

**WESTMINSTER UNITARIAN CHURCH**

**CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES**

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## Table Of Contents

<a href="#">Preamble</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Summary of Policies</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Article I: SCREENING AND SELECTION OF WORKERS WITH CHILDREN &amp; YOUTH</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Article II: BACKGROUND CHECKS</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Article III: SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Article IV: CONDUCT FOR WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH</a> .....	13
<a href="#">Article V: TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH</a> .....	15
<a href="#">ARTICLE VI: THE SAFER CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM (SCRT)</a> .....	17
<a href="#">ARTICLE VII. COMPLAINTS OF CHILD ABUSE</a> .....	20
<a href="#">ARTICLE VIII. DISRUPTIVE, VIOLENT, OR HARRASSING BEHAVIOR</a> .....	22
<a href="#">ARTICLE IX. PRIOR OFFENDER</a> .....	24
<b>APPENDICES: FORMS AND TEMPLATES</b> .....	
<a href="#">Appendix 1: Westminster Unitarian Church Background Verification Release Form</a> .....	28
<a href="#">Appendix 2: Westminster Unitarian Church Religious Education Youth Permission Form</a> .....	30
<a href="#">Appendix 3: Westminster Unitarian Church Report of Suspected Incident Involving a Minor</a> .....	31
<a href="#">Appendix 4: Westminster Unitarian Church Code of Ethics For Adults and Older Youth Working with Children and Youth</a> .....	32
<a href="#">Appendix 5A: Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement: Allegation of Sexual Misconduct by an Adult: Confidential</a> .....	33
<a href="#">Appendix 5B: Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement: Allegation of Sexual Misconduct by a Minor: Confidential</a> .....	35
<a href="#">Appendix 6A: Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement: Convicted Adult Sex Offender: Confidential</a> .....	37
<a href="#">Appendix 6B: Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement: Convicted Minor Sex Offender: Confidential</a> .....	39
<a href="#">Appendix 7: Westminster Unitarian Church Behavioral Agreement for Disruptive Person</a> .....	41
<a href="#">Appendix 8: Sex Offender Release of Information Form</a> .....	42
<a href="#">Appendix 9: Sample Letter of Temporary Exclusion</a> .....	43
<a href="#">Appendix 10: Sample Letter of Permanent Exclusion</a> .....	44

## Preamble

We at Westminster Unitarian Church (WUC) recognize the importance of creating a community in which everyone is safe. This responsibility is particularly important with respect to our children and youth. We recognize that religious communities are particularly vulnerable to incidents of abuse because of the high level of trust, the welcoming spirit, and the strong reliance on volunteers, especially in programs for children and youth.

To minimize the risk of abuse in youth and children, we recognize the need to adopt policies and procedures to guard against such incidents. As a people of faith, we look to our Unitarian Universalist Principles to guide our policy-making. We apply our affirmation of the worth and dignity of all people and our search for justice, equity and compassion in human relations to these policies, which support our being together in community.

We recognize that to adequately address the need for a safe environment, we will need to make changes and sacrifice some convenience; we know, however, that it is our responsibility to respond to the reality of our situation and to protect our children and youth.

In this spirit, we endorse the following Child and Youth Protection Policies for WUC events.

## Summary of Policies

The WUC Child and Youth Protection Policies contain the following Articles:

### **I. Screening and Selection of Workers with Children and Youth**

#### 1) Definitions

- a. Workers
- b. Adults
- c. Group
- d. Director of Religious Education (DRE)
- e. Westminster Unitarian Church (WUC) Event

#### 2) Qualifications

- a. Criminal Background Check
- b. Instructor and Driver for Grades 7-12
- c. Assistant (Grd 7-12)/Instructor (PreK-6) age limits and activity term at WUC
- d. Assistant (PreK-6) age limit and activity term at WUC
- e. Babysitters
- f. Identification
- g. WUC Code of Conduct
- h. Religious Education Workers
- i. Special Circumstances

### **II. Background Checks**

- 1) Purpose
- 2) Individuals to be Checked
- 3) Timing
- 4) Type of Screen
- 5) Application
- 6) Review
- 7) Appeal
- 8) Confidentiality

### **III. Supervision Requirements**

- 1) Supervision during WUC religious education classes and WUC religious education-sponsored activities
- 2) Supervision before class, after class, and during non-religious education-sponsored activities

### **IV. Conduct for Workers with Children and Youth**

- 1) Child Abuse

- a. Physical Abuse
- b. Physical Neglect
- c. Sexual Abuse
- d. Emotional Abuse
- 2) Isolated Contact with Youth
- 3) Friendship with Youth
- 4) Unofficial Contact with Youth
- 5) Sexualized Behavior
- 6) Confidentiality
- 7) Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol

#### **V. Transportation of Children and Youth**

- 1) Transportation to and from WUC Events
  - a. Parent/Guardian Responsibility
  - b. Non-Parent/Guardian Drivers of Minors
- 2) Transportation During WUC Events
  - a. Drivers
  - b. Two Adult Rule
  - c. Permission
  - d. Emergency Information

#### **VI. Safer Congregation Response Team**

- 1) Membership
- 2) Training
- 3) Conflict of Interest
- 4) On-Going Responsibilities
  - a. Training
  - b. Community Resources
  - c. Resource d. Education
- 5) Situational Responsibilities
  - a. Allegation of Child Abuse
  - b. Disruptive, Violent, Harassing Behaviour
  - c. Prior Offender
  - d. Physical Threat
  - e. Other Elevated Risk of Harm
- 6) Address Allegation
  - a. Denominational Resources
  - b. Consult with Professionals
  - c. Develop & Implement Plan
  - d. Monitor and Revise Plan

- e. Seek Legal Counsel if Necessary
- f. Communication to Congregation
- g. Support Minister
- h. Develop Confidential Record
- i. Allegations of Sexual Misconduct of Religious Professional

## **VII. Complaints of Child Abuse**

- 1) Reporting to Community Authorities – Police and/or DCYF
- 2) Reporting to Westminster Authorities – Any Member of SCRT
- 3) Safety Needs of Congregation Following Reports of Child Abuse to DCYF or Law Enforcement
  - a. Interim Safety Needs
  - b. Interim Safety Plan
  - c. Permanent Safety Plan

## **VIII. Disruptive, Violent or Harassing Behavior**

- 1) Respond Keeping in Mind the Individuals Inherent Worth and Dignity
- 2) Report to SCRT member
- 3) Immediate Response by SCRT member or Group Leader
- 4) Communicate and Document Behavior
- 5) SCRT Assesses Situation and Decides on Course of Action.
  - a. Dangerous
  - b. Disruptive
  - c. Offensive

## **IX. Prior Offenders**

## **X. Appendix**

- 1) Background Verification Release Form
- 2) RE Youth Permission Form
- 3) Incident Reporting Form
- 4) Code of Ethics Form
- 5) Limited Access Agreement for Allegation of Sexual Misconduct
- 6) Limited Access Agreement for Convicted Sex Offender
- 7) Behavioral Agreement for Disruptive Person
- 8) Sex Offender Release of Information Form
- 9) Sample Letter of Temporary Exclusion
- 10) Sample Letter of Permanent Exclusion

These Policies apply to all WUC events, such as (but not limited to):

- Sunday School classes
- Babysitting for WUC Events
- Youth RE- and WUC-Sponsored Trips and Activities

# Article I: SCREENING AND SELECTION OF WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

## 1) Definitions

- a. Workers with Children and Youth ("Workers") include both volunteer and compensated individuals who provide direct care, supervision, instruction, or transportation of children or youth for WUC events. Examples include the Director of Religious Education, the Minister, classroom teachers and assistants, Coming-of-Age mentors, chaperones for group trips, and Junior Choir director. One-time guest speakers for classes or other activities are not included, and do not count as adults for the purposes of the "two-adult" rule.
- b. Except as specifically provided below, an adult is a person who is at least 18 years of age.
- c. A group is defined as those children or youth who have been assigned to a nursery, individual class or specific program or activity within the context of a class or other WUC event.
- d. The Director of Religious Education ("DRE") is the WUC staff person charged with teacher supervision and training. If there is no DRE, the chair(s) of the Religious Education Committee take on all responsibilities assigned herein to the DRE. If there is no DRE or Youth Religious Education Committee then the responsibility becomes that of the Minister and President.
- e. A "WUC event," for the purpose of these Safe Congregation Policies, is a planned gathering or activity that (a) is organized and led by a WUC member, visitor, friend or group, (b) is intended for WUC members, visitors, friends and groups and (c) supports the church mission. A WUC event can be on site or off site. WUC events do not include events that are organized or led by a renter of WUC space, and do not include the Sharing Locker.

## 2) Qualifications

All Workers shall satisfy the following criteria:

- a. All Workers shall consent to a criminal background check, to be performed as described below. Individuals who do not consent to the background check, or who are deemed to be ineligible as a consequence of the background check, are prohibited from working with children or youth at WUC.
- b. Classroom instructors for grades 7-12, and all mentors and chaperones shall be at least 21 years of age and shall have been active at WUC for at least one year OR obtain approval from the Director of Religious Education (DRE) following review of a referral from a religious educator or minister of another congregation where the person was previously a member or active participant. All drivers must be at least 25 years old and have been active at WUC for at least

one year OR obtain approval from the Director of Religious Education (DRE) following review of a referral from a religious educator or minister of another congregation where the person was previously a member or active participant.

c. Classroom assistants for grades 7-12, and classroom instructors for PreK - grade 6, shall be at least 18 years of age and shall have been active at WUC for at least one year.

d. Classroom assistants for PreK - grade 6 shall be at least in high school and shall have been active at WUC for at least two years. Classroom assistants who are less than 16 years of age may not be considered adults for purposes of the "two adult" policy.

e. Babysitters during Sunday services and during other WUC events and activities shall be at least in high school and must either (i) have been active at WUC for at least one year or (ii) provide references to, and be approved by, the DRE. All non- adult babysitters shall have completed the Red Cross Babysitter's Training, Red Cross first aid or CPR, or an equivalent course, and shall provide proof of training to the DRE. Babysitters during Sunday services shall report to the DRE. Other church members are responsible for arranging childcare during activities other than Sunday services, using only approved babysitters. Approved non-adult babysitters may be considered adults for purposes of the "two adult" policy.

f. Government issued photo identification, such as a driver's license, may be requested.

g. All Workers shall read and sign the WUC Code of Conduct Form for Persons Working with Children and Youth annually. Copies of the signed form shall be retained by the DRE.

h. Religious Education Workers shall be approved by the DRE following an interview with the DRE and consideration of any other evidence deemed relevant by the DRE.

i. The DRE may waive or alter the above requirements in special circumstances, and with the consent of the RE committee and minister, and may generate other specific job descriptions with alternate requirements.

## Article II: BACKGROUND CHECKS

**1) Purpose.** The purpose of the check is to identify individuals who have committed a child-related or violent offense, or who have history of other offenses that raises concern about suitability for working with children and youth (e.g., alcohol or drug offenses, theft, or driving-related offenses). During classes and scheduled programming, a minimum of two background-checked workers will be present with each group of children and youth. Exceptions to this may be made at the DRE's discretion in rare situations; however, at least one background-checked worker will always be present with each group of children and youth.

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

a. compensated employees who have direct contact with children and youth (e.g., the DRE, minister, and paid babysitters, teachers and youth advisors);

b. volunteer workers who are scheduled babysitters, teachers, classroom assistants, advisors, field trip chaperones, coming-of-age mentors and volunteers at middle school or high school youth conferences (cons);

c. volunteer workers in other capacities that regularly involve direct contact with children and youth that, in the opinion of the DRE and minister, is sufficient to warrant a background check.

**3) Timing.** The background check shall be performed before a compensated employee or volunteer begins work with children or youth, and a minimum of every five (5) years thereafter. For Workers who have been working with WUC children and youth prior to the adoption of this policy, background checks shall be performed within three months of regularly scheduled DRE work time following adoption of this policy, and then every five (5) years thereafter. At the discretion of the DRE and the Minister, additional background checks on any Worker may be performed at any other time.

**4) Type of Screen.** The background check shall be a nationwide criminal record check, including sex-offender registries and county court records. A driving record check may also be obtained. Any service deemed suitable by the DRE and the Minister may be used. Representative options include LexisNexis employment screening or a service provided through our church database.

**5) Application.** Candidates will authorize the background check using a consent form approved by the safe congregations committee, minister and DRE.

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

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

- a. Any conviction of a violent or sexual offense, or other form of child abuse, against a minor SHALL disqualify the candidate.
- b. Any conviction of a violent or sexual offense, against a person within the past 10 years SHALL disqualify the candidate.
- c. Any conviction of a violent or sexual offense more than 10 years prior to the date of the background check is presumed to disqualify the candidate; this presumption may be overcome if in the opinion of the DRE AND the Minister, the circumstances indicate that the candidate should be allowed to work with Westminster children and youth.
- d. Any conviction of a drug or alcohol-related offense within the past 10 years SHALL disqualify the candidate from driving children or youth.
- e. A record of driving offense(s) which, in the opinion of the DRE OR the Minister, indicates an elevated risk of harm to passengers SHALL disqualify the candidate from driving children or youth.
- f. Any conviction(s) which, in the opinion of the DRE OR the Minister, render a candidate poorly suited to a leadership position with children and youth may disqualify the candidate.

The DRE and the Minister shall consider the totality of convictions and the circumstances of each in making this determination.

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

**7) Appeal.** A candidate may appeal a determination of ineligibility under any of sections 6(c)-(f), above, to the President of WUC. Such appeal must be in writing within two weeks of notification of the determination. Determinations based on section 6(a) or 6(b) may not be appealed.

Upon appeal, the President shall notify the DRE and the Minister and the nominating committee. The nominating committee shall appoint a three-member appeal panel to review the basis of the decision and the candidate's argument. Members of the panel are chosen from WUC members who have been active in the congregation for at least three years, with due consideration given to potential conflicts of interest. The panel shall contain at least one current member of the Board of Trustees.

The panel shall consult with the Minister, the DRE and the candidate before making a decision. The decision of the panel shall be rendered within one month of the appeal unless specific circumstances require additional time, and shall be final.

**8) Confidentiality.** Background check results and consent forms in paper form shall be kept in a locked file to which only the Minister and the DRE have access, and will be destroyed after five (5) years. Digital background check results and consent forms shall be stored so as to permit access only by those authorized herein. Background check results and consent forms may be viewed only by those authorized herein.

- a. Only the DRE and the Minister are authorized to view the results and the background check consent forms of Workers and, except in cases of appeal as described herein, the DRE and

Minister may not discuss the results with anyone other than each other and the candidate. The DRE and Minister may communicate the candidate's eligibility status, without mentioning details, to members of the RE Committee if necessary for the performance of RE Committee duties. If the candidate wishes to see the background check results, the DRE or Minister will arrange a time for the candidate to view the results in the presence of the DRE or Minister. The candidate may not copy or remove the results from the possession of WUC.

b. Background check results and consent forms for the DRE may be viewed by the Minister and the President.

c. Background check results and consent forms for the minister may be viewed by the President and a representative of the Personnel Committee.

d. If a candidate determined to be ineligible appeals the decision, the three members of the appointed appeal panel are also authorized to view the results, and the DRE and Minister may discuss the results with the members of the panel. The members of the panel may not discuss the results with anyone who is not authorized to view the results.

## Article III: SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

### 1) Supervision during WUC religious education classes and WUC religions education-sponsored activities.

a. The DRE, DRE's representative, Workers and babysitters are responsible for supervision of children and youth during RE Classes and WUC RE-sponsored programming (e.g. pageant rehearsal, field trips on or off church site, cons, etc.)

b. During WUC Sunday services, children and youth ages infant to thirteen (13) are to attend the Religious Education class for their age group (if available) or to attend the service with a parent/guardian.

1. If a parent/guardian cannot be present at WUC with a child or youth ages infant to thirteen (13), the parent/guardian must obtain permission from the DRE or DRE representative, and provide the DRE or DRE representative with emergency contact information and the name of a responsible adult at WUC who will take responsibility for the child or youth. This procedure must be followed each time the parent/guardian cannot be present.

2. If a parent/guardian cannot be present at WUC with a child or youth ages fourteen (14) to eighteen (18), the parent/guardian must provide the DRE with emergency contact information to have on file. The parent/guardian is responsible for updating the emergency contact information as needed.

c. Best practices for safety require a minimum of two adult Workers to supervise any group of children and youth, where at least one of the Workers satisfies the requirements above for a classroom instructor for PreK – grade 6. Spouses, immediate relations and partners do not fulfill the two-adult requirement. If such related individuals teach or supervise together, a third unrelated adult must be present. The DRE may require more than two adults in certain situations or for large groups. Exceptions for unexpected circumstances, or specific cases, may only be made by the DRE or the DRE's representative. In such cases, the classroom door is left open to provide visibility, and the DRE or DRE's representative will check in with the group periodically. This policy protects both the children and the adults, in that it minimizes the opportunity for abuse and the risk of false accusations.

d. If circumstances result in a Worker being alone with one or more children or youth, the DRE or the DRE's representative shall be notified of this occurrence immediately. The DRE or the DRE's representative shall determine whether to move the group to a public space, provide additional adult supervision or make an exception to the two adult rule.

e. Under no circumstances should an adult Volunteer Worker arrange to meet privately with a child or youth, either on-site or off-site. Meetings between an adult and an individual child or youth, if necessary, should be held at Westminster and with the knowledge of the DRE, DRE's

representative or parent/guardian. Such meetings should be held in a public space at WUC, with others present, or in a room in which the door is left open and another adult can see and hear the meeting. Such meetings are most likely to occur between mentors and youth in coming-of-age classes; where possible, mentors are encouraged to hold such meetings jointly with one or more additional mentors and youth. During one-on-one meetings with the minister, the minister will follow UUMA professional guidelines.

f. For children with special needs, it may not be possible to serve the child's needs in a classroom or other group setting, and other arrangements may be made. In such cases, the DRE and the child's parent/guardian(s) will agree upon a reasonable supervision arrangement, and the Religious Education Committee will approve the arrangement.

g. Anyone who believes a child or youth needs to be protected from her/himself or others during a WUC RE class or WUC RE sponsored activity should contact the DRE, DRE's representative, minister and/or leader of the event.

## **2) Supervision before class, after class and during non-religious education sponsored activities**

a. Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children and youth before class, after class, and during non-WUC RE sponsored activities (e.g. coffee hour, church meetings, service in the sanctuary, etc.).

b. If childcare is required at those times, parents/guardians are responsible for arranging such care, either privately, with the event leader or by working with the childcare coordinator.

c. Parents/guardians and other congregants can remind children and youth to behave in a safe and respectful manner (e.g., use walking feet, indoor voices and helping hands) when inside WUC buildings.

d. Parents are responsible for supervision and safety of their child(ren) on WUC grounds.

## Article IV: CONDUCT FOR WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Those who work with children and youth at WUC are expected to always have the best interests of the children and youth at heart. They are expected to nurture the young people's physical, emotional and spiritual growth in an environment of kindness, trust, respect and fun. The WUC community strives to create an environment in which children and youth are able to explore the spiritual and religious aspects of their lives. The behavior of Workers is expected to be consistent with this goal at all times.

Certain minimal specific expectations for Workers, which are intended to further this goal, include:

1) **Child Abuse** - Workers must not engage in any form of child abuse, such as:

**a. Physical abuse** – bodily injury to a person. Examples of prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, corporal punishment, hitting, pinching, pushing, kicking or shoving a child or youth.

**b. Physical neglect** – the failure to adequately provide the essentials of life, such as food, shelter, clothing and medical care.

**c. Sexual abuse** – the exploitation of a child or youth for the gratification of an adult. Examples of prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, inappropriate touching, intercourse, incest, rape and sodomy, as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism and the use of minors in pornography.

**d. Emotional abuse** – the failure to provide care, support and guidance necessary for healthy psychological development. This includes verbal abuse, such as excessive teasing, belittling and rejection. Examples of prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, yelling, abusive language, using profanities and threatening a child or youth.

2) **Isolated Contact with Youth** - Volunteer Workers are not permitted to be with a child or youth (who is not their own child) alone, in a closed room, or without another Worker in the immediate vicinity.

3) **Friendship with Youth** – although we hope that youth and adults will have a genuine fondness for one another, any adult who looks to youth for friendship is not sufficiently mature to be in a position of responsibility over youth. In the adult/youth relationship, the adult assumes primary responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries and cultivating an atmosphere of health and trust. It is the adult Worker's responsibility to avoid inappropriate relationships.

4) **Unofficial Contact with Youth** – WUC takes no responsibility for monitoring unofficial contact between youth and adults outside of WUC activities; thus, any such contact is at the discretion of the parents/guardians involved. Workers are expected to ensure that parents/guardians are aware of and approve any such unofficial contact.

**5) Sexualized behavior** – It is never appropriate to engage in any manner of sexualized behavior with a child or youth. This refers not only to explicitly sexual behavior, but also to sexually provocative behavior or language. It is inappropriate to tell jokes with sexual content. Physical expressions of affection such as hugs certainly have their place, but it is best to allow the child or youth to initiate them, and the adult must remain mindful of the tenor of the physical contact.

**6) Confidentiality** – In some situations, such as certain OWL, coming-of-age classes and mentoring, and youth group meetings and activities, there is an expectation of confidentiality with regard to classroom discussions. This means that participants, both youth and adult, will generally not discuss the confidential subject matter with others. However, if an adult learns about a serious matter that relates to a child or youth (e.g., the child or youth is the victim of abuse, is suicidal, has a serious drug problem, etc.), such information **MUST** be communicated to the WUC professional staff (Minister or DRE) immediately, and may also be required to be reported to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. Workers should avoid giving children and youth the impression that Workers will keep such matters a secret.

**7) Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol** - Workers shall not be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs, and shall not use tobacco, while working with children or youth, either at WUC or off-site. Workers also shall not encourage tobacco, drug or alcohol use, or permit children and youth under their supervision to use tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.

## Article V: TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### 1) Transportation to and from WUC events

#### a. Parent/Guardian Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide or arrange for transportation of children and youth to and from WUC events. This includes transportation to and from services, classes and programs held at WUC, as well as transportation to and from off- site events (such as cons or service projects) for which transportation is not coordinated by the DRE or a Worker responsible for arranging group transportation.

#### b. Non-Parent/Guardian Drivers of Minors

Following a WUC event, children and youth may not leave with a driver other than the parent/guardian, except by prior arrangement with a parent/guardian and notification of the DRE or event leader.

### 2) Transportation During WUC Events

#### a. Drivers

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

#### b. Two Adult Rule

- i. Whenever possible, there should be two unrelated adults in each vehicle.
- ii. An exception to this requirement may be made if needed, provided that (a) there are at least two minors in the vehicle, (b) the vehicle goes directly to the destination and (c) upon arrival at the destination a minimum of two unrelated adults accompany the group of children or youth. In such cases, it is preferred that all vehicles remain within

sight of each other while traveling, and rest stops will be coordinated with other drivers.

**c. Permission**

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

ii. When a group, such as a Neighboring Faiths class, participates in multiple trips over the course of the school year, a single permission form covering all trips during that year may be obtained.

**d. Emergency information**

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

## Article VI: THE SAFER CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM (SCRT)

**1) Membership:** The Safer Congregation Response Team (SCRT) 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 Westminster. The team will be composed of the Minister, Director of Religious Education (DRE), Board President or delegate member of the Board (Board representative), and two members of Westminster appointed by the Board. If the DRE position is vacant or the DRE does not have the training or responsibility for this aspect of the program, the DRE will serve in a consulting capacity and be kept informed as needed, and a third member of Westminster will be appointed and will complete all of the training. Once a DRE with SCRT training and responsibilities is in place, the third member will move to alternate status. We acknowledge each member brings experience, knowledge and skills to the work and is a valued member of the team.

Congregation members appointed by the Board shall serve for up to three years with staggered terms. It is preferable that two of the members of the team have expertise in areas such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, human resources and/or legal issues. The board president or designee will serve for the duration of their board term.

If an issue requires SCRT attention at a time when the full SCRT is not available, the Board President or a quorum of the Board may authorize a smaller SCRT to handle a specific issue, provided that the smaller SCRT comprises at least three members: the Minister, the DRE (if a member of the team), and the Board representative. If the DRE is not a member of the team, the third member is a member of the congregation.

**2) Training:** The SCRT will determine appropriate training for team members. New members must complete initial training before participating in SCRT work. Training topics should include child abuse, mandated reporting, domestic abuse, prior offenders, disruptive persons, and disaster preparation, as well as Westminster Safer Congregations Policies. Suggested resources include the UUA Safe Congregations Handbook and the free online NEARI course “Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations” (<http://www.nearipress.org/balancing-acts>). The SCRT is also expected to review and discuss 2-4 case studies as a team each year.

Initial training for the first SCRT will consist of the “Balancing Acts” online course and reading the UUA Safe Congregations Handbook. Subsequent training will be determined by the SCRT.

Even if the Board President is not the SCRT Board representative, the Board President is encouraged to complete SCRT training.

**3) Conflict of Interest:** A SCRT member must be excused from participation in all SCRT activities related to a situation that presents a conflict of interest. If an SCRT member is excused, the SCRT will ask the Board if it wishes to replace the excused SCRT member with an alternate for the duration of the conflict.

**4) Ongoing Responsibilities:** The SCRT will generally have the following ongoing responsibilities:

- a. Establish and update SCRT member training requirements.
- b. Know about community resources (e.g., for child abuse, treatment for sex offenders, and support groups for survivors), state laws regarding reporting, and UU denominational resources.
- c. Be a resource for people to share their concerns.
- d. Educate the congregation about at least one safer congregations topic (such as the policy and/or safer congregations issues) each year. Such education may take the form of, for example, newsletter articles, workshops, informational meetings, volunteer trainings, congregation-wide trainings, worship service topics, etc.

Educational topics may include, for example: the Westminster Safer Congregations Policies, child abuse prevention and warning signs, mandated reporting, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, disaster planning, and disruptive persons issues (e.g., defining disruptive behavior and responding to such behavior).

Each year, the SCRT will determine which topic(s) will be included in congregational education and the type and frequency of educational events and activities. Resources include those listed above for SCRT training, as well as Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island (<http://www.preventchildabuse-ri.org/>).

**5) Situational Responsibilities:** Allegations and situations that may warrant SCRT action include:

- a. An allegation of child abuse (see ARTICLE VII),
- b. A person engaging in disruptive, violent or harassing behavior (see ARTICLE VIII)
- c. A prior offender who wishes to be involved in church activities (see ARTICLE IX),
- d. A physical threat to church property or to the congregation, and
- e. Any other allegation or situation that presents an elevated risk of physical or emotional harm to the congregation.

When deemed necessary by the SCRT, or when otherwise authorized by this Policy, the SCRT will address a specific allegation or situation in the following ways:

- a. Consult denominational resources to receive input on best practices.
- b. Consult with professionals (e.g., social worker, psychologist or other mental health professional) as needed. Any professional so consulted should not be a member or friend of the congregation.
- c. Develop and implement a plan which may include, for example, communication strategies with involved parties, a Limited Access Agreement, a Behavioral Covenant, and/or safety measures, as needed. This plan will be shared with the Board President.

- d. Continue to monitor and revise the plan as necessary.
- e. Seek legal counsel if the Minister and Board President determine that such counsel is necessary.
- f. Promptly develop a plan for communicating information about allegations or situations to the congregation based upon 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. The Minister will be the spokesperson regarding the allegation or situation both within the congregation and with the wider community or media as necessary. If the Minister is the accused, then the President of the Board or delegate member of the Board will be the spokesperson.
- g. Support the minister in offering confidential support, advice, and counsel as appropriate with concern for the safety of all parties involved.
- h. Develop a confidential record detailing the reasoning behind the decision- making process, actions taken and outcomes. This information will be shared with the Board and others on an as needed basis. The report will be kept under lock and key in a secure location.
- i. In situations involving allegations of sexual misconduct by a religious professional, the SCRT will notify the Board President and will ensure that the allegation is reported to the UUA Office of Ethics and Safety. If the minister is the accused, the SCRT will also ensure that the allegation is reported to the UUA Regional Lead. SCRT members who receive information about incidents or allegations that may warrant SCRT action are expected to advise the other members of the SCRT as soon as possible. If there is a question about whether this is a pastoral care issue, the SCRT member may want to consult with the minister before convening the response team as a whole.

Once reported to the SCRT, all SCRT members will share all relevant information not deemed pastoral. The SCRT can only be expected to act in situations for which it has sufficient information. Decision making will be by consensus. The SCRT has no responsibility for matters not reported to the SCRT.

All activities of the SCRT will be conducted in a confidential fashion to the extent consistent with the above responsibilities. If the President of the Board is not a SCRT member, the SCRT will keep the President informed throughout the process. The SCRT will speak with involved parties as needed in order to fulfill the above responsibilities, but will not investigate allegations.

The SCRT is expected to make every effort to reach consensus on the matters entrusted to it. If needed, the SCRT will seek outside assistance (e.g., from the Committee on Ministry or a professional mediator) to facilitate conflict resolution among SCRT members.

If the SCRT is ultimately unable to reach agreement regarding a course of action, the SCRT will report this outcome to the Board President. All documentation related to the situation will be shared with the Board President and responsibility for further actions will be transferred to the Board.

## **Article VII. COMPLAINTS OF CHILD ABUSE**

### **1) Reporting Child Abuse to Community Authorities**

For situations in which any person is in immediate danger, persons affiliated with a WUC event are expected to contact local police.

Rhode Island law requires all persons who know or reasonably suspect that a child or youth has been abused or neglected by a parent or other legally responsible adult to report the incident to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) within 24 hours, via the Child Abuse Hotline Number: 1 (800) RI-CHILD; 1 (800) 742-4453. See [http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/child\\_welfare/reporting.php](http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/child_welfare/reporting.php). Other allegations of abuse may be reported to DCYF, but such allegations will only be investigated by DCYF if reported to law enforcement.

### **2) Reporting Child Abuse to Westminster Authorities**

- a. All persons affiliated with a WUC event, including compensated and volunteer Workers, and all attending adults and youth, who know or reasonably suspect that one or more children or youth have been abused at a WUC event shall immediately report the incident to a member of the SCRT or the person in charge of the event, and will provide a completed incident reporting form.
- b. Anyone other than a member of the SCRT who receives such a report will promptly convey the report to a member of the SCRT.
- c. The member of the SCRT who receives the initial report shall ensure that the incident is also reported to the DRE, Minister and President. If the incident involves one of these individuals, the others shall be notified.
- d. Anyone who learns that a Westminster member, friend or employee is under investigation by DCYF or law enforcement for allegedly abusing a child is asked to communicate this information to the Minister, DRE, or other member of the SCRT.
- e. The identity of the allegation reporter will only be disclosed as necessary.

### **3) Safety Needs of the Congregation Following Reports of Child Sexual Abuse to DCYF or Law Enforcement**

Situations involving allegations of abuse are challenging for the individuals involved and for the congregation. As Unitarian Universalists we covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and the SCRT is committed to addressing these situations in a way that respects individual worth and dignity, while promoting the safety and security of the community. The SCRT will not presume or determine guilt; actions taken are routine safety precautions, without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances.

When the SCRT learns of an allegation of child sexual abuse against a church employee, member, friend or attendee and an SCRT member is notified, the matter will be referred to the SCRT. The SCRT will attempt to verify reports of sexual abuse with those involved. If the allegation has been confirmed to

have been reported to DCYF or law enforcement, the SCRT will address Westminster's safety needs as follows:

- a. **Immediate Safety Needs:** The SCRT will, as soon as is practical, take immediate actions for the safety of the congregation. Until the SCRT can be mobilized, the Minister, DRE, and/or other SCRT member who received the initial report of abuse may take any actions they deem prudent.
  
- b. **Interim Safety Plan:** The SCRT will convene within ten days to develop an interim safety plan that will apply during the investigation of abuse. This plan will include a Limited Access Agreement for investigations of sexual abuse. The purpose of the Limited Access Agreement is to protect both the accused (who may be at risk for further accusations, which may be unfounded) and others in the congregation. If the accused abuser is another youth, input from parents or guardians must be solicited. The plan will be clearly communicated to the accused abuser or, if a minor, his or her parents or guardians, by the Minister, along with the DRE if appropriate.
  
- c. **Permanent Safety Plan:** Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, Westminster will await the decisions of those authorities as to the validity of the complaint before taking any final actions. Upon final disposition by appropriate authorities, an interim Limited Access Agreement may be lifted. If deemed necessary by the SCRT, a permanent Limited Access Agreement will be developed by the SCRT that complies with any orders imposed by such authorities. The permanent safety plan should be reviewed by the SCRT on a regular basis and modified as needed.

Allegations of child sexual abuse that are not reported to DCYF or law enforcement are not automatically referred to the SCRT. Such allegations may, however, be referred to the SCRT as disruptive, violent or harassing behavior ([ARTICLE VIII](#)).

## Article VIII. DISRUPTIVE, VIOLENT, OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR

Each Sunday we affirm our commitment to welcome all people and to respect each person's inherent worth and dignity. But in order to secure that tradition, we recognize the need to address disruptive, violent or harassing (including, but not limited to, bullying and sexual harassment<sup>1</sup>) behavior from staff, volunteers, congregants or minors<sup>2</sup>, whether occurring physically at Westminster or in the form of threatening phone calls, emails or other messages, which may challenge our sense of individual and communal safety and well-being. If such a challenge arises:

- 1) Persons engaging in behavior identified as being disruptive, violent or harassing will be responded to as individuals of inherent worth and dignity.
- 2) Situations involving disruptive, violent or harassing behavior will be brought to the attention of an SCRT<sup>3</sup> member. The matter will be referred to the SCRT if deemed necessary by any member of the SCRT. The SCRT team includes the minister, the DRE/ADRE, the Board President and President Elect.
- 3) If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by an SCRT member or the leader of the group involved. An immediate response may include asking and/or requiring the offending person or persons to leave the meeting, the building, or the property, and may further include 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, is threatened or is occurring, the Police Department may be called. An SCRT member must be notified as soon as possible about any actions that have been taken. All follow up steps will be undertaken by the SCRT.
- 4) The SCRT will communicate with concerned individuals and document their concerns and descriptions of the behavior. Such communication and documentation will take place as quickly and systematically as possible, and will be completed before any action is taken unless more immediate action is deemed necessary for the safety of the congregation.
- 5) The SCRT will meet to assess the situation and decide on a course of action. To aid in evaluating the problem, the following points will be considered:
  - DANGEROUS - is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
  - DISRUPTIVE - how much interference with church functions is occurring?

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<sup>1</sup> WUC definition of sexual harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or participation; creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

<sup>2</sup> Minor individuals, either engaging in disruptive, violent, harassing behaviors or recipients of such behaviors, will be represented by/with a parent or guardian present in all discussions and agreements.

<sup>3</sup> Safer Congregations Response Team (SCRT) members include the Minister, DRE/REC, Board President and President-elect

- OFFENSIVE - how likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away by the disruptive behavior?

To determine the appropriate response, the following points will be considered:

- 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 or mental illness?
- HISTORY - what is the frequency and degree of disruption in the past?

The SCRT will decide on the necessary response on a case-by-case basis, which could involve creating a contract with the individual and minor individual's parent/guardian. The following four levels of response are recommended to them.

- Level One:** A SCRT member or members (preferably including the Minister) will contact the person<sup>4</sup> named as the source of the disruption and inform them of the nature of the concern. The person's view of the matter will be elicited, valued, and documented. SCRT members will then assess the situation.
- Level Two:** If the basis of the original concern is determined to be valid, the SCRT will document the finding and establish a framework for negotiating a contract for clearly defined behavior change. The minister, along with one or more SCRT members, will communicate the finding to the person<sup>5</sup> in question and negotiate the contract, if appropriate. Such communication and contract will be documented.
- Level Three:** If the person and/or minor individual's parent/guardian in question refuses to negotiate a contract, refuses to abide by a contract or is engaging in behavior of sufficient severity, the response team may exclude the person from the group whose meetings they disrupted or from Westminster altogether for a specified period of time. The minister, along with one or more SCRT members, will communicate the reasons for such action, and conditions for return, to the person in question. Such communication, reasons and conditions will be documented.
- Level Four:** Should the SCRT decide that indefinite or permanent exclusion or expulsion from Westminster is necessary, they will recommend such action to the Board of Trustees.

The SCRT will promptly develop a plan for communicating information about the situation to the congregation and/or appropriate parties, based upon 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. The Minister will be the spokesperson regarding the allegation or situation both within the congregation and with the wider community or media as necessary. If the Minister is the accused, then the President of the Board or delegate member of the Board will be the spokesperson.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Article IX. ADULT OR MINOR PRIOR OFFENDER

One key component of a commitment to keep children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe in our congregation is to have policies and procedures governing requests by sex offenders to participate as part of the congregation.

As faith-based communities, we can provide support and compassion with awareness and vigilance so that all are safe as those who have sexually offended return to or join our church community.

An adult sex offender or a minor offender<sup>6</sup> who truly wishes to participate in the life of the church, who realize the extent of the crime and the difficulty their presence may cause to survivors, and who will understand and accept the need for the imposition of restrictions.

The core response of the congregation to a convicted sex offender is a LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT. If the risk of inclusion of the offender is determined to be acceptable with conditions, a written agreement, executed between the church and the individual<sup>7</sup>, invites the person with a history of sex offenses to participate in certain aspects of congregational life, and delineates clear expectations and boundaries including what the individual will not do. The message to the sex offender is that they are both welcome to participate in various church activities and that they must covenant with the congregation (through a Limited Access Agreement) and the adult offender must avoid all contact with children. In the case of a minor offender, they must agree to increased supervision around other youth and/or children. Concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual.

No matter how the presence of a convicted sex offender is revealed to the minister and/or a congregational member, the following steps must be taken.

1) The minister meets privately with the individual<sup>8</sup> to discuss the concerns that have been raised. The minister will check the local sex offender registry before meeting with the person. If the person has a partner who also wishes to attend the church, then the minister should reach out to the partner as well.

2) If, following the initial meeting, the minister determines that there is genuine cause for the concern, a Letter of Temporary Exclusion (see Appendix 9 of SCP) will be put in place preventing the person from attending any church activities or events until the review process is complete. The person<sup>9</sup> is then requested to meet with the Safer Congregations Response Team. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Team's review process with the individual<sup>10</sup> and obtain information and cooperation from them needed to complete it. At the initial meeting with the Team, the individual is asked to sign a release form so that the minister can contact their sex offender treatment provider and/or current therapist, and parole/probation officer, if applicable. If

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<sup>6</sup> Minor individuals will be represented by/with a parent or guardian present in all discussions and agreements.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

the individual<sup>11</sup> affirms their cooperation, and provides the necessary authorizations, the Team's review process can continue; if not, the Team recommends a Letter of Permanent Exclusion be delivered to the offender<sup>12</sup>, and the Minister notifies the individual<sup>13</sup> of that outcome. If the process is not complete within 1 calendar year of its inception, the Response Team may determine the process has been abandoned and issue a letter of Permanent Exclusion, to be delivered to the offender<sup>14</sup>.

3) Following the initial Team meeting, as authorized by the offender<sup>15</sup>, the Minister will contact the treatment providers, case workers, probation officers and/or parole officers to: a) determine if the treatment providers are members of ATSA, the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers; b) ask the therapist and, if applicable, the parole/probation officer for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the sex offender will re-offend and whether additional restrictions beyond the standard Limited Access Agreement ought to be placed on the person's participation. Information should be obtained, if possible, concerning the number, timing and nature of offenses, to allow consideration of different situations.

4) When the needed information has been obtained, the Team meets to review and discuss the case and reach its determinations. The Team's review has the objectives of: a. ensuring the safety of everyone involved; b. determining if it's prudent for the offender to be involved in congregational activities, and if so, the nature and degree of restrictions that need to be agreed to in order to protect vulnerable members of the congregation, while permitting limited involvement of the offender.

All meetings and conversations throughout the Team's review process are to be documented and stored in a locked file in the Minister's Office.

The Team may ask the person to go for a professional assessment with a therapist who specializes in working with sex offenders, and may take the agreement or refusal to provide this assessment into account in reaching its determinations. Note, this assessment will be paid for by the individual<sup>16</sup> requesting involvement in the congregation. The minister may choose to offer funding from the Minister's Discretionary Fund to support this effort.

The questions the Response Team must be able to answer are:

- a. given the professional advice and input available to you, and your collective assessment of the individual, is it prudent and reasonably safe to allow this individual access to the congregation,
- b. what special conditions or limitations need to be placed on that access, if allowed, and
- c) is it the group's judgement that this person<sup>17</sup> will sign and obey a Limited Access Agreement with the church in order to assure the safety of children and youth?

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Minor individuals will be represented by/with a parent or guardian present in all discussions and agreements.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

5) If the assessment indicates that the person has completed or is participating successfully in treatment and is not at high risk for recidivism, the Response Team may develop a Limited Access Agreement. If the person has a partner in the community, that person should be involved in developing the Limited Access Agreement as well. If the offender is a minor, the parent and/or guardian will be involved in developing the Limited Access Agreement.

All persons with past histories of sexual offenses must be asked to sign a Limited Access Agreement. If the offender<sup>18</sup> refuses to do so, the Team will draft a Letter of Permanent Exclusion to be delivered to the person<sup>19</sup>, denying them access to congregational functions and church Property.

6) The Response Team will meet at least once every 6 months with any individual (and parent/guardian) with whom the Church has a Limited Access Agreement to assess compliance and address any concerns.

7) Key people, including but not limited to the Minister, the Religious Educator, the President of the Board and the Response Team, need to know that the person is attending church, that he or she has agreed not to have contact with children (in the case of a minor offender<sup>20</sup>, they must agree to increased supervision around other youth and/or children and has signed a Limited Access Agreement. If the minister or the Religious Educator changes, as well as the President of the Board of Trustees or SCRT membership, it is important that the new person/people be apprised of the situation.

This policy outlines a number of controls to mitigate risk with known sex offenders participating in our community. While the Response Team will know the names of any Adult registered sex offenders here – that information will not be explicitly disclosed to the congregation at large. However this information is publicly available for designated levels of sex offenders on the RI Parole Board website. (

## **REASONS FOR EXCLUDING A PRIOR SEX OFFENDER FROM ALL CONGREGATION ACTIVITIES**

- Refusal to allow the minister to contact the treatment provider and parole/probation officer.
- Refusal to meet with the SCRT
- Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
- Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high risk for recidivism.
- Determination by the SCRT that the potential risks of the individual not adhering to the Limited Access Agreement is too high or the overall risks to the congregation, considering all factors and information available, exceed the potential benefits to the individual and community.
- Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
- Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.

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<sup>18</sup> Minor individuals will be represented by/with a parent or guardian present in all discussions and agreements.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## Appendices: FORMS AND TEMPLATES

**Appendix 1:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Background Verification Release Form**

Thank you for your interest in working with the children & youth of our congregation. Our congregation takes seriously the responsibility of ensuring the safety of our youth, and we appreciate your support.

Please fill out this form and give it to the Director of Religious Education.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden or other names used: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions, providing details of any "yes" answers. Please note that a "yes" answer does not necessarily disqualify you from working with our children and youth.

1. Have you ever been convicted of, on probation for, or plead guilty to a crime (excluding minor traffic violations)?

No ( ) Yes ( )                      If yes, please provide details:

2. Have you ever been convicted of, on probation for, or plead guilty to any crime against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor?

No ( ) Yes ( )                      If yes, please provide details:

3. Have you ever been reported to a state agency for domestic violence, elder abuse or child abuse, that resulted in probation or conviction?

No ( ) Yes ( )                      If yes, please provide details:

4. As of this date, do you have any pending criminal charges against you?

No ( ) Yes ( )                      If yes, please provide details:

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

No ( ) Yes ( )                      If yes, please provide details:

I authorize Westminster Unitarian Church and its agents to request and receive any and all background information about or concerning me, including, but not limited to, my criminal history. I understand that the criminal history may contain information presumed to be expunged. I further understand that this information will be viewed only by those authorized by the WUC Child and Youth Protection Policy, or others as required by law. I understand that this Release Form and all background information about me will be stored to protect this confidentiality until they are destroyed.

I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility for working with children and youth at Westminster Unitarian Church, and that as long as I continue such work the background search may be repeated at any time.

I agree to notify the WUC Director of Religious Education or Minister within seven days of any ticket, citation or arrest for driving under the influence, or an arrest for any crime.

I release Westminster Unitarian Church and its agents from any and all liabilities, claims or lawsuits in regards to the background information received.

I attest that the above information is correct.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of the Westminster children and youth.**

**Appendix 2:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Religious Education Youth Permission Form**

My youth \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to leave Westminster Unitarian Church grounds with designated adult chaperones, using any appropriate transportation (e.g., automobile, bus, subway, etc.) to attend:

Event \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) and time: \_\_\_\_\_

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

I will provide the chaperones with any medical information and medication (e.g., inhalers, and including over-the-counter medication) that my child needs. If my child requires medical attention during the course of this event, I understand that all efforts will be made to reach me. If I can't be reached, I authorize the chaperones to obtain medical services for my youth.

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Family e mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth cell phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Head of Household #1**

**Head of Household #2 (or Emergency Contact)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician Name and Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insurance company and policy number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any allergies, special diets or other information the chaperones need to allow your youth to safely participate in this activity: \_\_\_\_\_

May we post photographs of your youth from this trip (without names) on the Westminster website or facebook page, and include such photographs in Westminster's CHIMES newsletter? YES NO

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 3:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Report of Suspected Incident Involving a Minor**

**Person(s) reporting incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child(ren) / Youth involved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Suspect(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person(s) preparing report:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date / Time of report:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of incident (date/time, location, and persons present; continue on reverse if needed):**

**Actions taken prior to preparing report:**

**Report submitted to:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date and Time received:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 4:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Code of Ethics For Adults and Older Youth Working with Children and Youth**

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of individuals as well as the community.

The relationship between youth and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if positive potential is to be realized. There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care; therefore leaders will refrain from engaging in any kind of sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

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.

I have read and understand the above statements of position, expectations, and actions.

**Name (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (signed):** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Appendix 5A:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement**  
**Allegation of Sexual Misconduct by an Adult: Confidential**

A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the Safer Congregation Response Team. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children and youth in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement.

Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confession of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known only to the Minister, the Religious Educator and the members of the Safer Congregation Response Team. It will be kept in a locked file in the office.

**Agreement**

You understand that you will not be allowed to volunteer or chaperone events for children and adolescents, including children's religious education classes, talks with children/adolescents during worship, youth group, children's and adolescents' activities during intergenerational events, or drive children and young people to or from church sponsored events.

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

Worship services

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Coffee Hour

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Adult meetings with children in building, such as choir

No ( ) Yes ( )

Adult meetings without children in building

No ( ) Yes ( )

Have a key to the building

No ( ) Yes ( )

Intergenerational church activities

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Intergenerational group outings such as ice skating, baseball games, etc

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Alone in building with minister or other staff

No ( ) Yes ( )

Access to church computer

No ( ) Yes ( )

Social activities in other member's homes with children present

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

RE Classes and field trips, youth-related social events

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

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

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:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property. I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

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

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

Director of Religious Education : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Board President: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 5B:  
Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement  
Allegation of Sexual Misconduct by a Minor: Confidential**

A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the Safer Congregation Response Team. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect all children and youth in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement.

Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confession of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known only to the Minister, the Religious Educator and the members of the Safer Congregation Response Team. It will be kept in a locked file in the office.

**Agreement**

You understand that you must have a chaperone present to participate in events for children and adolescents at Westminster. Limited disclosure to event leaders may be required for specific event participation (ie CONs, overnight travel, field trips).

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

Worship services

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone\* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Coffee Hour

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone\* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Adult meetings with children in building

No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Adult meetings without children in building

No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Intergenerational church activities

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Intergenerational gGroup outings such as ice skating, baseball games, service projects, etc

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Alone in building with minister or other staff

No ( ) Yes ( )

Access to church computer

No ( ) Yes ( )

Overnight trips

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Youth Convention (CONs)

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Social activities in other member's homes with children present

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone\* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

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

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:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

I and my parent/guardian have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I/we agree that if I/we violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property. I/we understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

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

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Director of Religious Education : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Board President: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 6A:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement**  
**Convicted Adult Sex Offender: Confidential**

Westminster Unitarian Church affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who choose to worship 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 in ways to ensure the safety of our children and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

**Agreement**

You understand that you will not be allowed to volunteer or chaperone events for children and adolescents, including children's religious education classes, talks with children/adolescents during worship, youth group, children's and youth activities during intergenerational events, and driving children and young people.

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

Worship services

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Coffee Hour

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Adult meetings with children in building, such as choir

No ( ) Yes ( )

Adult meetings without children in building

No ( ) Yes ( )

Have a key to the building

No ( ) Yes ( )

Intergenerational church activities

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Intergenerational group outings such as ice skating, baseball games, etc

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Alone in building with minister or other staff

No ( ) Yes ( )

Access to church computer

No ( ) Yes ( )

Social activities in other member's homes with children present

No ( ) Yes ( ) With support person\* No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

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

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:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property. I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

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

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

Director of Religious Education : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Board President: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 6B:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Limited Access Agreement**  
**Convicted Minor Sex Offender: Confidential**

Westminster Unitarian Church affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who choose to worship 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 in ways to ensure the safety of all our children and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

**Agreement**

You understand that you must have a chaperone present to participate in events for children and adolescents at Westminster. You understand that limited disclosure to teachers and event leaders will be required for specific event participation (ie re classes, CONs, overnight travel, field trips).

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

Worship services

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone\* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Coffee Hour

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone\* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Adult meetings with children in building

No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Intergenerational church activities

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone\* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Group outings such as ice skating, baseball games, service projects, etc

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone \* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Religious Education Classes

No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Overnight trips

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Youth Convention (CONs)

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Social activities in other member's homes with children present

No ( ) Yes ( ) With chaperone\* No ( ) Yes ( ) Disclosure No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

No ( ) Yes ( )

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

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:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Position in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

I and my parent/guardian have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I/we agree that if I/we violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property. I/we understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

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

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Director of Religious Education : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Board President: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 7:**  
**Westminster Unitarian Church Behavioral Agreement for Disruptive Person**

Westminster Unitarian Church strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and wellbeing of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree the disruption compromises the health or safety of this congregation, our actions as a people of faith must reflect this emphasis on security.

To that end, the undersigned agree to the following conditions for inclusion in the Westminster Community:

- I. List condition 1 here (e.g. agree to be evaluated by a psychiatrist to determine risk, and release the report to the Safe Congregations Response Team)
  
- II. List condition 2 here (e.g. agree not to attend if under the influence of alcohol)
  
- III. List condition 3 here

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Signature Date

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Minister Date

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Board Chair Date

**Appendix 8:  
Sex Offender Release of Information Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, authorize Westminster Unitarian Church to contact and/or obtain information from my counselor, parole officer, treatment provider, and/or other individuals, offices and agencies related to my conviction as a sex offender.

This permission is granted to permit the Safer Congregations Response Team to obtain information relevant to my request to participate in Westminster Unitarian Church worship and church-related activities as set forth in their Safer Congregations Policy.

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

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

**Appendix 9:  
Sample Letter of Temporary Exclusion**

Date

Address of sex offender

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

It is our desire to welcome all people to worship and participate in church-related activities here at Westminster Unitarian Church. To insure the safety of our members and their children, we have in place a Safer Congregations Policy including a section delineating conditions for participation of convicted sex offenders.

The first step in that process is to put in place this Letter of Temporary Exclusion, while you, together with the Response Team, review what will be needed to ensure maximum safety for you and the congregation. This letter is a routine measure, and indicates that while your situation is reviewed, we ask that you refrain from attending events or services at the church.

Thank you for respecting this policy.

Sincerely yours,

SCRT and/or Minister

**Appendix 10:  
Sample Letter of Permanent Exclusion**

Date

Address of sex offender

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

It is our desire to welcome all people to worship and participate in church-related activities here at Westminster Unitarian Church. To insure the safety of our members and their children, we have in place a Safer Congregations Policy including a section delineating conditions for participation of convicted sex offenders.

It is the opinion of the Safer Congregations Response Team that you, as a convicted sex offender, have not adhered to the following conditions set forth in our Safer Congregations Policy:

For these reasons, we are giving you written notification that you are no longer welcome or permitted to attend worship services and church-related activities and are denied access to all church property.

We wish you the best and regret this action became necessary.

Sincerely yours,

SCRT and/or Minister

cc East Greenwich Police Department

Parole Officer