

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST METRO ATLANTA NORTH  
POLICY for the PROTECTION of YOUNG PEOPLE

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## Preamble

We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North (UUMAN), recognize the importance of creating reasonable precautions in order to protect our young people. It is in this spirit that we have developed this Protection Policy. This policy will apply to all UUMAN sponsored activities and events.

## I. DEFINITIONS

“**Abuse**” is an act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust that harms or threatens to harm a child. There are four categories of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect.

**Physical Abuse** – non-accidental injury to a child under age 18 by a parent or caretaker, which results in bruises, welts, fractures, burns, cuts or internal injuries.

**Physical Neglect** - is the failure of the parent or caretaker to see that the child is adequately supervised, fed, clothed, housed or provided medical care.

**Sexual Abuse** - *Sexual abuse* means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any act that includes, but is not limited to inappropriate touching, intercourse, incest, rape and sodomy as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism and use of children in pornography. *Sexual exploitation* means conduct by a child's parent or caretaker who allows, permits, encourages, or requires that child to engage in prostitution or sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct.

**Emotional maltreatment** - the failure to provide love, care, support and guidance necessary for healthy psychological development. This includes, but is not limited to verbal abuse, such as excessive teasing, belittling, and rejection. (Not addressed under GA law)

A “**young person**” is a person under the age of 18 years. “Youth” generally means middle and high school age young people, or between 11-18 years.

A “**group**” is defined as those young people who have been assigned to a nursery, preschool, Religious Exploration (RE) Team or any planned, organized program or activity.

“**Mandatory Reporters**” are persons who are under a legal duty to report abuse to designated civil authorities whenever there is “reasonable cause” to believe that a child may have been abused. Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse is permitted by law to make a report. The UUMA code of conduct requires the DMCY and the Minister to be “**Mandatory Reporters**”. *The Board of Trustees is the group legally empowered to notify the police, lawyers, insurance company, media spokesperson and/or MSD district executive as needed.*

“**Supervision**” is defined as the reasonable exercise of thoughtful action and responsibility by adults working with an assigned group, realizing that what constitutes appropriate supervision will vary with the ages of those in the group and the context of the activity.

“**Volunteers**” are unpaid persons who are engaged with UUMAN young people, whether they are permanently assigned or occasional.

## II. SCREENING AND SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS

Those volunteers who provide direct care or supervision for young people at UUMAN must meet the following criteria. All volunteers must be:

Adults who work with young people must be at least 25 years of age and have been active participants at UUMAN, as a member or contributing friend for at least six months prior to taking on any assigned group, committee, activity or event *or*

Active participants at UUMAN, as a member or contributing friend for fewer than six months who were active participants as a member or contributing friend in good standing at another Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregation. Participation should be of at least one year duration through the current or preceding calendar year. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the Director of Ministry With Children & Youth (DMCY). Youth, age fourteen (14) and up, who are well known to the church, may assist in religious exploration and childcare. Youth should work with an adult whenever practical.

The MCY Council members and RE Team Leaders must be UUMAN members.

Volunteers with a known documented history of child abuse are prohibited from providing care or supervision of young people.

All volunteers that have an ongoing relationship with young people must complete the UUMAN Volunteer Application Form included with this policy and must consent to such reference and/or background checks as UUMAN deems necessary, and must agree to be bound by the code of ethics set forth in this policy.

All volunteers are required to read and agree to the terms in this policy as well as sign the UUMAN Code of Ethics prior to being assigned ongoing duties with any group or program involving care or supervision of young people at UUMAN.

### ***Background checks***

All staff members, volunteers, and facilitators who will have an ongoing relationship with young people will have local and national criminal background checks (including child/sexual abuse). The background checks will be performed by the personnel trustee. The personal information collected and the findings of these investigations will be kept in a confidential file and retained in a secure place at UUMAN. Should any of these departments report past violations or reports, the DMCY and the Minister will determine further steps to insure safety of our young people. Individuals with a known documented history of child abuse are prohibited from providing care or supervision of any children or youth, which is defined as any person below the age of 18. The background check will be performed as soon as possible for all new personnel. All background checks will be updated every 3 years.

## **III. SUPERVISION GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

All MCY staff and volunteers are subject to the supervision and evaluation of UUMAN's DMCY.

All MCY volunteers are required to comply with the following policies to ensure a safe and secure environment for our ministry:

Whenever feasible, each group should have **at least two volunteers present at all times** with at least one being an adult (in the case of a youth assistant). The DMCY shall determine the appropriate level of supervision for each group and activity, and may make exceptions to this rule on a case-by-case basis. For infants and toddlers, the desirable ratio is outlined in the Nursery Policy (see Appendix).

In order to provide visibility into classrooms any window coverings will be open and door windows will not be obscured.

The DMCY and/or designee shall circulate the rooms on Sunday mornings and monitor activities randomly during MCY/RE activities.

Young people in grades kindergarten and up may use the restroom as needed. Adult/supervisor permission must be obtained before leaving the room/activity to use the restroom. No volunteer will enter the restroom when in use by a young person. Assistance may be provided to Nursery/Preschool children by the childcare

provider or Team Leader as needed. Infants under the care of the childcare provider may have their diapers changed as needed.

Young people in **Preschool through grade 12** may participate in our Religious Exploration program on Sunday mornings. Teams meet in rooms in both Fellowship & Discovery Halls during the time when the Adult community is in the Worship Service. Parents or guardians are expected to be available, if needed, during this time.

Parents/guardians are asked to escort their young people (through grade 5) to their rooms ensuring a safe 'hand over' of responsibility to their RE Team Leaders. ***Our younger children will not be dismissed without an adult.*** Children in Preschool through grade 5 should be picked up by a parent or designated adult when the worship Service is ended.

Team leaders are expected to remain in the room until **all** young people (in their team) have left the room/building. You are asked to escort 'stragglers' to Fellowship Hall if necessary.

Youth should be dismissed according to the following procedure:

Team leaders are expected to offer reminders to the youth as they are dismissed;

They may not stay in the building without adult supervision

They need to check in with their parents (or the adult responsible for them that morning), so that they know that they have been dismissed from RE.

If they want to 'hang out' in DH they could try to find a couple of adults willing to stay in the building with them.

***Last adult in Discovery Hall checks the building and locks the doors.*** Go to the MCY table to let the DMCY or Worship Associate know that you have locked the building

All MCY outings must be pre-approved by the DMCY. Participating children must have a signed permission slip from parent or guardian. See the ***Fieldtrip Guidelines*** in the Appendix of this document.

## **IV. CONDUCT FOR ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

UUMAN seeks to create an environment in which young people and adults can explore the spiritual and religious nature of their lives. We actively encourage relationships between young people and adults, and know that when healthy and genuine they can be transformative for both the adult and the young people involved. Adults are expected to nurture the physical, emotional and spiritual growth of our young people by treating them with kindness, trust, respect and good humor. Interactions must be genuine and not manipulative of the child's needs or vulnerabilities. They must always be engaged with the best interests of the young person as the foremost goal.

We expect all adults working with young people to understand the power differential in young person/adult relationships. This differential places greater responsibility on the adult in the relationship. No matter the age of the young person, it is always the responsibility of the adult to maintain appropriate boundaries in order to maintain an atmosphere of health and trust. To that end we require that all volunteers to endorse our code of ethics. See attached 'Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth Who Are Engaged In Leadership Roles with Children/Youth'.

Corporal punishment or abusive language may not be used under any circumstances. This includes behavior that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse and behavior or language that is threatening or demeaning. Behavior of all volunteers must both *be* and *appear to be* above reproach.

## ***Other areas that may be of concern***

***Physical Affection:*** Physical expressions of affection such as hugs are acceptable, but it is best to allow the child to initiate the contact or to at least to ask permission of the child, and the adult must be sensitive not to allow such affection to become too frequent or prolonged.

***Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol:*** Our Youth Policy prohibits the use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs by minors. Adults should at all times be aware that their own behavior is a powerful statement to young people as to what is acceptable and responsible use of these agents. Adults should not use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco while acting in a supervisory capacity.

If a UUMAN group plans to serve alcohol at an event then an adult must be present at all times in the area where the alcohol is being served. Any leftover alcohol must be taken off UUMAN property at the conclusion of the event. It is also the responsibility of the event chair to ensure that alcohol is unavailable to those under age 21.

***Confidentiality vs. Secrets:*** If a child discloses incidents of abuse or neglect, the volunteer should listen carefully to the report but ask limited questions. Should the disclosure raise a suspicion that abuse has occurred or that the child is in imminent danger, the volunteer should report immediately to the Minister or DMCY. While you can assure a child that you will respect the information and use it confidentially, never give the child the impression that you will keep secrets. Secrets are issues that put a person in danger.

***Disclosures:*** Children's statements will be taken seriously. In the event that a child makes a disclosure, or in an emergency situation, an approved adult will stay with the child until the appropriate next steps have been taken, such as contacting the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFACS).

## **V. PROCEDURES FOR ASSURING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### ***Reporting Abuse and Response Procedures***

Georgia law states that - A report is required when the child suffers from an injury that was inflicted by non-accidental means.

Clergy and Religious Education Professionals are considered "mandated" reporters by the UUMA. They are ethically required to make a report when, based on their training and experience, they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child before them has been abused. Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse is permitted by law to make a report. In addition, anyone who suspects any child abuse should notify the Minister and DMCY, who will in turn notify the President of the UUMAN Board of Trustees. The UUMAN Board of Trustees will ensure that the following notifications are made as applicable:

Parents/ guardians of all parties involved

Within 48 hours, file a written report. This report should include the following information as required by statute:

names/addresses of child and parents or other person responsible for care of child, if known;

where suspected abuse occurred;

age and sex of children;

nature and extent of suspected abuse, including any evidence of prior abuse to child or child's siblings;

name and relationship of person(s) responsible for causing abuse, if known, and any evidence of prior abuse by that person(s);

family composition;  
source of the report;  
person making report and contact information;  
actions taken by reporting source.

Fulton County Authorities:

UUMAN Lawyer or other legal counsel

Insurance Company

MSD District Executive

Media Spokesperson

All notifications should be documented, including telephone calls to any agency or hotline. This documentation is to be confidentially retained in the church records along with all written reports.

An approved adult should stay with a child in any emergency situation that involves disclosure of abuse. Pastoral care and counseling referrals will be provided as desired in coordination with local Youth and Family Services.

### ***Registration Process***

Registration on an annual basis is required for all MCY participants. Parents and guardians who register their children are asked to provide information such as name, age, and home address and telephone number for ongoing UUMAN contact as well as for emergencies. They are also asked to provide information regarding allergies, special needs, and anything we should know as it relates to health and safety. This information is kept in the MCY Registration folder, and is accessible only to the DMCY, Minister, and Board of Trustees. The DMCY will share information with volunteers as needed.

### ***Incident Reports***

In the event that any injury or any safety issue occurs on UUMAN property, during UUMAN functions, an incident report must be filed within 24 hours by the volunteer. Witnesses to an incident may also file an incident report. Forms are located at the MCY Table and in each of the RE Team binders. Incident reports are filed with the DMCY, who will then contact parent/guardian(s) of the young people involved. A copy of the incident report will be provided to parent/guardian(s). If there is immediate concern and the DMCY is not available, any MCY Council or staff member should be consulted. In the event of criminal activity reported, the DMCY will immediately notify the Minister. The police and/or DFACS officials will also be notified as appropriate. The UUMA code of conduct requires the DMCY and the minister to be mandated reporters.

### ***Permission Slips***

For travel, or walking trips that take children and youth off UUMAN grounds, permission slips need to be signed by each participant's parent/guardian. In the case of Mountain, MidSouth District or UUA sponsored events, the permission slips generated by those groups will take the place of those generated by UUMAN.

## **VI. POLICIES FOR ASSURING SAFETY IN RE TEAM ROOMS**

If at any time there is inadequate adult cover for RE sessions or provide for childcare, young people will be returned to their parents/guardians.

In keeping with the recommendations of the UUA, we support the position that a minimum of 2 workers should be present with our children and youth at all times. In the unusual circumstances where this is not possible, limited exceptions may be made with the approval of the DMCY.

MCY/RE activities must be visible at all times so the room doors have glass windows to allow rooms to be monitored.

We believe that young people need an environment where they will be safe. For the safety of our groups, young people are placed in RE Teams that are appropriate for their age/developmental/maturity level. Please refer to the Policy on RE Team Placement in the Appendix.

During MCY/RE activities, young people must remain with the RE Team Leader(s) and the rest of their group for the entire time, whether that be in the room or on an outdoor excursion. A young person is not permitted to freely roam the halls or wander away from the group unsupervised. If a young person does not want to attend the session, they must join their parents/guardians.

### ***Classroom Conduct***

Our teachers and staff spend much time and energy creating a supportive, nurturing, and positive atmosphere for our shared ministry. We expect all young people to behave in a manner that fosters these feelings for themselves and their fellow team members. In addition to our ***MCY Behavior Expectations*** (see Appendix), each RE Team is encouraged to develop a team covenant with their group.

Parents/guardians can help by discussing these expectations with their young people and reinforcing the team covenant.

If a young person has difficulty meeting the MCY Behavior Expectations & affirming our Principles, we will respond according to steps outlined in the ***MCY Conflict Resolution Process*** (see Appendix).

In the event that a young person is injured by the actions of another young person at UUMAN, the parents/guardians of the young people involved will be notified immediately. An incident report will be filled out, and procedures will be followed as outlined in section V. PROCEDURES FOR ASSURING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

If a young person reports to an RE Team Leader that they were treated in an aggressive or hurtful fashion by another team member, the volunteer will relay any complaints to the DMCY and parents/guardians of all parties involved. The volunteer will first help the young people involved discuss the problem and work out a resolution. Further concerns will be handled as outlined in the MCY Conflict Resolution Process or section V. PROCEDURES FOR ASSURING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

### ***Before and After RE Classes***

Before and after scheduled RE sessions, parents are responsible for the direct supervision of their children while on the playground or elsewhere on the UUMAN campus. Young People should never be in a building without adult supervision. See the Parental Responsibilities policy in the Appendix.

Parents/guardians cannot assume that their young person is being supervised by MCY staff or volunteers after program time. Parents/guardians are responsible for any actions of their young people that cause harm to themselves, others or property.

### ***Scheduled fellowship events***

When there is childcare provided for activities other than Sunday mornings, for whatever age groups, the same policies apply as on Sunday mornings.

Consent from parents/guardians is required for MCY/RE activities outside of Sunday mornings and off the UUMAN campus.

## ***ON UUMAN PROPERTY***

### **Outdoors & Playground**

Any young person or group in our playground or grounds during an MCY/RE activity will be supervised by their assigned leaders. Team agreements for rough play apply to the outdoors. Before and after church, parents/guardians are responsible for the safety of their children.

### **Kitchen areas**

As a general rule, parents and guardians are responsible for keeping their young people out of the kitchens for their own safety. Occasionally an activity may involve children's participation in the kitchen, always with adult supervision. Youth often use the kitchens during youth group activities.

Children may be accompanied by an adult to obtain snacks or drinks.

### **Fellowship Hall (upstairs)**

Children are to be supervised in Fellowship Hall at all times by their parent/guardian(s) or other designated adults.

### **Sanctuary**

Young people are to be supervised in the Sanctuary at all times.

If a young person is attending the service with their parent(s)/guardian(s) and leaves the sanctuary for a bathroom break or to go elsewhere on the property, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to supervise the young person.

## ***OFF UUMAN PROPERTY***

### **Transportation**

Any young person transported by a UUMAN volunteer, must have a permission slip signed by their parent or guardian. Youth are not allowed to drive with other youth who are not family members, and only then with signed parental/guardian consent. See the *Fieldtrip Guidelines* in the Appendix of this document.

### **The Mountain R&LC and MidSouth District (MSD)**

Mountain and MSD events, such as conferences or workshops, daily or overnight, have their own rules and regulations. While the policies and procedures for these events are in line with those of UUMAN, they are specifically designed for the safety and enjoyment of the participants of these events. The behavior of young people at Mountain and district events is outlined in a contract signed by the participant and their parent/guardian before engaging in any of these events.

### **UUA Events & General Assembly**

Any youth less than 18 years who is sent with the financial or other support of UUMAN must adhere to the rules put forth by the YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists). UUMAN will not be responsible for any adult or youth who does not comply. Sponsors and youth will be familiar with code of ethics and expected behavior before going.

## **VII. EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The UUMAN Board of Trustees will be asked to approve this policy. We recommend that it be communicated to the congregation and implemented as follows:

A copy of this *Policy* will be provided to anyone identified by the DMCY, MCY Council or Program Council as being within its definition of “volunteer”. All new and existing staff and volunteers will be required to sign a form indicating that they have read this *Policy* and agree to be bound by it.

A summary of this *Policy* will be distributed to the parents/guardians of all children currently participating in the MCY, and thereafter a copy shall be provided to the parents/guardians of children enrolling for the first time.

References to this *Policy* will be a standard part of every application interview and training of new staff and volunteers.

This policy and information on child abuse awareness will be provided to MCY staff and volunteers annually. The DMCY shall store all application forms, signed consents, and background check reports in a locked file. The Safety & Security Committee will report annually to the Board of Trustees regarding the implementation and compliance of this policy.

The Board of Trustees shall ensure that this policy is made public and available to all UUMAN members.

## **VIII. FORMS**

The forms listed in this next section are to be kept on file and accessible for implementing these policies and procedures. It is imperative that they be kept up to date and reviewed yearly. UUMAN Youth Protection documents need to be continually reviewed and updated as our ministry grows and changes. Changes may be implemented more frequently than yearly, on an as needed basis, by the UUMAN Safety and Security Committee with Board approval of respective changes.

***UUMAN VOLUNTEER APPLICATION Form***

Name .....

Address .....

Telephone (Daytime) ..... (Evening/Weekend).....

Email ..... UUMAN member since .....

Date of Birth ..... Driver's License on file? Yes..... No..... N/A.....

By signing below, I give permission for a criminal background check to be undertaken by UUMAN in accordance with the 'Safe Congregations' Policy Manual as recommended by the UUA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
DMCY signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***Please tell us something about yourself***...For example - what is your experience in working with Children & Youth? What are some of the gifts, talents or interests that you would like to share as we build our UUMAN community together? What are some of the needs that you might anticipate as you think about volunteering with our UUMAN children and youth?

## ***UUMAN CODE OF ETHICS***

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

It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care & support that will enable children & youth to develop a positive sense of self & a spirit of independence & responsibility.

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

Adults should also model the positive & respectful behaviors that we expect of children & youth: courtesy, timeliness, orderliness, use of affirming verbal & body language & refraining from smoking in front of children & youth.

All Leaders/Adult Advisors shall be informed of the ***Code of Ethics*** & agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken. This ***Code of Ethics*** was adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1986.

### **Volunteer's Statement**

*In signing this document I agree to uphold the above 'Code of Ethics' in my work with children & youth at Unitarian Universalists Metro Atlanta North (UUMAN).*

*Additionally, 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 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 will meet with the Minister & Religious Educator(s) to review this information confidentially.*

*Furthermore, I agree to notify the Minister & Religious Educator(s) immediately should I be accused of sexual abuse, sexual offenses, sexual harassment, or other sexual improprieties whilst I am working with children & youth at UUMAN.*

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(Name Printed)

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(Name Signed)

(Date)

## ***UUMAN Youth Protection Incident Report***

Please use this form to document all

- physical injuries
- physical arguments
- serious infractions of Covenant, rules or violations of legal statutes

Name of Child/Youth \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Other individuals involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ am / pm

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe incident (*continue on back if necessary*): \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian notified: \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No      Legal authorities notified: \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Staff (paid or volunteer) completing this report:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**Please give this report to the DMCY or Minister.**

**IX. APPENDICES**

Policy attachments

## *UUMAN Field Trip Guidelines*

- All church-sponsored field trips, whether the destination is nearby or far away, must have the prior approval of the DMCY. MCY staff needs to know the “who, what, where, why and when” of the event for our records.
- Participants should be notified as far in advance as possible (*at least one week’s notice*).
- **Resources are available for trips being planned by volunteers.** Standard Permission forms can be customized for your particular event. MCY or UUMAN Office staff can mail cover letters and permission forms from the church to all participants. ***Please allow two weeks notice*** & include special information that needs to be included (such as where to meet, what to bring, what to wear, etc.). We ask that you allow enough lead time so that several modes of communication can be used, including publication in the OOW, UUMAN Times & conversation with young people & parents in person, by email or by phone.
- When Young People are to be taken off the church grounds, the parent/guardian’s permission must be obtained and a liability/medical release from our files must be in the possession of each driver. These are basic requirements in case of an emergency. **If there is no signed Permission slip available or on file, the young person may not participate in the field trip. No exceptions.**
- All drivers must be 25 years of age, have a current driver’s license & be able to show proof of insurance.
- There must be one seat belt for each passenger and the driver. No sharing of seatbelts is allowed.
- **A minimum of two adults must be present on trips**, with a minimum ratio of one adult per seven (7) children/youth. Because of the nature of some activities, a greater number of adults may be required. Always check with the DMCY.
- **Prior to departure make sure that;**
  - All drivers have (*the same*) directions & destination
  - Drivers & youth with cell phones have exchanged cell phone numbers & have a contact number for emergencies
  - All vehicles are in good working order (air, water, oil checked & OK)
- **Create a plan for keeping track of children & youth throughout your excursion.** Communicate the plan to everyone before departure.
- Whenever possible vehicles should travel together (in convoy).

### **At the destination**

- **Establish a central meeting place on arrival.**
- **Review** schedule of activities and expectations for the fieldtrip with everyone on arrival
- **No-one should be off on their own at any time**
  - Ensure that every young person is assigned to a group with (*at least*) 1 adult chaperone. Each group should have a *minimum* of 2 children/youth + 1 adult. Adults should be aware of each other’s whereabouts at all times.
  - Groups may choose to use a ‘buddy system’
  - Do regular ‘headcounts’, *especially when transitioning between activities or locations.*
- **Create a plan for contacting each other in the event of separation**
  - Each young person with a cell phone will be given the opportunity to add at least 2 chaperone phone numbers (*see note about cell numbers above*)

*UUMAN Ministry With Children & Youth Policy on Religious Exploration Team Placement*

**For Childcare and Preschool**

Placement in the Nursery, Toddler Room, and Preschool rooms is flexible. Physical and social development takes precedence over the age of the child. However, placement in the Preschool Team requires that children be toilet trained.

**For Children & Youth (Grades K through 12)**

The September 1st Fulton County School System “cut off date” is to be used in placing young people in RE teams according to grade levels. However as Religious Exploration is not an academic program, effort will be made to place children with their peer group whether or not they have advanced a grade or been retained. Parent/Guardian’s requests will always be considered and should be taken to the Director of our Ministry With Children & Youth.

## *Parental Responsibilities*

**Safety and Supervision:** On arrival on Sunday morning, Parents/Guardians are asked to assist young people in signing the attendance sheet at the MCY table in the foyer. Parents should then accompany young people to the Sanctuary, or escort them to their RE Team Rooms as appropriate. Younger children (infants through Pre-K) should be taken directly to their rooms where they can sign in. ***For their safety, Children & Youth are required to be under adult supervision at all times.*** If they are not attending RE Team meetings or other MCY programming they are expected to be under their parent's or guardian's supervision. Before and after scheduled RE sessions, parents are responsible for the direct supervision of their children while on the playground or elsewhere on the campus. ***Young People should never be in a building without adult supervision.***

**Childcare:** Childcare for all ages is available from 9.00am on Sunday mornings for those parents/guardians who wish to attend Adult Religious Education classes. Our paid caregivers will welcome children as parents sign them into the nursery. Parents must come to the nursery to sign their child out once their Adult RE has been dismissed. Professional childcare is provided throughout the morning in the *Nursery* for infants & toddlers who are not yet potty trained.

**Religious Exploration Teams:** Children and Youth in *Preschool through grade 12* may participate in our Religious Exploration program on Sunday mornings. Teams meet in classrooms in both Fellowship & Discovery Halls during the time when the Adult community is in the Worship Service. Parents or guardians are expected to be available, if needed, during this time. Children & Youth participating in RE will start in their rooms at 10.30am. Parents/guardians are asked to escort their young people (through grade 5) to their rooms ensuring a safe 'hand over' of responsibility to their RE Team Leaders. ***Our younger children will not be dismissed without an adult.*** Children in Preschool through grade 5 should be picked up by a parent or designated adult at 11.30am when the worship Service is ended. ***We respectfully ask that parents wait until 11.30am to collect their young people as RE Teams need this time to complete their sessions.***

**Involvement:** Ours is a '*Shared Ministry with Children & Youth*'. Parents and other UUMAN members who have been attending UUMAN for a year or longer are warmly invited (*encouraged*) to apply to be a Religious Exploration Team Leader for a semester or summer session. Our program relies on dedicated volunteers who make a significant contribution to our ministry, our church, and the principles of Unitarian Universalism. When a family enrolls in our Ministry with Children & Youth (MCY), parents automatically become members of a '*Family Ministry Team*'.

**Attendance:** ***A vital part of the spiritual development of our young people is the experience of being together in community.*** Children who attend regularly get the most from the curriculum and are able to build strong and lasting relationships by sharing their gifts (& *struggles*) with Teammates and the larger Church community. Children & Youth want & need to make meaningful friendships; they look forward to seeing each other on Sunday & may be disappointed if their friends are absent. We hope to support each family in making regular church attendance a priority.

**Financial Commitment:** We believe that the religious education & faith development of our children is the responsibility of the entire congregation. In addition to a voluntary donation for MCY enrollment, ***we encourage families to provide strong financial support to UUMAN through their annual pledge.*** Only with such support are we able to provide professional staff, training, clean and attractive meeting spaces, meaningful curricula, & general program supplies.

## ***Nursery Policy and Procedures***

*January 2000*

UUMAN strives to maintain a health and safe environment for all children entrusted to the care of the nursery childcare providers. Toward that end, the following Policies and Procedures should be followed:

### **1. Policies and Procedures for Families using the Nursery**

**Sign-In Procedure:** All children must be signed into the nursery upon arrival by the parent or other adult who is bringing the child to the nursery. A clipboard with sign-in sheets is provided for this purpose. Allergies and food preferences should be noted here. The parent should also indicate where s/he will be (in service, teaching RE, on RE field trip, etc.).

**Health and Sickness:** To help keep all the children as healthy as possible, children may not be left in the nursery with the following symptoms:

- Fever\*
- Diarrhea\*
- Sore throat
- Vomiting\*
- Eye infection
- Unidentified or contagious skin rash
- Constant cough or constant runny nose

\*Note, fever, diarrhea and vomiting should be gone for 24 hours before a child may come to the nursery.

*Medication may not be administered by the nursery childcare providers.*

**Safety:** Other than necessary “comfort” toys, e.g. security blanket, toys should not be brought to the nursery with the child. Toy guns, balloons, money, and other mouth-sized items should never be sent.

**What to bring:** The child should bring his/her own diapers as well as a change of clothes, in the case of accidents or spills. Diaper bags, backpacks, etc. should be clearly labeled so that childcare providers can easily locate the needed items.

**Sign-out Procedure:** Upon returning to the nursery to pick up the child, the parent should sign their child out on the sheet on the clipboard.

### **2. Policies and Procedures for Nursery Childcare Providers**

**Sign-In Procedures:** The childcare provider should make sure that each child has been signed into the nursery by the parent or adult who is bringing the child to the nursery. Specific issues and questions should be clarified before the parent leaves the nursery.

**Snacks:** For children who are old enough to have snacks, the nursery childcare provider will serve a snack and juice in a ‘sippy-cup’. The nursery childcare provider will check the sign-in sheet on the clipboard before serving snack.

**Safety:** Appropriate safety procedures should be followed at all times.

**Sign-out Procedure:** The childcare provider should make sure that no child in their care leaves the nursery unless s/he is with the parent or adult, and that the sign-out sheet has been noted.

### ***MCY Conflict Resolution Process***

Living our UU Principles in our daily lives - at church and at home - can be hard work! All of us, younger and older, will make mistakes at times, we might fail to live up to the expectations that we have for one another. At those times, it is important for us to talk directly, honestly, with respect and love; to get help from someone we trust, when needed; to listen to one another; to apologize and make amends; to explore what we can do differently next time.

In this way, we learn and grow. In this way, we keep our church a safe and special place. In this way, we make a difference in the world.

***If a Young Person has difficulty meeting the MCY Behavior Expectations & affirming our Principles, we have a responsibility to respond at that time...***

- An RE Team member (*young person or adult*) will offer a reminder that the behavior is not part of our agreement.
- If the behavior continues, an adult will have a private conversation with the young person to determine how the situation can be improved. The following guidelines may be helpful for these conversations;
  - **Stop** – take a moment to check emotions & cool down if necessary
  - **Share** – observations (*objectively, what's happening?*), feelings (*use 'I' statements*) & needs
  - **Think** – about & brainstorm possible solutions that meet needs (*resist editing*)
  - **Agree** – on a solution that all parties believe could be a workable solution
  - **Try** – the chosen solution, check in with each other to see how things are going. Affirm each other & go back to the process if necessary...
- If the young person is upset or unable to cooperate, s/he may be brought to the DMCY for additional resource, support &/or conversation to work toward a solution.
- If a satisfactory solution is not found, the DMCY will speak with the young person's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The parent(s) or guardian(s), young person, RE Team members & DMCY will work together to find ways to make changes or accommodations that enable the young person to participate fully as a member of the RE Team.
- In the case of repeated difficulties, a parent or guardian may be asked to attend class with the young person until a resolution is found.

## ***UUMAN's Ministry with Children & Youth- Behavioral Expectations & Family Agreement***

*Based on the Seven Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

UUMAN's Ministry with Children & Youth is grounded in a commitment to affirm our UU Principles as we build a safe & loving community where we can worship, learn, serve, play & grow together.

### **Principle One: Each and every person is important.**

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. We all have a right to speak, to have a chance to share, to be heard, and to be included in the day's activities at church. This means that we remember not to interrupt when someone else is talking and that we take turns so that every person has a chance to talk, to play or to do a special activity.

### **Principle Two: All people should be treated fairly and kindly.**

Everyone – no matter their age, gender, race, family, abilities, or differences is welcome! We use kind, thoughtful, words. We welcome new friends & look after one another. We forgive ourselves & each other for our mistakes. We deal with our anger & disappointments in honest, caring ways. When we know we are wrong, we apologize and make amends for what we have done. We speak up and get help when we see someone being treated unfairly.

### **Principle Three: We encourage one another and learn together.**

UUMAN is a place for fun & friendship, for learning & service! We listen to each other, participate in group activities to the best of our abilities, help someone who is new or struggling, and share what we are thinking or feeling. We remember that we learn by trying new things and understanding our mistakes. We encourage each other as we learn and grow.

### **Principle Four: Each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.**

Everyone is encouraged to share their own thoughts & feelings without fear of being laughed at or criticized. We ask questions to discover what is true and right for ourselves. We let other people ask questions and explore the things that have meaning for them, and never make fun of our classmates. We try to make sure that people of all ages are given choices so that they can follow their interests & discover what is true & right for them.

### **Principle Five: All persons should have a say about what affects them.**

This principle reminds us that all of us, young and old, work together to make church a safe and friendly place to learn & grow together! Everyone contributes by sharing thoughts and feelings about what happens at church and offering ideas for new, or better, ways of doing things.

### **Principle Six: We work together for a peaceful, fair and free world.**

We settle our disagreements in honest, caring & peaceful ways. We don't shout, push, shove or throw things at one another. We play with each other in thoughtful ways, leaving toy weapons at home. When there is a problem, we talk *to* each other, not *about* each other.

### **Principle Seven: We care for our planet earth which we share with all living things.**

We don't waste food or supplies, and we recycle whatever we can. We don't jump on furniture or play on equipment that is meant for people who are smaller, or younger, than we are. We leave supplies and clean rooms for the next person. We take good care of what belongs to the church or other people.

## FAMILY AGREEMENT

Understanding our Principles & what is expected of us in our time together helps us stay in 'Right Relationship' with one another. With our agreements to do our best we will each make a difference as we build our shared ministry together.

Living our UU Principles in our daily lives - at church and at home - can be hard work! All of us, younger and older, will make mistakes at times, we might fail to live up to the expectations that we have for one another. At those times, it is important for us to talk honestly, with respect and love; to get the help from someone we trust; to listen to one another; to apologize and make amends; to explore what we can do differently next time.

In this way, we learn and grow. In this way, we keep our church a safe and special place. In this way, we make a difference in the world.

***If a Young Person has difficulty meeting these expectations & affirming our Principles, we have a responsibility to respond...***

- An RE Team member will offer a reminder that the behavior is not part of our agreement.
- If the behavior continues, an adult will have a private conversation with the young person to determine how the situation can be improved.
- If the young person is upset or unable to cooperate, s/he may be brought to the DMCY for additional resource, support &/or conversation to work toward a solution.
- If a satisfactory solution is not found, the DMCY will speak with the young person's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The parent(s) or guardian(s), young person, RE Team members & DMCY will work together to find ways to make changes or accommodations that enable the young person to participate fully as a member of the RE Team.
- In the case of repeated difficulties, a parent or guardian may be asked to attend class with the young person until a resolution is found.

***I have reviewed these principles & expectations & shared them with my child(ren) so that they understand what is expected of each of us in our time together at UUMAN. I will help my child(ren) follow these principles & guidelines so that we can all work together to build a safe & loving community for our Ministry with Children & Youth.***

**Parent's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

***I have talked about these principles with my parent(s) or guardian(s) & I understand what is expected of me when I am at UUMAN. I will do my best to follow our principles. I will ask for help when I make mistakes or if I am having a hard time because that is how we help each other to learn & grow.***

**Child's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Child's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Child's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Child's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DMCY Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_