|  |
| --- |
| River road Unitarian Universalist Congregation |
| RRUUC Safe Congregation Policy Manual |
|   |
|  |
|  |
| **1/31/2015** |

|  |
| --- |
|  **RRUUC \* 6301 River Road, Bethesda MD, 20817 \* (301) 229-0400 \* www.rruuc.org** |

**RRUUC Safe Congregation Policy Manual**

**Table of Contents (pages are linked to location)**

[I. Safe Congregation Mission Statement 2](#_Toc388969665)

[I. Definitions 3](#_Toc388969666)

[II. Safe Congregation Committee 5](#_Toc388969667)

[III. Building Safety 6](#_Toc388969668)

[A. Health and Safety 6](#_Toc388969669)

[B. Fire Safety 6](#_Toc388969670)

[C. Accessibility 6](#_Toc388969671)

[IV. Screening for Adult Employees and Volunteers 7](#_Toc388969672)

[A. RRUUC Employees 7](#_Toc388969673)

[B. RRUUC Volunteers 7](#_Toc388969674)

[C. Background Checks 7](#_Toc388969675)

[V. Safe Congregation Policies in Practice 9](#_Toc388969676)

[A. General Congregational Life 9](#_Toc388969677)

[B. General Guidelines for Children, Youth, and Parents/Guardians 10](#_Toc388969678)

[1. Responsibilities of Children and Youth 10](#_Toc388969679)

[2. Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians 10](#_Toc388969680)

[3. Teachers and Classroom Management 11](#_Toc388969681)

[4. Electronic Communication Guidelines 14](#_Toc388969682)

[5. Leaving RRUUC with Children and Youth 16](#_Toc388969683)

[C. Nursery and Children’s Program 18](#_Toc388969684)

[1. Parents and Guardians 18](#_Toc388969685)

[2. Teachers and Staff 19](#_Toc388969686)

[D. Youth Program 20](#_Toc388969687)

[1. Training for Volunteers 20](#_Toc388969688)

[2. Teacher and Advisor Guidelines 20](#_Toc388969689)

[3. Youth Group Events 20](#_Toc388969690)

[E. Person Charged with a Crime 22](#_Toc388969691)

[VI. Concerns about Staff or Volunteers 22](#_Toc388969692)

[VII. Reporting of Child or Adult Abuse 22](#_Toc388969693)

[VIII. Appendices 22](#_Toc388969694)

[I. Appendix I: Introduction to Questionnaires and Background Check 22](#_Toc388969695)

[II. Appendix II: Questionnaires 22](#_Toc388969696)

[III. Appendix III: Authorization for Background Check 22](#_Toc388969697)

[IV. Appendix IV: Criminal Background Checks: Guidelines for Response 22](#_Toc388969698)

[V. Appendix V: Code of Ethics 22](#_Toc388969699)

[VI. Appendix VI: Permission Slips 22](#_Toc388969700)

[VII. Appendix VII: The Maryland Code for the Reporting Incidents of Child Abuse 22](#_Toc388969701)

[VIII. Appendix VIII: Policy Regarding Integration of Convicted Person 22](#_Toc388969704)

[IX. Appendix IX: Agreement for a Person Charged with a Crime against a Child or Youth 22](#_Toc388969705)

[X. Appendix X: Safe Congregation Coordinator and Companion Job Descriptions 22](#_Toc388969706)

[XI. Appendix XI: Our Sources 22](#_Toc388969707)

# Safe Congregation Mission Statement

RRUUC is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our congregation, placing a special emphasis on meeting the unique needs of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

RRUUC’s Safe Congregation Policy is intended to help create and support this safe and nurturing environment. A Safe Congregation provides an environment in which we may each deepen our acceptance and understanding of one another, and in which personal transformation and spiritual growth are encouraged and supported in an atmosphere of civility, mutual respect, trust and kindness.

Our commitment to creating a Safe Congregation is grounded firmly in our seven principles, and especially in our abiding belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. **We affirm the right of each person who participates in our congregation to seek and find spiritual, emotional and physical safety and acceptance at RRUUC. This includes safety from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.**

Our Safe Congregation Policy reflects the guiding principles articulated by the UUA, including consideration of responsible staffing and supervision; screening of volunteers and paid staff; release of young children only to parents or guardians; careful incident reporting; provisions to remove staff and volunteers from positions working with children and youth when necessary; and guidelines for how we may all interact with each other to create a safe and nurturing environment for all.

RRUUC’s Safe Congregation Policy (SCP) is a comprehensive set of guidelines for interactions among adults, youth and children at RRUUC. Our SCP applies to RRUUC clergy, all employees, RRUUC’s adult members and friends, the children and youth of RRUUC, volunteers, and visitors of all ages. Our SCP applies to RRUUC-sponsored activities on our church property, as well as any and all activities undertaken by or sponsored by RRUUC off site. This policy will be maintained and updated annually by the Safe Congregation Committee, which is a Board Committee working in concert with a designated member of the Board of Trustees.

# Definitions

*Children and Youth*: People under the age of 18.

*Child Abuse:* Child Abuse includes but is not necessarily limited to the physical, mental or emotional injury of a child or youth by another person who has permanent or temporary custody or responsibility for the care and/or supervision of the child or youth.

*Discipline*: Discipline includes actions and words used strategically to teach respect and caring; to clarify expectations for appropriate behavior in a particular setting; to try to modify another’s behavior; and/or to assist others in developing self control.

*Positive Discipline:* Positive Discipline is characterized by techniques that consciously and consistently focus on positive behavior. Examples include but are not limited to: giving attention before a problem occurs; recognizing, praising, or rewarding behaviors that are caring, respectful, or helpful; honoring even small progress toward a goal; and/or clarifying expected behavior in response to a problem (rather than listing what not to do or describing all the things that are going wrong). When teachers use positive discipline effectively, *every student* experiences far more positive interactions than negative.

*Healthy Touch***:** Healthy, loving touch is a basic, human need. Common expressions of healthy touch include but are not limited to hugs of appreciation, condolence and affection; affirming pats on the back; and physical care-taking such as diaper changing and face washing. Healthy touch is appropriate as long as respect of others’ personal wishes about being touched are honored.

*Sexual Abuse: A*ctivity of a sexual nature between an adult and a child or youth, or between a child or youth and an older youth, *including but not limited to* molestation or exploitation of a child or youth, by any person responsible for the child’s or youth’s permanent or temporary care and/or custody. For purposes of this SCP, sexual abuse includes touching and non-physical interactions between a child or youth and one or more adults undertaken for the purpose of the adult’s sexual stimulation or sexual gratification. Such behavior is always considered unacceptable and non-consensual when the interaction involves a child or youth, even if the child or youth has indicated his or her consent verbally or otherwise. Sexual abuse includes but is not limited to fondling, kissing and all other sexual behavior. Other inappropriate behavior may include, but not be limited to, sexual remarks and the misuse of pornographic or sexually suggestive images.

Teacher: The term teacher refers to any roles being performed by adults that can be construed as teaching including Guides and Leaders, Advisors and/or Mentors. Any adult working with children in a learning environment is considered a teacher for the purposes of this policy.

*Vulnerable Adult:* An individual, 18 years or older, who because of age, developmental disability, past traumatic experiences, mental illness, physical handicap or other condition requires supervision or personal care and who may lack the personal or social skills required to live independently.

*SCC:* Safe Congregation Committee

*SCP:* Safe Congregation Policy

# Safe Congregation Committee

The Safe Congregation Committee (SCC) will be comprised of the following members:

* Lifespan Religious Educator (LRE) or
* Religious Educator for Youth (REY)
* One designated member of the Board of Trustees. who serves as Chair of the Committee
* One designated member of the RE Committee.
* One member of the congregation with relevant professional expertise (social worker, counselor, family lawyer, for example)
* One At-large Member of the Congregation
* Member of Building Committee
* The Senior Minister serves ex officio.

The Safe Congregation Committee (SCC) will meet at least annually to review and recommend revisions to the Safe Congregation Policy (SCP) to the Board of Trustees, and to ensure that confidentiality is being maintained in all aspects of the Committee’s work. The SCC may be assembled at any time to respond to incidents relating to the emotional or physical safety of any person in our church, or to provide guidance/assistance to clergy, staff, and volunteers. The SCC is responsible for designing, organizing, and carrying out training related to the SCP for all RRUUC staff as well as for volunteers who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults. The LRE,/ REY is a permanent members of this Committee with the Senior Minister serving ex-officio. The remaining members of the SCC will serve one three-year term, staggered. The SCC Member from the Board of Trustees will be selected by the Board from within the Board. The SCC Member from the RE Committee will be selected by the RE Committee from within the RE Committee. The SCC member from the Building Committee will be selected by the Building Committee. The final two members – a member of the congregation with relevant professional expertise and one at-large member of the congregation – will be nominated and appointed by a majority of the other members of the SCC.

**All members of the SCC will sign confidentiality agreements with respect to any concerns or incidents that are brought to the committee for consideration.**

# Building Safety

RRUUC is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our congregation. This includes attending to the physical safety of members, friends, visitors and staff of RRUUC.

## Health and Safety

1. RRUUC will maintain well stocked first aid kits throughout the building, including one in each classroom and in the kitchen.
2. RRUUC will maintain a working Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) machine in the Lounge. Members of RRUUC staff and Lay Leaders will be trained in its operation. RRUUC will make best efforts to provide annual refresher training.
3. RRUUC will maintain all areas of the church building and grounds to assure reasonable levels of safety for all employees, congregants and visitors to our buildings and grounds. Such maintenance will be assessed annually by the RRUUC Administrator and a designated member of the Board of Trustees.

## Fire Safety

1. RRUUC will make best efforts to maintain fire alarm and sprinklers up to code in all areas of the RRUUC buildings where such equipment is required.
2. Current emergency exit diagrams will be visibly posted in appropriate areas of RRUUC buildings, including in every classroom and in the kitchen.
3. Annual RE Teacher training will include directions about where teachers should take their classes in response to a fire alarm or fire drill. Parents/Guardians will be informed about these procedures when they register their children in the fall for RE classes.
4. Long term tenants of RRUUC, such as the River Road Child Care Center, will be asked to carry out regular fire drills.

## Accessibility

1. RRUUC will comply with all applicable Americans with Disability Act regulations.
2. RRUUC will make best efforts to make our buildings and grounds as welcoming as possible to people with disabilities.

# Screening for Adult Employees and Volunteers

## RRUUC Employees

Consistent with our efforts to provide a Safe Congregation, each member of the Clergy and all employees will:

1. Undergo a reference check prior to beginning employment;
2. Agree to and undergo a criminal and sexual-offender background check prior to employment and on a random basis during employment at least once every three years.
3. Be subject to personnel policies as adopted by the Board of Trustees.

## RRUUC Volunteers

Prospective RRUUC volunteers who wish to work with children, youth and vulnerable adults will talk with a supervising staff member to discuss their volunteer interests and goals.

Prospective Youth Advisors will also complete a Volunteer Candidate Questionnaire that includes questions about their interest in volunteer work, their motivations for seeking a volunteer role, and other relevant background information. (See Appendix I and II.)

Volunteers who work directly with or near children and youth as Religious Education Teachers, Youth Advisors, Coming of Age Mentors, Trip Chaperones or in other capacities must agree to undergo a criminal and sexual-offender background check organized by RRUUC staff prior to beginning volunteer work (See IVC and Appendix III).

## Background Checks

Each person applying for any staff position, and each person applying for volunteer positions at RRUUC that would involve work with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults must agree to submit to a Criminal Background Check (CBC). RRUUC will work with the Joseph Priestly District to carry out CBCs that will identify past criminal convictions and inclusion in the national Sex Offender Registry, based on reported places of residence – counties or states. The Sex Offender Registry is a national database that reports registered sex offenders regardless of the offense jurisdiction.

CBCs will be carried out for all new employees prior to employment. CBCs will be carried out annually for approximately 33% of the volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults. The 33% will include all first-time volunteers and a random selection of returning volunteers. After their first year volunteering at RRUUC, volunteers must agree to a CBC every year, though they may or may not be checked each year. RRUUC will use best efforts to carry out CBCs for each volunteer no less than once every three years.

Scope of Background Check Process: In addition to all Staff, adult volunteers working with children or youth in connection with the following congregational programs/events are subject to the CBC requirement:

* Sunday morning religious education classes (including YRUU),
* RRUUC provided childcare,
* Coming of Age program, and
* Children, Youth and Teen Choir practices.

Authorization forms for background checks will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the Safe Congregation Committee will have access to these forms, which will be kept in paper format in a dedicated, locked filing cabinet in the office of LRE. Only the LRE and REY will have keys to this cabinet. These forms will be kept for three years.

Each adult who participates in our community has inherent worth and dignity. Thus, each instance where a record is returned will be carefully considered. A documented criminal or sexually-related conviction will serve to initiate a discussion with RRUUC senior staff, and may result in the restriction or termination of employment, or the exclusion of the person in question from work with children and youth or other individuals. See **Appendix IV** for RRUUC’s Policies for responding to convictions revealed by background checks and **Appendix VIII** for RRUUC’s Policy on involving convicted sex offenders in our congregation.

The Safe Congregation Committee will review the process of maintaining these sensitive files annually to ensure the highest standards of confidentiality are being maintained.

# Safe Congregation Policies in Practice

## General Congregational Life

RRUUC is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our congregation. Recognizing that the way we treat each other is a fundamental part of creating a safe, inviting space and also a reflection of our values, we (children, youth, parents/guardians, teachers, volunteers, members, friends, ministers and staff) will strive to interact in ways that:

* embody our first UU principle, that every person has inherent worth and dignity;
* demonstrate our commitment to learning about each other ;
* show respect for our diversity and different needs ;
* foster empathy and an understanding of other people’s perspectives;
* honor each other’s time;
* communicate concerns directly with each other.

As we strive to interact in this way, we work toward a safe and nurturing environment in which we all have the opportunity to deepen our acceptance and understanding of one another, and in which personal transformation and spiritual growth are encouraged and supported in an atmosphere of civility, mutual respect, trust and kindness. We place a special emphasis on creating a safe congregation for the children, youth and vulnerable adults among us. Specific guidelines that apply to work with children and youth are outlined in the following three sections (B-D). In the fourth section (E), we address what happens when someone who has been charged with or convicted of a crime against a child, youth or adult wishes to attend RRUUC.

## General Guidelines for Children, Youth, and Parents/Guardians

From the moment parents and guardians, children and youth walk through the doors of River Road, we want them to feel they are in a safe, inviting, and comfortable space. To this end, RRUUC’s staff will make their best efforts to provide developmentally appropriate curricula and programming for our children and youth. RRUUC will make best efforts to provide children and youth with safe, appropriate spaces to learn, play, communicate and be active.

We ask that children, youth, parents/guardians, teachers, and staff follow these guidelines to ensure the safest and most nurturing environment for our children and youth.

### Responsibilities of Children and Youth

1. Children and youth will follow directions to ensure safety and to prevent harm.
2. Children and youth will always try to treat each other with kindness and respect.
3. Children and youth will provide input about how to make this a safe congregation.

### Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

For this section, the term “Parents /Guardians” is meant to include adults whom parents have entrusted with the care of their children (including but not limited to grandparents or friends who have been given permission to bring children to River Road) while they are at RRUUC or attending an RRUUC-sponsored event.

1. Parents/Guardians will complete registration forms for all children aged newborn through Grade 12, who are participating in any or all aspects of RRUUC’s Religious Education program.
2. When registering, Parents/Guardians will share all information that is relevant to the safety of their children and youth, or to others (medical needs, allergies, special needs).
3. When registering, Parents/Guardians will agree to abide by the guidelines within this Safe Congregation Policy.
4. Parents/Guardians will speak with the LRE, or REY about any custody issues, and, upon request, put the most important facts in writing. The LRE, or REY will communicate appropriately with teachers.
5. If Parents/Guardians are concerned about their children’s/vulnerable adults physical or emotional safety while at RRUUC, or the physical or emotional safety of another child while at RRUUC, Parents/Guardians will contact the Sr. Minister or another staff member. The staff member will inform the Sr. Minister and then Sr. Minister will involve appropriate Religious Educator immediately. Ministers and/or Staff will respond promptly and appropriately, engaging the Safe Congregation Committee if warranted.

### Teachers and Classroom Management

#### TRAINING AND SAFETY COVENANTS

1. Before assuming a teaching role, all volunteer Religious Education teachers (including substitute teachers), Youth Advisors, Youth Group Leaders and Coming of Age Mentors will make their best efforts to attend an annual RE teachers’ training session that includes coverage of RRUUC’s Safe Congregation Policy and positive discipline techniques.
2. The Religious Education Staff will make their best efforts to meet individually with volunteers who cannot attend the annual RE teachers’ training to provide training that includes coverage of RRUUC’s Safe Congregation Policy and positive discipline techniques.
3. Before assuming a teaching role, all volunteers will sign a covenant signifying that they understand, and are committed to, RRUUC’s Safe Congregation Policy and positive discipline techniques.

#### OPEN DOOR POLICY

1. All classrooms, nursery through Twelfth Grade, with the exception of OWL classes, will be easily monitored at all times (open door and/or uncovered window).
2. Parents/Guardians and RRUUC staff will be welcome in the classrooms at any time.

#### 2 PERSON RULE

1. RRUUC staff will make their best efforts to ensure that a minimum of two teachers or childcare providers are present to supervise any and all Religious Education Classes, children’s worship services, or congregational events for children and youth.
2. At least one of these teachers or childcare providers must be 21 years old or older in nursery through Grade 5 classrooms. At least one of these people must be 23 years of age or older in classrooms and programs for middle school and high school youth.
3. Children and youth who volunteer to work with younger children in RE classrooms must always work together with an adult (see preceding section).
4. When a scheduled Religious Education teacher is unavailable, the RE staff and/or RE volunteers appointed by RE staff will make their best efforts to secure a trained substitute. If this is not possible, RE staff and/or RE volunteers appointed by RE staff, may work with present teachers to combine or cancel classes.
5. If one of the two required teachers must temporarily leave their classroom or children’s program, they will stay as close to the classroom as possible and return to the classroom as quickly as possible.

#### DISCIPLINE

For this section, the word “teachers” should be understood to include any person working with children in an RRUUC classroom, children’s program or event.

RRUUC recommends positive discipline techniques (see definition on page 5). Teachers will make best efforts to establish clear expectations, provide rewards and incentives for acceptable behavior, and to use appropriate verbal redirection. In particular:

1. Teachers will strive to discipline with kindness and patience.
2. Teachers will discipline with actions and words designed to help children develop a sense of responsibility and self-control.
3. Teachers will support children in creating caring communities and happy learning experiences.
4. Inappropriate discipline, including corporal punishment and punitive techniques that cause pain, is not permitted and may be construed as child abuse. Physical restraint of children is only permitted to ensure the child’s own safety or the safety of others.
5. RRUUC does not permit the use of yelling, shaming, or belittling. RRUUC discourages sarcasm, which is likely to be misunderstood by children.
6. Teachers will consult with RE Staff and children’s parents/guardians to plan collaboratively how to improve problematic behavior.
7. If a child’s behavior is disruptive and has not improved in response to a variety of positive discipline techniques, teachers will communicate with RE staff and may choose to enforce consequences as follows.
8. BREAK INSIDE CLASSROOM: The child takes a break from participation, but remains inside the classroom. The child is NOT told to stand in a corner, but is directed to sit silently in an area apart from the activity. One teacher is available to supervise the break. The teacher briefly discusses the solution to the problem with the child when s/he is ready to rejoin the class activity.
9. BREAK IN HALLWAY: A teacher accompanies a child outside the classroom for a break from participation in the hallway. They briefly discuss the problem and solution when the child is ready to go back in the classroom.
10. BREAK WITH RE STAFF: A teacher walks with the child to find RE Staff, and the child has a longer break in the company of RE Staff. The RE Staff discusses the problem with the child and works collaboratively to develop a plan or solution.
11. PARENT/GUARIDAN SUPERVISION & REMOVAL FROM A LESSON: A teacher or RE staff person finds the parent or guardian of the child, and the parent or guardian is asked to supervise the child for the remainder of the class. The parent/guardian and teacher and/or staff member meet subsequently to discuss the problem and develop a plan.
12. Physical violence among children is not allowed. In the unlikely event that a child intentionally hurts someone, teachers will enforce one of the more serious consequences above.
13. In the event that a child’s behavior is highly disruptive, dangerous, or repeatedly emotionally hurtful, the RE Staff may decide that the child needs to be excluded from some, or all, participation in the Sunday school program or RE-sponsored events.

#### NAMETAGS

1. RE Staff will provide nametags to all people working with children. Teachers will wear these nametags whenever they are working with children.
2. Teacher and Advisor nametags will include volunteers’ full names and have the River Road logo.
3. Nametags for children will be available in classrooms.

#### CLASSROOM ABSENCES FOR CHILDREN 5 YEARS AND OLDER

Every teacher will enforce the following three rules when Children and Youth leave a classroom during a class or event:

1. Children and Youth need to let teachers know when they are leaving the classroom for bathroom visits, water breaks or other teacher-approved purposes.
2. Children and Youth are expected to go straight to the bathroom, water fountain or approved destination and then return directly and promptly.
3. Children and Youth will let teachers know when they have returned.

#### CHANGING LOCATIONS

If teachers wish to move their class to a location outside of the classroom that is approved by the LRE or the REY, they will post a sign or message in their classroom clearly indicating where they will be and when they will return.

#### TOUCH

Healthy, loving touch is a basic, human need. Common expressions include, but are not limited to, appreciation (high five), condolence (hand on shoulder), comforting and affection (hugs); affirmation (pats on the back); and physical care taking (diaper changing, face washing, etc.). These are all acceptable and encouraged as long as three guidelines are followed:

1. Touch needs to be respectful and age appropriate.
2. Teachers will respect a child’s or youth’s preference not to be touched and adjust activities accordingly.
3. Touch should always be non-sexual in nature. Teachers, youth advisors, nursery school supervisors and helpers shall not touch or interact with children or youth in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating or undertaken for purposes of sexual gratification.

### Electronic Communication Guidelines

We encourage the use of email for electronic communications among RE Teachers, Advisors, RRUUC Staff, RE families, children and youth, subject to the following guidelines:

Electronic Communication between RE Teachers, Youth Advisors, RRUUC staff and RE families, children and youth should be used to communicate facts and information relevant to Religious Education only.

#### Elementary School and Middle School Children and Youth

1. RE Teachers, Advisors and staff may communicate with the **parents/guardians** of elementary and middle school children using email and other forms of electronic communication.
2. If it is reasonable and necessary for RE Teachers or Middle School Youth Advisors or RE Staff to send electronic communication to **elementary** or **middle school students**, they should do so in the form of email, with a copy to the child’s or youth’s parent/guardian.
3. The use of text messaging and Instant Messaging as a means of communicating about RRUUC matters with elementary and middle school students is **strongly discouraged**, as parents cannot be copied on these types of communication.
4. RE Teachers and Staff may **not** communicate with elementary or middle school children and youth via social networking sites such as Facebook. This is true even if the child or youth initiates contact.

#### High School Youth

1. Youth Advisors and Youth Group leaders and RRUUC Staff members may communicate with high school youth using email, with a copy to the youth’s parent/guardian. The use of instant messaging between the above parties is strongly discouraged.
2. If necessary, Youth Advisors and Youth Group Leaders and RE Staff members may communicate with high school youth using social networking sites such as Facebook, but we strongly encourage and request that adults and high school youth follow these guidelines:
	1. High School Youth may invite an adult teacher/advisor/RRUUC staff member to be a “friend” on social media sites such as Facebook, and teachers/advisors/RRUUC staff members may accept. However, teachers/advisors/RRUUC staff members may **not** invite youth to become “friends” on social networking sites such as Facebook.
	2. Content of communications between High School Youth and teachers/advisors/RE Staff must be appropriate and consistent with the spirit and letter of this Safe Congregation Policy.
	3. Communication between high school youth and teachers/advisors / RE Staff on social media sites should take place on public spaces such as the “wall” on Facebook.
3. If a posting on a youth’s social networking site raises concerns, or a youth seems to be in any danger, Youth Advisors and Teachers should contact the REY or or the LRE as soon as possible.

### Leaving RRUUC with Children and Youth

#### Field Trip Transportation Guidelines

1. **Permission slips:** Parents/Guardians must sign permission slips when children and youth are leaving the RRUUC premises by vehicle for RRUUC sponsored field trips. (Appendix VI) If children and/or youth are being transported by private car, drivers must have a signed permission slip for each child in the car.
2. **Participation requirements**: If a child or youth does not have a signed permission from their parent or guardian, that child or youth will not be allowed to participate in the scheduled event.
3. **Location**: The destination and expected time of return must be posted near the RRUUC main entrance. All routes should BEGIN and END at RRUUC.
4. **Leader Information**: Leaders must have a list of names, emergency contacts, medical conditions and a parent/guardian-signed emergency treatment authorization with them at all times. (See appendix VI).
5. **Medications:** Parents/Guardians should disclose any medication that may need to be taken by their child during the trip to the RE Staff member in charge of the trip. Parents/Guardians should talk directly with the RRUUC staff member responsible for the field trip to agree on appropriate procedures for administering *emergency* medication that their child may require during the field trip.
6. **Ratios**: It is recommended that children and youth be transported in groups, and, when possible, two adults shall be present to transport a single child.
7. **Safety**: An appropriately filled first aid kit is to be taken on all field trips, overnights and retreats.
8. **Water Safety**: Anytime children and youth will be taken into the water, flotation devices must be provided for each child or youth.

#### Drivers and Driving Safety

1. All drivers for RRUUC sponsored field trips for children and youth must be over 21. Drivers may not have any points on their driving license, unless an exception has been granted by the SCC.
2. Drivers must comply with all applicable state laws regarding the operation of motor vehicles, including the use of seatbelts for driver and all passengers.
3. Children should ride in car seats in compliance with Maryland state law.

## Nursery and Children’s Program

 Following are guidelines specific to RRUUC’s programs for children in nursery through Grade 5.

### Parents and Guardians

#### DROP OFFS & PICK UPS

1. On Sundays, parents/guardians of infants, toddlers and preschoolers (newborn to approximately 3 years old) will drop off and pick up their children at the Nursery or classrooms. When dropping these young children off, parents/guardians will sign in with their names and cell phone number (if available).
2. On Sundays, parents/guardians of elementary school age children will pick up their children at their classrooms immediately following the service, unless appropriate and safe alternative arrangements have been agreed upon in advance.
3. During summer Religious Education, special children’s worship programs, or congregational events, parents/guardians will sign in and provide requested information (name, age, allergies, etc). Parents/Guardians will accompany their children (newborn to 11 years old) to the designated locations and pick them up promptly at the end of the event or service.

#### ACCESSIBILITY and SUPERVISION

1. Parents/Guardians of infants and toddlers may remain in the Nursery or classroom with their children.
2. Parents/Guardians of infants and toddlers will remain accessible during worship or special events. If possible, they will hold a cell phone set to vibrate, and give their cell phone number to their children’s teachers or child care providers. Parents/Guardians of infants and toddlers may be asked to return to the nursery or classroom if their children need comforting or a diaper change (see following section on Diaper Changing).
3. Parents/Guardians of school age children may join their children in their classrooms. If they choose to stay, Parents/Guardians of school age children will try to support the lesson and minimize any distraction their presence may create.
4. Parents/Guardians of school age children will remain at RRUUC while their children are participating in Sunday Religious Education programs, other children’s worship programs, or other congregational events.
5. Parents/Guardians will take responsibility for the supervision and guidance of their children when their children are in the RRUUC building not attending Sunday school classes or RE-sponsored events (for example, before and after class, during meetings or choir practice).

### Teachers and Staff

#### CHILDCARE

1. Paid childcare providers must sign a form signifying that they understand, and are committed to, RRUUC’s Safe Congregation Policy and positive discipline techniques, before beginning work.
2. If two or fewer children are registered for childcare during a congregational event, and when this childcare is provided by licensed paid childcare providers, RE staff may at their discretion, decide to hire only one childcare provider. In this case, parents/guardians will be notified.

#### DIAPERS

1. Professional childcare providers, or volunteers who have been trained on diaper changing procedure by the LRE, can change diapers on a changing table in the Nursery or in one of the restrooms in the Childcare Center (with the door and curtain open).
2. **Teachers who have not had training in diaper changing should not change diapers**. When a child’s diaper needs to be changed, teachers will call a parent/guardian on the cell phone or go find a parent/guardian, so s/he can change the diaper.
3. Anyone who changes a diaper must wash their hands thoroughly when finished.

#### POTTY TRAINING

1. Teachers or childcare providers for children who are potty training will accompany children to the restroom in the childcare center, leaving the curtain halfway open.
2. The teacher may stand just outside the restroom or wait inside the restroom, depending on the child’s level of need.
3. If a child demonstrates a need for help with cleaning or dressing, the teacher will help, always ensuring that the curtain is halfway open. Teachers will not assume their assistance is needed.
4. Teachers will ensure that children wash their hands after using the bathroom, and they will thoroughly wash their own hands after offering any assistance.
5. If an older child has special needs that require bathroom assistance, the teachers will work with the LRE and the child’s parent/guardians to develop an individualized plan for how to provide that assistance.

## Youth Program

Following are guidelines that apply to working with High School-aged Youth in particular.

### Training for Volunteers

1. All Youth Advisors and teaching volunteers are encouraged to attend Joseph Priestly District’s Basic Youth Advisor Training, and Advanced Advisor Trainings when they are appropriate and available.
2. *V*olunteer teachers, youth advisors and Coming of Age Mentors will maintain regular contact with the REY during any year in which they are volunteering as youth advisors, mentors or teachers.

### Teacher and Advisor Guidelines

1. There must be a minimum of two adults present for youth group meetings and at other events involving youth of the congregation. There must be a minimum of three adults present for overnights. If the required number of adults cannot be present, the event will be cancelled.
2. The minimum age for adult volunteers working with youth is twenty-three (23).
3. There will be no use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products by adults while leading field trips, overnights, retreats or any program for children and/or youth.
4. Youth Advisors, Coming of Age Mentors, and Teachers will abide by the electronic communication guidelines in the previous section.

### Youth Group Events

Youth daytime and evening events and overnights are an integral part of RRUUC’s youth program. To keep these experiences safe, nurturing, welcoming and enjoyable, RRUUC has established these guidelines:

#### FOR ONSITE EVENTS:

1. **Only RRUUC Youth Group members may participate in Youth Group Events,** unless express permission has been granted by the REY for visitors to attend. Youth Group members are those youth who have registered for the RE program and have attended RRUUC classes or events regularly. Walk-in visitors are not allowed.
2. **The onsite ratio** of adults to youth will be at least 1:10. A minimum of two adults is required for a day-time or evening-only event to take place; a minimum of three adults is required for an overnight to take place.
3. Adult leaders and youth participants will treat each other with **kindness and respect**. Youth participants will respect the requests and requirements of adult leaders.
4. **Youth will not go outside** after dark unless accompanied by adult leaders or with an adult leader’s permission. If this rule is violated, youth may be sent home after one warning.
5. **Youth will stay with the larger group**, or with a designated smaller group. If this rule is violated, youth may be sent home after one warning.
6. **No firearms, weapons, fireworks, illegal drugs or alcohol** are allowed. If a youth participant violates this rule, he or she will be sent home immediately. The youth will stay under adult supervision until the parent/guardian arrives. The youth will not be able to participate in overnights, retreats, and field trips for one calendar year, and then may resume participation if approved by the REY.
7. **No smoking or tobacco products are allowed**. If a youth participant violates this rule, the tobacco products will be confiscated, the youth’s parent/guardians will be called, and the youth will be sent home. Further participation in overnights, retreats, and field trips will require a contract among the youth and adult leaders, the REY, and the youth’s parent/guardians.
8. **No sexual activity**. Sexual behavior is inappropriate during a youth overnight, field trip or retreat. Sexual activity detracts from the group environment and the sense of group safety. If this rule is broken, the parent/guardians of the youth in question will be called, and the will be sent home. Further participation in overnights, retreats, and field trips will require a contract among the youth and adult leaders, the REY, and the youth’s parent/guardians.
9. **Youth and Advisors will respect RRUUC and others’ property**. If willful destruction of property occurs, the relevant parent/guardians will be notified, restitution will be required, and involved youth will be sent home.
10. Youth participants will work together to **clean up** and restore the overnight space to a tidy and orderly condition.

#### FOR OFF-SITE EVENTS, ALL OF THE ABOVE RULES APPLY. IN ADDITION:

1. **The offsite ratio** of adults to youth will be at least 1:6, with a minimum of three adults required for the event to take place.
2. **Please see Section B-5 above for rules regarding permission slips and driving.**

## Person Charged with a Crime

We are committed to maintaining the safest environment possible for the children, youth and adults of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation. We are also committed to being a religious community open to those who would like to worship on Sunday morning with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. We believe in the worth and dignity of all people, even those who may have made serious mistakes in their lives.

When someone who has been **legally charged with a crime against a child, youth or adult - including but not limited to child abuse, sexual abuse, assault, and domestic violence -** seeks to attend our services or participate in other congregational activities, it is our responsibility to address both the need to be a welcoming congregation and the need to maintain as safe an environment as possible for all people. To this end, these steps will be taken:

* The Senior Minister will meet with the individual in question to discuss the charges against him or her, and to determine how he or she would like to participate in congregational life.
* The Senior Minister will inform the remaining members of the SCC and the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the situation. The SCC will determine whether this person may safely participate in congregational life, and under what conditions. The SCC will provide an Agreement for the individual in question to sign governing the manner in which he or she may attend RRUUC worship services and other RRUUC sponsored events (“the Agreement”).
* The individual in question will sign and abide by the Agreement. A copy of the Agreement will be retained by the Senior Minister who will oversee its implementation with the support of the SCC.
* A list of companions will be provided to the individual in question, as specified in the Agreement.

A template for this agreement is included as Appendix IX. This template covers the situation in which a person has been charged with a crime against a child or youth. This template may be modified by the SCC to reflect the unique needs of a particular situation.

# Concerns about Staff or Volunteers

Circumstances or events may sometimes indicate that an adult staff member or volunteer or youth assistant is no longer able to work with children, youth or other vulnerable persons in a safe and reliable way. This may occur when:

* a volunteer teacher or advisor repeatedly fails to follow the guidelines outlined in the preceding sections;
* new information is returned on a Criminal Background Check;
* the individual’s application disclosures are found to be inaccurate;
* the person’s conduct is deemed inappropriate;
* Any other circumstances or events arise that cause significant concern among children, youth, parents or guardians, any other congregants or RRUUC staff and ministers.

Any person with concerns about an adult staff member or volunteer or youth assistant may contact a member of the Safe Congregation Committee, the appropriate supervising staff member, or the Board of Trustees President who will then assess the situation.

If the SCC or the Senior Minister deems that it is appropriate to remove a staff member or volunteer from a position, or to restrict in any way their role with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, the SCC and/or the Senior Minister will provide the affected worker, volunteer or advisor an opportunity:

* To know the complaints/allegations against him or her;
* To know the evidence supporting such complaints/allegations;
* To have the right to reply to such complaints/allegations.

If the removed worker is a minor, all such communications will be made in the presence of the child’s parent or guardian.

# Reporting of Child or Adult Abuse

Any person witnessing or having reasonable suspicion of injury, exploitation, objectionable conduct toward, physical or sexual abuse of any child or youth or other person at RRUUC shall report the information immediately to the Sr. Minister or in her or his absence, the LRE or REY, or in their absence, another member of the Safe Congregation Committee.

The report should be put in writing by the person observing signs of suspected abuse or neglect, and must include all events witnessed and information received, stating the date, time, and location of such events or the receipt of information and identifying any other witnesses or persons involved in the events or information being reported. It is necessary that whomever receives the report inform the person reporting what the next steps are, particularly if it involves a report to law enforcement and social service authorities.

* The SCC will notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees when such a report is filed.
* The SCC will determine whether such an incident report requires filing an insurance report or claim, and whether additional notifications to the Board of Trustees are warranted.
* Any allegation of **child abuse** **must and will be reported to the proper law** **enforcement and social services authorities,** according to federal, state, and local or municipal laws and regulations. RRUUC will cooperate fully with appropriate law enforcement and social services agencies and personnel. See Appendix VII for the Maryland Code procedures for the reporting of Child Abuse. Telephone numbers for 24 hour reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect: Montgomery County: 240-777-4417 and Department of Human Services: 1-800-332-6347.

Neither the RRUUC Staff, members of the Safe Congregation Committee, or Board of Trustees will take any retaliatory action against any person making such a report. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the privacy and rights of all persons involved by RRUUC Staff, SCC or Board of Trustees.

The RRUUC Safe Congregation Committee, with particular leadership from the Sr. Minister if appropriate, will investigate all reports thoroughly and promptly, and may, prior to the completion of any such investigation, take such actions as it deems necessary and appropriate. To the fullest extent possible, and to the extent permitted by the law, all such reports and investigation and resolutions of the same will be kept in strict confidence. If any investigation confirms that misconduct has occurred, the RRUUC Safe Congregation Committee will take whatever corrective action may be appropriate, including discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment or volunteer service.

# Appendices

1. Introduction to Volunteer Questionnaires and Background Check
2. Volunteer Questionnaires
3. Authorization for Background Check
4. Criminal Background Check: Guidelines for Response
5. Volunteer Covenant – Code of Ethics
6. Permission Forms
7. The Maryland Code for Reporting Suspected Incidents of Child Abuse
8. Involvement of Convicted Sex Offenders in the Congregation
9. Template for Agreement for People Charged with a Crime
10. Safe Congregation Coordinator and Companion Job Descriptions
11. Our Sources

### Appendix I: Introduction to Questionnaires and Background Check

**Questionnaire and Background Check for Adult Volunteers**

**Introduction**

Thank you for your commitment to RRUUC’s Children and Youth. Adult teachers and advisors are a vital part of our community and we celebrate the relationships built across the ages. RRUUC is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our congregation, placing a special emphasis on meeting the unique needs of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

To this end, we ask all prospective volunteers to:

* Complete a volunteer questionnaire, if asked;
* Agree to a Criminal Background Check (CBC) prior to volunteering, and every subsequent year in which you volunteer.

**Questionnaire**

Each prospective volunteer must complete a volunteer questionnaire if asked. We hope that the process of completing this form will help you to understand more clearly your interests and goals in volunteering, and will help us to match you with the best possible volunteer opportunity.

**Background Check**

Each year, we obtain criminal record reports and sexual offender information from the states or provinces in which our adult employees and volunteers have lived. RRUUC may do this for all volunteers, or for a random sample.

Each adult who wishes to volunteer with us and be involved in our community has inherent worth and dignity. Thus, each instance where a record is returned will be carefully considered. A documented criminal or sexually-related conviction will serve to initiate a discussion with RRUUC staff, and may result in your exclusion from work with children and youth. All communications, electronic, written and oral, with regard to the results of this background check will be kept strictly confidential, and seen only by relevant RRUUC staff and members of the SCC.

**When you are ready to volunteer, please complete the attached forms and return them to either the LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR or the RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR FOR YOUTH.**

We strive to build a Safe Congregation in many ways, including by using these two tools. If you have questions or concerns, please LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR or RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR FOR YOUTH, at (301) 229 0400.

### Appendix II: Questionnaires

**2012-2013 RRUUC YRUU ADULT ADVISOR CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

YRUU stands for Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. The RRUUC youth are like other teens in that they have unique and individual views of the world. They like to have fun, but they also care about world events. They are exciting and energetic, and very aware of the environment around them. They are the future of Unitarian Universalism, and they are Unitarian Universalism NOW!

You are invited to be a part of this amazing group of people as an Adult Advisor. Completing this questionnaire will assist you in determining whether this might be an appropriate and comfortable role for you. Your honest, thoughtful input will also assist the RE staff in determining whether you would be a good fit with the position of YRUU Advisor. Thank you for taking the time to consider serving the youth, the congregation and Unitarian Universalism in this vital role.

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

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

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. At RRUUC we strive to create an empowering environment for youth to explore their identities, strengths, and skills. The role of the adult advisor is to create a safe, confidential space in which youth can test their skills in facilitation and leadership; share their fears, concerns, joys, successes and failures; and, explore what is important and meaningful in their lives. Some qualities of an effective and empowering advisor are listed below. Please indicate which of these qualities you see in yourself:
* Active Listener
* Non-judgmental
* Good sense of humor
* Trustworthy/Confidential (except in case of life-threatening issues)
* Reliable
* Flexible
* Non-Controlling

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. One function of a UU youth group is to provide access for youth to participate fully in the life of a faith community. Effective advisors model community participation.

How long have you been a member/friend of RRUUC?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In what ways are you active (or have you been active) in the RRUUC community?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been active in any other UU communities, and if so, in what ways?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have any experience working with youth or other experience that might be useful in responding to issues and concerns of youth? (Group facilitation, counseling, education, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. An effective adult advisor maintains appropriate physical and emotional boundaries when working with youth. These questions help us to see how your personal life supports you in sustaining appropriate boundaries in working with youth.
* In what ways do you consider your life physically and emotionally stable?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Describe your support system of family and friends:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* How do you meet your own spiritual needs?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. References: Please provide names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for three people (who are not family) who would recommend you to work with high school-age youth (references can be youth, adults, co-workers, ministers, etc.)
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Name Phone E-Mail*

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Name Phone E-Mail*

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Name Phone E-Mail*

1. In addition to these regular gatherings, we offer several retreats, trainings and events to provide ways for the different groups to come together and to help you be a more effective advisor. Please indicate your willingness to assist in these events, or types of events, schedule permitting:
* August Youth Group Retreat – usually at end of Aug
* RRUUC Retreat at Camp Tockwogh, in Sept
* Periodic overnights at RRUUC (usually every other month, see calendar)
* President’s Day Retreat, in Feb

Any questions, ideas or concerns? If you are unable to serve as an adult advisor this year, would you be interested in serving in the future?

### Appendix III: Authorization for Background Check

**Questionnaires will be sent to the designated contracted firm that providse background checks for all congregations.**

**(1) PERSONNEL SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE**

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

(Last)(First) (Middle)

**Address:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Street) (City) (State) (ZipCode)

**Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Driver’s License #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_ State: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Previous Residences (Last 7 years), with dates:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Security:** Have you ever been convicted of an offense against the law **(other** than a minor traffic violation), or are you now under charges for any offense against the law? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Listed Criminal Offenses will not necessarily bar you from employment with **JOSEPH PRIESTLEY DISTRICT.**

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(2) AUTHORIZATION & GENERAL RELEASE:**

I hereby authorize **JOSEPH PRIESTLEY DISTRICT,** and all of its agents to request and receive any information and records concerning me, including but not limited to criminal record history, driving records, and sexual offender reports from any individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, institutions, schools, governmental agencies and departments, courts, law enforcement and licensing agencies, consumer reporting agencies and other entities, including my present and previous employers.

I further release and discharge **JOSEPH PRIESTLEY DISTRICT,** all of their agents and all of its subsidiaries and affiliates, and every employee or agent of any of them, and all individuals and personal, business, private or public entities of any kind from any and all claims and liability arising out of any request(s) for, or receipt of, information or records pursuant to this authorization, or arising out of any compliance, or attempted compliance, with such request(s). I also authorize the procurement of an investigative consumer report and understand that it may contain information about my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, whichever are applicable. I understand that I have the right to make a written request within a reasonable period of time to JPD agent, for a complete and accurate disclosure of additional information concerning the nature and scope of the investigation. I further understand that JPD agent’s reporting of information pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act is not intended to authorize or condone a prospective employer’s request for and reliance upon information for purposes which are not legitimate under the Fair Credit Reporting Act or any federal or state employment laws. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily provided the above information for employment purposes, and I have carefully read and I understand this authorization.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix IV: Criminal Background Checks: Guidelines for Response

Each adult who participates in our RRUUC community has worth and dignity. Thus, each instance where a past conviction is revealed by a Criminal Background Check (CBC) will be carefully considered by the Safe Congregation Committee. For each instance that is considered, members of The Safe Congregation Committee will sign a confidentiality agreement related to the particular incident. These records will be kept in a dedicated, locked filing cabinet in the office of the Senior Minister.

The Safe Congregation Committee (SCC) will strive to follow the following guidelines with compassion, care and confidentiality for all concerned.

* Any applicant whose CBC report indicates “no record” shall be considered eligible for further consideration for the staff or volunteer position for which they have applied.
* Any applicant whose CBC report indicates a record of sex offenses or crimes against children will be denied further consideration, and indefinitely restricted from staff or volunteer positions working with children, youth and vulnerable adults at RRUUC. Reports may be retained in a permanent, confidential personnel file.
* Applicants who answer “yes” to any of the criminal record questions on the Voluntary Disclosure Statement shall be invited to talk with the Sr. Minister, who will then speak with the Safe Congregation Committee. In this case, the applicant’s explanatory statements shall be taken into consideration, and an interview arranged with relevant RRUUC staff, before eligibility is determined.
* Any CBC report that indicates a criminal record will be subject to further review. The Sr. Minister and the SCC will take into consideration the nature of the offense, and the date of the offense (how many years have passed since the crime was committed).

Confidentiality of Criminal Records and Implications for Membership

* Authorization forms for background checks will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the Safe Congregation Committee will have access to these forms, which will be kept in paper format in a dedicated, locked filing cabinet in the office of the Lifespan Religious Educator. These authorization forms will be kept for a minimum of three years.
* Staff applications are subject to personnel policies as established by the Board of Trustees.
* Applications and CBC records for volunteer or staff positions, regardless of the subsequent employment status of the applicant, shall not be used to assess or evaluate an individual’s membership in the congregation, whether the membership is new or continuing, except as outlined in the following section.
* Any applicant whose CBC report indicates a record of sex offenses or crimes against children may be subject to a limited access agreement at the discretion of the SCC, in accordance with RRUUC’s Relevant Policy (See Appendix viii) and subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. The process of determining the appropriateness of limited access restrictions will remain confidential, although the imposition of such an agreement is subject to required notifications as outlined in RRUUC’s Policy (See Appendix viii).

### Appendix V: Code of Ethics



CODE OF ETHICS

Based on the Code of Ethics by the UUA For People Working with Children and Youth

RRUUC is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our congregation, placing a special emphasis on meeting the unique needs of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

RRUUC’s Safe Congregation Policy is intended to help create and support this safe and nurturing environment. A Safe Congregation provides an environment in which we may each deepen our acceptance and understanding of one another, and in which personal transformation and spiritual growth are encouraged and supported in an atmosphere of civility, mutual respect, trust and kindness.

Our commitment to creating a Safe Congregation is grounded firmly in our seven principles, and especially in our abiding belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. We affirm the right of each person who participates in our congregation to seek and find spiritual, emotional and physical safety and acceptance at RRUUC. This includes safety from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Adults and older youth who are in leadership in our congregation play a key role in creating a safe congregation at RRUUC. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect that in all ways reflects our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people.

By signing this code of ethics, I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, agree that I will strive to support the children, youth and vulnerable adults with whom I work by treating them with respect, kindness and acceptance. Because all those involved suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care, I will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children, youth and vulnerable adults in the community. Neither shall I sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

By signing this, I am agreeing to conduct myself in accordance with this code. I understand that appropriate action will be taken if this code is violated.

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

I have received information about, and agree to abide by, the Safe Congregation Policy of RRUUC and the Positive Discipline Approach. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Initials

###  Appendix VI: Permission Slips

**River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817-5888 301-229-0400 fax 301-320-3544 e-mail birikura@rruuc.org

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION YRUU PROGRAM PERMISSION FORM**

**For RRUUC Youth Activities from August 15, 20XX through June 15, 20XX**

*This is a general form to be used for giving permission to participate in RRUUC Youth sponsored activities at RRUUC or off site within the Washington area. Trips in excess of 100 miles will require a specific permission form. If a parent or guardian would like to limit this permission to a specific youth activity or activities, please indicate such on this form.*

*THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO RRUUC BEFORE ANY YOUTH MAY PARTICIPATE IN OVERNIGHTS OR YOUTH ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD TAKE HER OR HIM OFF THE RRUUC GROUNDS. The following rules are standard for all YRUU activities.* It’s all about building community and respecting one another.

* No leaving sponsored activity without prior arrangement.
* . No sexual activity – one person per sleeping cover.
* . No illegal drugs or misuse of prescription drugs.
* . No walk-ins or visitors.
* . No alcohol and tobacco usage.
* . R\*E\*S\*P\*E\*C\*T: Respect each other, the adults, the buildings & other property.

Name of Youth Participant \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has permission to participate in activities sponsored by the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation YRUU program between August 15, 20\_\_ and June 15, 20\_\_. These activities may include overnights at RRUUC or RRUUC youth-sponsored programs throughout the Washington area.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Parent/Guardian Signature Printed Name Date*

I have read the above rules and acknowledge them as my guide for participation in YRUU activities. I will follow any additional rules established by the Staff and/or Community. I understand that if I break the rules I may be asked to discontinue my participation in the current event and jeopardize my ability to participate in future YRUU activities:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Participant’s Signature Printed Name Date*

I give permission to use my teen’s image in promotional materials and the RRUUC website \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*initial here*

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL RELEASE FORM**

In consideration of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation organizing certain activities and events and allowing my child to participate in such activities and events, neither my child nor I (nor his/her other parent(s) or guardian(s), our respective heirs, successors, executors, administrators, or assigns) will hold River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation or its agents responsible or institute suit for any damage, loss or injury that may be sustained as a result of my child’s participation in the activity identified at the top of this page. I realize precautions will be taken against accidents. I give my permission for emergency medical treatment for my child.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Name of Youth Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Parent/Guardian Signature Printed Name Date*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Relationship Day Phone # Evening Phone #*

The following information will facilitate prompt emergency medical care of your child if such treatment is required during a youth group activity:

Doctor’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Medication/Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Return this signed permission slip to: by/on:

**River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817-5888 301-229-0400 fax 301-320-3544 e-mail birikura@rruuc.org

**Permission Slip for Religious Education Field Trip**

Destination:Date**:**

Activity:Purpose:

Departure Time: From:

Return Time:To:

Type of Transport:

Help needed from Parent or Guardian:

Primary Adult Contact:

Other Details:

……………………………………………………………………………………………… (Tear along dotted line and return lower section)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to participate in

(Print child’s name)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Event: on Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature Printed Name Date**

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL RELEASE FORM**

In consideration of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC) organizing certain activities and events and allowing my child to participate in such activities and events, neither my child nor I (nor his/her other parent(s) or guardian(s) or our respective heirs, successors, executors, administrators, or assigns) will hold RRUUC or its agents responsible nor institute any suit for any damage, loss or injury that may be sustained as a result of my child’s participation in the activity identified on this page. I realize precautions will be taken against accidents. I give my permission for emergency medical treatment of my child.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(**Print** Child Name)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature Printed Name Date**

Please tell us where we can reach you or another responsible person in case of emergency during this event.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The following information will facilitate prompt emergency medical care of your child if such treatment is required.

DOCTOR’S NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Emgcy. Phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

INSURANCE COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MEDICATION(S) / ALLERGIES \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix VII: The Maryland Code for the Reporting Incidents of Child Abuse

***Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect***

* RRUUC shall report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities as mandated by Maryland State Law. Standards for making a report are as follows. A report must be made when the reporter suspects or has reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.
* Maryland State Law, specifically Family Law § 5-704 and § 5-705, specifies that ALL citizens are to report suspected abuse or neglect regardless of profession.
* Reports shall be submitted promptly to local Department of Human Resources or Child Protective Services offices, either on the DHR/SSA 180 reporting form or by telephone. A report to police is made if a child appears in imminent danger, or the reporter has reason to believe that release of the child to his or her parent or guardian poses a significant risk to the child’s health or well being.
* Provisions of the law recognize that certain privileged communications may be exempt from mandatory reporting. These include attorney/client and clergy/penitent communication, but NOT clergy/congregant. Privileged communication does not extend to any other church staff person or volunteer. This information should be shared with congregant making a report.
* Any person witnessing or having reasonable suspicion of injury, exploitation, objectionable conduct toward, physical or sexual abuse of any child or youth or other person at RRUUC shall report the information immediately to the Sr. Minister or in her or his absence, the Lifespan Religious Educator or the Religious Educator for Youth, or in their absence, another member of the Safe Congregation Committee. These persons shall assess the situation, make the report if warranted, and contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The person receiving the report must share with the person making the report immediate next steps.
* Telephone numbers for 24 hour reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect:

⬥ Montgomery County: 240-777-4417 ⬥ MD Dept of Human Services: 1-800-332-6347

***Reporting Adult Abuse and Neglect***

* RRUUC shall report suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation of adults to the proper authorities as provided by Maryland State Law, specifically Family Law, Adult Protective Services, § 14-301 through § 14-309.
* Reporting is not mandatory, except for law enforcement, human services and healthcare workers. However, § 14-309 provides that persons making a report based on suspicion or definite knowledge are immune from civil liability.
* Reports shall be submitted in a prompt fashion to local Maryland Department of Human Resources or Adult Protective Services offices, either via the proper form or by telephone.

### It is the policy of RRUUC that all authorized persons working with vulnerable adults shall receive training in recognizing and reporting adult abuse and neglect.

### Any indication of adult abuse or neglect shall be brought to the immediate attention of a Safe Congregation Committee member. The SCC will assess the situation, make the report if warranted, and report the situation to the Sr. Minister and the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

* Telephone numbers for 24 hour reporting of suspected adult abuse or neglect:

⬥ Montgomery County: 240-777-3000 ⬥ MD Dept of Human Services: 1-800-917-7383

### Appendix VIII: Policy Regarding Integration of Convicted Person

**Policy Regarding Integration into Church Life of a**

**Person Charged or Convicted of Child Sexual Abuse**

(Adopted by the Board of Trustees April 4, 2000)

RRUUC is committed to maintaining the safest environment possible for the children, youth and adults at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation. We are also committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping on Sunday morning with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. We do believe in the worth and dignity of all people, even those who may have made serious mistakes in their lives.

 When someone who has been officially charged or convicted of child sexual abuse seeks to attend our services or participate in other church activities, it is our responsibility to address both the needs of being a welcoming congregation and the needs of maintaining as safe an environment as possible. When someone has broken trust with our congregation and its principles, and that person wants to regain trust with us, we will work toward reconciliation within the context of maintaining a safe environment at RRUUC. Accordingly, no person charged or convicted of child sexual abuse will be permitted to participate in RRUUC activities unless they agree to restrictions established by RRUUC designed to create the safest possible environment for children and families at RRUUC. These restrictions shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

 1) The person will agree not to make any attempt to interact with children or youth who participate in RRUUC programs anywhere, either on or off church property and whether or not as part of church programs or otherwise; and

 2) The person shall have an escort approved by and serving under conditions determined by RRUUC with him or her at all times when on church property and at church sponsored events.

 All such restrictions shall be set forth in a written document approved by the Senior Minister and the Chair of the Board of Trustees and signed by the person charged or convicted of child sexual abuse.

 This policy supersedes the policy approved by the Board of Trustees on March 4, 1998.

**Note:** “RRUC” changed to “RRUUC” and “Director of Religious Education” changed to the “Minister of Religious Education and Congregational Life” on 4/21/10.

Note: “Minister of Religious Education and Congregational Life” changed to Senior Minister on 1/31/2015

### Appendix IX: Agreement for a Person Charged with a Crime against a Child or Youth

We are committed to maintaining the safest environment possible for the children, youth and adults of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation. We are also committed to being a religious community open to those who would like to worship on Sunday morning with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. We believe in the worth and dignity of all people, even those who may have made serious mistakes in their lives.

 When someone who has been legally charged with a crime against a child or youth seeks to attend our services or participate in other congregational activities, it is our responsibility to address both the need to be a welcoming congregation and the need to maintain as safe an environment as possible for all people. We do this by requiring the individual in question to sign the following agreement, a copy of which will be retained by the Senior Minister.

**AGREEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, wish to attend services and/or programs at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC). Accordingly, I agree to all of the following:

1) I will NOT interact, nor make any attempt to interact, with children or youth, other than my own, who participate in RRUUC programs anywhere either on RRUUC property or at RRUUC sponsored events.

2) I will have an authorized companion approved by the Safe Congregation Committee (SCC) of RRUUC with me at all times when I am on RRUUC property and at RRUUC sponsored events. I am responsible for arranging my own companion from the approved list of authorized companions given to me by the Sr. Minister or his/her designated representative.

3) My companion will meet me at the front doors of RRUUC at an agreed upon time. He or she will accompany me into the service/event and sit beside me. When the service or program is over, my companion will escort me directly back to the front doors. I will then proceed directly to my vehicle and leave the RRUUC premises.

4) I will notify all of the ministers by email AND I will leave a message on the RRUUC pastoral care phone line regarding (1) my intention to attend worship service or any other church activity and (2) the name the companion who will accompany me. I will notify the ministers in this manner at least 48 hours before the event, and I will receive confirmation from one of the ministers before attending worship service or any other church activity. \*Contact information is provided below.

5) I understand that the SCC or the Sr. Minister may inform the congregation via the RRUUC weekly e-newsletter that someone charged with a crime against a child or youth will be attending Sunday services with a companion, and will not have contact with our children or youth. I understand that an announcement of this sort will not identify me by name. However, should congregants individually ask members of the SCC or the Sr. Minister, my name, I understand that they may provide it.

6) I will not use RRUUC computers or otherwise attempt to connect to the internet from RRUUC.

7) I will inform Sr. Minister of the final disposition of my criminal case, and she or he will inform the other ministers and the SCC. At this point, the Sr. Minister and the SCC will review this agreement and discuss warranted modifications with me.

Signature of Person who has been Charged Printed Name

Signature of Minister Printed Name

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*Contact information

Nancy McDonald Ladd, Senior Minister [Nancy’s email]

Louise Green, Minister of Congregational Life [email]

**RRUUC Pastoral Care Phone (301) 787 4938**

### Appendix X: Safe Congregation Coordinator and Companion Job Descriptions

In the event that the RRUUC Safe Congregation Committee has been informed that a member of the congregation has been charged or convicted of Child Sexual Abuse, or has been charged with a different crime against a child or youth, and that person has requested the opportunity to participate at RRUUC, the Safe Congregation Committee will appoint a member of the congregation to coordinate companions for the charged or convicted member while that person attends some congregational activities.

**Characteristics required of the Coordinator:**

* Member of congregation, with no personal or familial connections to the person charged or convicted
* Clear understanding of the RRUUC Safe Congregation Policy
* Experience in working with people concerning conflict and/or emotional issues
* Experience in organizing people for very specific tasks
* Ability to train or arrange for professional training of companions
* Ability to recruit volunteers and coordinate volunteer schedules
* Ability to monitor volunteer work and responsibilities
* Ability to communicate clearly in writing, email, by phone or in person about difficult issues
* Ability to retain clear personal boundaries concerning all involved

**Job Description of Coordinator**:

* Be familiar with RRUUC Safe Congregation Policy
* Communicate with person who has been charged or convicted
* Recruit and train companions to accompany person who has been charged or convicted. Companions may not be family members of the person charged or convicted and not involved in the RE program while serving as a companion.
* Evaluate every accompanying experience from individual reports by the companions
* Provide written explanation of the process to the Safe Congregation Committee who will then share this information with the RRUUC Board of Trustees
* At least two days before such activity report to the ministers when a person charged or convicted of sexual child abuse (or other crime against child or adult) is scheduled to be in attendance at the Sunday morning service or RRUUC events
* Have the responsibility to terminate a person’s permission to participate at RRUUC should adherence to the SCP be violated. Termination would take the form of notifying the ministers and the participant and then the companion.

**Job Description of Companion:**

* Be trained by Coordinator
* Meet with or talk with by phone the person charged or convicted
* Arrange schedule of when and where companion would meet with person charged or convicted. (It is the responsibility of the person charged or convicted to contact the coordinator and arrange for accompaniment)
* At least three days before event report visiting schedule to Coordinator
* Meet person charged or convicted in the RRUUC parking lot or on the street nearby and accompany them into the RRUUC Sunday worship/activity
* In the building the companion must stay with the person charged or convicted at all times. If needed, the person charged or convicted should use the private restrooms (the one in the basement of the original building).
* Prevent the person charged or convicted from any formal interaction with children and youth in the congregation. This means if such person is standing in the foyer, lounge or Fellowship Hall a simple “hello” would be appropriate, but it would not be appropriate to get into a conversation.
* At least quarterly report to the coordinator as to any progress happening with appropriate suggestions

### Appendix XI: Our Sources

We are grateful to many people and organizations within and outside of our congregation for support, guidance, editing and perspective as we created this policy. In particular, we are grateful to the 2009-2010 RRUUC Religious Education Committee for overall support and guidance and Susan Okie, Betsy Brach, Stuart Weinstein and Joan Zenzen for their editorial contributions.

In addition, we have learned from these people and the documents they have produced:

* The Safe Congregation Policy of the **Sugarloaf Congregation of Unitarian Universalists**
* Child Protection and Discipline Policy of the **Interfaith Families Project** 2009-2010
* The Rev. Susan Archer, and the **Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Code** of Ethics for People Working with Children and Youth
* Dawn Star Borschelt, Director of Religious Education, Buxmont UU**.**
* Safety Policy for Children and Teens at the **Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville**
* **The Unitarian Universalist Association**
* **The Northbrook United Methodist Church** Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedure Manual

With thanks,

Ginger Luke, former RRUUC MRE; Beth Irikura, REY; Kerridwen Henry, former DCM; Andy Taylor, former Congregational Administrator; Linda Bleadingheiser,; and the 2009 -2010 RRUUC RE Committee, comprised of Cheryl Dodwell, Mark Hanson, Karen Chopra, Maura DeMouy and Marty Rouse.