

FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY

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SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY

I OUTLINE OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At First Parish 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 R.E. 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 that are described in this manual are designed to make sure 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 various committees with primary responsibility for specific areas as well as the Standing Committee from time to time with suggestions about how it may be improved.

II RELATIONSHIP OF MINISTERS TO THE CONGREGATION

We place great trust in our ministers to use their positions and powers only for the best interest of all congregants, and never to take advantage of others for their personal gratification. Clergy sexual misconduct harms both the individuals involved and the church as a whole, because it breaches the minister's covenant with the entire congregation. We expect our ministers 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 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108.

In the event that the Safe Congregation Response Team receives allegations of clergy sexual misconduct it will immediately notify the Standing Committee, and will contact the Bay Area District Executive and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA, which will be charged with the investigation. The Response Team will thereafter act as liaison between the Standing Committee and the Bay Area District Executive and Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and will work with the Standing Committee to support, counsel and communicate with the congregation and those members who are most directly affected by the misconduct.

III RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONGREGATION AND THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Like the Ministers, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) 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 DRE 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.

IV 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.

A. Definitions

The terms used in this document will have the following meanings:

1. 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.
2. Physical abuse includes offensive physical contact or activity that causes bodily injury.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

B. Education and Training:

1. Education and training is 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 Director of Religious Education (DRE) and Religious Education (RE) 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 through the use of the following: the Code of Ethics for Those Working with Children and Youth, herein identified as the Code of Ethics (See Appendix) and RE Safety Procedures (Section VII).

2. The Standing Committee shall take responsibility for:

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

C. Hiring

1. 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 First Parish from ethical and legal liability.
2. All persons seeking paid employment at First Parish, including (but not limited to) the Senior Minister, the Associate Minister, Ministerial Interns, the DRE, R.E. assistants, the Director of Music, Business Administrator, Office Staff, Director of Tuesday Meals, and Sexton will be required to read and acknowledge receipt of a copy of the policy against harassment set forth in the First Parish Employment 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, including a Massachusetts Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) and such other multi-state 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 reference material will be confidential and will be available only as required by law and to those responsible for screening and hiring, or participating in the Safe Congregation Response Team.

V. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SAFETY PROCEDURES

A. Adult Volunteers

1. Volunteers in the Religious Education (RE) programs at First Parish Cambridge must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Prior to participating in the RE and Youth Group programs, all volunteers will agree to a yearly background check which includes a satisfactory reference and a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information). They must complete an Application Form for Volunteers and Employees Who Work With Children and Youth (See Appendix) and the Code of Ethics (See Appendix). In addition, volunteer teachers will attend a yearly teacher training session to be scheduled by the Director of Religious Education (DRE).
2. Various supervisory methods are listed below. They will help First Parish leaders avoid setting up situations in which personal boundary issues can become a problem. Some of these methods will help leaders and teachers decrease the risk of misunderstandings and offer some support for handling various concerns.
 - a. Regular consultations with the DRE.
 - b. On-going training
 - c. Parental permission whenever necessary
 - d. Visible classroom activity

B. Working with Children and Youth

1. It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation, not just those in leadership and teaching positions, to create and maintain a climate that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth. We encourage all First Parish members and friends to read and abide by the Code of Ethics for Working with Children and Youth (See Appendix). However, those working with young people in the context of our Unitarian Universalist movement have a crucial and privileged role, one which carries with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, childcare worker, teacher, or in any other role, the volunteer has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways which are affirming and inspiring to all involved.
2. Teachers, helpers, or youth group leaders who have gained the trust of young people are in a unique situation to observe behavior or be party to a conversation in which a possible abusive situation (either within or outside First Parish) is revealed. In this situation, it is the adult's responsibility to report any reasonable cause to suspect child abuse to a First Parish Mandated Reporter (the Ministers and DRE). The Ministers or DRE shall then notify the legal authorities as required by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119 Section 51A ((See Appendix). The DRE and RE Committee will provide regular training on dealing with suspected abuse or neglect.

C. Religious Education Classes/Programs (Nursery —12th Grade)

1. All classes including the nursery must be taught by a minimum of a two person teaching team. This requirement applies to off-site First Parish RE activity as well as on-site classes. Teams should consist of at least one person who has been an active participant at First Parish for at least one year or after six months if they have had previous teaching experience in a UU setting. Parents may serve as classroom aides and/or visit classes at any time. Teachers are subject to the approval of the RE Committee. One individual may be briefly alone with a group when the other must leave as dictated by common sense and necessity for such purposes as bathroom breaks and escorting individual children away from the group.
2. For grades 9-12, the youth group teachers must be at least 25 years of age.

A. General Supervision Guidelines (Sunday Morning Programming)

1. Each child will have a registration form on file that includes information about special needs and permission to accompany their RE class and teachers on walks around the Meeting House or neighborhood on Sunday mornings.
2. Parents are responsible for their children before the service begins and after the RE program has ended.
3. During services and classes, children must have a parent or another responsible adult on the premises unless prior arrangements have been made with the DRE.
4. The DRE or designated supervisor will do a walk through of all RE spaces to check in with teachers during classes. Exceptions to this procedure are discouraged; however there will occasionally be Sun days when it will not be possible for the DRE to do a walk through.
5. Nursery through First Grade parents (or designees) must pick up their child(ren) from the RE program at the end of the service. The DRE or appropriate designee will locate parents (or designees) who fail to comply.

E. General Sleepover Guidelines

1. Adults supervising youth sleepovers must be active participants at FIRST PARISH for at least one year or after six months if they have had previous youth group experience in a UU setting before volunteering. Parents who are staying over with their own youth need not have been active participants.
2. There will always be a minimum of three adults present during sleeping hours regardless of the numbers of youth attending. Two of these three adults must remain awake during these sleeping hours. During a sleepover at FIRST PARISH, there should be a minimum ratio of one adult to eight youth with one additional adult required for each additional four youth.
3. During sleepovers at First Parish, all outside doors will be locked against entry once the last youth has arrived, and will remain locked until parents arrive for pick-up in the morning.
4. A Parent/Guardian Consent and Medical Release Form and a Medical Information Form (See Appendix) will be required for each youth at the sleepover.
5. Each youth will be required to complete and sign the Youth Code of Ethics (See Appendix) for each sleepover event.

F. Transportation To and From First Parish Sanctioned Events

1. It is the responsibility of the First Parish RE Program, or the parents, to provide safe transportation to and from First Parish sanctioned events. The First Parish RE program requires the following:
 - a. When traveling to and from outings, conferences, meetings and other First Parish activities, a parent/guardian signed permission slip is required for each child/youth participating or being driven to an off-site activity. In addition, each youth must sign the Youth Code of Ethics and each adult must sign an Adult Sponsor Responsibilities Form (See Appendix).
 - b. Drivers must be at least 25 years old.
 - c. Every person in the car will have a seatbelt and age appropriate seating arranged in reference to airbag safety rules.
 - d. No driver may consume alcohol or use any form of drug which can affect physical or mental performance before or during the carrying out of his/her duty as a driver.
 - e. A minimum of two adults must accompany a group going off site. Exceptions for exigent circumstances may only be made by the primary on-site adult leader.
 - a. Each driver must show proof of license, registration, and insurance coverage upon request.
 - b. There will be a phone chain for parents of children on trips at the discretion of the DRE for arriving at destination and when leaving to return to home site.

G. First Aid and Incident Reporting

1. First aid kits are maintained by the sexton.. They are located on each floor: outside the elevator on the 2nd floor, in the kitchen adjacent to the stove on the ground floor, and beside the bathroom on the mezzanine level.
2. In case of serious injury, 911 will be called for emergency assistance. Parents and/or guardians will be notified as soon as possible and an incident report shall be completed and submitted to the DRE.
3. In case of minor injury, appropriate first aid will be applied, the parent/guardian notified, and an incident report completed and turned over to the DRE.
4. A file is maintained in office of DRE for all incident/accident reports.

H. Bullying

Dedicated to providing a supportive and nurturing environment, First Parish strives to ensure safety from violence and abuse of all kinds for our children and youth. To ensure the healthy spiritual development of all Religious Education participants, bullying, including but not limited to intimidation, coercion, sexual harassment, or verbal, sexual, or physical abuse will not be tolerated. Intimidation that may challenge the safety and well-being of Religious Education participants, whether the intimidation occurs physically at First Parish or through electronically transmitted media, must be addressed.

- Situations involving bullying will be brought to the attention of a minister, the DRE or the chair of the Standing Committee or RE Committee.
- A referral will be made to the Child/Youth Safe Congregation Advocates. The C/YSCA shall consist of a minister, the DRE and a member of the RE committee or their designee. This group shall be established and in place at all times.
- Resolution shall include parents/guardians of minors.

Recommended resolution steps with C/YSCA:

1. Sharing the concern with all involved parties and hearing each response.
2. Evaluating the degree of further response needed to adequately address the concern.
3. Moving toward reconciliation/resolution – the child/youth in question must revisit and recommit to the Religious Education Covenant.
4. If covenant is broken again, the child/youth is excluded from group for a specified time and must make amends or otherwise reconcile with affected parties before returning to the group.

Religious Education participants encompass a wide span of ages and abilities. At the discretion of the Child/Youth Safe Congregations Advocates, accommodations for very young children or for youth may be necessary, i.e., exceptions to meeting with the full C/YSCA may be made for young children; additional action or referral to the Safe Congregation Response Team is to be determined in the case of more severe offenses.

J. Note: Any exceptions to the RE Safety Procedures must be approved by the DRE.

VI. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE OR HARASSMENT

There are several situations which may prompt a response regarding a complaint or concern about sexual or physical abuse including but not limited to:

1. A child, youth or adult reports possible abuse by a First Parish official, member or attendee;
2. A First Parish official, member, friend, or attendee suspects that a child or youth is being abused;
3. Child or youth reports possible abuse by a family member or other individual; or
4. First Parish members, friends or officials learn that a First Parish member, friend or attendee (child, youth or adult) is under investigation for allegedly abusing others.

Any member or official of First Parish who receives a report of such abuse or who personally observes or has reasonable cause to suspect such abuse should immediately bring it to the attention of the Senior Minister or Associate Minister and (in the case of suspected or reported abuse of a child) the Director of Religious Education.

VII REPORTING CHILD ABUSE TO COMMUNITY AUTHORITIES

It is not the function of the Ministers, Religious Educator or Chair of the Standing Committee or the Safe Congregation Response Team to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. Rather it is both the law in Massachusetts and the policy of First Parish that in any situation in which the Minister, Associate Minister or Director of Religious Education has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected, an immediate report must be made to the State Department of Children & Families (DCF), by phone to the hotline that the DCF maintains for such purpose at 1-800-792-5200 and in a written report form promulgated by the DCF, a copy of which shall be provided to and kept on file by the Safe Congregation Response Team.

Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, First Parish will await the decisions of those authorities as to the validity of the complaint before taking any final actions. Pending the issuance of such a report it is also the responsibility of the Safe Congregation Response Team to consider and adopt, in consultation with the Standing Committee as time permits, such interim actions as may be prudent to temporarily restrict the privileges and access of any alleged abuser who is a member, friend or visitor to First Parish or any of its programs or the programs of those organizations that use or rent its facilities, as further outlined in the Section below regarding Immediate Safety Needs Of The Congregation.

In all cases the Senior Minister will also notify the Chair of the Standing Committee and the Mass Bay Area District Executive, and seek their advice and counsel. Additionally, the Senior Minister will notify First Parish's insurance company.

VIII. THE SAFE CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM

In order to ensure continuity, the Safe Congregation Response Team will be established and in place at all times, with the names and phone numbers of team members available to all members and friends of First Parish. This Team will be composed of the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Director of Religious Education and three members of First Parish, one of whom shall be a member of the Standing Committee and all of whom shall be appointed by the Standing Committee). 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.

In cases of a conflict of interest, a Team member must be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate. Their function, individually and collectively, will be to offer confidential support, advice, and counsel with concern for the safety of all parties involved. The Safe Congregation Response Team will generally have the following responsibilities:

1. Know about community resources for child abuse, treatment for sex offenders, and support groups for survivors.
2. Know about state laws regarding reporting.
3. Be a resource for people to share their concerns.
4. Evaluate applications for Religious Education (RE) teachers and youth group leaders that are flagged by the Senior or Associate Minister or Director of Religious Education as needing more information or follow up.
5. Receive allegations of possible abuse and develop a process for expedient handling of such allegations. See also the below section regarding Pastoral Needs of Congregation Regarding Reports of Abuse
6. Meet with convicted sex offenders who may wish to participate in worship to develop a Limited Access Agreement for participation.
7. Work in concert with the Worship Committee, the Ministers and the Deacons to develop a policy for avoiding and/or responding to potential or actual disruption of church worship services and other church meetings and functions, and obtaining and conducting training sessions to enable the Deacons to effectively respond to such situations.
8. 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.

All activities of the Response Team will be conducted in a confidential fashion to the extent consistent with a sufficient investigation to enable the Response Team to ensure that adequate measures are taken to protect the safety and dignity of all concerned, and may only be disclosed when necessary and appropriate as determined by the Response Team.

IX. IMMEDIATE SAFETY NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION REGARDING REPORTS OF ABUSE

1. 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 Response Team 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 Senior Minister and Chair of the Standing Committee 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 Response Team. The Senior Minister and or Religious Educator may implement similar steps while awaiting initial recommendations of the Response Team.

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

X PASTORAL NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION REGARDING REPORTS OF ABUSE

Following a report of suspected abuse, the Safe Congregation Response Team will also develop, in consultation with the Ministers and lay Pastoral Associates, a plan to address the pastoral needs of our congregation, including:

1. The person or child who has allegedly been sexually abused: This may include providing information about or referrals to appropriate professional, community and First Parish or UU resources as needed. Additionally the Safe Congregation Response Team may assist in dealing with Department of Children & Families, the District Attorney's or the Police Department as and when those authorities become involved in the matter.
2. Other members and friends of our congregation:
 - a. 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;
 - b. the Minister (or other members of the First Parish staff) to aid in dealing with the pastoral needs of the victim or accused person;
 - c. 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

d. 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).

3. 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.
4. 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.

B. The plan established will be such that both the alleged victim or victims and other individuals are not put at risk for further incidents.

XI GUIDELINES REGARDING SEXUAL OFFENDERS

A. Situations may occur involving individuals accused or convicted of sexually aggressive or violent behavior. Those situations will be addressed as follows:

1. 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.
2. 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).
3. 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 First Parish, the Response Team 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
4. In all cases the Response Team, with approval of the Senior Minister and Chair of the Standing Committee, may seek legal counsel before proceeding with either a draft or permanent Limited Access Agreement.

XII 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 First Parish or in the form of threatening phone calls, emails or other electronically transmitted messages, that may challenge our sense of individual and communal safety and well-being. Therefore, the following shall be the policy of First Parish if and when such a challenge may arise:

- A. Situations involving disruptive behavior will be brought to the attention of the Chair and the Senior Minister or Associate Minister who may refer the situation to the Safe Congregation Response Team. The Standing Committee will be notified of this action.
- B. The Safe Congregation Response Team 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 team 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.
- C. If an **immediate** response is required, this will be undertaken by the Senior Minister, if available, or the Associate Minister, if available, or the leader of the group involved, or the deacons of First Parish 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 First Parish 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 Senior Minister being present the Senior Minister and the Chair of the Standing Committee must be notified as soon as possible. All plans for follow up steps will be referred to the Safe Congregation Response Team.
- D. Persons identified as being disruptive or violent will be responded to as individuals of inherent worth and dignity.
- E. Information concerning the alleged incident(s) that led to concern will be systematically collected from the concerned parties by delegated Response Team members and documented before any action is taken.
- F. The Response Team will meet to assess the findings and decide on a course of action with the following four levels of response recommended to them.
 1. Level One: A Response Team member or members 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. Response Team members will then assess the situation.

2. 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.
3. 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 First Parish altogether for a specified period of time, with reasons for such action, and conditions for return, clearly communicated and documented.
4. Level Four: The person in question is permanently excluded from First Parish and its premises, with steps taken as needed to enforce this decision.

G. Should the Safe Congregation Response Team decide that exclusion or expulsion from the First Parish is necessary, they will consult the Standing Committee prior to action being taken.

H. The four levels of response recommended by this policy may be applied in the order determined by the Safe Congregation Response Team and the Standing Committee in their judgment.

XIII APPENDICES

A. Code of Conduct For Working With Children and Youth

B. Overnight policy

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D. Permission For Children and Youth Activities and Release

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APPENDIX A

Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Youth

Our commitment, as Unitarian Universalists, is to the inherent worth and dignity of every person, to justice, and to compassion, compels us to create a safe environment that protects children and youth from harm and promotes their spiritual growth.

Adults and older youth that are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of both individuals and community. Few areas of growth are more important than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity. Children and youth suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with or place inappropriate emotional burdens on young persons in their care.

As a leader and role model in the religious education program of First Parish Church, I will strive to:

- Nurture spiritual growth in myself and others;
- Be consciously gentle and non-threatening;
- Exercise sound judgment in assessing my emotional state and its influence on my ability to function in my role as leader;
- Remain mindful that much is communicated through non-verbal means including tone of voice, facial expression, and body language, and strive to communicate in a manner that is affirming and positive.

In addition, I will avoid the following specific behaviors. I will refrain from:

- Engaging in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children and youth;
- Harassing or verbally or physically abusing children and youth;
- Using or being under the influence of alcohol, or illegal drugs, while engaging in activities with children and youth;
- Discriminating against or harassing children and youth, based on race, color, ethnicity, religious, national origin, age, ability, gender or sexual/affective orientation.

In addition, I will take appropriate action to ensure that other adults, children, and youth adhere to this code of conduct.

I hereby agree to and affirm that I will abide by this Code of Conduct. If I violate this code, I understand that appropriate action will be taken.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

Overnights at First Parish

The following policies are established to maintain the safety of individuals and the security of the building.

In order to have an Overnight approved, the organizer needs to check with the Office Coordinator for availability of the space including potential morning conflicts. Requests for space for sleeping, meeting, and eating meals need to be identified as well as use of the kitchen. Groups are reminded that there are no available showers. As a general rule, Overnights are not approved for Saturday nights because they disrupt normal Sunday activities. The RE program may request an annual overnight on a Saturday as long as the kitchen and ground-floor restrooms are not used after 8:15am so the sexton has time to prepare the space for Sunday activities.

Once the space is confirmed as available, the organizer needs to write a memo outlining how the applicable policies will apply and identify specific voting members who are responsible. The memo is submitted to the Office Coordinator who will bring the Overnight Request to the weekly staff meeting for discussion and approval by the Senior Minister.

Overnights by First Parish adult church groups

- Three voting members need to be identified as responsible for the group. These members need to be present for the entire event, be familiar with First Parish Safe Congregation Principles, be familiar with fire safety procedures and at least one member needs to be a building key-holder.
- Group members attending need to register in advance. This list should be submitted to the Office Coordinator before the event. An attendance list should be kept to verify who attended the event.
- Event participants need to agree to a policy of no alcohol, tobacco, illegal drug use or sexual activity during the event.
- Event participants need to agree to behavior consistent with First Parish Safe Congregation Principles.
- The doors must be locked at a specified time in the evening and participants agree not to leave until the specified time in the morning.
- Space use is limited to space requested in the memo.
- The Meeting House cannot be used for Overnight activities.
- The First Parish policy on use of the Old Burying Grounds needs to be followed.

Overnights by First Parish youth and RE classes

- There will always be a minimum of three adults during sleeping hours regardless of the numbers of children/youth. The adults need to be staff or voting members who have been at First Parish for at least one year and have completed a CORI check. At least two adults needs to be awake, through-out the night – it is suggested that adults rotate shifts so all adults can get some sleep. During a sleepover at First Parish, there should be a minimum ratio of one adult to eight children/youth.
- One adult may be briefly alone with a group when the other must leave as dictated by common sense and necessity for such purposes as bathroom breaks and escorting individual children/youth away from the group.
- Registration for the event must occur in advance to assure the proper ratio of adults and children.
- An attendance list from the event must be maintained and given to the DRE after the event.
- All outside doors are locked, once the last youth arrives and the doors are not un-locked until parents arrive.
- Space use is limited to space requested in the memo.
- The Meeting House cannot be used for Overnight activities.
- The First Parish policy on use of the Old Burying Grounds needs to be followed.
- Parents must sign a consent form for youth and children to participate.

- The DRE will work with the organizers to develop an age-appropriate “code of ethics” for participants to sign – this would include guidelines for respecting each other, reporting any problems to an adult, no use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs and safety issues.

Overnights by Outside groups

Outside groups need to be sponsored by an official group or committee. Two voting members of First Parish need to be willing to spend the night with the group and ensure the age-appropriate procedures are followed. Outside groups need to follow the same procedures as First Parish groups depending on if adults or youth. If youth under the age of 18, the two voting members of First Parish need to have completed a CORI check. First Parish needs assurance that the adult chaperones accompanying the youth have CORI checks completed by their organization/church. A combination of the First Parish members and accompanying chaperones can be used to reach the required number of adults present.

APPENDIX C

Off Site Emergency Procedures

If a child requires immediate medical attention,
Dial 911.

Provide comfort and first aid, as directed by the dispatcher or an on-site first aid certified adult, to the child.

Other chaperones should ensure the rest of the group’s safety and reassure them that help is on the way.

Alert the child’s parents (see pink Emergency Packet for contact numbers).

If First Parish staff is not on site, please contact Director of Religious Education Mandy Neff at (781) 258-2453.

During regular work hours please use the First Parish number, (617) 876-7772.

If the child must be transported by medical personnel:

You can find the child’s medical insurance information in the pink Emergency Packet.

Be sure to maintain safe congregations ratios: they should be accompanied by a parent or by TWO other adults.

Remaining children should also be accompanied by two other adults, or more as required to maintain a 1:8 adult:child ratio.

Appendix D

**FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE
PERMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND RELEASE
CHURCH YEAR 2010 - 2011**

As parent or legal guardian of _____
I give permission for him/her to participate in any and all events and activities sponsored or endorsed by First Parish in Cambridge during the next twelve (12) months.

I acknowledge that by participating in church sponsored events my child may be involved in activities occurring both on and off church property, taking place during both day and evening hours, occasionally involving overnight stays, requiring transportation by motorized vehicle, involving the preparation and consumption of food and involving the use of tools, chemicals, fire or other materials and objects. I further acknowledge that by participating in church sponsored events my child may become involved in recreational and sporting activities including but not limited to hiking, climbing, swimming, skiing, basketball, volleyball, baseball and frisbee.

Accordingly, I acknowledge that participation in church sponsored events involves certain dangers and risks, may expose my child to hazards of bodily injury or property damage.

In recognition of these risks and realities and in consideration of my child being offered the opportunity to participate in and benefit from these church sponsored events I agree on behalf of myself and my child to release, waive and disclaim any and all liabilities of or claims against First Parish of Cambridge, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, servants, employees and all private persons or organizations volunteering services without charge to transport, supervise or chaperon my child while participating in such church sponsored activities including, but not limited to, any or all liabilities or claims for personal injury, property damage, court costs, attorneys fees and interest, however caused or accrued, as a result of my child participating in the church sponsored events.

In the event my child requires emergency medical attention, and I cannot be reached immediately, I give permission for the First Parish youth leaders to authorize medical attention.

I agree that First Parish in Cambridge, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, events and/or employees have the right to terminate the participation of my child in any or all church sponsored activities for failure to behave and act in accordance with the church's regulations on conduct, for failure to follow the instructions and directions of the activity supervisor(s) and/or chaperon(s), or for any conduct of my child deemed by the church, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, servants and/or employees, in their sole discretion, to be detrimental to or incompatible with the interest, harmony, comfort or welfare of others or the activity as a whole.

I further agree to indemnify First Parish of Cambridge, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, events and /or employees for any and all damage or injury my child may cause to others as a result of his/her participation in the church sponsored events.

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Name of insurance company

Policy number

Name of insured

I grant permission to First Parish of Cambridge to photograph and/or videotape my child's voice and likeness for use in First Parish publicity and outreach. Their name will not be used in any materials. I will make no monetary or other claim against First Parish of Cambridge for the use of the photograph(s)/video.

Signature

APPENDIX E.1
Religious Education for Children Volunteer Sign-up Sheet

Name: _____ E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Teaching (teams for each grade, each of 3 semesters):

Teaching Teams divide up the leading of the lessons into three parts – fall, winter, and spring. This provides consistency for the children and for the teaching teams. Teaching can be a rewarding experience and requires:

- a commitment to your teaching team,
- planning and doing some preparation before class each week, curriculum is already written
- attending 2 or 3 teacher support meetings during the year,

On the Sundays you teach:

- arrive at 10 A.M.
- get the room ready for the children before the worship
- attend (usually) the first part of the worship service
- guide the children from worship to the group rooms in a timely fashion

I am interested in working with _____ grade level as a Teaching Team member.

Non-Teaching Opportunities:

_____ **Organizing and maintaining the RE supplies** - work could be done on Sunday, but could also be done on other days. Maintaining the supply closet and supplies is much less of a time commitment, but requires

_____ **Special Event Planning and Organizing** - retreats, sleepovers, field trips, special worship services, community outreach! If you would like to help organize these kinds of events, they often require a significant amount of planning but at a specific time rather than over a longer period of time.

_____ **Assist in the nursery** - there is paid staff in the Nursery, but assistants are always needed!

RE Committee responsibilities:

The RE committee consists of members and friends of First Parish who are dedicated to the children of the parish as an integral part of our community. In addition to committee meetings, First Parish needs adults who are willing to help set up for Sunday morning RE classes, lead an occasional children's group activity or worship, be the Sunday morning RE greeter for parents (particularly visitors!) as they enter.

_____ I will serve as a member of the RE Committee, please contact me!

Opportunities with older children/ youth:

First Parish has three programs for older children and youth (high school). These are the Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality curriculum, the Coming of Age (COA) curriculum and the Youth Group. We need volunteers for all parts of these programs. Training is provided and no prior experience is required. Some of the volunteer opportunities are:

- trained OWL facilitators
- trained COA facilitators
- individual mentors for COA participants
- Youth Group facilitators
- Administrative and Coordinator help for all groups

_____ I am interested in serving in one of these programs (OWL/COA/youth) please contact me!

_____ I understand that as a teacher/volunteer I will be subject to a background check and will be provided with the appropriate form prior to September to adhere to safe congregation policy.

APPENDIX E 2
2010-2011 Religious Education Family Registration Form

First Parish in Cambridge

First Church, Unitarian Universalist

Date _____ **(Please print clearly. Thank you!)** **New Family** _____
Returning _____

Parent(s)
Guardian(s) _____
Last Name First Name Last Name First Name

Address _____
Street/city/zip Street/ city/zip

Phone _____
Home Work Home Work

E-mail _____

Children's Full Names (<i>incl. Infants</i>)	Date of Birth	Grade (10-11)	Name of School child/youth attends	Medical Information (Allergies/Diet/Other)
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Are there special concerns you want us to know about, *e.g.* death in family, special ed, needs, behavior strategies?

If any of your children have special interests or abilities, or if you have insights that will help us as we plan classes and activities, please describe them below, or talk with Director of Religious Education Mandy Neff, dre@fpcambridge.org.

Our religious education program is a cooperative effort. It works because parents and other church members share their time, talent, and skills with each other and with the children. This modeling of cooperation is as important a part of our children's learning as what gets taught in classes. Our expectation is that non-teaching parents will actively participate in our cooperative religious education program by contributing their time, talent, and skills during the course of the year. Please see Reverse Side...

Religious Education for Children Volunteer Sign-up Sheet

Please let us know how you will participate in the RE program by sharing *your* time, talent, and skills...

Teaching:

Teaching sessions run 8-10 weeks each in fall, winter, or spring. Teachers work with the same volunteer partner all session. This lets the group develop strong relationships, and provides consistency for the children.

Teaching is a rewarding experience and requires:

- Attending Teacher Training and Teacher Reflection Group once per session
- Setting up the classroom at 10 am
- Leading the weekly lesson
- Contacting parents and the Director of RE weekly about the lesson and how it went
- About an hour of planning and preparation with your partner during the week
- Completion of a CORI background check

Curriculum and supplies are provided, as well as the support of staff and the RE Committee.

I am interested in working with _____ grade level as a Teacher. Please contact me.

Non-Teaching Opportunities:

_____ **RE Supply Shopper** - Each week our RE teachers identify supply needs for their individual classrooms. Our supply shoppers are given a list of supplies early in the week and have until Friday of each week to drop off supplies at First Parish. Shoppers are reimbursed for their purchases.

_____ **Ingathering Worship Support** – Share your interest in music, worship, social justice, and more with our children during their monthly worship service. Past volunteers have played their musical instruments, led meaningful arts & crafts activities, and shared their personal experiences as an immigrant.

_____ **Special Events** – Join us at a retreat, field trip, sleep over, or holiday event! You may participate in the planning process or simply attend the event and provide support.

_____ **RE Substitute Teacher**- When one of our regular RE teachers is unavailable, we need volunteers who are willing to be called for occasional substitute teaching opportunities. We provide curriculum, supplies, and support to these teachers!

RE Committee Responsibilities:

The RE committee consists of members and friends of First Parish who are dedicated to the children and youth of the Parish as an integral part of our community. Members attend the monthly meetings to advise the Director of Religious Education on program content, policy and direction. They serves in a variety of support functions including planning and coordinating special events, leading an occasional children's group activity or worship, Sunday morning RE greeting for parents (particularly visitors!), and providing setup and food for teacher and parent events throughout the year.

_____ I will serve as a member of the RE Committee. Please contact me!

2010-11 Our Whole Lives volunteers:

First Parish will offer "OWL," a faith-based sexuality education program for grades K-1, 4-5, and 7-8 on Sunday afternoons or evenings in 2010-11. Training is provided and no prior experience is required. Some of the volunteer opportunities are:

- trained OWL Facilitators
- lunch/dinner coordinators
- administrative help for all groups

_____ I am interested in serving in the OWL program. Please contact me!

APPENDIX F

REtreat Children and Youth Code of Ethics



In the spirit of retreat, we covenant to respect each other and the Unitarian Universalist principles with our language and our physical behavior.

We agree to:

- leave electronic devices at home
- leave pets at home
- kind and thoughtful speech and behavior
- no use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs
- no sexual activity
- respect the chaperones and follow their directions
- tell an adult about a violation of this code



-tell an adult if we are feeling uncomfortable

Signed: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

If a retreat participant is in violation of the Code of Ethics, a parent will be contacted to pick up their child.

APPENDIX G

**ADULT CHAPERONE RELEASE
FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE
CHURCH YEAR 2009 - 2010**

I, _____ acknowledge that by participating in church sponsored events I may be involved in activities occurring both on and off church property, taking place during both day and evening hours, occasionally involving overnight stays, requiring transportation by motorized vehicle, involving the preparation and consumption of food and involving the use of tools, chemicals, fire or other materials and objects. I further acknowledge that by participating in church sponsored events I may become involved in recreational and sporting activities including but not limited to hiking, climbing, swimming, skiing, basketball, volleyball, baseball and frisbee.

Accordingly, I acknowledge that participation in church sponsored events involves certain dangers and risks, may expose me to hazards of bodily injury or property damage.

In recognition of these risks and realities and in consideration of being offered the opportunity to participate in and benefit from these church sponsored events I agree to release, waive and disclaim any and all liabilities of or claims against First Parish of Cambridge, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, servants, employees and all private persons or organizations volunteering services without charge to transport or supervise while participating in such church sponsored activities including, but not limited to, any or all liabilities or claims for personal injury, property damage, court costs, attorneys fees and interest, however caused or accrued, as a result of my participation in the church sponsored events.

I agree that First Parish in Cambridge, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, events and/or employees have the right to terminate my participation in any or all church sponsored activities for failure to behave and act in accordance with the church's regulations on conduct, for failure to follow the instructions and directions of the activity supervisor(s), or for any conduct of I deemed by the church, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, servants and/or employees, in their sole discretion, to be detrimental to or incompatible with the interest, harmony, comfort or welfare of others or the activity as a whole.

I further agree to indemnify First Parish of Cambridge, its officers, board members, supervisors, agents, events and /or employees for any and all damage or injury I may cause to others as a result of my participation in the church sponsored events.

Signature

Date

Name of insured

Name of insurance company

Policy number

I certify that I have current automobile liability insurance.

Signature

In the event I require emergency medical attention, please contact :

_____.