

## **SAFE CHURCH GUIDELINES**

*“I urge you to recognize that the changed world in which we live calls us to a new level of duty and care.” Rev. William Sinkford; past UUA President*

Dear Religious Education Staff , Volunteers, and Congregation,

United First Parish Church/Unitarian Universalist church, is committed to ensuring the safety of their community members. In 2008, we implemented a new practice, requiring all staff members and all volunteers who are likely to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults to provide information that will support us to live in community guided by Safe Church practices.

These are the 3 parts to our effort:

- 1) The first involves completing a fairly standard Code of Ethics form for all adults working with children. *(provided by the State of Massachusetts)*
- 2) The second involves reading and signing the Safe Church Policy addendum. completing This form reviews expectations for new friends and members who would like to teach, help in the classroom or bring forward creative ideas for activities or special classes/program. The purpose is to keep open dialog with the Religious Education leadership team develop clear communication for all those who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the UFPC community protected from potential harm.
- 3) The third involves signing a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) authorizing church leaders to explore your background sufficiently to document there is no cause for concern about your suitability for volunteer work within our congregation.

Because of the data sensitivity collected on these forms United First Parish Church will keep these Safe Guidelines Packets in a locked file to insure the confidentiality of their contents. The only people having access to these packets will be the Minister, and RE Committee Co-Chair, Sandy Hovey, who is trained and approved by the state of Massachusetts to submit official CORI forms.

## **SAFE CHURCH POLICY**

Adults Working with Children and Youth UFPC

*(addendum April 2013)*

- 1) Any adult who would like to work with the children or Youth, must be part of the congregation for at least 12 months, prior to working with the children or Youth. The purpose of this is to ensure that:
  - a) The adult has an opportunity to be part of congregational life and experience our community values, prior to teaching.
  - b) The rest of the congregation, RE committee and teachers has an opportunity to know the adult.
  
- 2) Any adult who has an educational plan to work with the children or Youth, must review the plan with the RE committee. The purpose of this is
  - a) to coordinate all RE work and curricula, for the RE committee to be aware of,
  - b) and oversee all educational efforts being undertaken,
  - c) not to deter any adult of the congregation from working with the children and Youth, but to ensure a coordinated effort.
  - d) The RE Committee and DRE are ultimately responsible for the well-being, safety and education of the children and youth in this Unitarian Universalist church school.
  
- 3) Any concerns about the safety of the children must be brought to the attention of the DRE and the RE Committee.
  
- 4) The door between the RE corridor and the crypts will be kept locked during church school hours. Locked means it can be opened from the RE corridor to the crypts, but not from the crypts to the RE corridor. This is for physical safety, to ensure no one can enter the church from the front entrance and head directly down to the RE classrooms. Parents and teachers will enter their RE classrooms the usual way, from the parlor down to the classrooms.
  
- 5) The Parish Hall door is locked during service and reopened during coffee hour. (Please check on this).
  
- 6) The RE committee is available to address any questions or concerns regarding the church school, or adults working with the children and youth.

If you have any question about these policies, forms, the purpose or content, please contact RE Co-chairs (*Elisabeth Strachan and Sandy Hovey*), RE Committee members (*Jo Morris, Marie Louise Jackson Miller, Sharon Gamache, Michelle Frost*) Interim Minister (*Rev. Dave Johnson*), or Director of Religious Education (*Nan Moore*).

I have read the Safe Church Policy - Adults Working with Children and Youth UFPC (addendum April 2013) and agree to participate with these guidelines

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **“CODE OF ETHICS”**

### ***For All Volunteers Who Relate to Children and Youth United First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist, Quincy Massachusetts***

Adults play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of individuals and the community. It is especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurturing care and support that will enable children and youth to develop in self and spirit. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized. There are no more important areas of growth than those of self worth and healthy identity, and adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth.

Therefore, those who lead children and youth will:

- Provide nurturing care and support to all children and youth.
- Work to help children develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence.
- Help children and youth develop a sense of responsibility.
- Respect selfhood of each child and youth, including the absolute right to privacy of his or her own mind and body.
- Not engage in any behavior with children or youth, which constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse.
- Not engage in behavior or language, which is personally threatening or demeaning.
- Not engage in any sexually harassing behavior, nor any other sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children or youth.
- Not encourage or promote any sort of illegal activities on the part of children or youth.

I have read the above Code of Ethics and understand that these guidelines govern expected behavior of adults working with children and youth at United First Parish Church/Unitarian Universalist in Quincy

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Name

Date

# **SAFE CHURCH PACKET**

**FOR PAID STAFF AND ADULT VOLUNTEERS  
WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

**United First Parish Church (UFPC)  
Unitarian Universalist**

**September 2013**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_