

This policy supersedes the portions of the 2001 UUCB Safe Congregation Policy at page 3 (beginning with Procedures for Recruiting ...) through page 5 and page 18, and any other portions that are inconsistent with this policy.

Approved by board of Trustees 11-16-2017, except background check section (which was approved 3-16-2017).

SCREENING AND SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

1) Definitions

- a. Volunteers with Children and Youth ("Volunteers") are individuals who provide direct care, supervision, instruction, or transportation of children or youth for UUCB events. Examples include classroom teachers and assistants, Coming-of-Age mentors, chaperones for group trips, youth advisors, and stay-awake adults. One-time guest speakers for classes or other activities are not included, and do not count as adults for the purposes of the "two-adult" rule.
- b. An adult is a person who is at least 18 years of age.
- c. A group is defined as those children or youth who have been assigned to a nursery, individual class or specific program or activity within the context of a class or other UUCB event.
- d. The Director of Lifespan Faith Development ("DLFD") is the UUCB staff person charged with Volunteer supervision and training. If there is no DLFD, the minister takes on all responsibilities assigned herein to the DLFD, and may delegate (e.g., to the chair of the Children and Youth Program Committee).
- e. The "DLFD's delegate" is an individual designated by the DLFD to take on DLFD duties in the DLFD's absence (e.g., on a Sunday morning when the DLFD is away).
- f. A "UUCB event," for the purpose of these Safe Congregation Policies, is a planned gathering or activity that (a) is organized and led by one or more UUCB staff, members, visitors, friends or group, (b) is intended for UUCB members, visitors, friends and groups and (c) supports the church mission. A UUCB event can be on site or off site. UUCB events do not include private events, or events that are organized or led by a renter of UUCB space, and do not include events associated with Riverside Drive Nursery.

- g. A “private event” is an event organized and led by one or more UUCB staff, members, visitors, or friends and is not open to all UUCB members and is not primarily UUCB mission-based.

2) Qualifications

All Volunteers shall satisfy the following criteria:

- a. All Volunteers must consent to a criminal background check, to be performed as described herein. Individuals who do not consent to the background check, or who are deemed to be ineligible as a consequence of the background check, are prohibited from working with children or youth at UUCB.
- b. All Volunteers shall have been active at UUCB for at least 6 months OR obtain approval from the DLFDD following review of a referral from a religious educator or minister of another congregation where the person was previously a member or active participant.
- c. All Volunteers shall be approved by the DLFDD following completion of an application, review of background check results, an interview with the DLFDD and consideration of any other evidence deemed relevant by the DRE.
- d. Anyone who is under investigation for, or is charged with, child abuse or neglect or a violent crime against any person may not serve as a Volunteer while the investigation or charge is pending.
- e. Classroom instructors and youth advisors for grades 9-12, and all drivers, mentors and chaperones shall be at least 25 years of age.
- f. Classroom instructors for grades 6-8 shall be at least 21 years of age.
- g. Classroom instructors for preK - grade 5, and volunteer childcare providers, shall be at least 18 years of age.
- h. Government issued photo identification, such as a driver's license, may be requested.
- i. All Volunteers shall read and sign the WUC Code of Conduct Form for Persons Working with Children and Youth annually. Copies of the signed form shall be retained by the DLFDD.
- j. All teachers, facilitators, advisors and mentors will attend orientation/training sessions on the relevant portions of the UUCB Safer Congregations Policy annually. The DLFDD is responsible for providing such training.

- k. Permission from the DLFD is required for any non-teaching adult (other than a parent of a child in the classroom) to be present in a classroom or youth meeting. If permission is granted, the DLFD will notify classroom teachers and if possible will introduce the visitor.
- l. The DLFD may waive or alter the above age requirements in special circumstances, and with the consent of the Children and Youth Program Committee and Minister, and may generate other specific job descriptions with alternate requirements.

VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECKS

1) Purpose. The purpose of the check is to identify individuals who have committed a child-related or violent offense, or who have history of other offenses that raises concern about suitability for working with children and youth (e.g., alcohol or drug offenses, theft, or driving-related offenses). During classes and scheduled programming, a minimum of two unrelated background-checked adults will be present with each group of children and youth. Exceptions may be made at the DLFD's or minister's discretion in rare situations where two background-checked adults are not available; provided at least one background-checked adult will always be present with each group of children and youth.

2) Volunteers to be checked. Criminal background checks shall be performed on:

- a. all adults who are scheduled babysitters, teachers, advisors, field trip chaperones, coming-of-age mentors and volunteers at middle school or high school youth conferences (cons);
- b. adults in other capacities that regularly involve direct contact with children and youth that, in the opinion of the DLFD and minister, is sufficient to warrant a background check.

3) Timing. The background check shall be performed before a volunteer begins work with children or youth, and a minimum of every five (5) years thereafter. The DLFD is responsible for ensuring that all background checks are up-to-date. For adults who have been working with UUCB children and youth prior to the adoption of this policy, background checks shall be performed within three months following adoption of this policy, and then every five (5) years thereafter. At the discretion of the DLFD and the Minister, additional background checks may be performed at any other time.

4) Type of Screen. The background check shall be a nationwide criminal record check, including sex-offender registries and county court records. A driving record check may also be obtained. Any service deemed suitable by the Board of Trustees may be used.

5) Application. Candidates will authorize the background check using a consent form approved by the Board of Trustees, minister and DLFD.

6) Review. The background check results shall be reviewed by the DLFD and Minister. Following review of the background check results, the DLFD and the Minister shall be responsible for determining the eligibility of each candidate. The DLFD and Minister may request further information from the candidate in order to fully understand the circumstances of prior convictions, and to assess the accuracy of the results, before making a determination of eligibility.

The determination of eligibility shall be based on the following criteria.

- a. Any conviction of a violent or sexual offense, or other form of child abuse, SHALL disqualify the candidate.
- b. Any conviction of a drug or alcohol-related offense within the past 5 years SHALL disqualify the candidate from driving children or youth.
- c. A record of driving offense(s) which, in the opinion of the DLFD OR the Minister, indicates an elevated risk of harm to passengers SHALL disqualify the candidate from driving children or youth.
- d. Any conviction(s) which, in the opinion of the DLFD OR the Minister, render a candidate poorly suited to a leadership position with children and youth may disqualify the candidate. The DLFD and the Minister shall consider the totality of convictions and the circumstances of each in making this determination.

The DLFD and/or Minister shall convey the determination of eligibility to each volunteer within two weeks of receipt of the results, or as soon thereafter as is practical. The volunteer may view the results of the background check upon request.

7) Confidentiality. Background check results and consent forms in paper form shall be kept in a locked file to which only the Minister and the DLFD have access, and will be destroyed after five (5) years. Digital background check results and consent forms shall be stored so as to permit

access only by those authorized herein. Background check results and consent forms may be viewed only by those authorized herein.

Only the DLFD and the Minister are authorized to view the results and the background check consent forms of volunteers and the DLFD and Minister may not discuss the results with anyone other than each other and the candidate. The DLFD and Minister may communicate the candidate's eligibility status, without mentioning details, to members of the Children and Youth Programming Committee if necessary for the performance of Committee duties. If the candidate wishes to see the background check results, the DLFD or Minister will arrange a time for the candidate to view the results in the presence of the DLFD or Minister. The candidate may not copy or remove the results from the possession of UUCB.

SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

1) Supervision during UUCB faith development classes for children and youth and other UUCB Events

- a. The DLFD, DLFD's delegate, Volunteers and Childcare Providers are responsible for supervision of children and youth during Faith Development Classes and UUCB events that are intended for children and youth without parental supervision (e.g., field trips on or off site and cons). Parents/guardians are responsible for supervision of children and youth at all other times (e.g., during coffee hour, meetings (except when UUCB childcare is provided), and at other whole-congregation events that are intended for family attendance).
- b. During UUCB Sunday services, children and youth ages infant to thirteen (13) are to attend the faith development class/nursery for their age group (if available) or to attend the service with a parent/guardian.
 1. If a parent/guardian cannot be present at UUCB with a child or youth ages infant to thirteen (13), the parent/guardian must obtain permission from the DLFD or DLFD delegate, and provide the DLFD or DLFD delegate with emergency contact information and the name of an adult at UUCB who will take responsibility for the child or youth. This procedure must be followed each time the parent/guardian cannot be present.
 2. If a parent/guardian cannot be present at UUCB with a child or youth ages fourteen (14) to eighteen (18), the parent/guardian must provide the DLFD with emergency contact information to have on file. The parent/guardian is responsible for updating the emergency contact information as needed.

- c. Except as noted below, a minimum of two approved, unrelated, background-checked adults must be present to supervise any group of children and youth.
 - 1. Spouses, immediate relations and partners do not fulfill the two-adult requirement. If such related individuals teach or supervise together, a third unrelated adult must be present.
 - 2. The DLFDD may require more than two adults in certain situations or for large groups.
 - 3. Exceptions for unexpected circumstances, or specific cases, may only be made by the minister, the DLFDD or the DLFDD's delegate. In such cases, at least one background-checked adult will always be present with each group of children and youth, the classroom door is left open to provide visibility, and a second unrelated background-checked adult will check-in regularly with the group. This policy protects both the children and the adults, in that it minimizes the opportunity for abuse and the risk of false accusations.
 - 4. For youth cons, lock-ins and other times when the group of youth is split into multiple rooms, the following guidelines apply:
 - a. Whenever possible, the DLFDD will be notified ahead of time that two adults will not always be present with each group of youth. If that is not possible, the DLFDD will be notified as soon as the group is aware of the situation. If the DLFDD cannot be reached, the minister will be notified.
 - b. The internal doors to any room in which youth are present will remain open at all times unless there are two unrelated adults also present in the room.
 - c. If youth are awake in a room without at least two unrelated adults, that room will be in close proximity to other room(s) in which youth are present, and there will be at least one background-checked adult who periodically visits the room to maintain an awareness of the activity and the tone of the conversation, and to provide assistance if needed. The visiting adult may rotate among multiple rooms if needed, provided that the rooms are located in the same general area of the building and the adult is able to fully attend to each room at least once every 15 minutes.
- d. A ratio of at least 1 adult to 7 children/youth will be maintained during all programming.
- e. If circumstances result in a Volunteer being alone with one or more children or youth (unrelated to the Volunteer) during a UUCB event without prior permission, the Volunteer must notify the DLFDD or the DLFDD's delegate immediately. The DLFDD or the DLFDD's delegate shall determine whether to move the group to a public space, provide additional adult supervision or make an exception to the two adult rule.
- f. In general, adult Volunteers may not meet privately with an unrelated child or youth during a UUCB event, either on-site or off-site, or at any time on-site. If such a meeting is considered necessary, a parent and either the DLFDD or minister must be notified in advance. Such meetings shall be held in a public space, with others present, or at UUCB

in a room in which the door is left open and at least periodically within the line of sight of another adult.

If a situation arises that requires an unforeseen one-on-one meeting between an adult and a youth (e.g., a pastoral matter), the door must be left open and another adult made aware of the meeting before and after. If the meeting lasts more than a few minutes, the other adult is expected to check in to see if additional assistance is needed and to be aware of the tone of the meeting.

- g. The DLF/D or DLF/D's delegate will periodically look in, and sometimes enter, classrooms during programming, to observe interactions and monitor tone and comfort level.
- h. For children with special needs, it may not be possible to serve the child's needs in a classroom or other group setting, and other arrangements may be made. In such cases, the DLF/D and the child's parent/guardian(s) will agree upon a reasonable supervision arrangement, and the Minister will approve the arrangement.
- i. Anyone who believes a child or youth needs to be protected from her/himself or others during a UUCB class or event should contact the DLF/D, DLF/D's delegate, minister and/or leader of the event.

2) Supervision before class, after class, during meetings and during whole-congregation events

- a. Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision and safety of their children and youth on UUCB grounds before class, after class, and during UUCB events that are not intended for children and youth apart from parents (e.g. coffee hour, church meetings, and other whole-congregation events that are intended for family attendance).
- b. If childcare is required at those times, parents/guardians are responsible for arranging such care, either privately, or by arranging on-site childcare with the event leader.
- c. Parents/guardians and other congregants can remind children and youth to behave in a safe and respectful manner (e.g., use walking feet, indoor voices and helping hands) when inside UUCB buildings.
- d. During non-program time, the door will remain open when children and/or youth are in the room.

3) Supervision During Private Events

It is the responsibility of the host of the private event to take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of minors during the event, including:

- a. ensuring that all minors are supervised while on UUCB property;
- b. avoiding situations in which an adult is alone with an unrelated minor; and
- c. arranging for two unrelated adults to be present with any group of minors.

4) Abuse Reporting

Those working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one which may carry with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, child-care worker, teacher, mentor or in any other role, the volunteer has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways that are affirming and inspiring to all involved.

While it is important that volunteers be capable of maintaining meaningful relationships with the young people they work with, they must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with children and youth and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with people older than themselves, and may find it difficult to speak out about any inappropriate behavior of their leaders, teachers and caretakers.

Volunteers who have gained the trust of young people are in a unique situation to observe behavior or be a party to a conversation in which a possible abusive situation (either within or outside of the church) is revealed. It is the Volunteer's responsibility to report any such concerns to the DLFD or minister.

TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

1) Transportation to and from UUCB Events

a. Parent/Guardian Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide or arrange for transportation of children and youth to and from UUCB events. This includes transportation to and from services, classes and programs held at UUCB, as well as transportation to and from off-site events (such as cons or service projects) for which transportation is not coordinated by UUCB staff or volunteer(s). UUCB policy provisions that relate to transportation during UUCB events do not apply in such cases.

b. Transportation by Youth Group Advisors, Coming-of-Age Mentors and OWL facilitators

While this policy does not address parental decisions regarding transportation to and from UUCB events, we recognize that there are certain Volunteers who have been asked to form a close relationship with youth, including youth group advisors, Coming-of-Age mentors and OWL facilitators. Such adults are expected to avoid being alone in a vehicle with an individual youth during transportation to and from UUCB and UUCB events, even with parental permission.

2) Transportation During UUCB Events

a. Drivers

1. All drivers of vehicles containing minors other than their own children must be at least 25 years of age and must provide proof of insurance and a valid driver's license, copies of which will be kept on file in the LFD office.
2. No driver may be sleep deprived, consume alcohol or use any form of drug (prescription or non-prescription) that can affect physical or mental performance during or before carrying out his or her duties as a driver. In addition, drivers shall not have any known medical condition that might reasonably be expected to result in an increased risk of accident. The UUCB community relies on individual drivers to monitor their own fitness to drive on any particular occasion; however, the DLFD or event leader is expected to remove any driver for whom there is a reasonable suspicion of impaired driving ability.
3. Everyone must wear a functioning seat belt, and the driver must follow the state laws regarding the use of car seats and booster seats.

4. At least one adult in the group must carry UUCB travel permission forms and emergency information (see below) for all youth in the group. If traveling by car, each driver must carry permission/emergency forms for all youth in their vehicle.
5. At the discretion of the DLFDD or minister, adults who have not been active at UUCB for at least 6 months may transport youth to regional or other youth events, provided that all other safer congregations requirements are met, including approval by the DLFDD or minister following:
 - submission of a volunteer application,
 - completion of a background check and
 - an in-person meeting.

b. Two Adult Rule for Transportation

1. Whenever possible, there should be two approved, unrelated, background-checked adults in each vehicle.
2. An exception to this requirement may be made if needed, provided that (a) the driver is an approved volunteer, (b) there are at least two minors in the vehicle who are unrelated to the driver, (c) the vehicle goes directly to the destination and (d) upon arrival at the destination a minimum of two unrelated, approved adults accompany the group of children or youth. In such cases, it is preferred that all vehicles remain within sight of each other while traveling, and rest stops will be coordinated with other drivers. If this is not possible, any stops are expected to be in well-lit, public spaces.
3. Upon return to UUCB, the adult driver is responsible for ensuring that youth are picked up by a parent or guardian, or leave by another means expressly approved by a parent or guardian.
4. At least one other approved adult, or at least two unrelated youth, must be present in the car **at all times**. Adult drivers may not be in a car (or any other isolated space) with one unrelated youth unless a second unrelated adult or an unrelated youth is also present.

c. Permission

1. Written permission of the parent/guardian of all minor passengers will be obtained before transportation. The permission will include all relevant details pertaining to the event, including the date and location, means of transportation, name of adult(s) if possible, and times of departure and return.

2. When a group participates in multiple trips over the course of the church year, a single permission form covering all trips during that year may be obtained.

d. Emergency information

Emergency contact information including name of physician, health insurance information and consent to treat in case of emergency must accompany all minors who are being transported by adults other than their parent/guardian. During travel, the forms will be kept by the driver of the vehicle, or the responsible adult traveling with a group using an alternate form of transportation.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ADULTS IN SPECIFIC ROLES WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH

There are additional expectations for certain Volunteers who have been asked to form a close relationship with youth. Such Volunteers include Youth group advisors, Coming-of-Age mentors and OWL facilitators, and may include other Volunteers at the discretion of the DLFD or minister.

1) INTERACTIONS IN OTHER SETTINGS

- a. There is an expectation that such Volunteers will pay attention to their interactions with youth in any setting, always maintaining boundaries, and the appearance of boundaries, in a way that upholds the trust in the advisors and the UUCB youth program, and that reinforces an understanding of appropriate adult boundaries for the youth.
- b. Volunteers who have pre-existing relationships with youth are expected to be clear and consistent about which role they are in at any given time. Such Volunteers are considered to be in their UUCB role any time they are on UUCB property, traveling to or from UUCB or a district/regional event, visible to UUCB members, or interacting pastorally with one or more UUCB youth. When in their UUCB role, all UUCB policy provisions (including the two-adult rule and the guidelines for digital communication) apply.
- c. If a situation arises that requires an unforeseen one-on-one meeting between an adult and a youth (e.g., a pastoral matter), the parent, DLFD or minister must be contacted as soon as possible.

2) DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

In general, Volunteers must not engage in one-on-one digital communication with a youth. When digital communication is used, a parent, an unrelated advisor or the DLFD must be copied. It is the adult's responsibility to copy a third person, even if a communication is initiated by a youth.

In a pastoral emergency, a Volunteer may have one-on-one communication with a youth, without copying a third adult, if necessary for a prompt response. In such cases, the Volunteer must: (a) take notes and save messages (and screenshots, as appropriate) and (b) as soon as possible notify the DLFD about the emergency and share the communication.

3) EXPANDING THE CIRCLE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers are expected to share any information about youth that is related to potential harm to the youth or to others, or youth mental health issues, with the DLFD or minister.