

North Shore Unitarian Church Congregation Safety Policy

Preamble: The North Shore Unitarian Church (NSUC) has made a commitment that members, friends and visitors of NSUC feel welcomed, safe, respected and cared for. It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation, not just those in leadership positions or formally signed members, but all community participants, to create and maintain a climate that supports the growth and welfare of everyone in the congregation.

This policy will apply to all NSUC programs, services, activities and events, including all Lifespan Religious Education and Youth Programs, youth/adult activities, field trips, conferences, and events for which child care is provided.

The purpose of this policy is the following:

- To promote safety in all areas of congregational life (physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, and spiritual), especially pertaining to the safety of children, youth, and adult volunteers & staff (workers) working with children and youth.
- To provide training and guidelines for handling unsafe situations, safety concerns, and reported & alleged abuse.
- To reduce the possibility of sexual misconduct or child sexual abuse.
- To provide safeguards in case of false accusations of sexual abuse made against NSUC volunteers and/or paid staff.
- To proactively establish a plan for addressing these issues of safety
- To declare our congregation's ongoing commitment to the safety and well-being of everyone in the NSUC community and ensuring, to the best of our ability, that our congregation is free of sexual abuse, harassment, and misconduct. (Source: Religious Institute: Sexually Safer Best Practices #18-Ongoing Commitment)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SCREENING AND SELECTION OF PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH	3
SUPERVISION GUIDELINES AND POLICIES	4
MAINTAINING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES	7
REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES	11
FIRE & LIFE SAFETY	15
IMPLEMENTATION, EDUCATION and ENFORCEMENT	15
SOURCES	16
FORMS	17
NSUC Worker Application and Consent Form	19
NSUC Limited Access Agreement	23
NSUC Permission Slip - NSUC Sponsored Event / Travel	25
NSUC Permission Slip - NSUC Ongoing Travel	27
NSUC Accident / Incident Form	28
Electronic Communication Consent	30

1. SCREENING AND SELECTION OF PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

- a. Those who provide direct care or supervision for children or youth at NSUC (“workers”), including staff, ministers, and volunteers, must meet the following criteria:

Children and Youth are people under the age of 18 years.

Worker is defined as anyone, volunteer or paid staff and clergy, serving as a teacher, advisor, childcare attendant, chaperone, driver, or supervisor of children and youth during NSUC sponsored activities and events who has supervisory or oversight responsibilities.

- i. All NSUC staff & clergy working with children and/or youth will be trained and fully aware of state laws requiring reporting and concern for the welfare and abuse of children.
- ii. Those working with children and youth in junior high school (7th-8th grade) and younger should be at least 18 years of age. Workers below the age of 18 must be approved by the Director of Lifespan Religious Education (“DLRE”).
- iii. Those working with high school groups (usually 9th-12th grade) should be at least 25 years of age. Workers below the age of 25 must be approved by the DLRE.
- iv. Volunteer workers must be active members of NSUC for at a minimum of six-months prior to working with children or youth. NSUC Friends and Associate Members who have been active in the congregation for at a minimum of six-months are eligible to become volunteers, but must become a Member during the volunteer period. Those transferring membership from another Unitarian Universalist congregation may volunteer without meeting the six-month minimum, provided they are affirmatively recommended by the religious educator at their previous congregation and the NSUC DLRE approves.
- v. All workers must complete the [NSUC Worker Application and Consent Form](#) annually and consent to such reference and/or background checks

as NSUC, in its sole discretion, deems necessary, and must agree to be bound to the *NSUC Congregational Safety Policy* and *NSUC Covenant of Right Relations*. It is assumed that anyone applying to work with NSUC children and/or youth, in any capacity, has given NSUC consent to complete a criminal background check as it deems necessary.

- vi. Failure to complete the Background Check will disqualify the worker from participating with children and/or youth at NSUC.
 - vii. The DLRE and Minister will be responsible for determining disqualification based on background or reference checks. This information will be kept confidential in a locked cabinet in the Business Administrator's office.
 - viii. All workers must be trained annually as prescribed and administered by the DLRE.
 - ix. Background checks for all Workers are valid for one year.
 - x. Applications, sign consents, and final results of background checks will remain on file at NSUC in a secured location.
- b. For other programs that involve children and youth, the program coordinator will serve in the role described for the DLRE in this policy in all respects to ensure that this policy is upheld.

2. SUPERVISION GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

- a. All workers are subject to the supervision and evaluation by the DLRE.

Supervision is the reasonable exercise of thoughtful action and responsibility by all adults, and will vary depending on the ages of children/youth and the context of the activity.

- b. All workers are required to comply with the following policies to ensure a safe and secure environment for children and youth while participating in NSUC activities:
- i. Each group should have at least two workers present at all times with at least one worker being an adult (18+). For infants and toddlers, the desirable ratio is one worker for every three children. The DLRE shall determine the appropriate level of supervision for each group and activity, and may make exceptions to this rule on a

case-by-case basis.

An **Adult** is an individual who has reached his/her/hir 18th birthday.

- ii. Visibility and access into classrooms and other spaces used for education and programming with children & youth must be maintained at all times. Window coverings shall remain open at all times. Doors can be closed but must remain unlocked.
- iii. The DLRE, and/or their designee (i.e. Sunday Assistant), shall circulate in the RE classroom area and monitor classroom activities randomly during regular RE classes. It is the responsibility of the DLRE to ensure a designee is available to monitor the RE area if the DLRE is unavailable.
- iv. All NSUC groups will engage in the creation (and maintenance) of a group Covenant. In the case of the Nursery and classes for young children, it is expected that the teachers and/staff create and post a covenant viewable to parents and/or guardians. Copies of Covenants shall be provided to the Business Administrator for record-keeping.

A **Group** is a gathering of children, youth, or adults, who have voluntarily been assigned to participate in an NSUC organized program or activity.

- v. If a child needs to use the restroom, the worker shall provide the child as much privacy as possible, entering and assisting only when necessary.
- vi. Children in second grade and younger must be picked up by a parent/guardian, unless prior arrangements have been made with the DLRE.
- vii. No private off-site meetings with children and youth are allowed, other than with a parent or guardian present, or without prior approval and notification from both parent/guardian and DLRE. Such meetings are strongly discouraged.

If an offsite meeting is to occur (with parent/guardian approval and notification), it should occur in a public location, such as a restaurant or coffee shop.

- viii. All outings and events, onsite or offsite, which are organized by

NSUC staff or volunteers, must be pre-approved by the DLRE (or his/her/hir designee). Participating children and youth must have formal permission from a parent or guardian.

Note: In programs, such as Affirmation, where Workers are recruited and approved by the DLRE for the expressed purpose of establishing a supportive relationship with a child/youth, outings with that child/youth are deemed to be preapproved by the DLRE and parent/guardian per the [NSUC Worker Application and Consent Form](#).

In the event that NSUC organizes travel arrangements for an approved outing:

- ix. Parents and/or guardians must sign the [NSUC Permission Slip - NSUC Sponsored Event / Travel](#) for all NSUC sponsored travel.
- x. All drivers shall be a minimum age of 25. Drivers must submit proof of a current & valid driver's license, proof of insurance, and submit to a Driver Background Check through the State of Illinois before being assigned NSUC driving responsibilities. The Driver Background Check is valid for one year.
- xi. The DLRE is responsible for ensuring the Driver background checks are complete prior to a volunteer driving children or youth of NSUC.
- xii. Drivers should have two or more children or youth in the car when transporting children and youth to and from activities. The only exception is when the driver is transporting a child or youth with prior parent approval and notification of the DLRE.
- xiii. Two unrelated drivers are required per vehicle when transporting children and/or youth of NSUC. Both drivers must complete the Driver Background check

Disciplinary Matters:

- xiv. If disciplinary issues arise, there must be two adults present during all disciplinary meetings between the worker and the child or youth involved. The parents or guardians shall be informed of any such meeting and its contents as soon as possible.
- xv. Corporal punishment or abusive language is prohibited. This includes behavior that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical

abuse, and behavior or language that is threatening or demeaning.

xvi. Behavior must both be and appear to be above reproach.

3. MAINTAINING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

- a. **Mentoring:** Mentoring relationships between children or youth and adults are actively encouraged, subject to the following guidelines:

A “**mentor**” is a trusted counselor or guide.

In the relationship between an adult and a child or youth, differences in age and maturity automatically bring differences in power and responsibility. Mentoring is not the same thing as peer-to-peer friendships which are grounded in equality of status.

Regardless of the age of the child or youth, it is the responsibility of the adult to maintain appropriate boundaries at all times AND to be conscious of how their behavior is welcoming or exclusive to children and youth, in order to maintain an atmosphere of health and trust. (Source: UUA Youth Inclusion & Safety Guidelines)

Anyone who becomes aware of, or observes, any boundary violations in relationships between minors and adults, must immediately discuss the situation with the minister or DLRE.

- b. **Physical Affection.** Limited physical expressions of affection such as hugs are acceptable, but the adult should allow the child or youth to initiate the contact, and be sensitive not to allow them to become too frequent or prolonged. Any form of touch or physical expression shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid adult staff.
- c. **Emotional Boundaries.** It is the responsibility of the adult Worker to maintain appropriate emotional and boundaries with children and/or youth. Thus, it is not appropriate for the Worker to lean on the children and/or youth for personal support and/or affection needs.
- d. **Role Boundaries.** It is the responsibility of the adult Worker to maintain appropriate role boundaries with children and/or youth. The Worker is not a therapist or parent and must maintain this discernment.
- e. **Sexualized Behavior.** Adults who work with children and youth are in

positions of power and play a key role in the spiritual and identity development of younger members of the community. It is never appropriate to engage in any manner of sexualized behavior with a child or youth. This refers not only to explicitly sexual behavior, but to sexually provocative, seductive, romantic, or erotic behavior or language as well. It is inappropriate to tell jokes with sexual content, connotations, or “double entendres”. Sexualized content on social media or any other virtual or electronic outlets is prohibited.

- f. **Harassment.** Adults shall not sexually harass or engage in any other behavior with children or youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse or harassment. Any harassment regarding race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or disability will not be tolerated. Such harassment may include unsolicited remarks, gestures or physical contact, or displaying or circulating written material or derogatory pictures directed at any of these categories. In addition, sexual advances, jokes, explicit or offensive pictures, requests for sexual favors, sexting, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment and will not be tolerated.

In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

(Source: UUA Participation Covenant for Youth Events)

- i. In the event a child or youth initiates inappropriate touching or any other form of sexualized behavior or harassment, the volunteer or paid staff member must immediately inform the child or youth that such touching is inappropriate. The adult must notify the DLRE or, in his/her/hir absence, the minister, of the incident within 24 hours.
- g. **Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol.** Children and youth are prohibited from using tobacco, drugs, or alcohol, and must not be allowed to engage in illegal behavior while participating in church-sanctioned activities. Workers should, at all times, be aware that their own behavior is a powerful statement to children and youth. Workers, while actively supervising children and youth at a church-sponsored event or gathering, must not consume alcohol, use illegal drugs, or use tobacco products for the duration of the event or the tenure of their responsibility, both to maintain their ability to act responsibly in the event of an emergency AND to avoid the distance between youth and adults created by alcohol or tobacco consumption (SOURCE: UUA Youth Safety & Inclusion Guidelines)
- i. Whenever alcohol is present at an NSUC event, adults of legal

drinking age (21 and older) who are consuming alcohol are expected to do so in a responsible manner which does not endanger themselves or others.

- ii. People serving alcohol at an NSUC sponsored event will adhere to the *Bartender Guidelines*.
 - iii. Left over alcohol should be removed or disposed of appropriately after the event.
- h. **Communication.** All communication, regardless of the method, between adults to children and youth must be AND appear to be above reproach. All communication between adults and children or youth should be thought of as though it were occurring in-person, regardless of whether it is occurring face-to-face, over the phone, or electronically. The vast number of communication possibilities, and the quickness with which new applications and devices are created, requires that adults working with children and youth be cognizant of the need to maintain appropriate relational boundaries at all times, no matter the means of communication.
- i. **Guidelines for Electronic Communication:** We encourage the use of electronic communication between volunteer teachers, youth advisors, NSUC staff, and NSUC families (including children and youth), subject to the following guidelines:
- i. Volunteer teachers, advisors, and staff may communicate with the parents/guardians of children and youth enrolled in the Lifespan Religious Education program by using email, texting, and other forms of electronic communication.
 - ii. Electronic communication between volunteer teachers, youth advisors, staff, and families, children and youth should be used to communicate facts and information relevant to the Lifespan Religious Education program, or other NSUC or Unitarian Universalist programming and business only. Parents/Guardians provide consent with the [Electronic Communication Consent Form](#).
 - iii. When adult teachers, advisors, staff, and mentors communicate with youth through email, Facebook, or any other electronic forms of communication, the appropriate NSUC staff and/or youth's parents or guardians should be copied (CC'd) or included whenever possible, or notified of the communication ASAP.

- iv. If a youth should contact a mentor, advisor or church staff member privately through electronic communications, the recipient may send a reply with a CC (copy) to either to the youth's parent/guardian or the appropriate church staff member.
- v. Social Network communication between adult leaders and high school youth related to NSUC activities, youth programming, regional & national UU youth events, and other NSUC business is permissible with advance parent/guardian notification/approval. Any such communication should, whenever possible, occur in a public space and must BE and APPEAR TO BE above reproach.
- vi. Group communication through email, Facebook, group texting, etc. is appropriate. Any such communication should occur, whenever possible, in a public space, such as the "Facebook wall". Whenever possible, parents/guardians and/or the appropriate church staff member should be copied or included.
- vii. The use of text messaging with high school youth (grades 9-12) as a means of communicating about Lifespan Religious Education & youth group programming is permitted with advance parent/guardian approval by the [Electronic Communication Consent Form](#). Approval will also be implied by inclusion of youth cell phone number on program registration form.
- viii. If an adult is in doubt about the appropriateness of any ongoing or emerging forms for communication, they must consult with their supervisor on the church staff (usually the DLRE) as soon as possible.
- j. **Confidentiality vs. Secrets.** If a child or youth discloses incidents of abuse or neglect, or is exhibiting self-destructive tendencies, the worker must report it immediately to the minister or DLRE. Adults should never give children or youth the impression that they will keep secrets for them, or promise to keep such information confidential.
 - i. If workers hear or encounter sensitive personal information from a child or youth which, in their judgment, necessitates notifying other church personnel for support or guidance, they should inform the DLRE or Minister as soon as possible.
 - ii. All disclosures conveyed to NSUC Workers, the DLRE, and/or Minister are to remain in confidence. The wider NSUC community

and/or parents/guardians of children/youth within the Group will be communicated with on an as-needed basis.

- iii. NSUC staff and Workers must act within the best interests of the child/youth, Worker, and NSUC Community. Personal opinions, relationships, and preferences are to be kept separate from NSUC Policy.

4. REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

- a. If an individual has a safety concern regarding children, youth, or an NSUC Worker (volunteer or staff), the matter must be brought to the direct attention of the DLRE or Minister, who will then assess the situation and make an initial investigation. The matter should not be shared with other members of the NSUC community or a third party (except as required by law), as doing so may interfere with the successful investigation of the concern or cause unwarranted harm to the reputation of individual(s) in question. Parents / Guardians of any involved minors must be immediately notified. Concerns will be taken seriously and given prompt attention. Any issue that has insurance implications must be brought to the attention of the Business Administrator.

Abuse is an injury of a child by an adult or an older child that might not be intentional, but is not accidental. It is usually classified with emotional abuse or sexual abuse. Abuse is not limited to that abuse inflicted by an individual responsible for the child's care, but also includes abuse inflicted by any other individual. (Source: 325 ILCS 5/1: Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act)

- b. It is the responsibility of the DLRE or Minister to complete a written report of the accusation and findings to keep on file at NSUC. The [NSUC Accident / Incident Report](#) shall be used to document the details, circumstances, and findings of the accusation and investigation. All reports shall be kept in a secure file cabinet in the Business Administrator's office.
- c. If a worker, volunteer or staff, has reason to believe that abuse has occurred during an NSUC program or event, has cause to suspect the child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, the worker must immediately

contact Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) as required by Illinois law and notify the Minister and/or DLRE.

Nothing in this section, however, is meant to preclude any person from reporting abuse, neglect, or any suspicions thereof, and no person making a report (staff or volunteer) shall be subject to any sanction or adverse action from their employer or supervisor.

- i. **Illinois Child Abuse Hotline at 800-25-ABUSE (22873).**
- ii. Mandated reporters include all church staff and volunteers who work with minors. If an individual required to report suspected instances of abuse or neglect pursuant to this section has reason to believe that the victim of such abuse or neglect is a resident of another state or was injured as a result of an act which occurred in another state, the person required to report such abuse or neglect may, in lieu of reporting to the Illinois children's division, make such a report to the child protection agency of the other state with the authority to receive such reports pursuant to the laws of such other state. If such agency accepts the report, no report is required to be made, but may be made, to the children's division (Source: 325 ILCS 5/1: Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act)
- iii. If the Worker (staff or volunteer) ascertains that the child or youth is in a situation of imminent risk, they (or another responsible person) should immediately remove the abusive adult or vulnerable child from the situation and take steps necessary to protect the child or youth. The Worker will cooperate with any subsequent investigation.

If an abuse situation is reported:

- d. If an abuse situation is reported, the Minister, or in his/her/hir absence the DLRE, shall ensure that the situation is reported as required by law, notify the church's insurer as the matter requires, and shall inform the NSUC Board President.

NSUC staff members may consult with Unitarian Universalist denominational personnel in regards to the situation. Otherwise, the matter is to remain confidential. Release of information could interfere with successful prosecution of the offender, result in unwarranted damage to the reputation of the accused, or may endanger the child.

- i. If the reported abuse involves an NSUC adult Worker, the DLRE or Minister shall immediately relieve that person of further duties involving the supervision, care or teaching of children and youth until the matter is resolved.
- ii. If the reported abuse involves an NSUC staff member, the matter will be addressed according to the terms and conditions in the *NSUC Employee Handbook*.
- iii. If the reported abuse involves a Minister, the matter shall be brought to the immediate attention of the NSUC Board President. In addition to discussing the matter with the Minister and discreetly removing him/her/hir from direct contact with children, the President should immediately contact the UUA Office of Ethics and Safety of the Unitarian Universalist Association at (617) 948-6462 for advice on how to proceed.
- iv. If the reported abuse or allegation involves a child or youth in the congregation being accused of inappropriate touching (or some other form of abuse or conduct) towards another child or youth in the congregation, the Minister should initiate contact individually with the parents/guardians of each child/youth to discuss the allegation and next steps. Depending upon the allegation and the nature of the incident, it may be necessary to report the incident to the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS).

Regardless of whether the allegation is founded, the child or youth who initiated the reported abuse or other inappropriate behaviors should not be allowed to participate in activities with the same child or youth until a safety plan can be developed, or the matter is otherwise resolved. It may, depending on the circumstances, make sense to remove the child or youth from religious education programming during this time (SOURCE: Religious Institute-Sexually Safer Practices, Item #17-Adolescent & Child Offenders).

- e. Should the media contact NSUC about an alleged incident of abuse, the Minister or NSUC Board President shall represent NSUC to the public. While no identifying information should ever be disclosed, the Minister or Board President may disclose steps taken to prevent such incidents, investigate this incident, and to guard against abusive situations in the future.
- f. Via the DLRE and/or Minister's monthly reports, the DLRE and/or Minister

shall inform the Board of background check status results and any investigations, while keeping all identifiable information confidential.

Restricted & Limited Access

- g. If it is determined that any person should have restricted or limited access to children and youth, or the NSUC community as a whole, the individual shall be required to sign the [NSUC Limited Access Agreement](#), and shall not be allowed to have access to children and youth except as consistent with that agreement. The Minister, DLRE and Board President shall determine if such an agreement is necessary, and administer the appropriate application of that agreement.
 - i. Restrictions & limitations may be placed on an individual's participation in NSUC activities if any of the following circumstances become known to the Minister, DLRE, and/or Board President.
 - 1. It becomes known that an individual is facing allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct.
 - 2. It becomes known that an individual has engaged in sexual abuse or misconduct, or has a prior conviction for such actions.
 - 3. If it's determined, even without a formal accusation of abuse or misconduct, that an individual's contact with children or youth potentially places the individual and/or the children & youth at risk of harm or accusation.
 - ii. A draft of the [NSUC Limited Access Agreement](#) can be found in Section 8 of this policy.

5. FIRE & LIFE SAFETY

- a. All NSUC Workers will be aware of and adhere to all Fire & Life Safety regulations and procedures within NSUC, and be prepared to lead children and/or youth in the event of an emergency.
- b. All information about fire escapes, fire extinguishers, and emergency contact information will be found within each NSUC classroom.

6. IMPLEMENTATION, EDUCATION and ENFORCEMENT

- a. The most current version of this policy will be distributed widely, including as follows:
 - i. The policy will be posted on the NSUC website.
 - ii. The policy will be included in information provided to new members.
 - iii. The policy will be given to all Lifespan Religious Education volunteers at the beginning of each program year, and to new teachers and leaders as they assume duties during the year.
 - iv. Should NSUC host an event which is open to children or youth from another congregation, Workers from the participating congregations will be provided with a copy of this policy in advance of the event.
 - v. This policy will be distributed annually to all parents/guardians who register children/youth in an NSUC program.
 - vi. The policy will be provided to all Board members, Ministers, and staff members annually, who are expected to familiarize themselves with the contents of this policy as part of their commitment to promoting safety in all aspects of congregational life (SOURCE: Religious Institute Best Practices: #1-Board & Clergy Commitment).
 - vii. A hard copy of this policy will be available outside the Lifespan Religious Education Office.
 - viii. The congregation will be kept informed of this policy through periodic publicity via the newsletter, website, weekly email notifications, etc.
- b. Discussion and review of this policy will be part of any Lifespan Religious Education volunteer orientation sessions or leadership team meetings which are held.
- c. This policy will be reviewed annually by the DLRE, along with other church staff members and/or lay leaders as deemed necessary, for any necessary revisions and updates. The congregation will be notified of any changes or updates as they occur (through the communication noted in section a, part vi).
- d. The DLRE is responsible for ensuring that this policy is upheld during

Lifespan Religious Education program events and activities. The DLRE may seek the help and support of other church staff members and lay leaders as needed to ensure that these policies are upheld.

- i. Section 1, Part B outlines implementation for other church events
 - ii. When NSUC children, youth, and adult chaperones attend events at other congregations or locales, policies relevant to NSUC prevail over less stringent policies specific to the event/conference/locale. (Source-First UU Church-Rochester, MN)
- e. Below is a list of community organizations who specialize in and support people who are victims and perpetrators of abuse, sexual misconduct, and driving related offenses.
- i. List here

7. SOURCES

Unitarian Universalist Association: Balancing Acts: Limited Access Agreements
<http://www.uua.org/safe/children>

First UU Society-Burlington, VT: Safe Congregation Policies

Eliot Chapel, St. Louis, MO: Safe Congregation Policy 2016-17

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio Child and Youth Protection Protocol
<http://uusat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Child-and-Youth-Protection-Protocol-2014.pdf>

Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City: Policy & Procedure Manual

UUA Participation Covenant for Youth Events http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/participant_covenant.pdf

Religious Institute: Safer Congregations <http://religiousinstitute.org/safer-congregations/>

UUA Youth Safety & Inclusion Guidelines (updated 2015)
http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/youth_inclusion_guidelines.pdf

Church Mutual Insurance Company: Youth Safety & Your Congregation
https://www.churchmutual.com/media/safetyResources/files/Youth_Safety.pdf

Church Mutual Insurance Company: Fast Facts About Applicant Screening

https://www.churchmutual.com/media/pdf/ApplicantScreen_FastFacts.pdf

*Responsible Staffing Guidelines on Screening Practices for Use by Unitarian
Universalist Association Organizations When Adding Clergy, Professional
Leaders, Staff, and Volunteers*

[http://www.uua.org/sites/live-
new.uua.org/files/documents/mpl/transitions/responsible_staffing.pdf](http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/mpl/transitions/responsible_staffing.pdf)

8. FORMS

- a. [NSUC Worker Application and Consent Form](#)
- b. [NSUC Limited Access Agreement](#)
- c. [NSUC Permission Slip - NSUC Sponsored Event / Travel](#)
- d. [NSUC Permission Slip - NSUC Ongoing Travel](#)
- e. [NSUC Accident / Incident Form](#)
- f. [Electronic Communication Consent Form](#)
- g. [Church Mutual: Background Screening Form](#)
- h. [Church Mutual: Driver Screening Form](#)

NSUC Worker Application and Consent Form

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position within NSUC that interacts with children and youth, under the age of 18. The purpose of this form is to help NSUC provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in NSUC sponsored programs. Any information provided by you will be used solely for the purpose of determining your qualifications for working with minors.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Employer: _____

Work Phone: _____

In what position are you interested in serving at NSUC?

Please describe the reasons you are interested in this position.

How long have you been actively participating at NSUC? _____

Are you a member of NSUC? () No () Yes If yes, when did you become a member? _____

Please list any other congregations you have attended regularly during the past three years.

List previous church and non-church work involving children and/or youth. Please include the name of the organization, your role, and duties.

Please share information on your talents, callings, training, education, gifts, or other resources that you can share with NSUC.

Have you ever been charged or convicted of a criminal offense related to actual or attempted sexual misconduct, molestation of a minor, or of child abuse? () Yes () No

If yes, please explain:

Has any civil judgment ever been made against you for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer because you were accused of sexual misconduct or child abuse?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of NSUC children and/or youth?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Applicant Consent

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the information I have provided may be verified, by contacting persons or organizations names in this application, or by contacting any person or organization that may have information concerning me. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with children and/or youth. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides such information. I also agree to hold harmless NSUC, the Board, the staff and the volunteers thereof in their implementation of this Policy.

I have read and agree to be bound by the *NSUC Safe Congregation Policy* and *NSUC Covenant of Right Relations*. I understand that any information obtained about me through this application process will be kept in the strictest of confidence among NSUC staff who will be screening applicants for compensated and volunteer positions. Any information obtained through this process which indicates that I may not have, in their opinion, the maturity or temperament to work with children and/or youth, will be sufficient ground for denying this application.

I understand that this background check is valid for one year, and that non-compliance with the background check will result in my immediate disqualification for the position for which I am applying.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

For NSUC Use Only:

Application reviewed by: _____ Date: _____

NSUC Limited Access Agreement

Note: This is a sample form subject to modification by the Minister, DLRE, & Board President as deemed appropriate to the circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Introductory paragraph in cases of allegation or concern:

A serious complaint/allegation/concern, now under review, has been brought to the attention of the NSUC Minister/DLRE/Board President. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children and youth in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion or allegation, we expect you to abide by this interim agreement. Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confession of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known only to the Minister, DLRE, Board President, and others specifically mentioned in Terms & Acceptance, and will be kept in a locked file in the office.

Introductory paragraph in cases of convicted sex offender:

NSUC affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and them of an incident or accusation. Your participation is limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth, and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Agreement:

You are to avoid all contact with children and youth on congregation property or congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- i. Refrain from talking with children/youth.
- j. Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone, or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events, driving, or otherwise transporting children and/or youth to church sponsored events.
- k. Remain in the presence of an adult (a support person) who knows your situation at all times when children/youth are present.

A **support person** is a person who knows about your history/situation and has been designated by you with our approval to accompany you to activities where children and youth may be present.

- l. If a child/youth in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- m. Avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session, such as religious education activities or youth group events.

The following activities which are checked "Yes" are activities that we feel are appropriate for your participation.

- n. Worship services No () Yes () With support person No () Yes ()
- o. Coffee Hour No () Yes () With support person No () Yes ()
- p. Adult meetings with children in building No () Yes ()
- q. Adult meetings without children in building No () Yes ()
- r. Have a key to the building No () Yes ()
- s. Intergenerational church activities which occur on church property No () Yes ()
With support person No () Yes ()
- t. Intergenerational group outings which occur off-site, such as ice skating, baseball games, etc. No () Yes () With support person No () Yes ()
- u. Alone in church building with minister or other staff No () Yes ()
- v. Social activities in other member's homes (such as Covenant Groups)
No () Yes () With support person No () Yes ()
- w. Participating in NSUC activities No () Yes ()
With support person* No () Yes ()
- x. Other:
Activity: _____ No () Yes ()
Activity: _____ No () Yes ()
Activity: _____ No () Yes ()

Terms & Acceptance

I accept that the following people will be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/youth for whom they care:

(INSERT NAMES AND/OR POSITION IN CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP)

I have reviewed this agreement and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property.

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

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Minister: _____ Date: _____

DLRE: _____ Date: _____

Board President: _____ Date: _____

NSUC Permission Slip - NSUC Sponsored Event / Travel

Your child's religious education class will be going on a field trip to

On _____ from _____ to _____ o'clock.

The purpose of the trip is _____

Transportation will be provided by _____

Approved Adults who are responsible for this trip are

Please feel free to contact them for further information. If your child has a medical condition or other concern that we need to be aware of for this trip, let us know.

Your signature gives us permission to take your child on the above mentioned field trip.

Child's name _____

Phone number where you can be reached at the time of the field trip: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

NSUC Permission Slip - NSUC Ongoing Travel

I hereby give my permission for my child _____ to participate in NSUC sponsored events which require travel during the course of the _____ church year, from this date _____ until _____.

This permission slip is to be used for the travel to and from those events. I understand that specific attendance permission slips may be issued for specific sponsored events. I understand that NSUC does not accept responsibility for any bodily injury incurred during the event and during travel to and from any event.

I give my consent and authority for the NSUC Lifespan Religious Education Staff (paid or volunteer) and for the adult chaperones to take any reasonable action to help ensure the safety, health and welfare of my child, and absolve the staff of liability.

I give permission for any emergency medical, surgical, diagnostic and hospital care, treatment, or procedures deemed immediately necessary or advisable by emergency medical technicians, a physician or hospital to safeguard my child/ward's health when I cannot be contacted. I agree to be responsible for any medical expenses not covered by my insurance.

My child has the following allergies, dietary restrictions, or medical conditions (if none, so state):

Medications: _____

In case of emergency, I can be reached at _____ or _____

If unable to reach me, please contact:

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

NSUC Accident / Incident Form

Date of Report: _____

Person reporting the accident/incident: _____

Person(s) involved in accident/ incident:

Location of accident/incident (please be specific):

Date of accident/incident: _____ Time of accident/incident: _____

Description of what happened

Action Taken or Treatment Given:

Witness #1 (name, address, phone)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness #2 (name, address, phone)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian notified of accident/incident (Name, Relationship)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Person Completing Form (Name, Title)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please turn completed form into the Business Administrator.

Electronic Communication Consent

In general, electronic and in-person communications between youth and adult advisers

will be restricted to open forums with a minimum of two youth and two adults present.

However, there may be times when, in order to complete group business in a timely manner, an advisor may need to initiate a brief phone call or other one-on-one electronic communication in order to conduct time-sensitive group business.

By signing below, you are giving your permission for an advisor to contact your youth for time-sensitive business if other, more open forums fail.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact Director for Lifespan Religious Education.

I _____ (parent or guardian's name printed) am comfortable with a youth group advisor of NSUC contacting _____ (child's name printed) for reasonable communications as described above.

Signature _____ Date _____