

# The Unitarian Church of All Souls

## Safe Congregation Policy

updated September 2019

A variety of potential dangers are inherent in operating a congregation. These include physical site (including buildings and grounds), operation of the Religious Education (RE) program, transportation and supervision of children offsite, and instances of disruptive behavior involving members, friends, and/or staff of the congregation.

In the past few years, the issue of making our congregations safe places has become more prominent. Congregations are carefully and intentionally putting into place policies around all kinds of safety issues. Openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles. However, when any person's physical, sexual, emotional wellbeing, or freedom to safely express personal beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly.

Our commitment, as Unitarian Universalists, to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to justice and compassion, compels us to create a safe and nurturing environment that protects children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth while part of our community. Additionally, we affirm our commitment to maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, physical ability, gender, or sexual/affectional orientation. We pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner that conveys mutual respect and consideration.

If we are to be a caring community, we must ensure that everyone who comes here feels valued, safe, and secure. This congregation accepts responsibility to educate ourselves and our children about sexual misconduct, abuse, molestation, harassment, and exploitation. We pledge to do our best to protect and support those who come to us either at risk or in crisis.

The Unitarian Church of All Souls ("All Souls Church") is a safe congregation where practices and procedures serve to ensure that all members, friends, adults, children, and youth are treated with respect.

This policy will be periodically reviewed by the Response Team and Ministers. It will be posted on the All Souls website as a reference and will be easily accessible to all members, visitors, and friends. Our policies are comprehensive and cover a large range of issues related to all aspects of safety.

Section I. Religious Education Program Safety  
Staff and Volunteers  
    Selection and Screening of Staff & Volunteers  
    Screening Process and Documentation  
    Training and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers  
Supervision of Children and Youth  
    General Guidelines  
    Nursery  
    Offsite and Fieldtrips  
    Church Lock-Ins and Sleepovers  
    Physical Safety of Children, Youth, and Adults  
Reporting Child Abuse

Section II. Personal Safety  
Prevention of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation  
Disruptive Behavior  
Alcohol Policy  
Service Animal Policy  
Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy  
Online Communications/Social Media  
Surveillance Footage  
Media

Section III. Building Safety  
Emergency Evacuation of the Buildings  
First Aid Policy and Equipment  
Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Maintenance  
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/AED Training

Section IV Safe Congregation Response Team

Appendix A Code of Ethics for Working with Children  
Appendix B Youth Code of Ethics for Sleepovers  
Appendix C Agreement to Teach  
Appendix D Limited Access Agreement  
Appendix E Anti-Sexual Harassment Complaint Form

**\*\*Please note the Religious Education Program is now called the ASK (All Souls Kids) Program. The language of *religious education* will be maintained in this document for one year for clarity to all who read it.\*\***

## Section I Religious Education Program Safety

### **Staff and Volunteers**

#### A. Selection and Screening of Staff and Volunteers

The religious educator is responsible for the recruitment, training, and supervision of all teachers and leaders within the Religious Education Program and Youth Program at All Souls Church. The religious educator will recruit and carefully screen all applicants for paid and volunteer positions. All Souls Church will use screening documents which applicants must complete, sign, and submit as a condition of employment or appointment, both for initial hire and ongoing work. All volunteers must sign the Code of Ethics (see Appendix A). In addition, all teachers must sign the Agreement to Teach (see Appendix C).

Paid or volunteer staff known to have criminal charges pending or who have been convicted of or who have pled guilty to any sexual or physical abuse or assault charge will not be allowed to work with children or youth.

Paid or volunteer staff who break the Code of Ethics will be dismissed immediately.

Senior High Youth Group Leaders must be at least 25 years of age, unless a special exception is made by the religious educator.

#### B. Screening Process and Documentation

All paid or volunteer staff over age 18 must have a background check. The religious educator or designee shall be responsible for overseeing completion of the appropriate paperwork and for checking references online. The religious educator shall follow up to ensure that the reference checks have been completed and submitted appropriately. If the applicant is not known to the religious educator, confirmation of identity will be requested.

For all RE-related positions, excluding creative workshop teachers, including teachers, youth group advisors, and worship leaders, the applicant shall have been a congregant for at least six months, or have been a member of another Unitarian Universalist congregation and be able to supply references if asked. Youth group advisors and creative workshop teachers are hired through mutual agreement, references upon request, and a background check.

The records of the screenings and related forms will be kept in a confidential file. When criminal records checks are performed, they will be reviewed and kept confidential. Access to such information will be limited to the Clergy Team and religious educator as necessary.

#### C. Training and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

The nature of how we inform and train volunteers changes all the time. The religious educator will offer occasional teacher trainings, post videos and other resources on the

website, offer books/articles to read and suggest other trainings so that volunteers are able to be confident in their work as educators.

Parents and families also need to be oriented to the religious education program. The religious educator will include a discussion of this policy to families and volunteers during orientation to the RE program and inform them of where they can find a copy of it on the website.

Staff and volunteers working with children and youth shall be oriented to the Safe Congregations policy annually.

The Safe Congregations policy will be made readily available to members of the congregation.

## **Supervision of Children and Youth**

### **A. General Guidelines**

Religious education classes are available from 10:00 until 12:15 pm on most Sundays during the school year. Nursery care is available from 9:45 am-12:15 pm on most Sundays throughout the year. All classes will be observed by the religious educator or designee. Each class must have at least two non-related adults or an adult and a youth teacher assistant present in the classroom at all times. All classes are open for visitors and observation at any point. The religious educator and/or designee will visit each class at least one to be a presence and insure no issues are present.

Immediately following services, parents are expected to pick up their children from the respective teacher or nursery staff or from Chapel which is at 11 to 11:15. If children are not participating in second hour workshops, then at this time, parents again resume supervision responsibility for their children until leaving the grounds. After second hour workshops, parents retrieve their children and again resume supervision of their children. No child through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be dismissed from religious education without an appropriate parent or guardian. Children and youth 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up may be dismissed on their own.

The supervision of children and youth while on church grounds and during church functions is a very important aspect of maintaining a safe congregation. Parents or guardians of children and youth are responsible for their children at all functions and field trips, unless specifically left in the care of a childcare volunteer or staff member.

### **B. Nursery**

Nursery teacher to student ratio is one adult per three children under two years of age. If this ratio is exceeded, a parent must stay in the room until the hour is over.

### **C. Offsite and Fieldtrips**

For church-related fieldtrips and offsite functions, the laws of the state and the rules of the Unitarian Universalist Association must be adhered to including:

1. Every driver must have a valid driver's license and an actively insured car.
2. A permission form that includes transport and medical information must be completed and signed.

#### D. Church Lock-Ins and Sleepovers

##### General Sleepover Guidelines

1. General Sleepover guidelines developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association will be followed for on-site lock-ins and sleepovers.
2. Each youth will be required to complete and sign a Youth Code of Ethics for each sleepover event. (See Appendix B.)
3. Youth, Parents, and Youth Advisors will follow the guidelines set up by the UUA and CER when participating in Cons or other regional events.

#### E. Physical Safety of Children, Youth, and Adults

Proper attention to and management of physical safety concerns is another important aspect of maintaining a safe congregation. In addition to taking action on immediate safety issues that arise, the following steps will be implemented to routinely monitor physical safety:

- \* An annual fire drill will occur each fall to ensure a plan for Religious Education classroom safety. Teachers and leaders are aware of fire procedures.
- \* Buildings and classrooms will be observed by the religious educator and/or designee for safety and cleanliness.

### **Reporting Child Abuse**

A. It is not the function of the Ministers, Religious Educator, or President of the Board of Trustees to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. Rather it is both New York law and the policy of All Souls to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the NYC Children's Administrative Services. Individuals should report to a Minister, the religious educator or a Board Member when there is a situation in which there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected.

B. Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, the church will rely on the decisions of those authorities as to the validity of the complaint. It is also the church's responsibility under these guidelines to develop an appropriate plan of response to the allegations.

C. In all cases, the Senior Minister will also notify the President of the Board and the UUA, and seek their advice and counsel. Additionally, the Minister will notify the Church's insurance company.

D. In the event the accused abuser is the Senior Minister, reports will be filed by and the notifications referenced above will be the responsibility of the Associate Minister.

## **Section II Personal Safety**

### **Prevention of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation**

Sexual abuse prevention at All Souls is addressed through education of children, youth, adults, and staff members. This includes working to educate congregation members on the prevalence of child sexual abuse, programs for parents to educate their children about healthy sexuality, and ensuring that staff, lay leaders, and volunteers properly handle a suspected case of abuse of any kind -- sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect.

There are many resources for congregations to further educate and work towards prevention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The Rev. Debra Haffner has a helpful document online for adults titled "Balancing Acts: Keeping Children and Youth Safe in Congregations" <http://www.uua.org/safe/children/index.shtml>. The Safe Congregations Handbook is also available online at <http://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/index.shtml>.

For children and youth, All Souls believes that using the UUA curriculum Our Whole Lives (OWL) is one of the best methods to prevent or decrease the risk of sexual abuse. Curricula are used for 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades and for 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades OWL or another similar program will assist children and youth to recognize when someone is behaving in an inappropriate manner toward them. It is equally important for children and youth to develop a learned response in the event that anyone tries to engage them in inappropriate behavior.

For adults, All Souls cultivates healthy sexuality throughout the lifespan through worship, adult education programs, spiritual development programs, and learning opportunities, which vary each church year.

In the Case of Convicted or Unresolved Sexual Abuse or Offense:

- Keeping our Unitarian Universalist principles in mind, we must set boundaries for participation with persons who have a history of sexual abuse or offense with children, youth, or adults.
- If it is determined through a background check that a potential volunteer or potential church staff person has an unresolved accusation of abuse or offense, or has been convicted of a sexual abuse/ offense, the person shall not be hired.
- In the case of a member or friend of the congregation who has such a history, the first response shall be for the person to meet with the Senior Minister or Associate Minister to establish boundaries for participation.
- In coordination with the person and the team of staff and lay leadership (Safe Congregations Response Team – See Section IV), a Limited Access Agreement (Appendix D) shall be put in place. This tool will be used to welcome the person to

only certain specified church functions, and only under specified conditions. The Limited Access Agreement must be signed by the person prior to being admitted into All Souls Church. Refusal to sign allows All Souls Church the right to refuse admittance of the person to all church services, functions, and activities.

The congregation will take seriously all allegations and reports of mistreatment, misconduct, or any other incident deemed unsafe.

### **Disruptive Behavior**

Although the congregation of All Souls believes in civility and tolerance, we recognize the need to address the potential for behavior that may challenge our sense of individual and communal safety and wellbeing. Therefore, the following shall be the policy of the church if, and when, such a challenge may arise:

1. Situations involving disruptive behavior will be brought to the attention of the President of the Board of Trustees, the Clergy Team, and staff as deemed necessary. The Senior Minister will determine if the situation should be referred to the Safe Congregation Response Team (Section IV). All situations referred to the Response Team will also be reported to the Board of Trustees.
2. The SC Response Team will investigate the matter using this policy for guidance.
3. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Senior Minister or staff member onsite and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed. If further assistance is required, 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 President of the Board of Trustees must be notified. All plans for follow-up steps will be referred to the Response Team.
4. Persons identified as being disruptive will be responded to as individuals of dignity and worth.
5. 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.
6. 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.

Level One: A Response Team member or members contact the person named as the source of the disruption and informs him/her 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.

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 (sometimes referred to as a “covenant”) for clearly-defined behavior change will be negotiated. Such communication and contract will be documented.

Level Three: If the person in question refuses to negotiate a contract, refuses to abide by a contract, or engages in behavior of sufficient severity, he or she may be excluded from the church for a specified period of time, with reasons for such action and conditions for return clearly communicated and documented.

Level Four: The person in question is permanently excluded from the church and the church premises with steps taken as needed to enforce the integrity of this decision.

7. Should the Response Team decide that exclusion or expulsion from the church is necessary, they will consult the Board of Trustees prior to this action being taken. The minutes of the Board of Trustees shall record the name of any person permanently excluded from the church.

8. The four levels of response recommended by this policy may be applied in the order determined by the Response Team and the Board of Trustees in their judgement.

9. If appropriate, the Response Team may offer referrals for professional services.

10. All documentation developed in the course of investigating and resolving allegations of disruptive behavior will be kept confidential. The Senior Minister will be responsible for determining access to such documentation and for ensuring its security.

11. To aid in evaluating the problem and determining the appropriate response, the following points will be used in assessing the nature and severity of referred problems.

a. Dangerousness: Is the individual a source of threat or harm to persons or property?

b. Disruptiveness: What is the extent of disruption to church functions?

c. Congregational Integrity: How likely is it that existing or prospective church members will be driven away by the alleged behavior?

d. Causes: Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?

e. Probability of Change: How likely is it that the problem behavior will be eliminated in the future?



f. History: What has been the frequency and the degree of disruption caused by the individual in the past?

## **Alcohol Policy**

It is the policy of the church that the responsible consumption of alcohol by adults at church events is acceptable. If alcohol is to be served at church events, alternative beverages shall also be provided. Alcohol will be served in a separate area from food and other drink.

Alcohol shall not be served at events where children or youth will be present. Alcoholic beverages may not be served by or to anyone under 21. No one under 21 may handle any container that has alcohol in it or has contained alcohol. Persons under 21 who are serving or cleaning up shall not handle glasses or other containers of alcohol left on tables.

On rare occasions, there may be special events at which alcohol is served to adults and to which some children will attend with their parents. All parents will be responsible for close supervision of their children at these events. All Souls will not be held liable.

Alcohol stored at All Souls must be locked up and inaccessible to people under 21.

Alcohol brought in for non-church events will be self-monitored by the group to be sure the policy is followed. All containers of alcohol brought in shall be removed by representatives of the non-church event or disposed of by the custodial staff.

Because it would undermine the purpose of maintaining control over alcohol on the premises, no one may bring a personal container of alcohol onto the church premises or consume alcohol on the premises that has not been handled in accordance with this policy.

Any person who appears to be intoxicated to the point of being disruptive or posing a danger to anyone shall be brought to the attention of a staff member or custodian onsite who shall take appropriate action, including, if necessary, requiring the violator to leave the premises. The police can and will be called if the situation demands such action.

The events manager will ensure that all those using church space and serving alcohol receive a copy of the alcohol policy and that they understand it.

## **Service Animal Policy**

Animals are not permitted on the premises of All Souls, as a general policy, although exceptions may be made in consultation with the Senior Minister, the Associate Minister, and the Executive Director. Further,

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), All Souls Church defines service animals as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.”

A service animal will be identified by its uniform and will be allowed on the premises of All Souls with its handler.

Service animals must remain with their handlers.

Service animals shall not sit on church furniture.

Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or unless the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

Service animals shall not obstruct an area used for emergency evacuation.

### **Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy**

All Souls Church defines an emotional support animal (ESA) as an animal (typically a dog or cat) that provides a therapeutic benefit to its owner through companionship and is not specifically trained or certified to perform tasks for a person who suffers from emotional, psychiatric, or mental health-related disabilities. Under the law, an ESA does not qualify as a service animal and, thus, is not granted legal access to places of public accommodation by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Therefore, requests made by persons who wish to access All Souls with their ESA are treated as a unique situation, which may be considered as an exception to the service animal policy. Approval of an ESA is made strictly on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, and/or the Executive Director.

Those requesting an ESA should have current documentation from a licensed mental health professional or physician treating their mental health-related disability stating that the person has a mental health-related disability and that the animal accompanying the congregant is necessary to their mental health or treatment along with the mental health professional’s license number (or type, issue date, and state in which the license was issued).

Unless granted approval, an ESA is not permitted on the grounds of All Souls for Sunday services, other classes, events, or programs.

Persons with ESAs who are granted reasonable accommodation will receive a special tag at that time and must display this tag in order for staff, ushers, and other community members to readily identify their ESA as approved. Approved ESAs must comply with all the expectations listed under the service animal policy. In addition, ESAs are encouraged to find seating away from ADA-approved service animals. Any animals granted approval to accompany their owners on All Souls' property will be asked to relocate or remove their animal if it triggers an allergic or emotionally-traumatic reaction in another member of the All Souls community.

## **Online Communications/ Social Media Policy**

### **A. Electronic Communications Policy Guidelines for those working with the ASK program**

The vast numbers of communication possibilities and the speed of technology require that adults working with youth be aware of the need to maintain appropriate relational boundaries regardless of the communication medium. The spirit of this approach requires the adult to think of all communications as if they are happening in person (face to face) and to apply the same standards applied to face-to-face meetings to exchanges through electronic media.

Group communications through email, Facebook, etc. are appropriate. These media provide powerful modes of connecting with youth and for youth to connect with each other in their fast-paced world and should be channeled as such.

The ONLY appropriate interaction between youth and adults on email or social media must be as a group or with no less than three people. There will be no one-on-one communications allowed; this includes email, texts, Instagram, messaging services, Snapchat, etc. In the case of conducting youth group business, discussions of logistics, church event planning, or something more related to one person, include the other youth advisors or the religious educator in the communication loop.

Inappropriate actions include but are not limited to: initiating and engaging youth in personal/private conversations better discussed in person, exploring youths' Facebook pages as peers – i.e., commenting on personal photos or “poking.”

Adult advisors need to remind youth that the specific covenant youth group members have agreed to abide by during group time at the Church also applies to online communications and communities set up specifically for the group.

Adults must recognize the public nature of social networking sites and see themselves as representatives of All Souls Church (volunteer or paid.) Thus, advisors agree not to post any material that could be deemed inappropriate or explicit. So doing is cause for dismissal, which can be undertaken at the Religious Educator's discretion at any point.

If an adult advisor is in doubt about the appropriateness of any ongoing or new forms for communication, she/he should consult with the Religious Educator, and/or the Family Ministry Team (FKA the RE Committee) for guidance.

## B. General Guidelines for All Social Media

These guidelines are for anyone who posts to any “social media”: i.e., any channel for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, etc. The tone of any All Souls text, audio, or video should reflect the values of this congregation, whether it is original content being posted or a comment on content created by someone else.

All Souls Church welcomes contributions to conversations about All Souls on social media and content directly related to All Souls and to Unitarian Universalism. Wall posts, comments, photos, and other content posted on social media should be relevant to these areas of interest, respectful of the people involved, and mindful of the UUA’s Purposes and Principles.

All Souls has the right to delete any inappropriate content from the Facebook page, including but not limited to: irrelevant content, redundant content, hateful content, malicious content, uncivil or disrespectful content, attacks or complaints against an individual, financial solicitations, endorsements of a political candidate or party, and content that violates Facebook’s terms of use, code of conduct, or other policies. Content that violates Facebook’s policies may also be reported to Facebook.

Consult communications staff if setting up an All Souls social media site. If you are interested in setting up an All Souls account—Facebook page, Twitter feed, blog, etc.—first discuss with communications staff. At least one All Souls staff person shall be an administrator on any All Souls-related social media accounts.

Observe copyright rules. Always credit others for their work; and make sure you have permission to use material before you do so. “Fair use” requirements dictate that you should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else’s work without explicit permission; always attribute work to its original author or source. Where possible, link to others’ content rather than copy it.

Those who manage and produce content for the congregation’s new media tools should agree to:

- Consistently and fairly enforce stated policies.
- Prioritize Confidentiality: Do not post photos of children without written consent of their parent or guardian. If an event is being filmed or photographed, tell people in advance and at the event and provide an opt-out option.
- Back up all content.

## **Surveillance Footage**

When theft, injuries, and other incidents occur at church, surveillance footage can provide an account of what happened. Surveillance cameras can help gather useful information, but there are limits to where cameras should be placed. Surveillance efforts should balance ministry security with individual privacy.

**Notification.** A sign shall be posted at the receptionist area or building entrance announcing that surveillance cameras are in use.

**Privacy.** Cameras shall be placed in public areas only such as the sanctuary, vestibule, or hallways—where an individual can expect to be seen by others is generally acceptable. However, restrooms, and other private spaces should be off-limits for cameras.

**Recording and storing video content.** Video footage can be helpful evidence if an incident occurs on church property. In the case of an incident of a crime such as robbery, assault, or murder, the video content will be made available to the NYPD at its request. If the video content is requested by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a warrant must be provided at the time of the request and will be provided only at the decision of the Senior Minister in collaboration with the Associate Minister and Executive Director.

Recorded video is only kept for 7 days. Recorded video cannot be viewed by any staff except those authorized by the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, or Executive Director. Video footage shall be kept secure.

## **Media**

### **A. Spokespersons**

Only authorized All Souls staff spokespersons -- Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Executive Director, Music Director, or communications staff -- may communicate directly with members of the media on behalf of All Souls. Other staff should check with those authorized first before speaking to the media. It is in the best interest of All Souls to maintain relations with the media in an open, pragmatic manner, and to respond promptly to their legitimate interests.

All media requests should be recorded accurately and passed on to the following: Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Executive Director, Music Director, and communications staff.

Media requests include inquiries for interviews, commentary, and information, and include all media – TV/radio, newspapers, magazines, local/national media, and internet sites.

Authorized All Souls spokespersons will respond on behalf of the church or will assist in identifying the appropriate person from staff to handle the response.

Receptionists are not authorized to speak to reporters without advance knowledge and coordination with the appropriate staff spokesperson or communications personnel.

Volunteers who are approached by the media should be instructed to direct all media calls to the appropriate staff spokespersons or communications personnel.

All media calls are to be reported to the communications staff for follow-up and archiving. Provide the reporter's name, media outlet, media telephone number, the anticipated publication date, and the subject of the story.

#### B. Crisis Communication

Communication from All Souls regarding unexpected events or serious incidents must be approved by the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, and the Executive Director. Written communication regarding such an incident as such will be prepared in collaboration with the aforementioned staff members and the Board of Trustees. In the event of an extreme crisis, the situation will be shared with the UUA Communications Office and a plan of action determined.

#### C. Press Releases

Press releases are written by or coordinated by the communications staff. Press releases may also be written by a paid freelance writer. Staff members are responsible for proofreading and returning releases written on their behalf to the writer in a timely manner to meet publisher deadlines.

## **Section III Building Safety**

### **Emergency Evacuation of the Buildings**

The emergency evacuation plan is designed to provide the safest exit strategy for attendees of church and RE programs in the event of an emergency. It seeks to evacuate the church in a minimum amount of time by assigning exit paths to evacuees based on their location in the building, thus minimizing congestion at any one exit.

Directions will be provided by “Monitors.” Monitors are: staff, worship associates, ushers, greeters, and RE teachers and assistants. Directions provided by the monitors should be obeyed without hesitation. The monitors’ primary goal is to protect attendees from physical harm and secondarily to minimize psychological trauma created by an emergency.

Maps of the building with egress routes will be posted in hallways, elevators, stairwells, and every room used by All Souls congregants and non-church groups.

Those with mobility issues will be assigned a partner who will make sure they get out of the building. This list will be created and reviewed by the Lay Pastoral Associates.

Procedures for emergency evacuation will be kept in the church office and at the desk of the receptionist. These procedures will be given to every staff member, RE volunteers, and the ushers/greeters. They will be included in the information given to new staff. They will be included in the Board of Trustees Handbook. They will be reviewed two times a year at staff meetings.

All church emergency evacuations will be scheduled accordingly.

Emergency staff phone numbers will be accessible at the receptionist desk and in the church office.

### **First Aid Policy and Equipment**

Comprehensive first aid kits will be kept in the receptionist area and in the kitchen. First Aid kits may be located in other various sites throughout the All Souls building.

First aid kits will be monitored and resupplied by staff in coordination with the Facilities Manager.

### **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)**

Two AED units will be maintained in the building:

Location 1 is in the kitchen, inside the door on the Minot Simons side.

Location 2 is in the sanctuary vestibule (narthex), in the stairwell on the 80<sup>th</sup> Street side.

The Facilities Manager will inspect the AED devices to insure they are functional.

## **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/AED Training/First Aid Training**

The ASK (All Souls Kids) Program (formerly known as the Religious Education Program) is responsible for scheduling trainings at least once a year for nursery workers, teachers, and staff.

## **Section IV Safe Congregation Response Team**

This Team will be composed of the Associate Minister, Religious Educator, and two members of the congregation, ideally someone in the health professions or a social worker. It is preferable that the lay 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 Response Team member must be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate.

The function of the Response Team will be to offer confidential support, advice, and counsel with concern for the safety of all parties involved. The Response Team ensures that the Safe Congregation Policy is known and followed. In addition, they 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. Investigate disruptive behavior allegations and create a contract or covenant where appropriate.
5. Receive allegations of possible abuse and develop a process for expedient handling of such allegations.
6. Meet with convicted sex offenders to develop a Limited Access Agreement for participation in church activities.
7. All activities of the Response Team will be conducted in a confidential fashion and may only be disclosed when necessary and appropriate as determined by the Response Team.

This Safe Congregation Policy is adapted from the All Souls Safe Congregation Policy dated 2013, as well as the Safe Congregation Policy of The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood.



## Appendix A

### CODE OF ETHICS FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Those who teach and/or lead our children and youth play a key role in fostering the spiritual formation of our children and youth. It is therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable our children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility.

Therefore, those who teach and/or lead our children/youth will:

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

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree my electronic communications with children and youth will not be one-on-one but always in the context of a group.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not friend a child or youth on Facebook without the explicit authorization of the parent and the Religious Educator.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand volunteering with children/youth requires a background check.

I have read the above Code of Ethics and understand that these guidelines govern expected behavior of those working with the children and youth at The Unitarian Church of All Souls.

Name Printed \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Leaders shall be informed of the Code of Ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

Appendix B

YOUTH CODE OF ETHICS FOR SLEEPOVERS/OVERNIGHT TRIPS

I am attending the

\_\_\_\_\_ on

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of event) (date of event)

I understand that this event is coordinated by

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(name of person, persons, or committee)

I understand my behavior will affect the youth community of The Unitarian Church of All Souls. While attending this event:

- I will act in ways that encourage the wellbeing, safety, and the best interests of everyone attending this event.
- I will follow all federal, state, and local laws.
- I will work out a system of communication with my sponsor during this event.
- I understand that I am encouraged to express myself in healthy ways and to respect other's boundaries.
- I understand that behavior that breaks down the community, including sexual activity and sexual harassment, is inappropriate and therefore, not permitted in this setting.
- I will not consume any alcohol or illegal drugs.
- I understand that my sponsor has also agreed to refrain from any use of alcohol or illegal drugs during this event.

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
have read and understand the Youth Code of Ethics. I agree to abide by these guidelines for the duration of the event. I understand that if I break this agreement, my parents/guardians will be contacted and that I may be prohibited from attending any future events sponsored by All Souls.

## Appendix C

### AGREEMENT TO TEACH AT THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ALL SOULS

I have attended the teacher training session on \_\_\_\_\_ or met with the Religious Educator. I have received all training as outlined in the safety policy and understand all procedures.

I have read the documents provided for me on the All Souls Religious Education website. I understand these are for my reference and to help support my teaching at All Souls. I can refer to them at any time on the website at [www.allsoulsreligioused.org](http://www.allsoulsreligioused.org).

I have signed the Code of Ethics statement.

I affirm that I have never been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty to any sexual crime. I also have not pled guilty to a lesser charge after having been charged with a sexual crime. I have never engaged in any form of child abuse, including sexual abuse. I have never been determined to have engaged in any sexual offenses in any civil, administrative, ecclesiastical forum, or other forum.

If there are any facts or circumstances in my background that call into question my being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children, youth, or vulnerable adults, I have met to review this information confidentially with the Religious Educator.

Further, I agree to notify the Religious educator immediately should I be accused of sexual abuse, sexual offenses, sexual harassment, or other improprieties in the time that I am working with children and/or youth in this congregation.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT

The Unitarian Church of All Souls 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 (being among us) 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.

We welcome you to our congregation and our membership, but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult education, all adult social events, and well-supervised intergenerational events. You are to avoid all contact with children and youth on congregation property or congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- i. Do not talk with children.
- ii. 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, or driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
- iii. Remain in the presence of an adult who knows your situation at all times when children are present.
- iv. If a child in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- v. Refrain from being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children or youth are in session, such as nursery school or youth group.

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

---

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

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

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Minister \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

RE \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E

**ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT FORM**

New York State Labor Law requires all employers to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy that includes a complaint form to report alleged incidents of sexual harassment.

If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you are encouraged to complete this form and submit it to the Senior Minister or the Associate Minister of All Souls by email or by mail to: The Unitarian Church of All Souls, 1157 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10075; or in person. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.

If you are more comfortable reporting verbally or in another manner, your employer should complete this form, provide you with a copy and follow its sexual harassment prevention policy by investigating the claims as outlined at the end of this form.

**For additional resources, visit: [ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace](http://ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace)**

**COMPLAINANT INFORMATION**

Name:

Work Address:

Work Phone:

Job Title:

Email:

Select Preferred Communication Method:    Email   Phone   In person

**SUPERVISORY INFORMATION**

Immediate Supervisor's Name:

Title:

Work Phone:

Work Address:

**COMPLAINT INFORMATION**

1. Your complaint of Sexual Harassment is made about:

Name:

Title:

Work Address:

Work Phone:

Relationship to you: Supervisor Subordinate Co-Worker Other

2. Please describe what happened and how it is affecting you and your work. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

3. Date(s) sexual harassment occurred:

Is the sexual harassment continuing? Yes No

4. Please list the name and contact information of any witnesses or individuals who may have information related to your complaint:

*The last question is optional, but may help the investigation.*

5. Have you previously complained or provided information (verbal or written) about related incidents? If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information?

If you have retained legal counsel and would like us to work with them, please provide their contact information.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Instructions for Employers**

If you receive a complaint about alleged sexual harassment, follow your sexual harassment prevention policy.

An investigation involves:

- Speaking with the employee
- Speaking with the alleged harasser
- Interviewing witnesses
- Collecting and reviewing any related documents

While the process may vary from case to case, all allegations should be investigated promptly and resolved as quickly as possible. The investigation should be kept confidential to the extent possible.

Document the findings of the investigation and basis for your decision along with any corrective actions taken and notify the employee and the individual(s) against whom the complaint was made. This may be done via email.



