the individual as well as continuity of awareness of the situation consistent with the confidentiality provisions of this Policy.
7. In some circumstances, the Safety Team may determine in its discretion that a person shall not be allowed to attend Society Functions, and/or shall not be allowed to enter Society Facilities or Property. Such circumstances include, without limitation:
  - a. Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
  - b. Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.
  - c. Refusal to give the Minister permission to contact the individual's mental health treatment provider and/or parole officer.

d. Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified mental health professional.

e. Report by a mental health provider that the individual is at too high risk for recidivism.

If a person who has been denied access enters any Society Facility or Society Property and/or appears at any Society Function, such person will be asked to leave by a member of the Safety Team or the Board of Trustees, or, if such person(s) are unavailable, a Society Employee, Volunteer, or Member who is present at the Society Facility. If the person further refuses, the matter will be referred to law enforcement.

Once an individual decides that they can comply with these conditions, the Safety Team would begin a process to reassess the individual to determine whether, and in what capacity, that individual could be welcomed into the life of the congregation anew.

## **D. THE ROLE OF THE SAFETY TEAM IN RESPONSE TO A REPORT OF ABUSE**

### **PURPOSE**

The Safety Team does not have the legal authority or the expertise to determine guilt or innocence. Instead, it is called upon to protect members of the Society community, and to ensure that the victim and accused are treated with dignity and respect.

The Safety Team has a broad continuum of possible resolutions to a situation. In the most serious cases, they will be sure that it is reported to DCF and the accused is removed from working with children and youth. Also, in the most serious cases, when DCF has determined that Child Abuse did in fact occur, it may be necessary for the team to inform the Board and parents of other children who have had contact with this person. Where concerns are less serious, options such as additional supervision or training for the adult or not asking the person to teach again is a possible outcome. In cases where a misunderstanding seems to be the problem, the Safety Team will encourage, and can offer to facilitate, communication between the parties; they may also facilitate extra training for a teacher.

### **POLICY**

If the Report of Child Abuse is against a member of the Safety Team, or a relative of a member of the Safety Team, that person will be excused from participation on the Team and replaced by a suitable alternative appointed by the Board. If the complaint is against a paid Employee, including the Interim Minister or DRE, the Northern New England District Executive will be considered a member of the FUUSB Safety Team. If the complaint is against a Settled Minister, Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association (UUMA) policies and procedures apply (see <http://www.uuma.org/Documents/guidelines.html>).

## **E. THE ROLE OF THE BOARD**

The President of the Board of Directors of the FUUSB will be informed about any Report of Child Abuse in which any member of the Safety Team or other Society Employee is involved. Depending on the level of concern, identities of the victim, accused and reporter may be withheld. In the case of a Society Employee, the Board will make the final determination of any additional consequences appropriate to the violation of this Policy, including, but not limited to, termination of a Society Employee (except for Called Minister).

The Board shall also inform the following of any determination of violation of this Policy by the Minister:

- The Northern New England District Executive
- The Director of the Department of Ministry of the UUA
- The Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA
- The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association

## **F. INVOLVEMENT BY THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF)**

The Minister, and any person, including the DRE, who may be performing the official duties of the Minister (where such duties are recognized as the duties of an ordained UU Minister), are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect under Vermont Law, 33 V.S.A. § 4913. (Attached as Appendix 15)

These reporting requirements may also apply to other individuals who may participate in Society Functions who are also licensed professionals (such as physicians, registered nurses, and teachers). Mandatory reporters are generally required by law to file a report with DCF within 24 hours of learning information giving such person reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected.

In addition, any concerned person who is not a mandatory reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected may file a report of such abuse or neglect with DCF.

A person who files a report with DCF under this law in good faith, other than a person suspected of child abuse, is immune from civil or criminal liability which might otherwise be imposed as a result of such report.

The Safety Team should be advised as soon as possible of any report to DCF.

A report may be filed verbally or in writing with DCF as follows:

By phone via DCF's 24-hour child protection hotline: (800) 649-5285.

By fax: (802) 241-3301.

A report of abuse or neglect shall contain the following:

1. The name and address of the reporter
2. The names and addresses of the child and the child's parents/caretakers, if known
3. The age of the child
4. The nature and extent of the injuries or allegations of abuse/neglect, including any evidence of previous abuse and neglect of the child or the child's siblings
5. Any other information that the reporter believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries or reasons for the neglect as well as in protecting the child and assisting the family

Within 72 hours of receiving a report of abuse or neglect, DCF will commence an investigation to determine the nature, extent and cause of any abuse or neglect, and the party or parties responsible for such abuse or neglect. If the investigation produces evidence that the child has been abused or neglected, DCF may cause assistance to be provided to the child and the child's family in accordance with a written plan of treatment. For more information, please see the DCF's website at: [http://dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/reporting\\_child\\_abuse/mandated\\_reporters](http://dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/reporting_child_abuse/mandated_reporters).

# APPENDIX 1

## FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON

### VOLUNTEER APPLICATION AND SCREENING FORM

#### *CONFIDENTIAL*

**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. We appreciate your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of the congregation's children and youth.

Please complete this form, sign it and return it to: \_\_\_\_\_  
by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions. Feel free to use the back or attach another sheet of paper.

- 
1. How long have you been attending this congregation?
- 
2. What is your experience working with children/youth?
- 
3. What skills and interests do you bring to this volunteer position?
- 
4. What volunteer experience do you bring?
- 
5. Have you ever used a different name? Yes    No  
If Yes, please list here with dates:
- 
6. Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes    No  
If Yes, License #: \_\_\_\_\_ State issued: \_\_\_\_\_
- 
7. Have you ever been accused or convicted of child physical or sexual abuse or Yes    No
-

neglect?

If Yes, provide details:

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8.	Have you ever been accused or convicted of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor? If Yes, provide details:	Yes	No
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9.	Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer for reasons related to sexual misconduct? If Yes, provide details:	Yes	No
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10.	Have you ever been accused or convicted of a criminal offense other than those listed above? If Yes, provide details:	Yes	No
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11.	Other than the above matters, is there any fact or circumstances involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of young people? If Yes, provide details:	Yes	No
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**Character References:**

Please list two character references who are not a spouse, immediate family member or First UU Society member. Include complete names, and all other information requested. Examples of Relationship to Applicant include friend, co-worker, supervisor, etc.

Name:			
_____			
Phone:			
_____			
Email:			
_____			
Address:			
_____			
City:	State:	Zip:	
_____	_____	_____	
Relationship to Applicant:			
_____			

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship  
to Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments/Explanations:**

I, the undersigned, understand that the information I have provided may be verified by contacting persons or organizations named on this form, or by doing a criminal history check, and I hereby release from liability any person or organization that provides information concerning me to the representatives of the Religious Education program of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington.

I also understand that I will be automatically suspended, pending further investigation, from participating as a volunteer if in the future there is any question regarding my violation of the Code of Ethics or local, state, or national laws. In signing this form, I affirm that the information I have given herein is true and correct. I, the undersigned, have received a copy of this Safe Congregation Policy Statement and acknowledge receipt of it by my signature.

**Your Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### CODE OF ETHICS FOR ADULTS AND OLDER YOUTH WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

*Adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association 1986*

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 young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential is to be realized. Among the most important areas of growth are 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 and research shows that children, youth and adults may suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care.

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

*I have read and understand the above Code of Ethics for leaders of children and youth, and I am in agreement with its spirit and purpose.*

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3

### THE ROLE OF ADULTS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN OUR SOCIETY

*Adapted from the UUA Congregational Handbook, 1995*

Adults working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one that can carry a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, childcare worker, teacher, choir director, Minister, or in any other role, adults have a special opportunity to interact with young people in ways that are affirming and inspiring to young people and adults. Adults can be mentors, role models, and trusted friends of children and youth. They can be teachers, counselors, and Ministers. Helping our children grow up to be safe and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person.

While it is important that adults be capable of meaningful friendships with the young people with whom they work, adults must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with children and young adults and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with adults and may find it difficult to speak out about inappropriate behavior by adults. Adult leaders need to possess a special dedication to working with young people in ways that affirm the Unitarian Universalist Association principles. Good communication skills, self-awareness and understanding of others, sensitivity, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and a positive attitude are important attributes. Additionally, adult religious leaders need to be people who:

- i) Have a social network outside of their Religious Education responsibility in which to meet their own needs for friendship, affirmation and self-esteem; and
- ii) Are willing and able to seek assistance from colleagues and religious professionals when they become aware of a situation that requires expert help or intervention.

## APPENDIX 4

### WHAT COUNTS AS INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT TOWARDS CHILDREN OR YOUTH IN OUR SOCIETY?

*Revised in part from the UUA pamphlet Honoring the Children and the UUA recommended resource "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Society"*

*The UUA defines child abuse as "an act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust that harms or threatens to harm a child's well-being or physical or mental health." Child abuse is also against the law.*

**There are four categories of child abuse according to the UUA:**

#### **1) Physical Abuse**

Deliberately inflicting bodily harm to a child. Instances of child abuse include violent assault with hands, feet, a knife, or other implement, or burns, fractures, and bruises resulting from being beaten, shaken, or thrown. Brief passive restraint for the purpose of protecting children and youth is not considered abusive.

#### **2) Sexual Abuse**

Engaging in sexualized behavior, verbal or physical, with a child; using a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Any time a child is used for the sexual stimulation of an adult or a significantly older child, abuse has occurred. The child is powerless either to consent to or resist such sexual acts. Sexual abuse can include fondling, sexual intercourse, forced participation in sexual acts, incest, and exploitation for the purpose of pornography or prostitution. Child sexual abuse is illegal regardless of whether the child "consents" or not. Consent is not an issue. The offender bears the entire responsibility for the abuse whatever form it takes.

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects. Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include:

- i) Sexual fondling
- ii) Oral, genital, and/or anal penetration
- iii) Intercourse
- iv) Forcible rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- i) Verbal comments such as statements intended to seduce or stimulate children, comments that call sexual attention to body parts, or references to sexual activity
- ii) Pornographic videos

iii) Obscene phone calls

iv) Exhibitionism

### **3) Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse may be very difficult to identify and document. Emotional abuse deeply affects a child's self-esteem by subjecting a child to verbal assault or emotional cruelty. It can include close confinement, inadequate nurturance, extreme discipline, or deliberately permitting destructive behaviors such as drug or alcohol abuse.

### **4) Neglect**

Children have basic physical, nutritional, and environmental needs that must be supplied. Chronic withholding of food, clothing, medication, and proper living quarters, as well as abandonment are all acts of neglect. Neglect can include physical, emotional, or educational neglect through such actions as inadequate supervision, health hazards in the home, refusing to seek treatment for illnesses, providing inadequate emotional nurturance, and deliberately permitting chronic truancy.

**NOTE:** In writing these definitions, the authors noted that, "We were sensitive to the danger of relying on only a legal definition. If we only prohibit what the state can realistically respond to, we are not protecting the children."

## APPENDIX 5

### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

**To be signed by:** *All members of the Safety Team including the DRE and Minister as well as the President of the Board of Trustees and any other Board member who may be entrusted with confidential information.*

Abuse and issues of inappropriate conduct are highly sensitive matters. In order to respect the identity of victims, the accused, reporters and their families, members of the Safety Team, including the Minister and DRE, will not disseminate the following information to the congregation (except in compelling circumstances as determined by the Minister in consultation with the Safety Team):

- 1) the identity of the victim, the accused and/or the reporting person
- 2) the details of the allegation
- 3) any other identifying information

If a report is made to the President of the Board of Directors, those Directors who have received any identifying information will not disseminate the information to any members of the congregation.

All information, written or communicated verbally, which pertains to sexual abuse of congregation members, is confidential information, and must not be shared with anyone without written consent, except at the highest level of concern, when a report must be made to DCF. Mandated reporters (the Minister and DRE) will follow Vermont State law in supplying information at the time of reporting.

I understand and agree to follow the confidentiality procedures of the First Unitarian Society of Burlington.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 6

### BALANCING CONFIDENTIALITY WITH THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED AND CONSULTED

#### 1) Why protect the confidentiality of an alleged victim or a reporter?

The primary reason to protect confidentiality is that many cases of abuse will not be reported otherwise. If we refuse to offer confidentiality to victims of abuse in our Society, we will increase the likelihood of ongoing and repeated abuse. We will, thereby, increase our liability.

#### 2) Why do victims feel the need for confidentiality?

Abuse is grounded in secrecy, fear, and shame. While a primary goal of reporting abuse is to stop the victimization, coming forward actually increases the risk to the victim in the short run, with no guarantee that the abuse will be stopped. The risk is vastly increased when confidentiality is breached, and people who know little about the circumstances and the nature of abuse spread their misinterpretations. One extremely common misinterpretation is to blame the victims.

The risks to the victim range from not being believed (a form of re-victimization) to retribution by the abuser or his/her supporters. A victim's reputation, self-respect and safety that are endangered by the abuse itself are further endangered when coming forward. In addition, because this is a Society, a victim is at risk of losing a primary community and spiritual resource at a time when he/she is most in need of such. If a victim can report what has happened privately, this significantly reduces the increase in risk.

#### 3) Why do reporters of abuse need confidentiality?

There are two principal reasons for protecting the identity of reporters. First, the identity of the victim often may be deduced from the identity of the reporter, unnecessarily creating the risks described above. Second, while the reporter may not be at risk of abuse in the same way as the victim, the reporting of abuse may expose them to the same risks to reputation, self-esteem, safety and community. The motives of supporters are often questioned in the same way as those of victims. Harassment and ostracism may result. In addition, those who observe this punishment of reporters will be less likely to report abuse.

#### 4) What are examples of times when abuse would not be reported if we did not protect confidentiality?

a) A Sunday School teacher, who was abused as a child, notices one of the children in her class is exhibiting symptoms that remind her of her own abuse. The child has bruises for many weeks (more than other children in the class) and is losing weight. She suspects the parents. The teacher is traumatized by her own memories and is unsure about her suspicions. She wants to be sure the child is all right, but is afraid of her own history of abuse becoming public knowledge and worries about the safety of the child if what she reports is handled badly. She tries to ignore it and hopes for the best.

b) A 14-year-old girl is being harassed by one of the older boys at Society. She is trying to figure out ways to stay away and tells her friend, "I'll just die if anyone finds out I told about this."

c) A man new to the community starts coming to the Society, only to discover that a man who abused him when he was a teen-ager is a member. He does not want to confront his perpetrator. Moreover, he needs to devote his time and energy to a new job. But, the more he thinks about it, the more he worries about the safety of the teenagers in the Society. If he knew that his name would not be breached, he would call the Minister, but he is not sure, so he doesn't.

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT**

#### ***CONFIDENTIAL***

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington has reason for concern that your contact with children and/or youth in our congregation places both you and them at risk of incident or accusation. First UU Society therefore stipulates the Safe Congregation Policy guidelines in the Limited Access Agreement. Within these guidelines, First UU Society welcomes your participation in adult-only activities such as worship services, committee meetings, adult discussion groups, and adult social events. The guidelines for activities which include children follow:

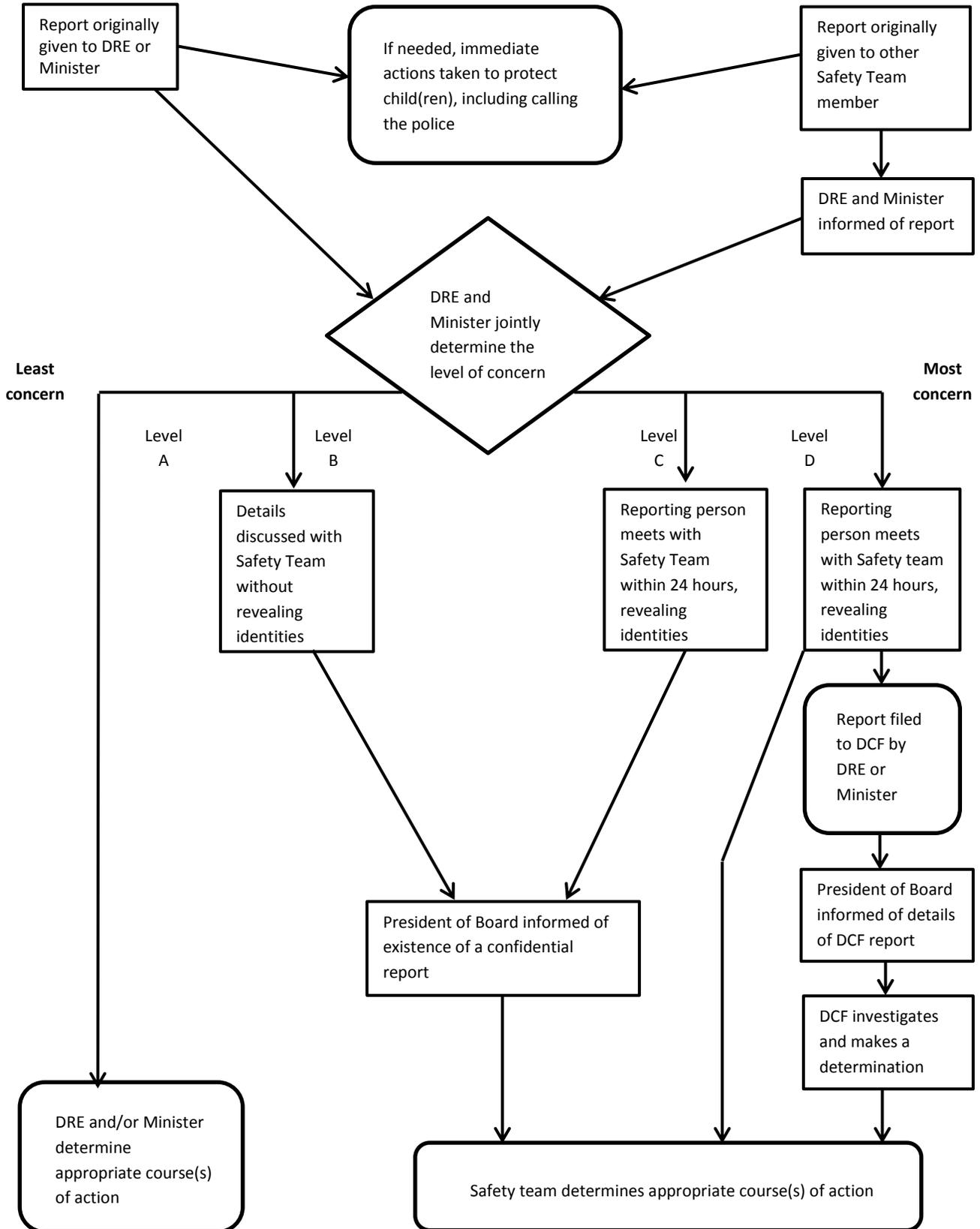
1. Avoid all interaction with children and youth on Society property or at Society-sponsored events, including coffee hour and intergenerational events. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. Refrain from any physical contact with children and youth
  - b. Do not participate in volunteering or chaperoning events for children or youth, including Religious Education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events and driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth
  - c. Remain in the presence of another adult who knows your situation at all times when children are in the Society Facility.
  - d. Do not enter into conversations with children.
2. You may not enter the RE classroom areas on Sundays before all children have been dismissed from classes. We need First UU language here. Our RE classes happen on two floors and in two Society Facilities.
3. First UU Society must provide safety for a variety of groups that use the Society Facility during the week. To that end, you may not enter the Society Facility unsupervised when activities involving children are in session. You may not possess or borrow a key to any Society Facility.
4. First UU Society will respect your privacy and right to confidentiality. Our primary responsibility, however, is to ensure that the Society is a safe place for children and youth. Please consider the Minister and the Director of Religious Education as your points of contact should further developments or questions arise. You are required to contact them in advance of the service or activity.
5. Any person affected by this process has the right to petition the Safety Team for appeal. The Safety Team will convene within ten days to consider the petition. The decision of the Safety Team in this regard is final upon a majority vote at a legally constituted meeting.
6. This agreement will be reviewed every three (3) months.

I have reviewed this Policy and agree to abide by it or I will be required to relinquish my participation and membership in this Society and be denied access to congregation functions and Society property.

**Your Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 8 Process of Responding to Reports



## APPENDIX 9

### RESOURCES

#### COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE LIST

##### **Stop It Now!!**

PO Box 495 Haydenville, MA 01039 1-888-Prevent

[www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)

For a more comprehensive list of organizations that deal with sexual abuse, go to Stop It Now! At

[www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)

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#### GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDSEXUAL ABUSE

##### **Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence**

936 No. 34th Street Suite 200 Seattle, WA 98103 206-634-1903 [www.cpsdv.org](http://www.cpsdv.org)

##### **ChildHelp USA – National Child Abuse Hotline**

1-800-4-A Child Hotline is open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services PO Box 1182 Washington, DC 20013 800-fy1-3366

[www.calib.com/nccanch](http://www.calib.com/nccanch)

##### **Prevent Child Abuse America** (formerly National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse) 332 S.

Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600 Chicago, IL 60604 800-CHILDREN

[www.childabuse.org](http://www.childabuse.org)

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#### INFORMATION ABOUT SEX OFFENDERS

##### **Center for Sex Offender Management**

8403 Colesville Road Suite 720 Silver Spring, MD 20910 301-589-9393 [www.csom.org](http://www.csom.org)

##### **National Adolescent Perpetration Network**

Kempe Children's Center 1825 Marion Street Denver, CO 80218 303-864-5192

[www.kempecenter.org/about.htm](http://www.kempecenter.org/about.htm)

##### **Safer Society Foundation, Inc.**

PO Box 340 Brandon, VT 05773 802-247-3132

[www.saferociety.org](http://www.saferociety.org) (also treatment referrals)

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## FOR REFERRAL TO A TREATMENT PROVIDER FOR AN ASSESSMENT

### **The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)**

4900 S.W. Griffith Drive, Suite 274 Beaverton, OR 97005 503-643-1023 [www.atsa.com](http://www.atsa.com)

### **National Council on Sexuality Addiction and Compulsivity**

PO Box 725544 Atlanta, GA 31139 770-541-9912 [www.ncsac.org](http://www.ncsac.org)

*See also: the Safer Society Foundation and the National Adolescent Perpetrators Network*

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## SUPPORT FOR CONGREGANTS

### **Parents Anonymous**

675 W. Foothill Blvd. Suite 220 Claremont, CA 91711 1-800-339-6993

### **Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network**

800-656-HOPE [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

### **Sexual Assault Recovery Anonymous**

PO Box 16 Surrey, BC, V35 424 Canada 410-584-2626

### **Survivors of Incest Anonymous**

PO Box 190 Benson, MD 21018-9998 410-893-3322

[www.siawso.org](http://www.siawso.org)

### **Voices in Action**

PO Box 13 Newtonsville, OH 45158 1-800-7-Voice-8

[www.voices-action.org](http://www.voices-action.org) (support for victims of incest and child sexual abuse)

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## INSURANCE ISSUES

### **Church Mutual Insurance Company**

3000 Schuster Lane PO Box 357 Merrill, WI 54452 800-554-2642 [www.churchmutual.com](http://www.churchmutual.com)

## APPENDIX 10

### INFORMATION ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE

*(Please refer to Balancing Acts by Reverend Debra Haffner for references.)*

STOP IT NOW! has a confidential toll free hotline for assistance on what to do if you are concerned about potential abuse but are unsure how to proceed: 1-888-PREVENT. Stop It Now! hotline Employees will walk you through the options that are available and what might be done to get help for everyone involved.

#### POSSIBLE SIGNS OF AN ADULT BEING AN ABUSER

**Do you know an adult or older child who:**

- Refuses to let a child set any of his or her own limits?
- Insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child even when the child does not want this affection?
- Is overly interested in the sexuality of a particular child or teen (e.g., talks repeatedly about the child's developing body or interferes with normal teen dating)?
- Manages to get time alone or insists on time alone with a child with no interruptions?
- Spends most of his/her spare time with children and has little interest in spending time with someone their own age?
- Regularly offers to babysit many different children for free or takes children on overnight outings alone?
- Buys children expensive gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason?
- Frequently walks in on children/teens in the bathroom?
- Allows children or teens to consistently get away with inappropriate behaviors?

If you answered "yes" to some of these questions, talk to that person. If you are uncomfortable, but don't see these signs, be sure to trust your instincts and ask questions. For information and advice on how to talk to someone, please call the Stop It Now! Toll-Free Helpline at 1-888-PREVENT.  
*(Reprinted with permission.)*

If you answered "yes" to some of these questions, talk to the DRE. If you are uncomfortable, but don't see these signs, be sure to trust your instincts and ask questions of the DRE or Safety Committee members. For more information, contact the Stop It Now! Toll-free helpline at 1888-PREVENT.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, PEDOPHILIA AND SEX OFFENDERS

Childhood sexual abuse is a pervasive and devastating social problem. It is important as we consider these issues that we learn the facts about child sexual abuse, pedophilia, and sex offenders, and that we separate them from the myths that are held in the culture. The information in this section will provide the reader with a rudimentary understanding; readers are encouraged to contact the organizations listed in the Resources.

## DEFINITION

One sex offender treatment specialist defined child sexual abuse as

“...a sexual act imposed upon a child who lacks emotional, maturational, and cognitive development. Authority and power enable the perpetrator, implicitly or directly, to coerce the child into sexual compliance. The ability to lure a child into a sexual relationship is based upon the all-powerful and dominant position of the adult or older adolescent perpetrator, which is in sharp contrast to the child’s age, dependency, and subordinate position.”

The abuse can be intrafamilial – between a child and a family member or person in the role of a family member – or extrafamilial – between a child and someone outside the family. Incest is a specific term for sexual contacts between persons who are prohibited to marry by virtue of their familial relationship. Sexually abusive behaviors range from nudity, disrobing, exhibitionism, to oral, anal, or vaginal sex.

### **Child sexual abuse can include:**

- Touching a child’s breasts, genitals, and anus.
- Having any type of intercourse with a child.
- Encouraging a child to watch or hear adult sexual acts.
- Using an object, instrument, or body part to penetrate a child’s genitals or anus.
- Having a child touch another’s genitals.
- Using a child in erotica.
- Showing erotic or pornographic materials to a child.
- Photographing a child in sexual poses.

## PREVALENCE

Sexual abuse of children is very common. According to a number of studies, between 17 and 25 percent of women report that they were sexually abused before the age of 18, and 10 and 15 percent of men were sexually abused before the age of 18. In a national study of adults aged 18 to 59, about 12 percent of the men and about 17% of the women reported that they had been sexually touched as children.

## WHO IS ABUSED

The prevalence of childhood sexual abuse is remarkably high, and the facts often run counter to the assumptions that many people have. Both boys and girls are sexually abused, but abuses against girls predominate. Experience with childhood sexual abuse does not vary by ethnicity, race, social status, or education background of the parents.

- One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn age 16.
- Children under the age of 12 account for half of the juvenile victims of forced sexual offenses.
- Young people under age 18 make up over two thirds of all sex crime victims.
- Girls predominate as victims of sex offenses. 82% of all juvenile sex crime victims under the age of 18 are female.
- One of every seven victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies were under the age of six.
- Nearly five out of every six sexual assaults of juveniles occurred in someone’s home, not a public place.
- Most children do not tell anyone the abuse has taken place. In a study of adults who remembered being touched sexually as a child, only one quarter of the women and one in six of the men remembered that they had told someone about this sexual contact with an older person.

## **RELATIONSHIP OF THE OFFENDER TO THE VICTIM**

Many people believe that children are sexually abused by strangers or known sex offenders. The reality is that strangers account for a small proportion of the abuse.

- Children know their abusers well in 90% of the cases – they are parents, family members, neighbors, clergy, coaches, and teachers.
- Family friends and relatives are the primary offenders; family friends are more likely to offend with boys and relatives to offend with girls. One in seven girls is abused by a father, stepfather, or mother's boyfriend, although only 3% of boys are abused by people in these categories.
- One quarter of offenders of victims, ages 12 through 17 are family members.
- Only 7% of offenders of juveniles are strangers to their victims.

## **PROFILE OF THE OFFENDER**

The public image of the sex offender is a strange middle-aged man lurking at a playground eyeing potential victims. The actual profile of the offender is someone well-known to the child, someone who may be a teenager, and for boys, more likely to be female than another male. The percentage of adolescents that inappropriately touch children is rarely addressed in congregational policies or screening.

- Girls are primarily touched by men, while the boys are touched more often by women but also by men. The risk to girls is greatest from adult men (63%), followed by adolescent males (28%). The risk to boys is greatest from adolescent women (45%), followed by adolescent men (25%) and then older men (38%).
- Ninety-six percent of all offenders in sexual assaults of all ages reported to law enforcement agencies were male.
- Adults were the offenders in 60% of the sexual assaults of victims under the age of 12.
- Forty percent of the offenders of children under the age of six were other juveniles under the age of 18. Sixteen percent of juvenile offenders were under the age of twelve.
- Six percent of the offenders who sexually assaulted juveniles under the age of 18 were female, with 12% of the offenders with victims under six were female.

## **TREATMENT AND RECIDIVISM**

As noted above, most sex crimes against children are never reported, and most sex offenders do not come to the attention of law authorities. Eighty-four percent of sexual abusers are never reported, and the National Crime Victimization Survey found that two thirds of sexual assaults against persons 12 and older are not reported to law enforcement.

Nevertheless, since congregations need to know how to respond to people who have been convicted of sex offenses, this information is offered to clarify many of the myths around treatment and recidivism.

Although state laws and practices vary, in many states convicted sex offenders who are serving time in prisons are not granted parole until they have successfully completed a sex offender treatment program. And once granted parole, states generally require the person as a condition of their parole to participate for a length of time in a treatment program for sex offenders. State laws do vary, and congregations will want to find out what treatment is available in their county jails and state prisons as well as parole requirements for treatment.

## APPENDIX 11

### Childcare Employee Hiring Procedures First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington

#### Purpose

To provide clarity regarding employment of staff for the First UU Society's childcare program, including the Childcare Coordinator as well as those interested in applying for other childcare positions.

#### References and Experience

- If the Childcare Coordinator does not have personal familiarity with an adult applicant's childcare skills, he/she will obtain 1-2 references before offering to hire.
- All teens must provide two references from adults other than their parents who are familiar with their childcare experience and/or employment and/or volunteer experience.
- Red Cross Babysitter Certification is strongly encouraged for teen applicants.
- Teen applicants will be observed by the Childcare Coordinator in our childcare setting for one hour prior to potential hire.
- For teen applicants, a combination of age and experience is factored into hiring decisions.

#### Compensation

Employees are paid on an hourly basis. Rates of pay are determined according to the Employees person's age and are adjusted annually. Specifically there are rate ranges for:

- Adult Supervisors (those 18 years and older) who have been hired to be adult Childcare Supervisors
- Teen Employees aged 15-17 and older teens older who:
  - choose not to be considered to work as adult supervisors and/or
  - whom the Childcare Coordinator deems not ready for promotion to adult supervisor
  - Employees aged 13 and 14

Adult Employees are technically supervisors of the teens. They are also required in this capacity to maintain current certification in First Aid and CPR. The Society pays for this training and compensates for training time.

#### Hiring

New hires are not to work until the Director of Administration informs the Childcare Coordinator that all their hiring paperwork is in order.

## APPENDIX 12

### LOCKDOWN DRILL PLAN – *TO BE CREATED PER SAFETY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE*

## APPENDIX 13

### The Vermont Statutes Online Title 33: Human Services

#### *Chapter 49: CHILD WELFARE SERVICES*

#### **33 V.S.A. § 4913. Reporting child abuse and neglect; remedial action**

##### **§ 4913. Reporting child abuse and neglect; remedial action**

(a) Any physician, surgeon, osteopath, chiropractor, or physician's assistant licensed, certified, or registered under the provisions of Title 26, any resident physician, intern, or any hospital administrator in any hospital in this state, whether or not so registered, and any registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, medical examiner, emergency medical personnel as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2651(6), dentist, psychologist, pharmacist, any other health care provider, child care worker, school superintendent, headmaster of an approved or recognized independent school as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 11, school teacher, student teacher, school librarian, school principal, school guidance counselor, and any other individual who is employed by a school district or an approved or recognized independent school, or who is contracted and paid by a school district or an approved or recognized independent school to provide student services, mental health professional, social worker, probation officer,

any employee, contractor, and grantee of the agency of human services who have contact with clients, police officer, camp owner, camp administrator, camp counselor, or member of the clergy who has reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with the provisions of section 4914 of this title within 24 hours. As used in this subsection, "camp" includes any residential or nonresidential recreational program.

(b) The commissioner shall inform the person who made the report under subsection (a) of this section:

- (1) whether the report was accepted as a valid allegation of abuse or neglect;
- (2) whether an assessment was conducted and, if so, whether a need for services was found; and
- (3) whether an investigation was conducted and, if so, whether it resulted in a substantiation.

(c) Any other concerned person not listed in subsection (a) of this section who has reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected may report or cause a report to be made in accordance with the provisions of section 4914 of this title.

(d)(1) Any person other than a person suspected of child abuse, who in good faith makes a report to the department shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of making a report.

(2) An employer or supervisor shall not discharge; demote; transfer; reduce pay, benefits, or work privileges; prepare a negative work performance evaluation; or take any other action detrimental to any employee because that employee filed a good faith report in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter.

Any person making a report under this subchapter shall have a civil cause of action for appropriate compensatory and punitive damages against any person who causes detrimental changes in the employment status of the reporting party by reason of his or her making a report.

(e) The name of and any identifying information about either the person making the report or any person mentioned in the report shall be confidential unless:

(1) the person making the report specifically allows disclosure;

(2) a human services board proceeding or a judicial proceeding results therefrom;

(3) a court, after a hearing, finds probable cause to believe that the report was not made in good faith and orders the department to make the name of the reporter available; or

(4) a review has been requested pursuant to section 4916a of this title, and the department has determined that identifying information can be provided without compromising the safety of the reporter or the persons mentioned in the report.

(f)(1) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section shall be fined not more than \$500.00.

(2) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section with the intent to conceal abuse or neglect of a child shall be imprisoned not more than six months or fined not more than \$1,000.00, or both.

(3) This section shall not be construed to prohibit a prosecution under any other provision of law.

(g) Except as provided in subsection (h) of this section, a person may not refuse to make a report required by this section on the grounds that making the report would violate a privilege or disclose a confidential communication.

(h) A member of the clergy shall not be required to make a report under this section if the report would be based upon information received in a communication which is:

(1) made to a member of the clergy acting in his or her capacity as spiritual advisor;

(2) intended by the parties to be confidential at the time the communication is made;

(3) intended by the communicant to be an act of contrition or a matter of conscience; and

(4) required to be confidential by religious law, doctrine, or tenet.

(i) When a member of the clergy receives information about abuse or neglect of a child in a manner other than as described in subsection (h) of this section, he or she is required to report on the basis of that information even though he or she may have also received a report of abuse or neglect about the same person or incident in the manner described in subsection (h) of this section. (Added 1981, No. 207 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. April 25, 1982; amended 1983, No. 169 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 1985, No. 208 (Adj. Sess.), § 19, eff. June 30, 1986; 1989, No. 295 (Adj. Sess.), § 3; 1993, No. 156 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 2003, No. 43, § 3, eff. May 27, 2003; 2005, No. 101 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 2007, No. 77, § 1, eff. June 7, 2007; 2007, No. 168 (Adj. Sess.), § 3, eff. Jan. 1, 2009; 2007, No. 172 (Adj. Sess.), § 19; 2009, No. 1, § 45; 2011, No. 156 (Adj. Sess.), § 28, eff. May 16, 2012; 2011, No. 159 (Adj. Sess.), § 7.)