



## **Youth Inclusion and Safety Guidelines for Staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association**

*Updated October 2015*

Note: These guidelines were created for use by UUA staff at UUA events that include youth. They should not be construed as UUA policy intended for local Unitarian Universalist congregations and faith communities; each local faith community should develop its own safety and inclusion guidelines reflecting its unique situation, context, and state and local laws. However, the strategies underlying these guidelines can be considered models of best practice in navigating the many considerations appropriate for living up to our goal of creating multicultural, multigenerational faith communities.

### **Introduction**

“As Unitarian Universalists, our call to the work of youth ministry rests on our spiritual commitment to build the world we dream about – a world in which our faith communities welcome people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds to join hands in nourishing our spirits and healing our world.

“In the world of our dreams, our faith communities are multigenerational, multicultural sacred spaces in which vital connections are made among peers and across generations. In the world of our dreams, our faith communities are life-giving and affirming places in which people with different life experiences are valued. In the world of our dreams, our faith communities appreciate every age as a unique and essential part of the larger whole, without whom the congregation would be incomplete.”

These words, which open the 2009 Youth Ministry Working Group Report, cast a broad vision for youth ministry in Unitarian Universalism. Central to that vision is the involvement of youth at every level of the Association. We are called to fully include youth in our committee work, in our program development, in our task forces and focus groups, in our new initiatives and in our events, and not just when it is a topic or committee about youth.

## **Call for Multigenerational Ministry and Youth Involvement**

In the Youth Ministry Working Group Recommendations, the following items were discussed in the section entitled “Widen Youth Voice and Participation.”

- Make every effort to open committees, task forces and groups at all levels of the Association to youth membership.
- All groups, including but not limited to committees, task forces, related organizations and UUA staff groups, solicit youth input in a consulting role. This involvement should extend to all aspects of congregational life, district activities and UUA staff work, not just those specifically targeted to youth. Areas for soliciting input include, but are not limited to: worship, pastoral care, program development, field-testing, event planning, strategic planning, leadership development and program evaluation.

This approach was also recently affirmed by the UUA Board of Trustees in the spring of 2011 when they added “ensuring that youth leadership is integrated within our Association at all levels” to the expectations of policy governance.

### **How to Use These Guidelines**

These guidelines will help you as a UUA staff person include youth in a way that is safe, both for them and for you. Some of these guidelines are things we must legally do when working with minors. Others are things we are called to do for all youth by our commitment to safety and prevention of harm. Regardless, inclusion of youth and recognition of their unique needs is fundamentally an accessibility issue.

**These guidelines are geared toward multigenerational events that include youth, rather than youth-oriented events.** They have been developed over the years by staff in the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries through their extensive work with groups that include youth, and represent best practices in denominational-level involvement. The guidelines and forms used by the Office have been cleared by UUA Counsel for those specific purposes. However, they should not be misconstrued as appropriate for all UU settings or events, or as legal advice, given that the needs and local laws for each event will differ. Youth-specific events of any size, such as General Assembly Youth Caucus or national youth leadership schools, offer different opportunities for creating healthy and safe cultures of inclusion, and require additional guidelines and support structures. Large youth-specific events have different roles of adult responsibility that often include adult “sponsors,” and in these cases UUA staff are responsible for coordinating adult sponsors. For more information about large youth events, contact the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (see below).

When questions arise about appropriate and safe ways to involve youth in UUA events, please contact the staff of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (YaYA Office) at 617.948.4350 or [yayadirector@uua.org](mailto:yayadirector@uua.org). YaYA Office staff members are more than happy to consult with you on how to improve youth accessibility for your event. Please note that, while the YaYA Office is available for consultation, it is expected that every office that interacts with

youth will be responsible for meeting these guidelines and providing the necessary staff support.

We know that this can be difficult work and that the guidelines may seem onerous, but we urge you to make the space for youth to be full members of our community. We are called to do nothing less.

*Definitions:*

**Minor** – Anyone under 18 years of age; we have particular legal responsibilities regarding minors. Under the definitions of “minor” and “youth” in this section, it is possible to be a minor but not a youth. Safety guidelines and requirements for youth also apply to minors who are high school graduates and college students.

**Youth** – The Youth Ministry Working Group recommended “[for] the UUA’s Youth Ministry programs and services, ‘youth’ are defined as those in high school grades 9-12 or the equivalent for homeschooled youth.” For the purposes of its programs, the UUA defines “youth” as any young person currently in high school (or the equivalent for home-schooled youth or other uncommon schooling situations) as well as minors of the same age who have left school without receiving a diploma. Youth fitting this definition may or may not be minors. This standard is a shift from an older age-based definition to a new life-stage definition. Here is a breakdown of how this terminology works in real-life situations:

- Under 18 and in high school = youth
- 18 or older and in high school = youth
- Under 18 (of high school age) and in alternate schooling or not in high school = youth
- 18 or older and not high school (college, work, dropped out) = not a youth
- Under 18 and in college = not a youth (but still a minor)

The exact point at which a youth transitions into being a young adult can be a difficult transition to determine, particularly during the summer after a youth graduates from high school when the youth is over 18. These situations should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine how the youth guidelines apply to these bridging youth. Important aspects to consider include the experience, comfort and maturity of the individual bridging youth, the youth’s relationship with their home district or region and/or congregation, and whether the event is a youth-only or multigenerational event. It is easiest to be able to have the same policies and expectations for all attendees of an event in areas such as leaving the site, singles versus doubles sleeping arrangements, and other areas that change with age. Keep in mind that the legal expectations around responsibility for minors must be followed regardless of the age of other event participants.

Finally, if congregations have safe congregation or travel policies for youth that are stricter than UUA practices, staff should work to ensure the youth’s congregation is comfortable with the arrangements. If districts or regions are involved in the event and have stricter policies than

UUA practices, the district's or region's policies take precedence and staff should work to ensure the youth's home district is comfortable with the arrangements.

### **Youth Involvement**

Multigenerational ministry is the responsibility of every staff, committee and organization of the UUA. Beyond merely making it possible for youth to join all denominational activities, not just youth-specific activities, multigenerational ministry calls for actively welcoming youth into roles of leadership in the UU community. For example, it should be understood that youth who participate in multigenerational UUA events are peers of the participating adults in terms of inclusion in discussions, conducting business, or valuing their contributions. Below are a few suggestions for productively including youth in a group, training or committee. Many of these are good ideas for any group that wants to be welcoming, and we recognize that it is particularly easy for youth to feel unwelcome when the group does not make intentional space for youth involvement.

- If possible, it is helpful for youth to serve in groups of two or more on UUA committees or other leadership bodies, in order to avoid the isolation of being a sole youth (the Youth Ministry Working Group recommended this in its 2009 report).
- Participating youth should be expected to only speak from their own individual experiences, rather than being tokenized to represent the interests of all UU youth. The youth should also understand that they are there to serve the faith, not as a representative of a specific age group.
- All members of committees and leadership bodies should think about how to serve youth, rather than leaving it to youth themselves to raise concerns.
- Support systems need to be available for youth who are in positions of leadership, including offering an orientation and through a youth's first event. It can be helpful to assign an adult to act as a mentor for a new youth (or any new committee member), especially if the committee's work requires careful understanding of procedure or context (see the Adults Responsible for Youth section for more information about mentors).
- Financial concerns can be considerable accessibility barriers for any of our volunteers, but this can be especially true for youth and their families. Though some UUA events cover expenses for all participants, youth may need to have travel arranged for them or have access to petty cash for expenses since most do not have a credit card.

If you have questions about how to best include youth in the discussions and decision making of your group, or how to support youth in new adult-dominated situations, please contact the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. The Boston-area nonprofit Youth on Board also provides good resources on youth inclusion ([www.youthonboard.org](http://www.youthonboard.org)).

## Permissions and Forms

While many of the guidelines for permission forms are based on legal requirements (e.g. ability to seek medical attention), permission forms also provide the opportunity to clarify expectations for both youth and their parents/guardians in advance of the event. It is helpful to provide an email address, phone number, and even a staff contact-name at the bottom of all forms, in case a parent/guardian has a question or need for a confidential conversation about their youth.

- For all overnight stays and most major program involvement, youth under 18 must submit forms that provide parent/guardian permission, a medical release, information regarding preferences (name, food, lodging, etc.) and information about behavioral/intellectual/other needs. *See attached examples.*
- Parent/guardian permission forms should explicitly include permission for offsite travel or other special events with higher risk factors for youth (e.g. volunteering in a soup kitchen). Youth should never be asked or expected to participate in actions at UUA events which could endanger their safety and well-being (e.g. civil disobedience).
- Youth attendees and the (non-staff) adults working with them should agree to a participant covenant that sets out behavioral expectations for youth and adults in relation to themselves and one another. For programs that have significant youth participation, all attendees should sign the behavioral covenant. *See attached examples.*
- Youth 18 and older complete the adult registration form (giving their own medical release). Though it is not required to collect parental/guardian permission for these youth, it is good practice for UUA staff to be in communication with these parents and guardians to ensure they understand the event in which their youth is involved. If home districts or congregations have different policies for this subset of youth, UUA staff should follow the instructions in “How to Use These Guidelines” about working with those differences to ensure all parties feel comfortable.
- The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries also collects supplemental youth personal information and needs forms which cover learning, dietary, accessibility and other needs. *See attached examples.*
- If contributions or images from minors are used for UUA publications and online media, media release waivers should be signed by the minor’s parent/guardian. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries currently maintains the files for all such completed forms. *See attached example.*
- A default media permission is included in the general permission form, which asks parents/guardians to mark if they DO NOT want to give permission for the UUA to use images, videos, writings, etc. of or by their youth. Make sure to check the permission forms to see if parents/guardians mark this box, and follow up with them to ensure they read the form correctly (this has been a source of confusion in the past). This permission

only applies to media from the event named on the form and does not cover media from other contexts from the same youth.

- Covenants and permission forms are kept for 12 years after the event, as recommended by legal counsel.

*The attached participant covenant, which covers sexual conduct, was recently updated through consultation with the Religious Institute, and the permission/medical/media release form example attached was approved by UUA legal counsel for use by the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.*

## **Travel**

Some of the most important safety questions arise during travel, especially at points of connection (e.g. leaving the hotel or airport), and the goal should be to ensure the youth is always in a safe environment. Travel plans for youth should be made to minimize the possibility of complications and should be done far enough in advance to allow for paperwork to be completed before plans are finalized.

- Youth are booked direct flights when possible, even if it is more expensive, if they prefer direct flights. This is to minimize the risk of a youth being stranded at their connection city. Direct flights are especially important for first-time solo-flyers.
- Youth are always met at their arrival location (airport, bus station, etc.), preferably by a UUA staff member if they are not traveling with an adult chaperone. In no cases should a minor be left to navigate Boston or other major cities alone. Adults meeting youth at their arrival location should carry a copy of the youth's itinerary and contact information, and youth should have the contact information of the adults who are meeting them before they travel.
- It is preferable for youth to travel in groups to and from event locations and with multiple adults present. Travel with staff should never include one youth and one adult alone in a private space (e.g. car). The YaYA Office has interpreted this to include travel on public transportation, taxis or other situations in which there would be no possibility of locating witnesses if questions about the situation arose. Please refer to the Adults in the Company of Youth section for more details on adults accompanying youth.
- Flights are not booked until all necessary forms (parental permission, medial release, etc.) are on file with UUA staff.
- Like other staff and volunteers, youth typically book their travel arrangements with UUA travel agent Ron Rajewski. It is recommended that UUA staff give Ron very specific instructions (cost, date and time parameters) before youth book their flights. Additionally, youth and their families should be aware that they can find a flight online that fights our parameters, and then can contact Ron to book that exact flight. If youth or their parents are not comfortable working directly with Ron, staff will help the youth book their flight (contact Ron at [ron@greatintltravel.com](mailto:ron@greatintltravel.com) or 617-559-5522).

- A guide for youth traveling alone is available from the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. It contains helpful travel and packing hints, and is a good resource for first-time fliers (contact [yayadirector@uua.org](mailto:yayadirector@uua.org) for a copy).

### **Adults in the Company of Youth**

Following the call of the Safe Congregations Handbook to “create and maintain clear safety requirements in which we leave no room for doubt in our expectations of healthy relationships and boundaries between adults and children [or youth] and between adults and adults” (pg. 41), it is imperative for adults to be conscious of the inherent dynamics of mixed generational settings. Youth leaders are often incredibly mature and bring considerable gifts to their involvement with UUA activities; those gifts are safeguarded by avoiding situations in which conduct could arise that would jeopardize the safety of our youth. This protects youth leaders, adult leaders, the UUA, and other adults involved in UUA events.

- One 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 adults are expected to be present at all events involving youth. Though it is understood that complications can arise which 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 should be avoided altogether if there is potential danger to youth safety (e.g. sports and athletic games).
- 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.
- When breaking into small groups, or having an adult 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).
- If a single youth comes for a meeting with a UUA staff person, again, sightlines should always remain open.
- 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. In addition to their reporting obligations to the UUA, certain UUA employees are mandated reporters of suspected abuse or neglect of students as specified by applicable state law.

*Note: Two adults who are in a committed partnership or marriage cannot satisfy the requirement of having at least two adults present around youth.*

### **Adults Responsible for Youth**

While involved in UUA activities away from home, youth and their parents or guardians should know ahead of time who will have primary responsibility for their youth, and have a way to get ahold of this person at all times of day or night during the event (usually a cell phone number). This will typically be UUA staff members, since it is usually unreasonable to burden other adults involved with the activity with these responsibilities. If a UUA staff member is not able to serve as the responsible adult for youth for the entirety of an event, or if there is another preferable arrangement for the group or committee, it is the staff member's responsibility to arrange for other adult volunteers to serve in this role and to ensure that those adults have updated background checks and understand their responsibilities (e.g. no alcohol, cannot leave the site). When a non-staff adult is responsible for youth, there needs to be a UUA staff person on call who could quickly return to the site in the event of an emergency.

- It should be clear to youth who is responsible for their well-being and who to talk with if they have questions, concerns or feel uncomfortable for any reason during a UUA event.
- Regular background checks should be run on all adults who have primary responsibility for youth, fill youth advisory roles, or will be working in a close peer relationship with youth (e.g. intensive training workshop), not including UUA staff with completed background checks. In the past, checks have been run on the General Assembly Youth Caucus adult staff, Chrysalis trainers, interfaith training attendees, and Multicultural Leadership School attendees. This should not be an added complication if UUA staff members are filling this role, since all UUA staff must undergo background checks.
- Background check requests should include a letter which clarifies that a criminal history is not an automatic disqualification for working with youth, but rather is the opening of conversation about the meaning of the offense and its relationship to youth ministry (e.g. convictions for civil disobedience). All background check requests should be made through the UUA's Human Resources Office.
- It is best to have two UUA staff adults present at every event. During low-activity times when other responsible but non-supervisory adults are present, such as during an overnight stay at Club Quarters, it is occasionally possible to have one staff member or responsible adult on-site overnight and one on-call when two staff members on-site for the duration of the stay is impractical.
- Adults who are responsible for youth should always carry copies of the medical release and emergency contact forms, including during off-site travel. It is impossible to know when the need for these forms will arise.
- Adults who are responsible for youth or on-call should not consume alcohol for the duration of the event or tenure of their responsibility, both to maintain their ability to act responsibly in the event of an emergency and to avoid the distance between youth and adults created by alcohol consumption.
- Non-staff adults who are responsible for youth at UUA events should comply with the "Code of Ethics for Adults" (part of Attachment 3 – Participant Covenant used for youth-specific events). The code of ethics can also be useful for adults who are working closely



with youth but are not legally responsible for youth. Adults who violate this policy are barred from working with youth in the future (depending on the circumstance, these adults may be able to participate in reconciliation guided by UUA staff that would allow them to regain this privilege).

- Adults responsible for youth should be familiar with the UUA's crisis response plan (available on the UUA intranet) and carefully think through how they will respond to crises or emergencies on behalf of the youth in their care.
- 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. In addition to their reporting obligations to the UUA, certain UUA employees are mandated reporters of suspected abuse or neglect of students as specified by applicable state law.

Adult responsibility for youth continues until: 1) a youth is seen onto their mode of transportation home, such as boarding a bus or train, or through check-in at an airport; or 2) a youth is picked up by another responsible adult in person. Adults who are responsible for youth should build their travel schedules to anticipate possible problems which they might be needed to help resolve. For example, if both the youth and responsible adult are traveling to a meeting, the responsible adult should schedule their own flight home 2-3 hours after the last youth leaves in case there are flight delays. If a youth is being picked up by an adult who is not their parent or guardian, this should be clarified in writing with the parent or guardian prior to the event. If the youth cannot identify the adult picking them up on sight, it is appropriate to ask that adult for identification.

If more than 10 youth are present for the event it may be more appropriate to consider the standards applied to youth-specific events. These larger events typically involve adult sponsors, which are responsible non-staff adults who take primary responsibility for supervising a small number of youth (usually 3-5 youth per adult). Sponsor policies also help maintain an appropriate youth/adult ratio of attendees. This is the type of arrangement used for larger youth conferences and for youth attendees of General Assembly. All attendees to youth-specific events also sign the participant covenant (see Attachment 3). For more information on youth-specific events, contact the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

### **Social Media and Communications**

Every year, social media, email and virtual communications become more and more integral to the work of the UUA, 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 UUA staff and volunteers who are interacting with youth in their professional capacity to ensure that virtual communications follow the same general principles of inclusion and safety outlined in these 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 calls, video chats, text messages, webinars, and any other communications that do not happen in person:

- *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.
- *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, whereas one-on-one phone calls or automatically deleted text messages (such as SnapChat) could prove problematic.
- *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 limit their youth’s participation if it is appropriate, particularly for youth under 18. Parents and guardians should also know who their youth is talking to or with, and have the opportunity to meet these people (virtually or in person).
- *Youth accessibility* – Youth who are participating in a focus group, committee, team, etc. should be comfortable and able to access the group’s expected communication. For example, if the group wants to communicate via Facebook group then the youth needs to have parental permission, or if the group expects quick email responses then youth members should know how often they need to check their email. A web camera may need to be purchased for youth who do not have web video capability if the group wants to use video chats. Any volunteers, including youth, who incur personal costs in the course of their duties (e.g. overtime cell phone minute charges) should be reimbursed.

Some groups may want to explore new platforms such as Google Docs that youth may be more comfortable using than older adults. On the other hand, do not assume that all youth will have prior knowledge, skill level, and accessibility with social media or other technology applications; just like adults, some youth may need encouragement and instruction to try something new. Staff should offer assistance upfront to volunteers of all ages when new technologies are used to overcome any hesitancy volunteers might have about asking for help.

- *Professionalism* – Adults should ensure that communications sent through social media outside their professional or volunteer role should not violate the professional relationship they maintain with youth. Examples include not allowing youth to be Facebook friends with you, or allowing them to friend you but placing them in a filter so they only see certain posts; this also applies to personal Twitter feeds, blogs, etc.
- *Youth comfort and privacy* – Since many social media platforms are comfortable environments for youth, UUA staff and adult volunteers should respect that dynamic while also being able to use these same platforms for their own personal and professional uses. Examples include waiting for a youth to friend you on Facebook as

opposed to sending them a friend request or refraining from commenting on personal Facebook, Tumblr or blog posts from youth.

It is helpful to discuss and identify communication patterns at the beginning of an event or committee term, so that everyone can feel comfortable and know what to expect. If a youth violates a personal or professional boundary you have set up, respond in such a way that does not imply they have done something wrong, and clarifies why you have set the boundary. Also, pay attention to security, permissions, and other terms of use for social media sites, because they can change every few months.

### **Lodging**

Careful consideration should be given to travel and lodging conditions when events that include youth must be held offsite. Club Quarters may offer a useful configuration for youth inclusion as well as immediate access to UUA staff and resources.

- A UUA staff person (or equivalent responsible adult) must be available at all times in the building where youth are staying.
- Under no circumstances should non-familial youth and adults be rooming together in a small room (e.g. hotel). If a large group is sharing sleeping space (e.g. on a church floor), there are additional considerations, and in that case adults who are not chaperones or otherwise responsible for youth should be sleeping in a separate room.
- Youth under 18 should generally not be roomed with youth 18 or older, to avoid putting youth over 18 into a legally unequal situation. Youth who are 18 years or older still should not be roomed with young adults, especially older young adults.
- Every youth must have their own bed. In years past youth had been asked to share beds (e.g. four to a room), but this practice has been eliminated.
- When multiple youth are present, they are typically placed in single rooms or in same-gender double rooms based on the self-identified gender that youth indicate on their registration forms. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries adopted this practice in response to what has shown to be the most comfortable arrangement for youth and their parents or guardians, particularly when youth attendees do not know each other prior to the event. Youth are also asked if they need alternative accommodations and any requests for singles or other configurations based on orientation, gender identity, medical issue, etc. are met.

Be advised that most private hotels will not allow minors, or often those under 21, to check into a room by themselves. UUA staff usually have to co-sign rooms with youth, which should be easy to manage because staff should be staying in the same hotel as the youth for whom they are responsible. Turning off incidental room charges is often helpful in these situations.

### **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse**

Under Massachusetts law, many human services professionals are classified as “mandated reporters,” meaning that they are required to notify the Massachusetts Department of Children

and Families in writing within 48 hours if they have “reasonable cause to believe that a child [minor] is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from: (i) abuse inflicted upon him which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child’s health or welfare, including sexual abuse; (ii) neglect, including malnutrition; or (iii) physical dependence upon an addictive drug at birth.” The law defines mandatory reporters to include any “person paid to care for or work with a child in any public or private facility “as well as any “clergy member, ordained or licensed minister, [or] leader of any church or religious body...” This definition clearly identifies many UUA employees and could be construed to broadly cover program staff members at the UUA, but beyond legal liability it is incumbent upon every UUA staff member and volunteer to be aware of possible instances of child abuse and neglect. Any UUA staff member who personally witnesses a situation of abuse in their capacity as a staff person is expected to intercede to remove the child from harm.

UUA employees who do not live or work in Massachusetts should learn about mandatory reporting expectations and procedures in their area (this includes off-site meetings that involve youth and do not occur in Massachusetts). Since illegal sexual contact is often covered under mandatory reporting expectations, it is important to cross-reference mandatory reporting laws with the state’s age of consent; adults who become aware of sexual contact between youth that is in violation of the age of consent may be required to report the incident. If you have reasonable cause to believe that instances of child abuse and neglect may have occurred, you must follow the legal protocol. You should also contact your supervisor, staff contact or the Office of Human Resources to keep them informed about the situation and help determine any necessary actions to take in the future.

### **Conclusion**

Though it may seem daunting to manage all the aspects of youth inclusion and safety, be assured that is truly worth the effort. Youth leaders and their families consistently offer appreciation for the care, forethought and kindness that these guidelines make possible, and report that it has a big impact on their experience with the UUA. Also, remember that the staff in the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries have a wealth of experience in navigating difficult situations, and are always eager to help UUA staff better connect with youth. Your dedication to youth inclusion and safety is an expression of Unitarian Universalism’s deepest values and principles.

**Attachment 1 – Sample Consent and Medical Release Form (minor)**

**UUA PARENT/GUARDIAN’S CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian name) am the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (youth name). I give my consent for him/her to attend the \_\_\_\_\_, herein after known as “THE EVENT.” I give my consent and authority for the Unitarian Universalist Association (“UUA”) staff or designated adult to take action to help ensure the safety, health and welfare of my child. I understand that if my child breaks any federal/state/provincial or local laws, s/he will be asked to leave THE EVENT and I will be responsible for getting my child home.

**The child covered by this authorization is:**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

In Case of Emergency during THE EVENT Contact:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical / Health Problems:**

Is your child under the care of a physician for  
Epilepsy?  yes  no      Diabetes?  yes  no  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please note if your child has any of the following:

Allergies \_\_\_\_\_ Asthma/Respiratory \_\_\_\_\_  
Surgery \_\_\_\_\_ Heart Problems \_\_\_\_\_  
Seizures \_\_\_\_\_ ADD \_\_\_\_\_  
Headaches \_\_\_\_\_ Stomach \_\_\_\_\_  
Broken bones \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Individuals not immunized due to religious objection must submit a written and signed statement from parent/guardian stating objection to their child’s immunization due to religious beliefs. Youth not immunized due to medical exemption must submit a statement signed by a physician.

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**Health Care Information:**

Name of Doctor \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Dentist/Orthodontist \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Do you carry family medical/hospital insurance?  
 yes       no

Name of parent/person with insurance policy:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Policy # \_\_\_\_\_  
Group # \_\_\_\_\_

My child currently takes the following medications:  
\_\_\_\_\_

My child may NOT take the following over the counter medications as needed:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any other medical/health issues which event organizers should be made aware of?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Authorization for Medical Treatment:** I hereby give permission to UUA staff to provide basic first aid treatment and care to my child within the scope of their training. I also give permission to the medical personnel selected by the UUA to order x-rays, routine tests, and treatment; to release any records necessary for insurance purposes; and to provide or arrange necessary related transportation for my child. In the event that I cannot be reached in an emergency, I give permission to the physician selected by the UUA to secure and administer treatment, including but not limited to hospitalization, anesthesia, emergency surgical care and prescriptive drugs for the health of my child.

**Reporting:** 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. In addition to their reporting obligations to the UUA, certain UUA employees are mandated reporters of suspected abuse or neglect of students as specified by applicable state law.

**Waiver/Release Agreement:** I, the undersigned, as a parent/legal guardian of the above named child, in consideration of the services of the UUA, its officers, employees, agents and volunteers, (herein after collectively referred to as the "UUA"), agree to release, indemnify, and discharge the UUA, on behalf of myself, my spouse, my children, my parents, my heirs, assigns, personal representative and estate as follows:

1. I acknowledge that my child's participation in THE EVENT entails known and unknown risks that could result in physical or emotional injury, paralysis, death, or damage to my child, to property, or to third parties.
2. My child's participation in THE EVENT is voluntary, and I elect to allow him/her to participate in spite of the risks.
3. I hereby voluntarily release, discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the UUA from any and all claims, demands, or causes of action that are in any way connected with my child's participation in THE EVENT.
4. I certify that I have adequate insurance to cover any injury or damages my child may cause or suffer while participating in THE EVENT, or else I agree to bear the costs of such injury or damage myself. I further certify that I am willing to assume the risk of any medical or physical condition my child may have.
5. I realize that any photos or video taken of my child or writings or other materials produced by my child as part of the program during THE EVENT become property of the UUA and may be used in UUA materials. I realize there will be no compensation for the use of these photos.  
(If you **do not** want your child's photo used in UUA materials, please initial here. \_\_\_\_\_)

**Parent/Guardian's Name (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment 2 – Sample Consent and Medical Release Form (adult)**

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION  
CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM (Aged 18 and over)**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's name, if applicable \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Name (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**HEALTH CARE INFORMATION:**

Name of Doctor \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**INSURANCE INFORMATION:**

Do you carry family medical/hospital insurance?  
 yes       no  
Name of person with insurance policy: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

Group # \_\_\_\_\_

Medications I am currently taking:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE DISCLOSE ANY MEDICAL OR HEALTH PROBLEMS:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Authorization for Medical Treatment:** I hereby give permission to UUA staff to provide basic first aid treatment and care to me within the scope of their training. In the event that I am unable to give consent and my emergency contact cannot be reached, I give permission to the physician selected by the UUA to secure and administer treatment to me, including but not limited to hospitalization, anesthesia, emergency surgical care and prescriptive drugs.

**Reporting:**

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. In addition to their reporting obligations to the UUA, certain UUA employees are mandated reporters of suspected abuse or neglect of students as specified by applicable state law.

**Waiver/Release Agreement:**

I, the undersigned, in consideration of the services of the UUA, its officers, employees, agents and volunteers (herein after collectively referred to as the "UUA"), agree to release, indemnify, and discharge the UUA, on behalf of myself, my spouse, my children, my parents, my heirs, assigns, personal representative and estate as follows:

1. I acknowledge that participation in \_\_\_\_\_ (herein after, "THE EVENT") entails known and unknown risks that could result in physical or emotional injury, death, or damage to me, to property, or to third parties.
2. My participation in THE EVENT is voluntary, and I elect to participate in spite of the risks.
3. I hereby voluntarily release, discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the UUA from any and all claims, demands, or causes of action that are in any way connected with my participation in THE EVENT.
4. I certify that I have adequate insurance to cover any injury or damages that I may cause or suffer while participating in THE EVENT, or else I agree to bear the costs of such injury or damage myself. I further certify that I am willing to assume the risk of any medical or physical condition I may have.
5. I realize that any photos or videos taken or writings or other materials produced as part of the program during THE EVENT become property of the UUA and may be used in UUA materials. I realize there will be no compensation for the use of these photos.  
(If you **do not** want your photo used in UUA materials, please initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Name (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



### **Attachment 3 – Sample participant covenant for youth-specific events**

## **Participant Covenant for UUA Youth Events**

### **Policy on Sexuality and Community for All Participants**

While sexuality is a healthy and important part of young people’s lives, there are times and places where sexual behavior is inappropriate. This policy seeks to create a healthy and safe space for all participants. Exclusive relationships detract from the community. All participants must abide by the following policies:

- Participants must respect each other’s physical boundaries.
- Participants shall refrain from sexual, seductive or erotic behavior while at the event.
- Sexual behavior between participants at the event and sexual harassment are not permitted and will not be tolerated.
  - *Any harassment regarding race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or disability will not be tolerated. Such harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures or physical contact, display or circulation of written materials or derogatory pictures directed at any of these categories. In addition, sexual advances, jokes, explicit or offensive pictures, requests for sexual favors, sexting, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment.*
- The event leadership team is responsible for ensuring this policy is enforced. Parents/guardians are invited to discuss this policy with youth.

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### **Code of Ethics for Adults**

Adults who work with youth are in positions of power and play a key role in the spiritual and identity development of younger members of the community. Therefore, it is especially important that adults be qualified to provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable youth to develop a healthy, positive sense of self and responsibility. Youth and adults suffer damaging effects when adults become sexually involved with young persons in their care; therefore, adults will not engage in any physical, sexual, seductive, erotic or romantic behavior with youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

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. In addition to their reporting obligations to the UUA, certain UUA employees are mandated reporters of suspected abuse or neglect of students as specified by applicable state law.

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### **Behavioral Guidelines for Participants**

- Respect the Policy on Sexuality and Community and Code of Ethics for Adults above.
- No drugs, weapons, or alcohol.
- No pets.
- All participants will remain on-site during the event.
- Adults must remain in the role of advisor at all times.
- Participants must abide by all applicable federal, state and local laws.
- Participants must provide all requested, signed permission and release forms.

**I have read and agree to adhere to these policies and guidelines while at the event. I understand that breach of this covenant will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the event and the inability to attend future UUA Youth events.**

---

**Name**

**Signature**

**Date**

***Attachment 4 – Youth personal information and needs form***

**Personal Information Request (One per Participant)**

**For [EVENT TITLE]**

**Unitarian Universalist Association**

Full Name:

Gender Identity:

Preferred Name:

Age:

Preferred Pronouns:

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Are there other identities you would like to share with us prior to the training?  
(race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, etc)

Please describe your food needs, if any. Are you a vegetarian? Vegan? Do you have any allergies or food sensitivities? Please be detailed.

Rooming will be assigned by the event planning staff. Youth will room with youth and adults with adults. There will be two people to a room. Rooms will be same-gender, based on the gender identity provided on your application. Do you require alternative accommodations?

Do you have any accessibility needs that we should be aware of? This includes needing an accessible room, alternative materials, any accommodations we may need to take into account for the service event, etc.

*Attachment 5 – Information/form on additional youth needs*

**Additional Information Regarding Youth Needs**

**For [EVENT TITLE]  
Unitarian Universalist Association**

The Unitarian Universalist Association is committed to making this event a welcoming and caring environment for all our youth. We want to be especially conscious of supporting our youth with varied social, cognitive, emotional or behavioral needs.

Having prior knowledge of a learning difficulty, ADHD, recent loss or behavioral needs will make a tremendous difference in helping us work with and support your youth. We invite you to contact us to discuss these needs with us if you'd like at [PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL].

The information provided here will be kept in confidence and will not be shared outside of the planning team. Please use the space below to share with us any information you feel would help us best support and engage your youth.

Youth Name:

Parent Name:

Phone Number for further contact:

*Attachment 6 – Youth media and writing release*

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION  
MEDIA RELEASE FORM**

I hereby authorize the Unitarian Universalist Association (“UUA”) to make use of my appearance in photographs, audio, and/or video recordings, as well as any writings or other materials of which I am the primary creator, that I submit to the UUA (hereafter, “media”).

The UUA shall have complete ownership of the media. I grant the UUA the right to use it with no restrictions or claims, including, but not limited to, the right to edit, use, and reuse the media as the UUA deems appropriate. I also hereby release the UUA and its officers, employees, agents and volunteers, from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

**Name (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Name (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

(must be signed by a parent/guardian if the participant is under 18 years of age)