



be a spiritual seeker

**The First Universalist Church
of Yarmouth, Maine**

**TOWARD A SAFE
CONGREGATION**

This Policy is a substantial update and expansion
of our previous Safe Congregation Plan, adopted 12.28.02.

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We are grateful for the wisdom and the hard work.

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I. PHILOSOPHY

A variety of potential dangers are inherent in operating a church. These include physical site, including buildings and grounds, operation of the religious education program, transportation and supervision of children off-site, instances of disruptive behavior involving members and or staff of the church, and external threats

Our commitments, as Unitarian Universalists, to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to justice and compassion, compel us to strive to create an environment that protects children, youth, vulnerable adults, friends and all members of our congregation from harm, and promotes their spiritual growth.

We believe our church can respond effectively to this challenge. The First Universalist Church of Yarmouth highly values the ideals of community and the search for truth. We encourage personal growth, allow for personal truth, and support individuals and families in their efforts to build healthier lives and a safer society.

This document is intended to be a “living document” that works to ensure such safety and security. We are committed to periodic reviews and updates of the Policy.

II. UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES AND SEXUAL ETHICS

One of the Leader Resources in Creating Safe Congregations restates our Principles in terms of sexual ethics, and appears in every age level of Sexuality and Our Faith, the companion volume to Our Whole Lives. ([UUA Sexuality and Our Faith](#))

- 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.

III. RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT

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

First Universalist Church (hereafter referred to as "First Universalist", "the Church" or "we") holds that it is the responsibility of all members of our church community to work at preventing sexual and physical abuse and harassment. To this end, we ask the members of our congregation to accept the responsibility of educating ourselves and our children about sexual and physical abuse, molestation, harassment, and exploitation. We also ask church members to pledge to do our best to protect those who are at risk and to support those in crisis.

IV. DEFINITIONS

The terms used in this document will have the following meanings:

1. **Abuse** includes non-accidental conduct that involves bodily injury or impairment; offensive physical or sexual contact, including physical or sexual abuse; physical or sexual harassment; physical or sexual molestation; or physical or sexual exploitation.
2. **Physical abuse** includes offensive physical contact or activity that causes bodily injury.
3. **Sexual abuse** means any sexual touching of a child or any activity that causes a person to engage in any sexual act or conduct without that person's consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.
4. **Physical harassment or molestation or exploitation** means activity that places a person in fear of bodily injury by such acts as threatening or tormenting behavior, compelling a person by force or threat of force to engage in conduct from which the person has a right to abstain, knowingly restricting substantially the movements of another person without that other person's consent, communicating to a person a threat to commit an act against that person or another person or entity where the natural consequence of the threat is to

place that person in fear or cause that person to engage in conduct in which that person otherwise would not engage, or similar repeated offensive physical or verbal conduct.

5. **Sexual molestation and sexual exploitation** means activity that places another person in a situation where that person feels compelled to engage in sexual conduct to which that person would not voluntarily consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.
6. **Sexual harassment** means making sexual advances or requests for sexual favors to another person, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where the other person by words or conduct has indicated that such words or conduct are not desired, or where a reasonable person would expect that such words or conduct would not be desired.

V. SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MINISTER AND CONGREGANTS

“Congregations confer powers upon their ministers through roles which the minister is expected to assume—worship leader, teacher, counsel or representative in the larger community...The powers of ministry have a great potential for good if they are used responsibly, and with potential for damage if they are abused...Ministers need to be fully aware of those powers and use them responsibly for the building of spiritual community, not for personal gratification. Exploiting ministerial powers for personal advantage abuses those congregants who become the inappropriate sexual objects of a minister’s personal interest. Such abuse damages the religious community of which the abuser is minister.”

~ Excerpted from Thomas Mikelson, *Reflections Toward a Unitarian Universalist Theology of Clergy Misconduct through Sexual Abuse*, December, 1992

We as a community expect the Minister to abide by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association’s (UUMA) Code of Professional Practice which acknowledges that ministers are the recipients of automatic trust, and comments directly on the issues of clergy sexual misconduct and the abuse of the trust congregations place in their ministers. In subscribing to this code, ministers agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

The complete text of the code is published in the UUMA Guidelines which is available in the Society library and/or office, from the UUMA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, or the UUMA website ([Guidelines - UU Ministers Association \(uuma.org\)](http://uuma.org)).

VI. SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CONGREGANTS

“I recognize that as a religious leader in whom trust and power have been placed, I am both morally and legally in a professional relationship to which I am called to be faithful...I must never abuse the authority of my position by manipulating others to satisfy my personal needs, which may include, but are not restricted to, sexualized behavior with any child, adolescent, or vulnerable adult seeking advice or comfort; with any adult in another committed relationship; with interns or with youth advisors. Nor will I engage in any other exploitative relationship that abuses the power and damages the trust that a specific individual, a congregation, or an institution has placed in me. As a religious education professional, I have the responsibility to be aware of, to advocate, and to live by this Code of Professional Practices,...Furthermore, I will be aware of and observe the legal requirements of my State or Province regarding reporting of physical or sexual misconduct.”

~ Excerpted from the Religious Educator’s Code of Professional Practices

We, as a community, expect the Director of Religious Education and other professional religious education staff, to abide by the Liberal Religious Educators Association’s (LREDA) Code of Professional Practice, which acknowledges that religious educators are also the recipients of special trust. In subscribing to this code, professional religious educators agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

The complete text of the Code is published in the LREDA Guidelines and Code of Professional Practices which is available in the Society library and/or office, from LREDA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, or the LREDA website ([Liberal Religious Educators Association \(Ireda.org\)](http://LiberalReligiousEducatorsAssociation(Ireda.org))), click on [Code of Professional Practices](#)).

In the case of violation of this code, procedures as outlined in this policy will be used.

VII. SAFE CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM

When any such incident of suspected sexual or physical abuse is reported, an Ad Hoc Response Team will be formed by the Minister or President. This Response Team will normally consist of the Minister, the Director of Religious Education, the President of the Board of Trustees and at least two other members of the congregation appointed by the President or otherwise designated Reporter. The President will maintain a list of congregants willing and able to serve in this capacity. While the Minister is seeing to the required reporting (outlined in Section XII below), the Response Team will gather necessary information and develop a response plan for the situation.

This plan will be put in writing, be specific to the situation at hand, and include clearly delineated action items, time frames and responsibilities. Care will be taken to ensure

confidentiality to protect the alleged victim, the accused person and the reporter until the appropriate state or local authorities issue a finding or take action. This plan must address the safety and peace of mind of all parties to the incident; including the alleged victim, the accused (if a member or attendee of the Church), the reporter, and church staff and members and friends and particularly the parents of children in the church school. The response plan will be designed first and foremost to address the needs of the victim. In constructing this plan, the Team will draw on the methods outlined in our [Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior](#), and may use the scale for assessing the nature and severity of the referred problem contained in that Policy. (See [Section XVII](#)). Additional meetings of the Ad Hoc Response Team will be scheduled as needed to monitor progress in carrying out the plan, for example at a six-month interval the Team might review a Response Plan, and consider revising, extending, or suspending the plan.

VIII. PREVENTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, PHYSICAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT

We acknowledge that preventing sexual misconduct, physical abuse, and harassment in our religious communities and in society is a complex goal. Prevention education, training, careful hiring, and safety procedures are concrete steps toward creating a safer environment for all concerned.

A. Education and Training

1. Education and training is critical to the creation of a safer congregational environment. Information, knowledge, and understanding support the development of healthy relationships based on self-esteem and respect for others. Greater understanding of sexuality and abuse will make us better able to avoid situations that could lead to abuse, and to move more effectively toward justice and healing for us all. To this end we believe it is important to promote self-esteem and personal responsibility among our children, our members, and friends. We will provide programs as follows:
 - a. The Director of Religious Education (DRE) and Religious Education (RE) Committee are responsible for:
 - 1) Offering age-appropriate information about development and sexuality for our children, youth, and adults on a regular basis, including clarification and understanding of the complex aspects of sexuality, as well as focusing on sexual abuse prevention and
 - 2) Keeping Church workers, volunteer teachers, advisors, and parents informed of this policy and reviewing at least annually, through the use of the following:
 - i) the Code of Ethics for Those Working with Children and Youth, herein identified as the Code of Ethics (Attachment A), and
 - ii) Safety Procedures, **Section IX** that follow, to create a safer space for everyone.
2. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for:

- a. Promoting congregational awareness about this policy. As part of this we will ensure that all members are aware of the **The Code of Ethics for Those Working with Children and Youth** at The First Universalist Church of Yarmouth.
- b. Informing church members and attendees regarding resources that address the issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

B. Hiring

1. Incidents of abuse and harassment often may take place in the context of ongoing (personal and professional) relationships. Therefore, it is essential that recruitment and hiring procedures protect children, youth, adults and staff from injury as well as protect staff and volunteers from unfounded accusations and the church from ethical and legal liability.
2. All persons seeking paid employment at The First Universalist Church of Yarmouth, including but not limited to the Minister, the Director of Religious Education (DRE), the Music Director, the Office Manager, and the Sexton, will sign [The Code of Ethics](#). They will be screened by the appropriate hiring committee, which will contact references (at least one of whom has known the applicant for a minimum of five years), record the contact, and conduct background checks plus a formal interview with the candidate. It is advised that background checks will be repeated every two – five years. The employment application and reference material will be confidential and will be available only as required by law and to those responsible for screening, hiring, or participating in the Response Team. All employees will sign the Code of Ethics annually.

IX. SAFETY PROCEDURES

These procedures address legal requirements and insurance obligations as well as help staff, volunteers, teachers and youth advisors avoid creating situations in which personal boundaries can become problematic. The various prevention methods listed below are specifically designed to protect the children and youth of our community.

A. Adult Volunteers

1. Long-term volunteer teachers and youth advisors must have attended The First Universalist Church of Yarmouth for at least six (6) months. This provision can be waived by the Minister and DRE, in consultation with each other, when the individual in question has been an active member with experience volunteering with children or youth at another UU church.

B. Director of Religious Education

1. The Director of Religious Education will insure that all teachers and advisors are informed of this policy and these safety procedures. First-time teachers and advisors must attend an orientation on these safety procedures prior to assuming their positions.

C. Working with Children and Youth

1. Long-term volunteer teachers and youth advisors will read and sign [The Code of Ethics \(Attachment A\)](#) and complete the [Volunteer Reference Sheet \(Attachment B\)](#).
2. Teachers and advisors will read and sign the Code of Ethics at the beginning of each church year or when taking on a new position. These documents will be confidential and will be available only for those responsible for screening, and members of any Response Team, or as required by law.
3. The Director of Religious Education, or a designated substitute, may check in on all classes during the course of a Sunday morning.
4. At least two volunteers will be assigned to and will be present in each classroom and youth group activity, including in-church events and overnights, off-site retreats, conferences, and other church-related activities, unless other First U adult members or staff are in the area. These volunteers must be unrelated to each other.
5. If there is a foreseeable reason a teacher, advisor, or other volunteer will be alone with a child or youth, the written consent of the child's parent or guardian will be obtained in advance. The volunteers participating in the Coming of Age Program or other special programs will meet the parents or guardians of the children or youth prior to the program.

NOTE: Exceptions to the two volunteer policy are discouraged but may be approved by the Director of Religious Education, Minister, or Religious Education Committee in an emergency situation.

X. GUIDELINES INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS ACCUSED OR CONVICTED OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

- A. Situations may occur involving individuals accused or convicted of sexually aggressive behavior. Those situations will be addressed as follows:
 1. An individual who has been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty, nolo contendere or "Alford" plea to a charge of sexual misconduct or who has been determined to have engaged in any form of child abuse in any civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical forum or any forum, will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved.

2. If an individual has been legally accused of sexual misconduct and is currently involved in civil or criminal litigation of such a charge, that individual will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved.
3. If the local District Attorney's office has dropped charges and/or the Maine Department of Human Services has neither opened a case or has closed the case as unsubstantiated, the accused shall still have no contact with children. In this situation, a Response Team shall determine whether there are exceptional circumstances or irrefutable evidence that no sexually inappropriate behavior occurred. Should the Response Team determine that this is so the Response Team can make recommendations about whether or not and in what manner the accused can resume contact with children.
4. In the event that a person has been convicted of a sexual offense and completed a term of incarceration and seeks to enter the life of the First Universalist Church, a Response Team will be formed to make a determination as to whether or not and the ways in which the individual may be safely involved in the life of the congregation.
5. Any volunteer, advisor or parent who suspects or is made aware of an allegation of child abuse will report that concern to the Director of Religious Education or the Minister as soon as possible. If neither the Minister nor DRE is available, the concern should be reported to the President of the Board of Trustees.
6. In the event of allegations of child abuse or of perceived threats to children's safety within the Church Community, the Minister and/or the President of the Board of Trustees will convene an Ad Hoc Response Team in accordance with the response procedure described below.

XI. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE OR HARRASSMENT

- A. There are several situations which may prompt a response regarding a complaint or concern about sexual or physical abuse, including but not limited to:
 1. A child, youth or adult or reports possible abuse by a church official, member or attendee;
 2. A Church official, member or attendee suspects that a child or youth is being abused;
 3. A Child or youth reports possible abuse by a family member or other individual; or
 4. Church officials learn that a church member or attendee (child, youth or adult) is under investigation for alleged abuse.
- B. Because child abuse is addressed directly in Maine State Law, such cases require a special adaptation of the First Universalist Church Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior. When any of the situations described above is identified, the following procedure will be utilized.

XII. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE TO COMMUNITY AUTHORITIES

- A. It is not the function of the Minister, Director of Religious Education or President of the Board of Trustees to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. Rather it is both Maine Law and the policy of the First Universalist Church of Yarmouth to immediately report any situation in which we have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected. Such a report must be made to the Maine Department of Human Services at 1 (800) 452-1999. A report also must be made to the District Attorney's office in the county in which the alleged victim resides. In Cumberland County the District Attorney's office can be reached at 207-871-8384.
- B. Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, the church may rely on the decisions of those authorities in the event of a finding for which there is a basis for the complaint. It is also the church's responsibility under these guidelines to develop an appropriate plan of response to the allegations.
- C. In cases occurring at First Universalist or within programming of the church (such as field trips), the Minister will also notify the Northeast District Executive, and seek her/his advice and counsel. Additionally, the Minister will notify the church's insurance company.
- D. In the event the accused abuser is the Minister, reports will be filed by and the notifications referenced above will be the responsibility of the President of the Board of Trustees.

XIII. SAFETY NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION REGARDING REPORTS OF ABUSE

A. Interim Safety Plan

- 1. When a report is filed by any person on behalf of any child and the suspected abuser is a church employee, member or attendee, the Response Team will develop an interim safety plan during the investigation of abuse. This plan may include, but is not limited to restricting attendance of the suspected abuser to adult-only church events, having an assigned companion with the alleged abuser at all church events, and refraining from any contact with children while attending a church function. The purpose of this plan is not only to safeguard our children, but also to provide protection to the accused abuser from further complaints. If the accused abuser is another youth, the plan must be developed with input from both sets of parents or guardians. The plan will be clearly communicated to the accused abuser or, if a minor, his or her parents or guardians, by the Response Team. The Minister and/or DRE may implement similar steps while awaiting initial action of the Response Team.

Given the time that may have passed, several Interim Safety Plans may need to be developed.

B. Permanent Safety Plan

1. Upon disposition by the Court, a permanent plan of restricted contact will be developed by the Response Team. This will follow the guidelines established above for Interim Safety Plans.

In all cases, the Response Team, Minister, Religious Educator or President of the Board of Trustees may seek legal counsel before proceeding with either a draft or permanent plan.

XIV. PASTORAL NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION REGARDING REPORTS OF ABUSE

- A. Following a report of suspected abuse, the Safe Congregation Response Team will also develop a plan to address the pastoral needs of our congregation, including:
 1. The person/child who has allegedly been sexually abused: This may include providing information about or referrals to appropriate professional, community, and Society or UU resources, as needed. Additionally the Safe Congregation Response Team may assist in dealing with the DHS, the District Attorney or the Police Department.
 2. Other members and friends of our congregation:
 - a. Members, friends, or attendees immediately affected by the incident (such as family members or partners) whose needs we can help meet, either directly or indirectly;
 - b. The Minister (or other members of the Church staff) to aid in dealing with the pastoral needs of the victim or accused person;
 - c. Other members and friends of the congregation who witnessed one or more incidents or, who having heard about them, are reminded of their own concerns; and
 - d. Other congregation members and friends who are relied on to a great degree by the person/child who has allegedly been sexually abused or accused offender (or those connected to them).
 3. The accused person: Support may include helping the accused person access the appropriate professional, community, and spiritual resources. While there may be feelings of ill-will toward the accused person, if that individual is a part of our community, they also deserve our support; withdrawing it at this critical point in that person's life might have severe detrimental long-term effects on their behavior in the future. It remains the mission of this congregation to recognize and support the integrity and inherent worth and dignity of that person even though we do not condone inappropriate behaviors, and to treat them with compassion.
 4. Other persons/children who have allegedly been sexually abused and who have been reluctant to come forward: If warranted, the response plan will include a way of reaching out to these individuals in a manner that is non-threatening.
- A. The plan established will be such that other individuals are not put at risk for further incidents.

XV. SAFETY AND PASTORAL NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION: REGARDING REPORTS OF HARASSMENT

- A. Incidents of alleged sexual or physical harassment of minors which do not warrant involvement of the DHS or DA shall be referred to the Director of Religious Education and Minister. They may request that an Ad Hoc Response Team be formed to investigate such allegations. A plan shall be developed to address and resolve these complaints which shall make clear to the accused person that this church will not tolerate harassment of any form, as well as provide information about appropriate counseling or other resources for both the victim and the offender. The parents of the minor(s) shall also be informed of this plan and involved, as appropriate, in its development.

XVI. POLICY REGARDING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

- A. **Disruptive behavior** is when an individual's conduct interferes with or obstructs church activities, diminishes the appeal of those activities, threatens person(s) and/or property, or violates church policy. It can be unprofessional, inappropriate, intimidating, disruptive, bullying, threatening, aggressive, or violent. It can also involve foul, profane, obscene, threatening, defiant, or abusive language or action. It can be vocal or physical.
- B. Situations involving disruptive behavior will be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees. The Board may appoint an [Ad Hoc Response Team](#) to investigate the matter using this policy as its primary source of guidance.
1. Persons identified as being disruptive will be responded to as individuals of dignity and worth.
 2. Information concerning the alleged incident(s) that led to concern will be systematically collected from the concerned parties by delegated team members and documented before any action is taken.
- C. The team will meet to assess the findings and decide on a course of action, with the following four levels of response recommended to them.
- **Level One:** A Response Team member or members contact/s the person named as the source of the disruption and informs them of the nature of the concern. The person's viewpoint of the matter will be elicited, valued and documented. Team members will then assess the situation.
 - **Level Two:** If the basis of the original concern is determined to be valid, this finding will be clearly communicated to the person in question and a contract for clearly defined behavioral change will be negotiated. Such communication and contract will be documented.
 - **Level Three:** If the person in question refuses to negotiate a contract, refuses to abide by a contract, or is engaging in behavior of sufficient severity, that person may be

excluded from the church for a specified period of time, with reasons for such action, and conditions for return, clearly communicated and documented.

- **Level Four:** The person in question is permanently excluded from the church and the church premises with steps taken as needed to enforce the integrity of this decision:
- D. Should the Response team decide that exclusion or expulsion from the Church is necessary, they will consult the Board of Trustees prior to action being taken.
- E. The four levels of response recommended by this policy may be applied in the order determined by the Team and the Board in their best judgment.
- F. If appropriate, the Team may offer referrals for professional services.

In the event of imminent risk or actual harm to church members, church employees or church property, immediate action will be taken to secure the safety of persons and property.

- G. All documentation developed in the course of investigating and resolving allegations of disruptive behavior will be kept confidential. The President of the Board of Trustees will be responsible for determining access to such documentation and for ensuring its security.
- H. The following are offered as dimensions to be used in assessing the nature and severity of referred problems:
1. **Dangerousness** – Is the individual a source of threat or harm to persons or property?
 2. **Disruptiveness** - What is the extent of disruption to church functions?
 3. **Congregational Integrity** – How likely is it that existing or prospective church members will be driven away by the alleged behavior?
 4. **Probability Of Change** – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
 5. **History** – What has been the frequency and the degree of disruption caused by the individual in the past?

XVII. MEDICAL EMERGENCY POLICY

The Church (Board and delegated Committees or Personnel) will maintain First Aid Kits including AED (Defibrillator) and Trauma Kits in the church facilities. We will also conduct training of selected persons on an annual basis for response to medical emergencies.

XVIII. FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY

The Church (Board and delegated Committees or Personnel) will maintain Fire Protection equipment, with annual inspections and training as necessary. Once a year a professionally

advised and/or supervised fire drill is required to be conducted during Sunday services to ensure the safety of our congregation. The Buildings and Grounds Committee will be accountable for executing the Emergency Evacuation policy.

XIX. BOMB THREAT POLICY

See Homeland Security Website, [What to Do - Bomb Threat | CISA](#)

The Church (Board and delegated Committees or Personnel) will maintain Bomb Threat preparedness, with annual review and training of staff and leadership as necessary.

XX. FIREARMS SAFETY POLICY

The Board of Trustees has approved of the following specific policies regarding firearms and all lethal weapons.

- A. With the exception of duly-licensed law enforcement officers, no firearms are permitted on the UU Yarmouth premises.
- B. If a person possesses a gun on the premises, the person will be asked to put their weapon in a locked vehicle and/or to leave immediately.
- C. If the person refuses to comply with the above, the Yarmouth Police Department will be called.

XXI. ACTIVE SHOOTER POLICY

NOTE: Adapted from Homeland Security website, [Active Shooter - How to Respond \(cisa.gov\)](#)

An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly.

Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

The Church (Board and delegated Committees or Personnel) will maintain Active Shooter preparedness, with annual review and training of staff and leadership as necessary.

First Universalist's safety procedures are in

[ATTACHMENT D: ACTIVE SHOOTER HOW TO RESPOND](#)

ATTACHMENT A

CODE OF ETHICS FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The care and education of our children and youth is a sacred task. Those who teach and/or lead our children and youth play a key role in fostering their spiritual growth and character development. It is, therefore, crucial? essential? that those in leadership positions provide the special nurturing care and support that will enable a positive sense of self, and a spirit of independence and responsibility.

Our church is a voluntary association of people who gather for the purpose of religious fellowship. The relationships which develop within our church thus more resemble friendships, with their attendant risks and rewards, than professional relationships. The potential for intergenerational friendship and learning at our church is unique and important to the spiritual life of all concerned--adults, children, and youth.

Since there is an inherent power differential between adults and young people, it is important for adults to exercise good judgment and maturity in their influence upon children and youth, and to refrain from using young people to inappropriately fulfill their own needs. Young people are vulnerable, in that they may find it difficult to speak out about the inappropriate behavior of adults or even to recognize such behavior as inappropriate.

Therefore, your signature on the reverse side of this page is a promise to:

1. Provide nurturing care and support to all children/youth.
2. Work to help children/youth develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence.
3. Respect the selfhood of each young person, including the absolute right to privacy of his or her own mind and body.
4. Not engage in any behavior with young people, which constitute verbal, emotional or physical abuse.
5. Not engage in behavior or language, which is personally threatening or demeaning.
6. Not engage in any sexually harassing behavior, or any other sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children/youth.
7. Not encourage or condone any sort of illegal or unethical activity on the part of children/youth.
8. Not consume alcohol or use any form of drug, which can affect physical or mental performance before or during the carrying out of his/her responsibilities.

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

I have read and understand **The Code of Ethics** for Those Working with children and youth and the attached **Safety Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual and Physical Abuse and Harassment**. I agree to uphold these principles in my work with The First Universalist Church of Yarmouth's children, youth, and adults.

I affirm that I have never been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty, nolo contendere or taken an “Alford” plea to a charge of sexual misconduct, or been determined to have engaged in any form of child abuse in any civil, criminal, administrative, or ecclesiastical forum, or any other forum.

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

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Minister or DEC

Signature _____ Date _____

ATTACHMENT B

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM VOLUNTEER REFERENCE SHEET

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with the First Universalist Church of Yarmouth's Religious Exploration program. As a child-serving program, the RE program is concerned about the safety and welfare of all our children and youth. For this reason we feel it is important to obtain some information about our volunteers.

Please complete the following information sheet and return it to the DRE with the signed ***Code of Ethics***. We appreciate your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all the young people of our church.

Volunteer's Name _____

First Middle Last _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ When is the best time to reach you at home? _____

Work Phone: _____ May the DRE phone you at work? _____ If yes, when? _____

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.

Please list 2 references that have known you for at least 2 years and are familiar with your character as it pertains to your experience with children and/or youth.

1) Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

2) Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

I authorize The First Universalist Church of Yarmouth to contact references to obtain information about my background. I authorize references to provide such information about me. This information will be available only to those responsible for screening or participating in a response team, or as required by law.

Signature _____ Date _____

Minister or DEC

Signature _____ Date _____

ATTACHMENT C
MAINE MANDATORY REPORTING LAW REGARDING CHILD
ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Title 22, Chapter 1071, Section 4011-A

- A. Required Reporting to the Department (of Human Services). The following adult persons shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Maine Department of Human Services when the person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected:
1. When acting in a professional capacity: (27) A clergy member acquiring the information as a result of clerical professional work except for information received during confidential communications.
 2. Any other person who has assumed full, intermittent or occasional responsibility for the care or custody of the child, whether or not the person receives compensation. Whenever a person is required to report in a capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or public or private institution, agency or facility, that person immediately shall notify either the person in charge of the institution, agency or facility or a designated agent who then shall cause a report to be made. The staff also may make a report directly to the department.
- B. Required report to District Attorney. When, while acting in a professional capacity, any person required to report under this section knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected by a person not responsible for the child, the person immediately shall report or cause a report to be made to the appropriate district attorney's office.
- C. Optional report. Any person may make a report if that person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected.

Resources:

Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, Medical Emergency Procedure, Firearms Policy [Heritage Universalist Unitarian Safety and Security.pdf](#), [Safety Manual \(huuc.net\)](#)

Fire and Smoke Emergency Procedure, Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, UU Ridgewood, NJ, Bomb Threat and Active Shooter Policies, Homeland Security, [What to Do - Bomb Threat | CISA](#)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, Maryland. Disruptive Definition, [Appendix III \(uuannapolis.org\)](#)

The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, New Jersey. Multiple sections, [Safe-Cong-Policy-2019 Ridgewood.pdf](#)

UU Huntington, NY, [Safe-Congregation-policy-2015-04-28 Huntington.pdf](#)

Unity Church Unitarian, St. Paul, MN, [Unity Church EAP 2023.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT D: PROCEDURE

ACTIVE SHOOTER HOW TO RESPOND

1. **RUN** If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:
 - a. Have an escape route and plan in mind
 - b. Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
 - c. Leave your belongings behind
 - d. Help others escape, if possible
 - e. Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
 - f. Keep your hands visible
 - g. Follow the instructions of any law enforcement
 - h. Do not attempt to move wounded people
 - i. Call 911 when you are safe
2. **HIDE** If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:
 - a. Be out of the active shooter's view
 - b. Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
 - c. Not trap you or restrict your options for movement
 - d. To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:
 - Lock the door
 - Blockade the door with heavy furniture
 - e. If the active shooter is nearby:
 - Lock the door
 - Silence your cell phone and/or pager
 - Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
 - Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
 - Remain quiet If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:
 - Remain calm
 - Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
 - If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen
3. **FIGHT** As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
 - a. Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - b. Throwing items and improvising weapons
 - c. Yelling
 - d. Committing to your actions