

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis**  
**CHILDREN & YOUTH SAFETY POLICY**  
*Adopted by the Board of Trustees on August 8, 2016*

**Purpose**

The Church recognizes the importance of creating and sustaining healthy environments for all ages and stages of life and considers work with children and youth to be a sacred trust. This policy sets forth requirements for screening and selecting volunteers and employees to work with children and youth, for supervising and transporting children and youth, for reporting known or suspected child abuse or neglect, and for media relations pertaining to these issues. This policy applies to all UUCD-sponsored groups and activities for children and youth.

**Screening & Selection of Volunteers & Employees to Work with Children & Youth**

The Assistant Minister for Congregational Life and the Religious Exploration (RE) Coordinator shall determine the responsibilities and necessary skills for adults or older youth working with children and youth under the age of 18. Before beginning work, a prospective employee or volunteer who will provide direct care, supervision, or oversight of children or youth must meet these criteria:

- Must sign an authorization to conduct a background check and provide a photocopy of a government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license or school ID. The Assistant Minister or the Congregational Administrator shall arrange for background checks every seven years, for confidential secure storage of such records, and for their secure disposal when no longer needed.
- Must sign a consent form indicating that s/he has read and agrees to comply with the Church's Children & Youth Safety Policy and the UUCD Code of Conduct for Working with Children & Youth.
- Must attend a training session that includes information on recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

In addition, a prospective employee who will provide direct care, supervision, or oversight for children or youth must meet this requirement:

- Must sign the UUCD Statement for Mandated Reporters.

In addition, a prospective volunteer who will provide direct care, supervision, or oversight for children or youth must meet this requirement:

- Must have been an active UUCD member or friend for at least six months. The Assistant Minister or the Senior Minister may waive this rule for volunteers relocating

from other UU churches after checking references from the person's former UU district or congregation.

### **Supervision & Transportation of Children & Youth under the Age of 18**

The Assistant Minister and the RE Coordinator shall ensure that these supervisory requirements are met:

- Each group of children or youth must be supervised by at least two older adults who are not married, domestic partners, or related to each other.
- Appropriate minimum worker-to-group-member ratios and appropriate minimum ages for workers with each age group must be established and followed.
- Volunteers and employees must be educated about appropriate relationships and boundaries when working with children and youth, including guidelines for classroom behavior, restroom assistance, oral or electronic communications between adults and children, and other interactions.
- Children in third grade and under attending Religious Exploration classes or activities must be signed in and picked up by parents, legal guardians, pre-designated adults, or, in an emergency, law enforcement officials at the conclusion these activities.
- Children and youth must not be left unsupervised, transported without specific parental permission (except by a law enforcement official), or released to anyone not specifically authorized by their parents or legal guardians.
- Parents or legal guardians of children or youth must give written permission for their children or youth to participate in any off-site activity.
- Parents or legal guardians of children or youth must give written permission for their children or youth to be transported via UUCD-organized transportation. Drivers and vehicles used must comply with UUCD Transportation Safety Guidelines promulgated by the Assistant Minister and the RE Coordinator.
- Corporal punishment is never permitted.

### **Reporting of Known or Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

The Senior Minister, the Assistant Minister, and the RE Coordinator shall ensure the Church's compliance with reporting requirements under the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, California Penal Code (PC) §11164-11174.3. Complete provisions of the Act may be viewed online at:

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=pen&group=11001-12000&file=11164-11174.3>

### ***Mandated Reporters***

Under this Act, individuals mandated by law to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect include clergy (except when their knowledge emanates from privileged or penitential communication) and administrators or employees of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children. At

UUCD, these employees include the Senior Minister, Assistant Minister, the RE Coordinator, the Youth Director, Youth Leaders, and Childcare Providers.

Every mandated reporter must, as a prerequisite to employment, sign the UUCD Statement for Mandated Reporters, affirming that s/he has knowledge of and will comply with this law. The statement shall:

- Inform the employee that s/he is a mandated reporter,
- Inform the employee of his/her reporting obligations,
- Inform the employee of his/her confidentiality rights under this law,
- Inform the employee of his/her legal protection against criminal or civil liability, and
- Provide the employee of a copy of Sections 11165.7, 11166, and 11167 of this law.

The signed statement shall be maintained in the files of the Assistant Minister, and a copy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

If an employee who is a mandated reporter in his/her professional capacity or within the scope of his/her employment learns directly or reasonably suspects that a child has been the victim of abuse or neglect, s/he is legally required to

- Make an initial telephone report as soon as practicably possible to any police or sheriff's department or to the child welfare agency in the county where the child resides:

Yolo County (including Davis, Woodland, Winters, West Sacramento): From 8am-5pm, Mondays-Fridays, call the Child Welfare Services' Child Abuse Reporting hotline at 1-888-400-0022 or 530-669-2345. At all other times, call 911.

Solano County (including Dixon, Vacaville, Fairfield): Call the 24-hour Child Welfare Services line at 1-800-544-8696.

Sacramento County: Call the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 1-916-875-5437 (875-KIDS).

***In an emergency, always call 911 for law enforcement.***

- Prepare and send, fax, or electronically transmit a written follow-up report, Suspected Child Abuse Report (California Department of Justice Form SS8572), within 36 hours of making the telephone report. SS8572 forms may be obtained from the Assistant Minister, the RE Coordinator, or the Congregational Administrator.

When two or more mandated reporters jointly have knowledge or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, and when there is agreement among them, the telephone report may be made by a single member of the team, selected by mutual agreement, and the required written report may be made and signed by that person.

### ***Voluntary Reporters***

A RE volunteer working with children or youth who learns or reasonably suspects that child abuse or neglect has taken place is not legally required to report it. However, a voluntary reporter (sometimes referred to as an “ethical reporter”) may make a report following the procedures for mandated reporters. Like mandated reporters, voluntary reporters have confidentiality protection under the law as well as protection against criminal or civil liability.

### **Responses to Media Inquiries**

The Senior Minister and Board Chair (or Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair) are the only persons authorized to respond to media inquiries concerning an alleged incident of abuse, injury, or objectionable conduct.