

Safe Congregation / Child Policy

Date approved by Board; May 20, 2014

POLICY: (includes the Safe Congregation Response Team)

Outline of Guiding Principles

At UUCGT we covenant to welcome all people to the table, to nourish and serve each other and to respect and honor the inherent worth and dignity of every person. To achieve these goals, it is essential that we maintain a safe environment that protects children and adults from harm while fostering their spiritual growth. There are many facets of operating a congregation in which prevention, education and response need to be established and refined over time in order to assure such an environment. These include building safety, operation of the Lifespan Education **Experience** (LE) program, transportation and supervision of children during off site trips and special overnights, confronting disruptive behavior, and both preventing and promptly responding to incidents of verbal abuse and physical or sexual harassment.

The policies described in this section of the manual are designed to ensure that all feel safe and free to follow their own spiritual paths in an atmosphere of respect and mutual support. These policies will naturally evolve over time as we respond to incidents and learn to better refine our safety procedures. All should consider this to be a living document and are encouraged to contact the Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT) from time to time with suggestions about how it may be improved.

PROCEDURE:

Relationship of Spiritual Leader to the Congregation

We place great trust in our Minister **Spiritual Leader** to use his or her positions and powers only for the best interest of all congregants, and never to take advantage of others for his or her personal gratification. Clergy sexual misconduct harms both the individuals involved and the church as a whole, because it breaches the Minister's **Spiritual Leader's** covenant with the entire congregation. We expect our Minister **Spiritual Leader** to understand thoroughly and always abide faithfully by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) Code of Professional Practice. The complete text of the Code is published in the UUMA Guidelines and can be found at the UUMA website or by contacting the UUA at 24 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210-1409.

In the event that the SCRT receives allegations of clergy sexual misconduct it will immediately notify the UUCGT Board President, and the Office of Ethics and Safety of the UUA which will manage the investigation. The SCRT will thereafter act as liaison between UUCGT, and the entities involved, to support, counsel and communicate with the congregation and those members who are most directly affected by the misconduct.

Relationship between Congregation and the Director of Lifespan Education Experience

Like the Minister ~~the Spiritual Leader~~, the Director of Lifespan Education Experience (DLE) has a special trust relationship with the congregation and must never misuse the authority and power inherent in the position to exploit, manipulate or take advantage of any child, adolescent, young adult or adult participant in religious education for personal gratification, including but not limited to sexual or physical misconduct or sexualized behavior.

We expect the DLE to fully understand and faithfully abide by the Liberal Religious Educators Association's Code of Professional Conduct, pursuant to which religious educators acknowledge that they are recipients of special trust and covenant not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

Preventing Sexual and Physical Abuse and Harassment

Preventing sexual misconduct, physical abuse, and harassment in our religious community requires multiple approaches on several fronts. We must focus on prevention, education, training, careful hiring, and safety procedures in order to create a safer environment for all concerned.

Definitions

The terms used in this document will 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.

Physical abuse includes offensive physical contact or activity that causes bodily injury.

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 that person's 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.

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 other person's consent, communicating to a person a threat to commit an act against that 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 in 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 otherwise 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 where a reasonable person would expect that such words or conduct would not be desired.

Education and Training

Education and training are critical to the creation of a safer congregational environment. Information, knowledge, and understanding support the development of healthy relationships based on self-esteem and respect for others. Greater understanding of sexuality and abuse will make us better able to avoid situations that could lead to abuse, and to move more effectively toward justice and healing for us all. To this end we believe it is important to promote self-esteem and personal responsibility among our children, our members and friends. We will provide programs as follows:

- a) The DLE and LE Committee are responsible for:
 - i) Offering age-appropriate information about development and sexuality for our children, youth, and adults on a regular basis, including clarification and understanding of the complex aspects of sexuality, as well as focusing on sexual abuse prevention and
 - ii) Keeping employees, advisors, and parents informed of this policy and reviewing it at least annually.

The SCRT shall take responsibility for:

- i) Promoting congregational awareness about this policy.
- ii) Informing members and attendees regarding resources that address the issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

3) Hiring (will delete this section as it goes in the Personnel manual – not here)

Incidents of abuse and harassment often take place in the context of ongoing relationships. Therefore, it is essential that recruitment and hiring procedures protect staff, children, youth, vulnerable adults, members and friends from injury as well as from unfounded accusations, and protect UUCGT from ethical and legal liability.

All persons seeking paid employment at UUCGT, including (but not limited to) the Spiritual Leader, the DLE, LE assistants, the Director of Music, Business Administrator, Office Staff, and all other employees, will be required to read and acknowledge receipt of a copy of the policy against harassment set forth in the UUCGT Staff Resources Manual. They will be screened by the appropriate hiring committee, which will contact at least two references (at least one of whom has known the applicant for a minimum of five years) and maintain notes of each such contact, and conduct a criminal history record check, [NOTE: the Congregational Administrator (not our name for this position) does the background check] including a Michigan Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) and such other multistate records check as shall be available from alternative sources recommended from time to time by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The hiring committee shall conduct at least one formal interview with the candidate in person. The employment application and above-referenced material will be confidential and will be available only as required by law and to those responsible for screening and hiring and will be destroyed immediately following a new hire.

ALL THIS WILL BE DELETED – IT GOES IN THE PERSONNEL POLICY DOCUMENT

The Safe Congregation Response Team

The Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT) will deal with any reports of abuse. Such abuse could be physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional in nature. In order to ensure continuity, the SCRT will be in place at all times, with the names and phone numbers of team members available to all members and friends of UUCGT. This Team will be composed of the Minister **Spiritual Leader**, Director of Lifespan Education **Experience**, and three to seven members of UUCGT, all of whom shall be appointed by the Board. It is preferable that two of the members of the team be familiar with issues likely to arise, to include but not be limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, human resources and legal issues.

The express purpose of the SCRT is to be able to respond in an appropriate manner when necessary. Issues that might demand the participation of the Team are outlined clearly in the Safe Congregation/Child Policy.

The Team should be very careful to not extend itself past the boundaries imposed by the policy. This team is in place if there is an issue of safety, as is indicated by the name of the team. It is NOT in place to interfere in normal relations between congregants or staff.

UUCGT has established both a Safe Congregation Response Team and a Healthy Congregations Team **Conflict Management Team (CMT)**. The primary mission of the SCRT is the safety of members, friends and guests, particularly the more vulnerable individuals. The primary mission of the HCT **CMT** is to assist members in managing conflicts which arise within the congregation.

The HCT ~~CMF~~ will necessarily be engaged with all people who are involved in a conflict situation and will be seeking ways for these people to engage with each other in search of a resolution. SCRT, on the other hand, will focus its attention on those individuals who do not feel safe and will be looking for means of shielding or protecting those individuals. The HCT ~~CMF~~ will not become involved in managing a conflict where some or all the participants do not feel safe because conflict cannot be managed under such circumstances.

The SCRT is also tasked with securing the criminal background checks that are required for a very small portion of committee members and the staff. The team must have clear definitions of what is, and is not, acceptable for denying anyone a position based on their background check. These guidelines should be consistently followed for every person, keeping in mind that the safety of the congregation, and our children, are of primary concern.

Background checks; What is acceptable and what is not.

NOT ACCEPTABLE

- Any violent criminal activity, regardless of conviction outcome
- Any drug related activity (except in the case of a misdemeanor)
- ANY registered sex offender
- Any domestic violence incident

COULD BE ACCEPTABLE

- Misdemeanor drug related charges (these usually have to do with marijuana)
- ‘White collar’ crimes that had nothing to do with bodily harm
- Non-violent convictions where the applicant has served the sentence of the court, such as community service, probation, etc.

NON-CRIMINAL OR LEGAL ACTIONS

In cases where the Safe Congregations Team has information about an applicant that may lead the team to question the wisdom of placing a person in a leadership position, the Team must clearly state what the ‘issues’ are, and why they determine the ‘no confidence’ vote. This could be a person who is destructive in behavior to the peaceful and respectful way we are intended to treat each other. These cases are very subjective, so all due diligence must be completed.

Any person who is denied a position because of the Safe Congregation Team’s decision is entitled to know why and have an opportunity to address the Team in their own defense.

Background checks will be destroyed after the committee is appointed and these documents will be kept locked up in the office during the review period. They may NOT leave the office.

In cases of a conflict of interest, a team member must be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate chosen by the Team. Their function, individually and collectively, will be to offer confidential support, advice, and counsel with concern for the safety of all parties involved, by following the Safe Congregation/Child Policy.

The SCRT will generally have the following responsibilities:

- a) Be familiar with the community resources for child abuse, treatment for sex offenders, and support groups for survivors.
- b) Know state laws regarding reporting and be capable and willing to follow those laws.
- c) Evaluate applications for Lifespan Education ~~Experience~~ teachers and youth group leaders that are flagged by the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ or Director of Lifespan Education ~~Experience~~ as needing more information or follow up.
- d) Receive allegations of possible abuse and follow the process for expedient handling of such allegations. (See VII: Pastoral Needs of the Congregation Regarding Reports of Abuse.)
- e) Meet with convicted sex offenders who may wish to participate in worship to develop a Limited Access Agreement for participation.
- f) Work in concert with the Sunday Services Committee, the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ and the Board to develop a policy for preventing and/or responding to potential or actual disruption of church worship services and other church meetings and functions and obtain and conduct training sessions to enable the Board to effectively respond to such situations.
- g) Determine whether to communicate information about incidents of suspected or alleged abuse to the congregation, and if so how much information to communicate and at what point during the investigation, after carefully weighing the interests and needs of the parties involved as well as the interests and needs of others in the congregation who are not directly involved. These instances should be immediately reported to the Board of Trustees, who will then decide with the input of the Team what information should be disseminated to the congregation or to other persons of interest.
- h) Secure background checks for specific leadership positions and for staff and new hires as needed.

All activities of the SCRT will be conducted in a confidential fashion to the extent consistent with a sufficient investigation to enable the SCRT to ensure that adequate measures are taken to protect the safety and dignity of all concerned.

The Office Administrator will secure criminal background checks on potential nominees for elected leadership positions, to be reviewed by the SCRT, before being presented by the Leadership Development Committee to our congregation. The SCRT, by its very nature, may have information about candidates that cannot be made public, but could affect eligibility. ([see previous page for a description of this](#))

Immediate Safety Needs of the Congregation Regarding Reports of Abuse

Interim Safety Plan: When a report is filed by any person on behalf of any child and the suspected abuser is a church employee, member or attendee, the SCRT will develop an interim safety plan during the investigation of abuse. This plan may include, but not be limited to, implementation of a draft Limited Access Agreement, with the assistance of legal counsel if the Minister ~~the Spiritual Leader~~ and SCRT Chair determine that such counsel should be obtained. If the accused abuser is another youth, the plan must be developed with input from both sets of parents or guardians. The plan will be clearly communicated to the accused abuser or, if a minor, his or her parents or guardians, by the SCRT. The Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ and/or DLE may implement similar steps while awaiting initial recommendations of the SCRT.

Permanent Safety Plan: Upon final disposition by appropriate authorities, a permanent Limited Access Agreement will be developed by the SCRT that, among other provisions, complies with any orders imposed by such authorities.

Pastoral Needs of the Congregation Regarding Reports of Abuse

- 1) Following a report of suspected abuse, the SCRT will also develop, in consultation with the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ and Congregational Care Committee, a plan to address the pastoral needs of our congregation, including:
 - a) The person or child who has allegedly been sexually abused: This may include providing information about or referrals to appropriate professional, community and UUCGT or UUA resources as needed. Additionally, the SCRT may assist in dealing with Department of Children & Families, the District Attorney or the Police Department as and when those authorities become involved in the matter.
 - b) Other members and friends of our congregation:
 - i) Members, friends, or attendees immediately affected by the incident (such as family members or partners) whose needs we can help meet, either directly or indirectly;
 - ii) The Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ or the DLE to aid in dealing with the pastoral needs of the victim or accused person;
 - iii) Other members and friends of the congregation who witnessed one or more incidents or, who having heard about them, are reminded of their own concerns and prior experiences; and
 - iv) Other congregation members and friends who are relied on to a great degree by the person or child who has allegedly been sexually abused or accused offender (or those connected to them).

- c) The accused person: Support may include helping the accused person access the appropriate professional, community and spiritual resources. While there may be feelings of ill-will toward the accused person, if that individual is a part of our community, he or she also deserves our support; withdrawing it at this critical point in that person's life might have severe detrimental long-term effects on his or her behavior in the future. It remains the mission of this congregation to recognize and support the integrity and inherent worth and dignity of that person even though we do not condone inappropriate behaviors, and to treat him or her with compassion.
 - d) Other persons and children who have allegedly been sexually abused and who have been reluctant to come forward: If warranted, the response plan will include a way of reaching out to these individuals in a manner that is non-threatening.
- 2) The plan established will be such that both the alleged victim or victims and other individuals are not put at risk for further incidents.

Guidelines Regarding Sexual Offenders

- 1) Situations may occur involving an individual, or individuals, accused or convicted of sexually aggressive or violent behavior. Those situations will be addressed as follows:
 - a) An individual who has been convicted of or pled guilty to a charge of sexual misconduct or who has been determined to have engaged in any form of child abuse in any civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical forum will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved.
 - b) If an individual has been legally accused of sexual misconduct and is currently involved in civil or criminal litigation of such a charge, that individual will not have contact with children or youth, or the parties involved until there is final disposition of the case (resolution).
 - c) In the event that a person has been convicted of a sexual offense and completed a term of incarceration and seeks to enter the life of the UUCGT, the SCRT will meet to make a determination as to whether or not and the ways in which the individual may be safely involved in the life of the congregation. If it is determined that the person can participate in congregation life, a Limited Access Plan will be developed and
 - d) In all cases the SCRT, with approval of the Spiritual Leader and SCRT Chair, may seek legal counsel before proceeding with either a draft or permanent Limited Access Agreement.

Disruptive or Violent Behavior

Each Sunday we affirm our commitment to welcome all people into the celebration of life and to respect each person's inherent worth and dignity. But in order to secure that tradition, we recognize the need to address the disruptive or violent behavior, whether occurring physically at UUCGT or in the form of threatening phone calls, emails or other

electronically transmitted messages, which may challenge our sense of individual and communal safety and well-being. Therefore, the following shall be the policy of UUCGT if such a challenge may arise:

- 1) Situations involving disruptive behavior will be brought to the attention of the Board President and the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ who may refer the situation to the SCRT.
- 2) The SCRT will investigate the matter, using this policy for guidance. In cases of a conflict of interest, a team member must be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate. Members of the SCRT will be educated in the Policy and will become knowledgeable about available resources for adults and children. Their function, individually and collectively, will be to offer confidential support, advice, and counsel with concern for the safety of all parties involved.
- 3) If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~, if available, or the leader of the group involved, any Board member of UUCGT if the disruptive or violent behavior occurs prior to, during or immediately following worship. This may include asking and/or requiring the offending person or persons to leave the meeting or the UUCGT building or suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed. If further assistance is required, especially where physical harm to person or property has occurred or is threatened or is occurring, the Police Department may be called. Any time any of these actions are undertaken without the Spiritual Leader being present, the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ and the Chair of the SCRT must be notified as soon as possible. All plans for follow up steps will be referred to the SCRT.
- 4) Persons identified as being disruptive or violent will be responded to as individuals of inherent worth and dignity.
- 5) Information concerning the alleged incident(s) that led to concern will be systematically collected from the concerned parties by delegated SCRT members and documented before any action is taken.
- 6) The SCRT will meet to assess the findings and decide on a course of action with the following four levels of response recommended to them. These four levels of response may be applied in the order determined by the SCRT.

Level One: A member or members of the SCRT contacts the person named as the source of the disruption and informs them of the nature of the concern. The person's viewpoint of the matter will be elicited, valued, and documented. SCRT members will then assess the situation.

Level Two: If the basis of the original concern is determined to be valid, this finding will be clearly communicated to the person in question and a contract for clearly defined behavior change will be negotiated. Such communication and contract will be documented.

Level Three: If the person in question refuses to negotiate a contract, refuses to abide by a contract or is engaging in behavior of sufficient severity, he or she may be excluded from the group whose meetings he or she disrupted or from UUCGT altogether for a specified period of time, with reasons for such action, and conditions for return, clearly communicated and documented.

Level Four: The person in question is permanently excluded from UUCGT and its premises, with steps taken as needed to enforce this decision.

- 7) Should the Board of Trustees decide that exclusion or expulsion from the UUCGT is necessary, they will take the appropriate action and inform the SCRT.

WEAPON FREE POLICY

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse has adopted a Weapon Free Policy (insert Board approval date), as part of the **Safe Congregations Policy**.

It is the policy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse that guns and other weapons which cause bodily harm are not permitted on church property. Guns or other weapons may be carried on church property by on-duty police officers for professional purposes. Outside groups that rent our facility shall adhere to this policy though may use armed law enforcement and/or security guards if they so choose.

According to Michigan state law, MCL 28.425o:

“Individuals licensed to carry a concealed pistol by Michigan, or another state are prohibited from carrying a concealed pistol or other portable device that uses electro-muscular disruption technology on the following premises.....

#5. Any property or facility owned or operated by a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other place of worship, unless the presiding official or officials allow concealed weapons.”

The UUCGT had made the determination that we will *not* allow such weapons in our midst, except as noted above.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Purpose

The leaders of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse place the highest value upon the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual growth of all church participants. We are deeply committed to providing a safe and caring religious community free of violence (physical and sexual abuse, intimidation, coercion, and sexual harassment). We recognize that religious communities are particularly vulnerable to incidents of abuse because of the high level of trust and the strong reliance and need for volunteers, especially in children and youth programming. Therefore, we have developed the following policies to ensure a safe environment for all church participants.

Lifespan ~~Experience~~ Education Volunteer Screening

- 1) All volunteers who will work with children or youth under the auspices of UUCGT, whether the children are part of the UUCGT community or not, must apply to be a volunteer and then sign the Religious Education LE (Teacher) Contract (see attached).
- 2) General Guidelines:
 - a) Volunteers must have been active church participants for six months.
 - b) Youth advisers must be at least 25 years of age.
 - c) Either childcare workers must be at least 18 years old, or, if younger teens are employed, the event planner must provide adult supervision for the teens. Supervising adult/s must be screened in the same way as other volunteers.
 - d) All volunteers and drivers must fill out an application form.
 - e) All volunteers and drivers will be screened through the Department of Human Services and the church insurance company.
 - f) Any applicant found to be a registered sex offender will not be allowed to volunteer with children or youth.
 - g) Any applicant who has been required to surrender a license to teach, or practice therapy or medicine of any kind with children or youth, with cause, will not be allowed to volunteer with children or youth.

Supervision Policy and Guidelines

- 1) Two volunteers will be assigned to each classroom. A volunteer will also be assigned to assist the nursery care provider.
- 2) Drivers for any event must be at least 25 years or older and a copy of each driver's license will be on file in the church office. They will also have been screened and have signed volunteer forms on file.
- 3) Cars must be currently registered and insured and be in running order according to state laws, and drivers must be well-rested and free of the influence of alcohol and drugs that may impair their ability to drive.
- 4) Seat belts must be worn by each person in the vehicle.
- 5) There will always be at least two children in a vehicle with an unrelated adult chaperone.

6) The congregation is only responsible for the supervision of any child at the playground during the period between the time the child is signed in and the time the child is signed out of congregation-sponsored activities. The procedures for signing in and signing out are contained in Classroom-only Procedures, and Nursery-only Procedures Item 1, below. The congregation shall not be responsible for the supervision of any child on the playground at all other times.

7) **No unrelated adults are allowed in the RE area any time while the children are there.**

Off-site and Overnight Activities

1) A permission slip signed by parent or guardian is required for all off-site and overnight activities. This will include a contact number where a responsible adult can be reached if an emergency situation arises during the activity. The permission slip will also include current medical information.

2) Each driver will have a copy of the permission slip for each youth passenger in their vehicle.

3) Middle and high school guidelines:

i. Events will follow district youth conference rules.

ii. Youth will be supervised by at least two adult chaperones at all times.

Emergency and First Aid Procedures

1) Emergency telephone numbers are posted by all office and kitchen phones.

2) First aid kits are kept in the kitchen, the church office and the DLE office.

3) Rubber gloves are included in all first aid kits, and their use is strongly recommended when treating an injury involving bodily fluids.

4) The “Accident and First Aid Report” must be completed by the person administering first aid and submitted to the church office as soon as possible for review and filing.

5) A first aid kit will be taken on all off-site activities.

6) Annual LE teacher training will include health and safety awareness and the church’s emergency procedures.

Nursery and Classroom Procedures

1) Some children have dietary restrictions and special health considerations. This information must be given to the teachers/ childcare workers, who will be attentive to these considerations.

2) At the end of the LE period, large surfaces (tables, mats, etc.) should be sprayed with Lysol and used plastic cups should be taken to the kitchen for washing/sanitizing.

Classroom-only Procedures

1) LE teachers sign in children of preschool through 5th grade ages as they arrive from the service; after class, each child must be signed out by an authorized parent or guardian.

2) LE teachers of middle and high school students take attendance; no parent/guardian signature is required for release at the end of LE class.

Nursery-only Procedures

1) Each child will be signed in and out by the authorized parent/guardian. If child is to be picked up by someone other than the person who signed the child in, the individual picking up the child must have a signed permission note from the authorized parent/guardian who signed the child in.

2) Each diaper bag must have an outer identification label.

3) For diaper changes, a disposable pad must be used on the changing table, and/or the table must be cleaned with a Lysol wipe. Nursery staff will wash their hands after each diaper change.

4) Clean sheets should always be available and used on the crib.

5) The bag of soiled diapers must be taken to the dumpster.

Abuse Policy

Code of Conduct

No Spiritual Leader, adult leader, LE teacher or any other person working in a paid or voluntary capacity shall pursue a personal friendship or engage in sexual behavior of any kind with Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse youth. (See MidAmerica Region of the UUA “Child and Youth Safety and Protection Guidelines” sections on “Friendship with Children and Youth” and “Sexualized Behavior”.)

Abuse Reporting Procedures

The Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~, DLE and LE teachers must report abuse and/or neglect or signs and symptoms of the same to Children's Protective Services. (Act 238 of 1975 MICHIGAN CHILD PROTECTION LAW)

- 1) *The Safe Congregation Response Team* will be established to deal with any reports of abuse. Such abuse could be physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional in nature.
- 2) All volunteers must immediately report suspected cases of abuse to the Minister ~~the Spiritual Leader~~ and/or DLE. This includes suspected abuse that may have occurred on site, or that which may have occurred in a setting outside of the congregation. An incident report must be completed, including the date and time of the incident.
 - a) *At this point, the abuse is only suspected. The Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ and/or the DLE must give all information to the SCRT to take necessary actions to determine if this abuse can be confirmed or should be referred to some other professional.*
- 3) If the abuse is confirmed or even strongly suspected the SCRT must file the report with the Department of Human Services to protect the victim and the congregation, and to bring necessary help to the abuser. Although this section particularly addresses children, the same support and reporting will be expected with adult victims of abuse
- 4) If necessary, the incident will be reported to the church's insurance company. It will not be handled without professional outside assistance.
- 5) If necessary, the proper civil authorities will be contacted following the guidance of the insurance company and attorney. Involved church members will not attempt in-depth investigation of the incident but should leave this to professionals who are familiar with these cases.
- 6) If necessary, the text of a prepared public statement will be used to communicate with the press and convey the news to the congregation. Involved church members should safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

Other types of incidents

In cases of a lesser degree than abuse (verbal harassment, bullying, etc.) the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ and/or the DLE must still fill out an incident report. The SCRT will be notified and the appropriate response and follow up action will be decided. This may include discussions with other affected members or their children. All actions involving children should be conducted with the parent(s) and the team should decide how to involve the affected children. Great care should be taken to assure the rights of all parties are not violated.

Confidentiality and Victim's Rights

In all cases, the confidentiality of the suspected victim of abuse, the reporter, the alleged perpetrator and any other individuals involved in a case of suspected abuse is of the utmost priority. All conversations will be considered confidential in nature. Beyond reporting the incident and following all State of Michigan legal requirements in reporting abuse, the role of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse will be one of ministry and supporting individuals facing a crisis. (See Confidentiality statement in “Heartland District Child and Youth Safety and Protection Guidelines”.)

Special Considerations

Alleged abuse by a minister ~~spiritual leader~~ or church leader

- a) If there is a report of abuse by a spiritual leader, DLE or any member of the SCRT, the alleged abuser will not be a participant in the process of receiving or investigating the allegations.

- b) Situations involving alleged abuse by the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ shall be reported to the President of the Board of Trustees, and to the UUA Office of Ethics and Safety.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

- 1) All incident report forms will be accessible to the proper authorities.

- 2) The spokesperson for Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse will be the Minister ~~Spiritual Leader~~ with the guidance of the President of the Board of Trustees, the DLE and any members of the Team being consulted. Please see the statement of “Confidentiality and Victim’s Rights” before proceeding.

Incident Response Procedures

- 1) Ensure the safety of the victim.

- 2) Follow reporting procedures.

- 3) Document all efforts to report and follow up on the incident.

- 4) Do not prejudge the situation but take the allegations seriously and report all concerns immediately. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care, safety and confidentiality of the victim are the priority.

- 5) Treat the alleged perpetrator with dignity and support. If the accused is a church worker, that person should be temporarily relieved of his or her duties while the incident is under investigation. If the individual is a paid employee, the Board will make the decision to either maintain or suspend income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

Appendix I

BASIC SIGNS OF ABUSE

Physical signs may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Behavioral signs may include:

- Anxiety when approaching church or classroom area
- Nervousness or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- “Acting out” of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- I don't like (name).
- (Name) does things to me when we're alone.
- I don't like to be alone with (name).
- (Name) has fooled around with me.

Appendix II

Definitions provided by the Michigan Child Protection Law:

Child Abuse: Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, by a parent, a legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare or by a teacher, a teacher's aide, or a member of the clergy.

Child Neglect: Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare that occurs through either of the following:

- ◆ Negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- ◆ Placing a child at an unreasonable risk to the child's health or welfare by failure of the parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for the child's health or welfare to

intervene to eliminate that risk when that person is able to do so and has, or should have, knowledge of the risk.

ACCIDENT AND FIRST AID REPORT

Date & Time: _____

Name of injured person: _____ Age: _____

Name and title of person administering first aid: _____

Nature of Injury:

How injury occurred: _____

First aid provided: _____

Were bodily fluids involved? (Circle) Yes No

If yes, type of fluids: _____ Were rubber gloves worn? Yes No

Signature of Person administering first aid: _____

ACCIDENT AND FIRST AID REPORT

Date & Time: _____

Name of injured person: _____ Age: _____

Name and title of person administering first aid: _____

Nature of Injury:

How injury occurred: _____

First aid provided: _____

Were bodily fluids involved? (Circle) Yes No

If yes, type of fluids: _____ Were rubber gloves worn? Yes No

Signature of Person administering first aid: _____