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Working with Children and Youth


Policy Statement

UUCLV wishes to provide a safe spiritual community for children and youth. In order to do that, the following guidelines are recommended. All related forms shall be kept in the UUCLV office.

Guidelines for the Protection and Safety of Children and Youth

A. General Guidelines for Including Children and Youth in Congregational Activities:

- a. One unrelated youth and one adult should never be alone. Even for youth who are 18 or older, it is always better to avoid solo encounters. Two or more unrelated adults are expected to be present at all events involving youth. Though it is understood that complications arise that make it impractical to have two adults present with each group that includes multiple youth (e.g. when groups are split up for an activity), these situations should be minimized and avoided altogether if there is potential danger to youth safety (e.g. sports and athletic games).
- b. Adults should always be conscious of how their behavior is welcoming or exclusive for youth, even outside of formally scheduled events. This includes language and explicit references, smoking, drug or alcohol consumption (never appropriate at youth-specific events), etc.


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- c. When breaking into small groups, or when an adult is paired with a youth for conversation, sightlines should remain open (e.g. open doors or windows to rooms) and other participants or adults should be nearby (e.g. in the building).
- d. Prior to participating in faith development and Young Religious Unitarian Universalist (YRUU) programs, all volunteers will agree to a yearly background check. They will attend training sessions as offered by church leadership.
- e. Adults are expected to identify and report suspicion of use or possession of illegal substances, harassment, abuse, and sexual or other misconduct, and will not engage in such behaviors themselves.
- f. Volunteers working with children, session leaders, teachers, helpers, or youth group leaders who have gained the trust of young people are in a unique situation to observe behavior or be party to a conversation in which a possible abusive situation (either within or outside UUCLV) is revealed. In this situation, it is the adult's responsibility to report any reasonable cause to suspect child abuse to a UUCLV Mandated Reporter (the Minister and hired religious educator). The Mandated Reporter shall then notify the legal authorities as required by [Nevada Revised Statute 432B.220](#).

B. Religious Education Classes/Programs (Nursery —12th Grade)

- a. All classes and activities, including the nursery, should be led by a minimum of an unrelated, two-person teaching team

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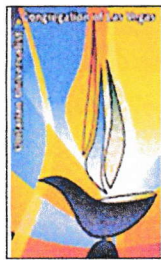
when possible. Sightlines should remain open at all times when a volunteer is with a child or youth.

- b. For grades 9-12, the youth group teachers must be at least 25 years of age.
- c. UUCLV aims to maintain a ratio of one adult to eight children or youth, after the minimum of two unrelated adult volunteers is achieved.
- d. Parents are responsible for their children before the service begins and after the faith development program has ended. During services and classes, children must have a parent or another responsible adult on the premises unless prior arrangements have been made with the hired religious educator and/or church leadership. The religious educator or appropriate designee will locate parents (or designees) who fail to comply.
- e. A designated Point Person will periodically do a walkthrough of all faith development spaces to check in with Session Leaders during classes.

C. General Sleepover Guidelines

- a. There will always be a minimum of three unrelated adults present during sleeping hours regardless of the number of youths attending. Two of these three adults must remain awake during these sleeping hours. During a sleepover at UUCLV, there should be a minimum ratio of one adult to eight youth with one additional adult required for each additional four youth.

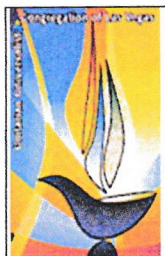
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- b. During sleepovers at UUCLV, all outside doors will be locked against entry once the last youth has arrived, and will remain locked until supervisory staff, or parents arrive for pick-up in the morning.
- c. A Parent/Guardian Consent and Medical Release Form and a Medical Information Form will be required for each youth at the sleepover. All necessary forms are available in the UUCLV office and should be filled out prior to the sleepover.
- d. Each youth will be required to complete and sign the Youth Code of Ethics (Available in UUCLV office) for each sleepover event.

D. Social Media and Communication with Children and Youth

- a. Every year, social media, email, and virtual communications become more and more integral to the work of congregations, especially with youth and young adults. It is impractical to set out specific rules about interactions online because there are a seemingly infinite number of platforms to use and they change so rapidly. However, it is incumbent upon UUCLV staff and volunteers who interact with youth in their professional capacity to ensure that virtual communications follow the same general principles of inclusion and safety outlined in this policy and guidelines. Here are key points to keep in mind for social media usage with youth, which apply to all social media (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Google+, etc.) as well as emails, phone


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calls, video chats, text messages, webinars, and any other communications that do not happen in person

- i. Groups and witnesses – It is always better to have multiple people (particularly multiple adults) present for virtual communications, to preserve a “group-appropriate” standard and to provide for corroboration should future questions arise. Examples are closed Facebook groups, webinars, video chats or Google+ hangouts with three or more people
- ii. Documentation – Written evidence or a recording of a communication offers proof should future questions arise. Examples of documented communications include email or recorded video chats or screen shots.
- iii. Parental permission – Parents or guardians of youth should be notified and consulted about communication expectations, such as Facebook, email or phone calls, and be given the opportunity to participate themselves or limit their youth’s participation, particularly for youth under 18. Parents and guardians should also know who their youth is talking with and have the opportunity to meet these people (virtually or in person).
- iv. Adults should not be connected personally to youth on any personal social media.

E. Transportation To and From UUCLV Sanctioned Events

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Parents are responsible for transportation or arranging transportation to and from any UUCLV sanctioned events.

F. First Aid and Incident Reporting

- a. First aid kits are maintained by the Facilities representative. They are located in the Mailroom in the entrance hall (aka Coat Closet) under the counter.
- b. In case of serious injury, 911 will be called for emergency assistance. Parents and/or guardians will be notified as soon as possible, and an incident report shall be completed and submitted to the UUCLV office.