

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures

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SAFE CONGREGATION PHILOSOPHY

Our commitment, as Unitarian Universalists, to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to justice and compassion, compel us to create a safe and nurturing environment that protects children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth while part of our community. We pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner which conveys mutual respect and consideration.

Our philosophy for a safe congregation is grounded in our Unitarian Universalist Principles*:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
Every person's sexuality is sacred and is worthy of respect, and therefore, is not to be violated.
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relationships.
We treat others as we would want to be treated; therefore, sexual exploitation and interpersonal violence is wrong.
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation.
Accepting each other, as we are, means doing no harm and fostering well-being in one's self and others.
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
In our relationship to others, our freedom of sexuality is as important as the responsibility for it.
- The right to conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large.
As a community and as an institution, we are responsible for creating a secure and safe environment.
- The goal of a world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.
We have the opportunity to create the kind of environment that lends itself to peace, liberty and justice in human sexuality, and we can become a model for the rest of society.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.
When we respect each person's sexual integrity we honor the wholeness of life and we respect the web of all existence.

*From *Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sexual Ethics* as it appears in every age level of *Sexuality and Our Faith*, the companion volume to *Our Whole Lives*.

This Safe Congregation Policy is intended to help create a safe environment for all in a manner that promotes our UU principles within the context of our relationships to one another and as a religious community. This Policy should be considered a “living document” that may be amended to reflect changing needs. Requests for amendments should be made through the Board of Trustees.

SMART MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response team is to help ensure an emotionally and physically safe environment for the church community in cases of sexual misconduct by providing guidelines for action to the Board of Trustees. We pledge, as a community, to honor the struggles of all, including victims, offenders, families, and the congregation as a whole.

SECOND UNITARIAN SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY

1. Second Unitarian Church will not tolerate any inappropriate touching. Any act of this kind, or any other form of abuse, whether occurring on church property or elsewhere, will be reported to the DRE and the Minister immediately. The Minister, the DRE, and the person who first learns of the incident will report all such incidents as required by the laws of the State of Nebraska immediately and without exception. When such an incident is reported, the alleged perpetrator will be suspended from attending church and engaging in any church-related activities (such as teaching, volunteering, committee work, etc...) while the State of Nebraska is investigating the alleged incident of abuse.
6. Anyone convicted of sexual or physical abuse of a child or an adult will not be permitted to volunteer with children or youth at the Church. All volunteers will be screened before admittance as a volunteer. They will be informed of the anti-abuse policies and procedures of Second Unitarian Church, as well as the reporting laws of the State of Nebraska. (See the "Screening Procedure"). Misrepresentation of any past convictions on a screening form will be considered immediate grounds for removal from church membership.
7. All volunteers working with children and youth are required to be a member or friend at Second Unitarian Church for at least six months. Parents are welcomed at any time to remain with their children during their participation at Second Unitarian events.
8. Two adults will be present with a group of children or youth at all times to ensure their safety. Where it is not practical to have two approved adults present, the door must be left open. If one of the two adults is a guest speaker or pastor, the other adult is required to be an approved volunteer, present at all times.
9. Parents are requested to accompany children in and out of Church. New or visiting parents must be introduced to the teachers. The child may only be released to that person.
10. Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team (SMART) is a team of Church leaders educated on the issues of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct. The team consists of the Board Chair (or designated Board representative), the Director of Religious Education, the Chair of the Religious Growth and Learning Committee, a Member-at-Large (selected by the Board of Trustees) and the Minister, as an ex-officio member. A member of the Personnel Committee may also be asked to serve on the team in cases where the alleged offender is a paid member of the staff. The team will include both male and female members. This group is responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding the process of dealing with offenders and victims of sexual abuse in the congregation. SMART will select a chair from within its membership. SMART is also

responsible for educating the volunteers, parents, and children of the congregation on the relevant issues and processes concerning the prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse.

11. As the Minister serves the unique role of providing pastoral care to the alleged perpetrator, which carries with it privileged communication, as well as ex-officio membership on the SMART team, the Minister shall not be in the position of gathering information for the risk assessment unless an additional SMART team member collaborates in the culling of such information. This prevents the Minister from being placed in a situation where he or she is unable to divulge information crucial to the risk assessment without breaking confidentiality. This also serves to protect the pastoral relationship from any action taken by the Board as recommended by the SMART team.
12. Upon learning of an incident of abuse, the SMART team will be convened by the Minister or DRE in order to make a risk assessment which will inform recommendations for the alleged perpetrators continued participation at Church.
13. The Board will hold a special, closed meeting at which SMART will make recommendations to the Board. The sole item on the agenda will be the incident of abuse. The Board will consider the situation, what information is to be made known to the congregation as a whole, and how to disseminate that information. Each incident of abuse will be taken on a case-by-case basis. (See the “Incident Procedure”)
14. The SMART Team, in conjunction with other Church staff, will ensure that all incidents of abuse at the Church are well documented.
15. The Board will oversee and enforce consequences upon any individual who has engaged in inappropriate physical, emotional, or sexual behavior with another person at the Church. The SMART team will ensure that the victim and their family have access to counseling and other support services. The Minister will work with the offender to help them access support and mental health resources where appropriate.
16. SMART will maintain a policy and procedure manual which will be kept in the church office and will be updated regularly by the SMART team with current educational and resource information.

SCREENING PROCEDURE

This document is a policy of Second Unitarian Church. This screening procedure may be different in other churches in the community or district

A. Adult Volunteer in Children or Youth Programs

1. Each current church year all adults who volunteer in programs for children or youth must fill out a screening form and sign a code of ethics before a volunteer can participate in a classroom.

2. Names of volunteers will be checked against the Nebraska and Iowa Sex offender lists by the Director of Religious Education and Minister. If a person has lived in another state previously in the past five years at the time the screening form is filled out, then all states of residence during those five years will be checked as well.

3. Screening forms will be kept confidentially in the Director of Religious Education's locked files.

4. Anyone who has been convicted of either child sexual abuse or physical abuse cannot volunteer to assist with children or youth in any church sponsored activity or program.

5. In the event that a person is on an offender's list, the information will be passed onto the SMART team. SMART will convene and perform a risk assessment of the situation.

6. SMART then notifies the Board that a documented sex offender is attending the congregation and has attempted to participate in the RE and/or childcare programs. The Board considers what and how much information should be disseminated to the congregation on a case-by-case basis.

B. Youth (13yrs to 18yrs) Volunteer in Children's programs

1. Each current church year all youth who volunteer in children's programming must fill out a screening form and code of ethics. Forms must be signed by both a parent or legal guardian of the youth and the youth. These forms must be filled out before a youth can volunteer.

2. Screening forms will be kept confidentially in the Director of Religious Education's locked files.

3. All youth volunteers will have an adult supervisor present on church grounds while they are volunteering with children.

C. Paid Staff who work in/with children's programs

1. Director of Religious Education

- a. Application for employment needs to be on file including a resume.
- b. Documented personal interviews with Minister and Personnel Committee need to be on file.
- c. Documented reference check of at least three references needs to be on file.
- d. Code of Ethics and release of liability for background information need to be signed and kept on file.
- e. Name must be checked against relevant sex offender registries by Minister and Chair of Personnel Committee.
- f. Criminal background check may be performed and kept on file.

2. Childcare workers

a. Adults

1. Application for employment needs to be on file including a resume.
2. Documented personal interviews with the Director of Religious Education need to be on file.
3. Documented reference check of at least three references needs to be on file.
4. Code of Ethics and release of liability need to be signed and kept on file.
5. Name must be checked against relevant sex offender registries by Minister and Director of Religious Education.
6. Criminal background check may be performed and kept on file.

b. Youth

1. All youth who are paid childcare workers must fill out a screening form and code of ethics. Forms must be signed by both a parent and legal guardian of the youth and the youth.
2. Screening forms need to be filled out before a youth can participate as a paid childcare worker. All childcare workers need to fill out a form for each current Church year.
3. Screening forms will be kept confidentially in the Director of Religious Education's locked files.
4. All youth will have an adult supervisor present on church grounds while they are taking care of children.

3. Interim/Settled Minister

- a. All procedures will be followed according to the UUA's *Interim and Consulting Ministries Handbook* and *Settlement Handbook*. Each has application procedures and background checks for the appropriate position.

D. Board of Trustee Members

1. Each current church year all Board members will fill out a screening form and sign a code of ethics.
2. Names will be checked against the Nebraska and Iowa Sex offender lists by the Director of Religious Education and Minister. If a person has lived in another state previously in the past five years at the time the screening form is filled out, then all states of residence during those five years will be checked as well.
3. Forms will be kept confidential in a locked cabinet. If participating in a children's or youth program, then a copy will be in the Director of Religious Education's locked files as well as with the board members' files.
4. Any Board member who has been convicted of either child sexual abuse or physical abuse cannot volunteer to assist with children or youth in any church sponsored activity or program.
5. In the event that a person is on an offender's list, the information will be passed onto the SMART team. SMART will convene and determine a risk assessment.
6. SMART then notifies the Board that a documented sex offender is serving on the Board of Trustees. The Board considers what and how much information should be disseminated to the congregation on a case-by-case basis. The Board member in question should recuse herself/himself from participating in any decisions made concerning their case.

SAFE CONGREGATION EDUCATION AND AWARENESS
Coordinated by DRE, Personnel Committee and Minister

A. Board of Trustees and Minister

Once a year, the Board of Trustees will attend a safe congregation workshop, which could include topics on sexual abuse awareness, right relations or other relevant topics.

B. Adult Volunteers in Children's and Youth Programming & Church Leaders

At least once a year, a Safe Congregation workshop will be offered to all adult volunteers in children's and youth programming as well as church leaders. Topics could include classroom management, sexual abuse awareness, right relations or other relevant topics.

C. Youth Volunteers in Children's Programming/Paid Youth Childcare workers

1. At least once a year, proper training will be offered to all youth who want to volunteer in children's programming or who want to be paid childcare workers for the church by the Director of Religious Education.
2. Youth must attend the training offered by the church in order to participate or show proof of training through another approved organization such as the Red Cross.

D. Parent/Child/Congregation Safe Congregation Education

At least once a year, programming will be provided to educate parents, children and the congregation separately in Safe Congregation Education. Programming could include but is not limited to Our Whole Lives, Safety Awareness, Sexual Abuse Awareness, and other relevant topics.

E. Director of Religious Education

At least once a year, the Director of Religious Education will read and document a book on a Safe Congregation topic or attend a continuing education class on an appropriate topic. Documentation will be kept in personnel file.

F. Paid Adult Childcare Workers

1. Need to provide proof of CPR/First Aid certification or be willing to take a CPR/First Aid certification course within 3 months of being hired.
2. Childcare workers will be encouraged to attend at least one of the workshops offered above.

**DOCUMENTATION OF AN INCIDENT OF SUSPECTED ABUSE
INVOLVING A MINOR**

1. All persons who suspect abuse are considered mandatory reporters by Nebraska State Law.

2. If a person suspects abuse the following procedure is recommended:
 - A. Provide a caring, supportive response to a victim with active listening. It is important to remember this is not an investigation.
 - B. Do not put blame or suspicion onto the victim.
 - C. Consult with the Minister or Director of Religious Education. A form will be provided to help make a report to civil authorities (see pg. 28 of resource section).
 - D. Reporting of a suspected incident to proper civil authorities will be the responsibility of the Minister, Director of Religious Education, and the person who became aware of the suspected abuse.

INCIDENT PROCEDURE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH A HISTORY OF PREDATORY BEHAVIOR

“There are generally a few ways that the presence of a convicted sex offender becomes known in a congregation. In an ideal world, a person with this background would come to the minister before they started coming to the congregation to discuss limits on their participation. Sex offender treatment specialists often encourage their clients to do just that. One community facing this issue wrote, “The Board’s response to this situation would have been made easier if, before becoming so deeply involved in church activities, the individual had approached our church, explained his situation, asked whether there was some arrangement under which he could participate, and then awaited our response.” This is probably not often the case. In some cases, people reveal their backgrounds to the ministers. In other circumstances, another congregant may discover a congregant’s history of sexual offenses. Congregants should know that in these cases they should make their concern known to the minister. In other cases, someone may see a familiar name on the sex offender registry. Or, perhaps it becomes known that a longstanding member of the congregation has been accused of a sexual offense.” *Rev. Debra Haffner, Balancing Acts*

1. Once the situation is revealed, the Minister should act as quickly as possible to contact the individual and discuss the issues that have been raised. The Minister may want to check the sex offender registry before meeting with the individual. If the individual has a partner who is also a member of the congregation, the Minister should make an effort to reach out to the partner as well.
2. The Minister should convene the SMART team in order to assess whether there is sufficient concern to warrant a risk assessment. The team consists of the Board Chair (or designated Board representative), the Director of Religious Education, the Chair of the Religious Growth and Learning Committee, a Member-at-Large (selected by the Board of Trustees) and the Minister, who maintains ex-officio status on the team. If the incident in question concerns one of the above people as the possible abuser, that person will immediately recuse herself/himself from the team and the Board of Trustees will nominate a representative to serve on the team instead. If the alleged offender is a paid staff member of the church, then a member of the Personnel Committee will also serve on the team.
3. If a risk assessment is deemed warranted, the alleged perpetrator is instructed to remove himself/herself immediately from any church activity until the Board of Trustees can meet to determine a course of action.
4. The SMART team will also contact the Church’s insurance company. They will provide the necessary information required by the Church’s liability policy.
5. A meeting of the Board of Trustees is then called. The SMART team reports to the Board the nature and substance of the suspected incident as well as the

conversations with the State (if applicable) and the insurance company. Additionally, SMART makes recommendations to the Board regarding ways to provide safe access, if appropriate, to limited church functions by the alleged perpetrator based on a risk assessment conducted in coordination with professionals involved in the case (i.e., therapists, law enforcement, social services, etc...). This might include use of a Limited Access agreement as in Balancing Acts by Rev. Debra Haffner. (See the copy on file in the Church Office.)

6. The Board determines how, when, and what information regarding the suspected incident is communicated to the congregation. The Board also determines whether or not to adopt recommendations made by the SMART team. It is not the responsibility of the Board, or any other entity within the congregation, to investigate incidents of abuse. Such activity can interfere with the legal investigation and have serious consequences. This is left to the appropriate State appointed persons.
7. Persons with past histories of sexual offenses may be asked to sign a Limited Access Agreement. Depending on the circumstances, the document may be renewed annually. If the offender refuses to do so, then it is appropriate to deny the person access to congregation functions and church property. If necessary, the local police will be asked to assist in the enforcement of this policy.
8. Once a case is in a probationary period, SMART will conduct an ongoing assessment of risk to determine adherence to the Limited Access agreement, or other guidelines established by the Board, every six months. These findings will be reported to the Board and may include additional recommendations.
9. The Minister and DRE will maintain a file of pastoral referrals to offer to victims and their families of sexual abuse and misconduct. The Minister will also make him/herself available for pastoral care to the general membership of the congregation post-incident.
10. The SMART team will continue to meet as necessary to monitor compliance of the perpetrator during any probationary period determined by the Limited Access Agreement. If the probationary period exceeds the term of office held by any of the SMART team members, the members agree to retain their membership on SMART, as pertains to cases which they initiated, until the probationary period has ended. This will facilitate consistency and fairness as well as minimize the risk to discretion by involving additional church members. Should a SMART case re-emerge involving a prior perpetrator, the original SMART team will be reconvened whenever possible.

11. Once a disposition has been determined for a case, a case summary is completed by the SMART team and is filed with all relevant materials in a secured place.

12. Should the disposition of a case change, a new case summary will be completed and an updated risk assessment will be made in order to ensure that all information regarding appropriate engagement in congregational life is based on recent information.

INCIDENT PROCEDURE FOR EVENTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OCCURRING OUTSIDE CONGREGATIONAL LIFE THAT BECOME KNOWN TO THE CONGREGATION

1. When an incident of sexual misconduct is perpetrated by a participant in Second Unitarian's congregation and becomes known to the congregation, the Board and SMART team must take action to ensure the safety of both the congregation and the perpetrator and to regulate the dissemination of information in the congregation.
2. Upon learning of the incident, the DRE or Minister will convene the SMART team in order to conduct a preliminary risk assessment. The alleged perpetrator is instructed by the Minister to remove him or herself from any church activity until the Board of Trustees can meet to determine a course of action.
3. The team consists of the Board Chair (or designated Board representative), the Director of Religious Education, the Chair of the Religious Growth and Learning Committee, a Member-at-Large (selected by the Board of Trustees) and the Minister, who maintains ex-officio status on the team. The team will include both male and female members.
4. If the incident in question concerns one of the above people as the possible abuser, that person will immediately recuse herself/himself from the team and the Board of Trustees will nominate a representative to serve on the team instead. If the alleged offender is a paid staff member of the church, then a member of the Personnel Committee will also serve on the team. If the Minister is the one accused, the Board Chair should contact the Director of Congregational Services at the UUA and/or the District Executive serving the congregation for further instruction.
5. If there are pending legal charges, the Minister will work with the alleged perpetrator to address his/her spiritual needs pending the resolution of the legal case and the alleged perpetrator will agree to remove himself/herself from congregational life until the legal issues are resolved.
6. If the individual has a partner who is also a member of the congregation, the Minister should make an effort to reach out to the partner as well.
7. After the process of adjudication, the SMART team will conduct a more detailed risk assessment based on factual information available to them through contact with law enforcement and mental health care providers.
8. The alleged perpetrator will be asked to provide limited access to any individual or group therapists as well as probation or parole officers by signing a release of information.

9. The SMART team will inform the Church's insurance company and will provide the necessary information required by the Church's liability policy.
10. Once the necessary information has been gathered to conduct a risk assessment, a meeting of the Board of Trustees is called. The SMART team reports to the Board the nature and substance of the suspected incident as well as any conversations with the State, the insurance company, and the mental health professional. Additionally, SMART makes recommendations to the Board regarding ways to provide safe access, if appropriate, to limited church functions by the alleged perpetrator based on a risk assessment conducted in coordination with professionals involved in the case (i.e., therapists, law enforcement, social services, etc...). This might include use of a Limited Access agreement as in Balancing Acts by Rev. Debra Haffner. (See the copy on file in the Church Office.)
11. The Board determines whether or not to adopt recommendations made by the SMART team. It is not the responsibility of the Board, or any other entity within the congregation, to investigate incidents of abuse. Such activity can interfere with the legal investigation and have serious consequences. This is left to the appropriate State appointed persons.
12. If the offender refuses to sign a Limited Access agreement, then it is appropriate to deny the person access to congregation functions and church property. If necessary, the local police will be asked to assist in the enforcement of this policy.
13. The Minister will also make him/herself available for pastoral care to the general membership of the congregation post-incident.
14. Once a case is in a probationary period, SMART will conduct an ongoing assessment of risk to determine adherence to the Limited Access agreement, or other guidelines established by the Board, every six months. These findings will be reported to the Board and may include additional recommendations.
15. If the probationary period exceeds the term of office held by any of the SMART team members, the members agree to retain their membership on SMART, as pertains to cases which they initiated, until the probationary period has ended. This will facilitate consistency and fairness as well as minimize the risk to discretion by involving additional church members. Should a SMART case re-emerge involving a prior perpetrator, the original SMART team will be reconvened whenever possible.
16. A determination of how to address the issue in the congregation will be made on a case by case basis and action taken by the SMART team or Board of Trustees will reflect thoughtfulness and discretion for both the perpetrator and the members of the congregation who may be vulnerable to this issue.

17. Once a course of action has been determined for a case, a case summary is completed by the SMART team and is filed with all relevant materials in a secured place.
18. Should the status of a case change, a new case summary will be completed and an updated risk assessment will be made in order to ensure that all information regarding appropriate engagement in congregational life is based on recent information.

INCIDENT PROCEDURE FOR EVENTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OCCURRING WITHIN CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

1. The incident occurs and is witnessed or is reported to an adult. All adults who suspect abuse are required to report it by State of Nebraska law.
2. The adult consults with the DRE and the Minister concerning the incident of abuse.
3. The adult, with the DRE and Minister, reports the incident or the suspicion of the incident to the State of Nebraska.
4. The SMART team is convened by either the Minister or the DRE immediately after the incident is made known. The team consists of the Board Chair (or designated Board representative), the Director of Religious Education, the Chair of the Religious Growth and Learning Committee, a Member-at-Large (selected by the Board of Trustees) and the Minister, who maintains ex-officio status on the team. The team will include both male and female members.
5. If the incident in question concerns one of the above people as the possible abuser, that person will immediately recuse herself/himself from the team and the Board of Trustees will nominate a representative to serve on the team instead. If the alleged offender is a paid staff member of the church, then a member of the Personnel Committee will also serve on the team. If the Minister is the one accused, the Board Chair should contact the Director of Congregational Services at the UUA and/or the District Executive serving the congregation for further instruction
6. After the State of Nebraska has been notified of the incident, or the suspicion of an incident, the SMART team will contact a qualified therapist outside the congregation (see resource list). The role of the therapist is to advise the congregation on resources and decisions and to provide a referral, if desired, for treatment for both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
7. The alleged perpetrator is instructed by the Minister to remove himself/herself immediately from any church activity until the Board of Trustees can meet to determine a course of action.
8. If there are pending legal charges, the Minister will work with the alleged perpetrator to address his/her spiritual needs pending the resolution of the legal case, and the alleged perpetrator will agree to remove himself/herself from congregational life until the legal issues are resolved.

9. If the individual has a partner who is also a member of the congregation, the Minister should make an effort to reach out to the partner to provide pastoral support.
10. The SMART team will also contact the Church's insurance company. They will provide the necessary information required by the Church's liability policy.
11. A meeting of the Board of Trustees is then called. The SMART team reports to the Board the nature and substance of the suspected incident as well as the conversations with the State, the insurance company, and the mental health professional. Additionally, SMART makes recommendations to the Board regarding ways to provide safe access, if appropriate, to limited church functions by the alleged perpetrator based on a risk assessment conducted in coordination with professionals involved in the case (i.e., therapists, law enforcement, social services, etc...). This might include use of a Limited Access agreement as in Balancing Acts by Rev. Debra Haffner. (See the copy on file in the Church Office.)
12. The Board also determines whether or not to adopt recommendations made by the SMART team. It is not the responsibility of the Board, or any other entity within the congregation, to investigate incidents of abuse. Such activity can interfere with the legal investigation and have serious consequences. This is left to the appropriate State appointed persons.
13. After the process of adjudication, the SMART team will conduct a more detailed risk assessment based on factual information available to them through contact with law enforcement and mental health care providers
14. The alleged perpetrator will be asked to provide limited access to any individual or group therapists as well as probation or parole officers by signing a release of information.
15. If the offender refuses to sign a Limited Access Agreement, then it is appropriate to deny the person access to congregation functions and church property. If necessary, the local police will be asked to assist in the enforcement of this policy.
16. Once a case is in a probationary period, SMART will conduct an ongoing assessment of risk to determine adherence to the Limited Access agreement, or other guidelines established by the Board, every six months. These findings will be reported to the Board and may include additional recommendations.
17. The Board determines how, when, and what information regarding the suspected incident is communicated to the congregation.

18. The Minister and DRE will maintain a file of pastoral referrals to offer to victims and their families of sexual abuse and misconduct. The Minister will also make him/herself available for pastoral care to the general membership of the congregation post-incident.
19. The SMART team will continue to meet as necessary to monitor compliance of the perpetrator during any probationary period determined by the Limited Access Agreement. If the probationary period exceeds the term of office held by any of the SMART team members, the members agree to retain their membership on SMART, as pertains to cases which they initiated, until the probationary period has ended. This will facilitate consistency and fairness as well as minimize the risk to discretion by involving additional church members. Should a SMART case re-emerge involving a prior perpetrator, the original SMART team will be reconvened whenever possible.
20. Once a course of action has been determined for a case, a case summary is completed by the SMART team and is filed with all relevant materials in a secured place.
21. Should the status of a case change, a new case summary will be completed and an updated risk assessment will be made in order to ensure that all information regarding appropriate engagement in congregational life is based on recent information.

**REASONS FOR EXCLUDING AN OFFENDER FROM ALL
CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES**
Adapted from Rev. Debra Haffner's Balancing Acts

1. Refusal to allow the Minister and SMART member to contact the treatment provider and probation/parole officer.
2. Refusal to go for a risk assessment or attend treatment with a qualified therapist.
3. Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high a risk for recidivism.
4. Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
5. Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.
6. Non-adherence to the terms of probation or parole.
7. Non-compliance with treatment protocol as determined by treatment providers.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Required Material for Offender Risk Assessment

In providing adequate information to the Board of Trustees regarding the potential risk of a sexual offender to commit subsequent acts, it must be stressed that making predictions about recidivism is very difficult, even for specially trained mental health professionals. Therefore, recommendations should be made based on as much available material as possible and should err on the side of conservatism to protect both the congregation and the offender.

The following information should be used as the basis of risk assessment and to draft probationary conditions of membership as described in a Limited Access Agreement.

- A. The offender's ability to comply with withdrawal from all church activity until a Limited Access Agreement has been approved by the Board of Trustees.
- B. An initial conversation with each of the therapists associated with the offender's treatment to be conducted by the Minister in conjunction with a member of the SMART team. (It will be necessary for the individual to sign a release of information for these conversations to occur).
- C. An initial conversation with the probation or parole officer involved in monitoring legal compliance of the individual to be conducted by the Minister in conjunction with a member of the SMART team. (It will be necessary for the individual to sign a release of information for this conversation to occur).
- D. Ongoing, regular treatment with an individual and/or group therapist who is a member in good standing of ATSA (The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers).

During the probationary period, regular contact with the therapists and the probation/parole officer by the Minister and a member of the SMART team should be maintained every six months in order to ensure ongoing treatment and legal compliance. Revisions to the Limited Access Agreement may be suggested to the Board of Trustees based on these interactions, if deemed necessary.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Guidelines for conversations with therapists and/or probation/parole officers:

- What are your credentials and training?
- What professional organizations are you a member of? (ATSA?)
- For what period of time is treatment mandated?
- What is the frequency of treatment or contact required for probation/parole?
- Are you aware of any other offenses committed either inside or outside of the state of Nebraska?
- How long has the individual been in treatment with you?
- Are there other therapists involved in the case (individual, group, family, etc...)
- What sort of behavioral modification program do you use?
- Does the individual make constructive use of therapy?
- Is the individual making progress in treatment? Are you satisfied with the pace that he/she is working at?
- Does your treatment include a relapse prevention model? If so, what is included?
- What steps is the individual taking in reducing his/her risk to others?
- Can you give a rudimentary risk assessment of the individual given his/her work in therapy? How much is he/she currently able to participate safely in congregational activities?
- In your opinion, is the individual able to accept responsibility for his/her actions and behaviors?
- Do you think the individual has a sufficient amount of impulse control and affect regulation to participate safely in church activities?
- What role do you see the church playing in the individual's recovery? In the recovery of the individual's partner?

RESOURCE MATERIAL

- What changes would you like to see the individual make before you would feel confident that it would be safe for him/her to return to church and participate fully in activities that involve families and children?
- If the individual were attending your church, what safety guidelines would you like to see in place?
- To your knowledge, what kinds of behavioral guidelines have other churches put into action in situations similar to this one?
- What red flags should we be looking for or incorporate in our contract with the individual?
- What do you believe to be a compassionate response on the part of the church to possible relapse down the line?
- Can you recommend any specific actions that the church can take to support the partner and family of the individual in this process?
- If the individual determines that he/she will comply with the church's guidelines, are you available (with the appropriate signed release) for us to check in periodically to monitor continued progress in treatment and to update our risk assessment information.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

List of Community Therapists who work with Victims of Sexual Abuse

(who have no known affiliation with the Second Unitarian congregation)

As of May 2008

Individual Adult and Couples

Connie Logan, Ph.D.	926-2584
Patricia Blake, Ph.D.	493-4444
Tim Swisher, LMHP, CADAC	341-2230
Anne Potter, Ph.D.	330-6060
Stephen Skulsky, Ph.D.	393-2664
Mollie Foster, Ph.D.	827-5540

Children and Families

Sean Akers, Psy.D.	955-3900
Loren Conaway, Ph.D.	955-3900
Katie Sewell, Psy.D.	955-3900

Agencies

Lutheran Family Services	455-9757
Catholic Charities	554-0520
YWCA	345-7273
Heartland Family Services	553-3000
Jewish Family Services	330-2024
Child Savings Institute	553-6000

RESOURCE MATERIAL

SMART CASE SUMMARY FORM

Date: _____

Case Number: _____

Concerned Party(ies):

SMART Team Members & Roles (i.e. Minister, DRE, Member-at-Large, etc...)

Board Members:

Date of Referral of Case to Minister, DRE or Board Member: _____

Date Team Convened: _____

Date of First Contact with Concerned Party(ies): _____

Date of Last Contact with Concerned Party(ies): _____

Date of Report to CPS or APS (if applicable): _____

Date of Board Action: _____

Outside Consultation Sought by Team (names, positions and phone numbers):

Current Disposition of Case:

_____ Resolved: Reintegration into Church Community

_____ Resolved: Mandated Removal from Church Community

_____ Resolved: Voluntary Removal from Church Community

_____ Pending Resolution

_____ Participating under Limited Access Agreement
(probationary period terminates _____)

_____ Necessary Information Withheld by Concerned Part(ies)

_____ Dismissed ~ please explain:

_____ Other ~ please explain:

Additional Information:

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Form to Assist in Reporting an Incident of Suspected Abuse

Please provide as much of the information below as you are able to obtain from the victim. Again, this is not an investigation and you should not go back to the victim to ask leading questions. Only use the information you have from the initial point of contact. Please consult with the Minister or Director of Religious Education in filling out this form.

1. Name, age, gender and address of victim
2. Name, age, gender and address of alleged perpetrator.
3. Nature of alleged abuse.
4. Duration of alleged abuse.
5. If possible, date and location of incident(s)
6. Relationship between victim and alleged perpetrator.
7. If possible, other evidence that helps support allegation.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Second Unitarian Church Code of Ethics for Adult Leaders A covenant between our congregation and our children & youth

Adults working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one which may carry with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether in the role of teacher, nursery care-giver, minister, director of religious education, youth advisor, chaperone, or board member, the adults of our congregation have special opportunities to interact with our young people in ways which are affirming and inspiring both to the youth and the adult. Adults can be trusted mentors, role models and valued friends of our children and youth. To facilitate growth and self-discovery in a child, to help them grow to be caring and responsible adults, can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult as well as provide a lifetime of benefit to the child or youth.

While it is important adults be capable of maintaining meaningful friendships with the children/youth they work with, we must always exercise good judgment, wisdom and mindfulness regarding the impact of our interactions. Young people are in a vulnerable position, and when dealing with adults, they may find it difficult to speak out when they feel an adult's behavior is inappropriate.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of our entire church community, not just those in leadership positions to create and maintain a climate which supports, enhances and celebrates the growth and welfare of our children and youth.

I understand adults who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of both the individual and the community. I recognize the importance of those interacting with our children/youth be well-qualified to provide special care, nurturing and support that will enable our children/youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. I honor the relationship between young people and their adult mentors must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of the relationship is to be realized.

I acknowledge the importance of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. I understand, as an adult volunteer in our congregation, I will play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. I am aware children, youth and adults suffer damaging effects when mentors become sexually involved with the young persons in their care. Therefore, I commit to refrain from any behavior which may be sexual, seductive, or erotic with our children and youth.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Furthermore, I will not sexually harass or engage in any behavior which constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse. While performing my stewardship duties, I will abstain from any influence of illegal substances, alcohol or any other drug which may impair my judgment or ability to function effectively in a leadership role with our children and youth.

By signing this, I agree to enter into this covenant with the children and youth of our congregation and I will conduct myself in accordance with this code. I understand appropriate action, as outlined in our church's Safe Congregation Policies, will be taken if this code is violated.

Signature

Date

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Religious Education Adult Volunteer Information Form

Name: _____
Address (if different from the directory): _____
How long have you lived at the present address? _____
If you have not lived in your current town for 5 years, please list the cities and states where you have lived for the last 5 years: _____
Home Phone: _____ Work/Cell Phone: _____
When is the best time to reach you and on which phone? _____
Email: _____
How long have you attended Second Unitarian Church? _____

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The following principles reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities.

- Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse cannot volunteer to assist children or youth in any church sponsored activity or program.
- All adult volunteers are required to have regularly attended Second Unitarian Church for a minimum of six months prior to volunteering with youth or children.
- Adult volunteers must observe the **two adult rule**. This requires adults are never alone with children or youth without an adult partner. Where it is not practical to have two approved adults present, the door must be left open.
- Adult volunteers must immediately report any behaviors which may seem abusive or inappropriate to the Director of Religious Education or Minister.
- The ministry of touch is understood to be a valuable, sometimes even needed dimension of children/youth ministries. But it can also open the door of vulnerability if given inappropriately. A warm handshake or handclasp is always appropriate, as is an arm around a hurting child or a brief hug of greeting or approval. Such displays, however, must **always** be done in the presence of other people, **never** in an isolated situation. Any indication from the child/youth of discomfort with such a display must be honored immediately. **Any unreasonable or inappropriate touching is forbidden.**

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Religious Education Adult Volunteer Screening Form

*This form is to be completed by all volunteers for any positions involving the supervision or custody of minors. This form is being used to help the church provide safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. **Your responses will be kept confidential.***

As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe the policies regarding working with youth or children, as listed on the Volunteer information form?

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? _____
If yes, please explain. _____

Have you ever committed, or has any civil action ever been filed against you for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? _____
If yes, please explain. _____

Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer for reason related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? _____
If yes, please explain. _____

All of the above information I have given is truthful and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have read the policy on the Paid Staff Information Form and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

Date

Name (printed)

Signature

Office Use Only

Given Code of Ethics _____ (Date) _____ (Initials)

Name checked against appropriate sex offender registry

_____ (Date) _____ (Initials)

_____ (Date) _____ (Initials)

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Board Member Information Form

Name: _____
Address (if different from the directory): _____
How long have you lived at the present address? _____
If you have not lived in your current town for 5 years, please list the cities and states where you have lived for the last 5 years: _____
Home Phone: _____ Work/Cell Phone: _____
When is the best time to reach you and on which phone? _____
Email: _____
How long have you attended Second Unitarian Church? _____

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RESOURCE MATERIAL

Board Member Screening Form

*This form is to be completed by all volunteers for any positions involving the supervision or custody of minors or in leadership roles. This form is being used to help the church provide safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. **Your responses will be kept confidential.***

As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe the policies regarding working with youth or children, as listed on the Volunteer information form?

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? _____

If yes, please explain. _____

Have you ever committed, or has any civil action ever been filed against you for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? _____

If yes, please explain. _____

Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer for reason related to sexual misconduct or child abuse?

If yes, please explain. _____

All of the above information I have given is truthful and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have read the policy on the Board Member Information Form and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

Date

Name (printed)

Signature

Office Use Only

Given Code of Ethics _____ (Date) _____ (Initials)

Name checked against appropriate sex offender registry

_____ (Date) _____ (Initials)

_____ (Date) _____ (Initials)

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Paid Staff Information Form

Name: _____
Address (if different from the directory): _____
How long have you lived at the present address? _____
If you have not lived in your current town for 5 years, please list the cities and states where you have lived for the last 5 years: _____
Home Phone: _____ Work/Cell Phone: _____
When is the best time to reach you and on which phone? _____
Email: _____
How long have you attended Second Unitarian Church? _____

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The following principles reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities.

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RESOURCE MATERIAL

Paid Staff Screening Form

*This form is to be completed by all volunteers for any positions involving the supervision or custody of minors. This form is being used to help the church provide safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. **Your responses will be kept confidential.***

As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe the policies regarding working with youth or children, as listed on the Volunteer information form?

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? _____
If yes, please explain. _____

Have you ever committed, or has any civil action ever been filed against you for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? _____
If yes, please explain. _____

Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by an employer for reason related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? _____
If yes, please explain. _____

All of the above information I have given is truthful and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have read the policy on the Paid Staff Information Form and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

Date

Name (printed)

Signature

Office Use Only

Given Code of Ethics _____ (Date) _____ (Initials)
Name checked against appropriate sex offender registry
_____ (Date) _____ (Initials)
_____ (Date) _____ (Initials)

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Children’s Religious Education Teen Paid/Volunteer Information Form

Name: _____
Address: _____
How long have you lived at the present address? _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
When is the best time to reach you and on which phone? _____
Email: _____
List Parent/Guardian who attends First or Second Unitarian Church? _____
_____ If no parent/guardian, list sponsor: _____

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The following principles reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children and youth who participate in church sponsored activities.

- Teens must have either a parent/guardian attending First or Second Unitarian Church or be sponsored by a member of First or Second Unitarian Church.
- Teens must observe the **two person rule**. This requires teens are never alone with children or youth without a partner. Where it is not practical to have two approved people present, the door must be left open.
- Teens must immediately report any behaviors which may seem abusive or inappropriate to the Director of Religious Education or Minister.
- The ministry of touch is understood to be a valuable, sometimes even needed dimension of children/youth ministries. But it can also open the door of vulnerability if given inappropriately. A warm handshake or handclasp is always appropriate, as is an arm around a hurting child or a brief hug of greeting or approval. Such displays, however, must **always** be done in the presence of other people, **never** in an isolated situation. Any indication from the child/youth of discomfort with such a display must be honored immediately. **Any unreasonable or inappropriate touching is forbidden.**

All of the above information I have given is truthful and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have read the policy on the Children’s Religious Education Teen Paid/Volunteer Form and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

Teen’s Name (printed)

Parent/Guardian’s name

Teen’s Signature

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Date Signed: _____

Acknowledgements

Credit goes to a variety of resources in creating this document:

- Haffner, Debra. Balancing Acts: keeping children safe in congregations. (2004, Fall) Retrieved September, 2006 from <http://archive.uua.org/cde/ethics/balancing/BalancingAct.pdf>
- Hoertdoerfer, P., Hoertdoerfer, P. & Muir, F. (Eds.). (2005). Creating Safe Congregations; Toward an Ethic of Right Relationships – A Workbook for Unitarian Universalists. Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.
- *Our Whole Lives*, life-span sexuality curricula of the UUA
- Reducing The Risk II: Making your Church Safe from Child Sexual Abuse. Authors: James F. Cobbe, Jr., Richard R. Hammer & Steven V. Klipowicz
- Various safe congregation policies from other churches, especially that of The First Unitarian Society of Schenectady, New York

Further information, including resources and forms, may be found in a binder entitled “SMART Policies, Procedures and Resource Manual” in the church office. SMART will be responsible for keeping these materials current.