

INUUC Safety Policies for Children and Youth

The Inland Northwest Unitarian Universalist Community (INUUC) recognizes the importance of creating an environment where children and youth are physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe.

*It is recommended that this Safety Policy be reviewed for renewal every two to three years.
For details about what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency, please refer to INUUC or Westminster UCC emergency procedures.*

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Educating

Children and Family Ministry (CFM) includes programs such as the Nursery, Sunday morning classes on religion and ethics, sexuality education, youth groups, and other programming. CFM promotes knowledge of ethics, religion, sexuality, values and principles. Similarly, safety for children and youth must address physical and emotional security, as well as sexual health and safety. INUUC 's Safety Policy for Children and Youth addresses all these aspects.

A high quality sexuality education program, such as Our Whole Lives (OWL), is one of the best methods for sexual abuse prevention. Children who learn how to make good decisions and use language to communicate accurately and effectively about sexuality are also being prepared to respond appropriately when faced with abusive behaviors. They are better prepared to assert their right to control their own bodies, and to tell an adult if things happen that make them feel uncomfortable. INUUC has an OWL program for school-aged children with strong support from the congregation.

Screening and Training

Volunteers, including teachers, youth advisors, and caregivers, must be a member or friend in good standing of this or another UU congregation for a minimum of six months, or be an employee of the church. Youth being paid for childcare are considered hourly employees, and as such are subject to the congregation's expectations and code of ethics for adults working with children, as well as a required training meeting. Every person who works with children and youth will receive training on child sexual abuse prevention and reporting requirements. Definitions and general guidance are provided in Appendix IX.

Children and Family Ministry teachers, youth advisors, and caregivers will read and sign the Code of Ethics for Volunteers Working with Minors (Appendix I), and the Agreement for CFM Volunteers and Staff (Appendix II). Further, all employees and volunteers who work with children and youth will complete a background check every two years. Background checks will include a nationwide criminal search, a nationwide sex offender registry search, and a social security trace search.

Advisors for high school youth and middle school must be at least 21 years old, and 5 years older than any participant they will be facilitating (Appendix III). Caregivers supervising children at INUUC events must be at least 14 years old, and the Nursery Supervisor may not be under 18 years old (Appendix IV). Caregivers under the age of 14 must be under the supervision of a non-parent/caregiver adult and must never be left alone with children.

INUUC recognizes the United States criminal justice system can be discriminatory in nature and not all criminal offenses are violent or indicative of being unsuitable for working with children and youth. Should someone who would like to work with children have a criminal history, it is up to the best judgment and discretion of the Governing Circle, in consultation with the CFM representative, to decide if it is appropriate for them to work with children. For instance, someone with a drug possession charge may not necessarily be barred from working with minors. However, someone with a sexually violent or predatory history will not be allowed to work with minors and should have a limited access agreement in place, written by the Governing Circle.

Anyone transporting children or youth to an event sponsored by a Unitarian Universalist organization must complete a Volunteer Driver Screening form, attached in the Appendix.

Policies

Adults in the Children and Family Ministry Area:

No adults other than parents/caregivers, CFM volunteers, youth advisors, or those otherwise engaged in the purposeful operations of the church, should be in the Children and Family Ministry area of the building during Sunday mornings or OWL classes. If an unaffiliated adult is in the area, CFM volunteers may respectfully ask them to leave and notify the CFM representative.

Alcohol Use:

No alcohol will be allowed at CFM-sponsored events unless an exception has been granted by the Governing Circle.

Allergies/Food Restrictions:

It is impossible to safeguard against every possible food-related risk. However, in an effort to prevent allergy-related emergencies, those planning events for children should take into consideration the allergies that may be present in the room. This information is requested from the parent/caregiver of the child on the CFM Registration form (Appendix V); it is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to inform the volunteer, teacher, advisor or caregiver of the child's allergy plan. Any incidents arising from an allergic reaction should be reported to the CFM representative and the parent/caregiver.

Check-In and Check-Out:

All children and youth attending CFM must be registered by their parent or caregiver. It is important that in case of emergency an CFM volunteer has access to this information. A clipboard for weekly CFM attendance will be maintained in a convenient area, and caregivers are expected to sign in the child's name, parent/caregiver name, and phone number each week.

At the end of CFM activities, children six years and older may be released to join their parents. It is, however, best practice to have parents/caregivers sign out on the clipboard. Babies supervised in the Nursery and children younger than six being must be dropped off and picked up by the parent/caregiver.

First Aid:

In any case where a child has received an injury, the parent should be contacted immediately and the situation should be fully explained and documented in an Incident Report (Appendix X). First aid kits are available to CFM areas. These will be checked regularly to ensure that each kit has all the supplies it needs. All wipes, creams, and bandages should be single use. Medications cannot be administered by CFM volunteers or representatives due to potential liability.

It is recommended that at least one volunteer with First Aid Training be on hand while CFM classes are being offered.

Managing Disruptive Behavior of a Child:

The INUUC CFM program adopts a compassionate response to disruptive behavior. We affirm all children's place in our community, and we acknowledge many children come to us with a variety of specific needs and/or trauma, which may manifest as behavior that can sometimes feel disruptive or seem strange.

Those working with children should reward and reinforce positive behaviors. They can divert attention away from a disruptive child and provide fidget toys or alternative activities to help manage behavior. Volunteers and employees should adopt a "keep them in the room" mentality, which lets children know they are loved and wanted in our community, rather than punish them via exclusion. Continual disruptive behavior needs to be discussed with the parent/caregiver, and a plan determined to help the child adjust to classroom expectations.

Managing Dangerous Behavior of a Child:

Should a child's behavior become dangerous to themselves or others, an CFM volunteer or representative will move the other children to a different room and immediately send for the CFM representative and the parent/caregiver.

The CFM representative, the parent/caregiver, and the child will work together to rebuild trust with their religious community. Parents/caregivers may need to attend CFM with their child or the CFM representative may explore the possibility of meeting the child's religious education needs in another manner. If community trust continues to be broken and/or the child's behavior is repeatedly dangerous to themselves or others, the CFM representative, in consultation with the Governing Circle, may tell the parents/caregivers that the child can no longer attend Children and Family Ministry events.

Corporal punishment shall NOT be used under any circumstances.

Social Media and Communication:

No photos, audio recordings or video recordings of children participating in INUUC events or programs may be posted online or in INUUC promotional material by INUUC volunteers or representatives without the explicit permission of their parents/caregivers (Appendix VI). Generally communication to a group of parents and minors should be email BCC copied.

Safety and liability rules which apply to the physical space also apply to the digital space. No INUUC member, volunteer, or representative may engage in private communication with a child from INUUC. There should always be at least two people reviewing all communication between minors and adults in these contexts. When in doubt, CC the CFM representative in email or text communications.

Exception: the CFM representative may communicate directly with a youth if it is revolving around brief logistical information. Lengthier conversations should be kept to message groups with at least three people. See Appendix VII.

Adult INUUC volunteers should never initiate friend requests with minors. It is recommended that they refrain from following or being friends with INUUC youth and children, for the safety of both the adults and the minors in the relationship.

Supervision Requirements:

It is required that at least two **unrelated** people, and preferably three, be present in each classroom or gathering of children or youth. In addition, the following maximum child-to-adult ratios must be maintained:

- Nursery care (children ages 1-5 year) - ratio 3:1
 - If there is more than one infant (under 1 year of age) in a classroom - ratio of 2:1
- Elementary group care (children in grades K-5, usually ages 5-11) - ratio of 5:1
- Middle School group care (children in grades 6-8, usually ages 11-14) - ratio of 5:1
- High School group care (children in grades 9-12, usually ages 14-18) - ratio of 7:1

If a child requires a one-on-one aide, it is not the responsibility of the church to provide such an aide. The parent/caregiver of such a child should contact the CFM representative to discuss this arrangement. These ratios are the maximum and it is recommended a “floating adult,” usually the CFM representative or other volunteer, be available to step in and assist with activities if necessary.

In the event that a volunteer is unexpectedly absent for a regular class session, a second volunteer must be in the classroom.

Transportation of Minors:

Anyone transporting minors must fill out a Driver Information Form (Appendix VIII), as well as other screening and training. Persons convicted of a DUI or DWI are prohibited from transporting minors. The CFM representative may review and waive this requirement.

Reporting, Response, and Removal

Any person with concerns about anyone mistreating a child, whether hearing about such information or witnessing it, shall fill out an Incident Report (Appendix X) and immediately contact the Minister, CFM representative or the Governing Circle. They will assess the situation and take immediate precautionary measures to protect the safety of the child(ren). Precautionary measures will be defined as, at minimum, promptly removing the accused volunteer or employee from their work to the extent that it involves interaction with children. This removal will be done pending a fair investigation as outlined below.

The Minister or CFM representative will provide the affected worker or volunteer with an opportunity to know what allegations were made or filed against them. Whenever possible and without risk of further harm occurring, the affected worker or volunteer will be given an opportunity to know the evidence, and source thereof, supporting such charges. They will be given an opportunity to reply to or rebut such charges. After assessing the situation, the Minister or CFM representative will consult with the Governing Circle. It is understood such action will be handled with due caution and discretion.

*Should the Minister, CFM representative and/or the Governing Circle suspect any volunteer, caregiver, or Representative of physical or sexual abuse of any children or youth, they should remove the worker immediately and contact child protective services. The INUUC Governing Circle or members should **not***

take it upon themselves to investigate and or put on any sort of hearing or investigation for such abuse.

If anyone involved in congregational life (unpaid/paid worker, volunteer, the CFM Representative, or church member) reports suspicions of abuse or neglect of a minor by ANYONE to church leadership, CFM Representative, or volunteers, those suspicions should be taken seriously and handled with care. The Minister, CFM representative, or Governing Circle should be contacted immediately, and reports should be made to:

- Child Protective Services: if the perpetrator is a parent/caregiver or childcare provider.
- Local law enforcement: if the perpetrator is *not* a parent/caregiver or childcare provider (i.e. a neighbor or family friend).

Scope of Responsibilities for Individuals Working with Children and Youth

People working with children or youth at INUUC events and activities are expected to have the best interests of children and youth at heart. They are expected to nurture the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth of those children/youth by fostering an environment of kindness, trust, respect, and fun. To this end, it is expected that volunteers, teachers, advisors and caregivers enter into a collaborative and supportive relationship with the CFM representative and the parents of INUUC children.

Volunteers working with children and youth are *not* responsible for caring for children whose specific needs mean the caregiver cannot satisfactorily care for other children present. This obviously includes situations where a volunteer must leave the room with a child. Teachers and caregivers must immediately send for the CFM representative and/or the child's parents/caregivers should any of these situations might arise:

- Changing diapers
- Assisting a child to the bathroom
- Caring for seriously distressed children
- Caring for children and youth who are putting themselves or others in danger
- Caring for sick or injured infants, children, or youth

Although INUUC hopes youth and adults will genuinely care for one another, adults working with children should not develop "friendships" with children and youth. In the adult/youth relationship, the adult must assume primary responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries in the relationship. It is recommended that adults never be alone with a minor, for the safety of both adult and children (Appendix IX).

APPENDIX I: INUUC Code of Ethics for Volunteers Working with Minors

This code of ethics should be renewed each time a person takes on a new position working with children and/or youth.

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well-qualified to provide the special support that will nurture children and youth towards developing a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility.

The relationship between youth and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if positive potential is to be realized. There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care; therefore leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

Leaders shall be informed of this 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 above statements of position, expectations, and actions.

Name (printed):

Name (signed):

Date:

APPENDIX II: INUUC Agreement for CFM Volunteers and Staff

Name: _____

Please initial after each statement.

I have read and understand our congregation's policies on keeping children, youth safe.

I have reviewed with the CFM Representative what must be reported to child protective services and how our church responds to issues of safety regarding children and youth.

I agree to uphold these principles in my work with INUUC children, youth, adults, and families.

I have authorized a background check. I have signed the Code of Ethics statement.

I affirm that I have never been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty to any sexual crime. I also have not pled guilty to a lesser charge after having been charged with a sexual crime. I have never engaged in any form of child abuse, including sexual abuse. I have never been determined to have engaged in any sexual offenses in any civil, administrative, or ecclesiastical forum or other forum.

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

Further, I agree to notify the Minister, CFM representative, and/or the Governing Circle should I be accused of sexual abuse, sexual offenses, sexual harassment, or other sexual improprieties in the time I am working with children and youth in this congregation.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX III: INUUC Volunteer CFM Teacher Position Description

Expectations

- Commit to teach church school for a designated time period
- Collaborate with teaching team members and the CFM Representative to plan lessons and activities
- Review assigned curriculum and prepare weekly lessons and materials
- Arrive in the classroom at least 15 minutes before the class session begins and remain 15 minutes after the worship service ends.
- Take attendance each week and submit attendance sheets to CFM Representative
- Participate in class activities (e.g. service project or social events) outside of Sunday school time
- Attend semi-regular teaching team meetings throughout the year
- Maintain regular communication with the CFM Representative

Desired Qualifications

- Member/active participant at INUUC for at six months or at the discretion of the CFM Representative. This is to allow new members to get to know our community and vice versa.
- Successfully pass a criminal background screening
- Review and sign the volunteer code of ethics statement
- Enjoy working with children and/or youth
- Past teaching and/or childcare experience
- Identity as a Unitarian Universalist
- Effective interpersonal communication skills

Teacher Evaluation

Periodically throughout the church school year, the CFM Representative and/or trained volunteers will observe each volunteer teacher during class sessions. Feedback will be provided to the teacher to help her/him improve in her/his role.

At the end of the church school year, the CFM Representative will review the performance of church school teachers and determine if they will be asked to continue as a volunteer.

APPENDIX IV: INUUC Paid Childcare Provider Position Description

Expectations

- Childcare providers under 18 will have taken a babysitting class
- Have taken a CPR class (paid for by INUUC)
- Commit to provide childcare for infants/toddlers or preschool as scheduled with the CFM Representative
- Receive pre-approval for any absence, including calling in any illness in a timely manner, ideally with 12 hours notice
- Collaborate with teaching team members and the CFM Representative
- Arrive in the nursery or classroom at least 15 minutes before the session begins and remain 15 minutes after the session ends
- Take attendance each week
- Maintain regular communication with the CFM Representative
- Ensure that two caregivers remain in the room at all times
- Successfully pass a criminal background screening
- Review all policies with the CFM Representative, and sign the volunteer code of ethics statement
- Complete other duties as assigned by the CFM Representative

Desired Qualifications

- Member/active participant at INUUC
- Experience working with children
- Identity as a Unitarian Universalist

APPENIX V: INUUC Sample Registration Form

Inland Northwest Unitarian Universalist Community

Children and Family Ministry Registration

Date: _____

We ask that you give us a cell phone number, in case we need to contact you during the service. Parents are expected to sign their children in **and out** of the Nursery or class. This keeps our children safe. Please pick up your children within 15 minutes of the end of the service.

Parent #1 Last Name _____ First Name _____ Cell Phone _____ Address _____ Member ___ Friend ___ Visitor ___	Parent #2 Last Name _____ First Name _____ Cell Phone _____ Address _____ Member ___ Friend ___ Visitor ___
Child #1 Last Name _____ First Name _____ Pronoun Preferred _____ Birthdate _____ Medical/Behavioral Needs _____ _____	Child #2 Last Name _____ First Name _____ Pronoun Preferred _____ Birthdate _____ Medical/Behavioral Needs _____ _____
Child #3 Last Name _____ First Name _____ Pronoun Preferred _____ Birthdate _____ Medical/Behavioral Needs _____ _____	Child #4 Last Name _____ First Name _____ Pronoun Preferred _____ Birthdate _____ Medical/Behavioral Needs _____ _____

APPENIX VI: INUUC Photo and Video Permission Form

We often take photographs and videos of adults, youth, and children as they participate in congregational events such as worship, Children and Family Ministry programming, social events, and justice events. We use these images to promote our congregation and our faith in print, on the Web, and on social media.

By signing this form, you authorize the use of your image in these photographs and video recordings, as described below. (Note that providing us an image or recording constitutes your agreement to the Congregation General Usage section without your needing to also sign this form.)

No names nor other identifying personal information about individual children or minor youth will be published without your explicitly stated permission to do so in each individual case.

Names of minors (children or youth under 18) covered by this agreement:

_____ , _____

Please check one:

I Approve Congregational General Usage

For those minors listed here, I hereby authorize INUUC to make use of photographs, videos, or audio recordings on their website, in their social media, in their online photo albums and video channels, and in print. This grant is final and on-going, without any additional restrictions or limitations.

I Approve Congregational General Usage with Restrictions

I grant INUUC permission to do the above, limited by these terms and conditions:

I do not approve any use of photographs, videos, or audio recordings

I do not authorize INUUC to make use of the minors listed here in photographs, videos, or audio recordings that are shared beyond the walls of the congregation.

Name (printed): _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(must be signed by a parent/guardian of an CFM participant under 18 years)

APPENIX VII: INUUC Consent Form for Electronic Communication with Minors

Most communication will be between INUUC representatives and parents/guardians. In some cases, there may need to be brief conversations directly with the youth, such as directions, coordination, or last minute communications. Permission of the parent or guardian is here requested, in writing, in order for an adult leader to communicate with minors via telephone, cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, social networks, or other electronic means.

Please check one:

I give permission for my child to be contacted by INUUC representatives

I do not give permission for my child to be contacted by INUUC representatives

Name of Youth Participant: _____

Youth's e-mail: _____

Youth's cell phone: _____

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____

Parent or Guardian e-mail: _____

Parent or Guardian cell phone: _____

APPENDIX VIII: INUUC Driver Information Form for INUUC trips

Date _____

Name _____

Cell _____

Email _____

Address _____

I am willing to provide transportation for INUUC. I understand as the driver that I am primarily responsible for the safety and well-being of my passengers. I promise to abide by all posted speed limit and traffic laws. I can attest that the vehicle I am driving is in good maintenance and repair, and that all possible safety precautions have been taken to ensure a safe trip. I agree not to use alcohol or recreational drugs while driving for INUUC. Furthermore, I promise to abstain from the use of alcohol and recreational drugs in the 12 hours immediately preceding the trip. I have a current driver's license and automobile insurance and will provide copies of these documents to the CFM Representative. My vehicle has a functioning seatbelt for all passengers. I promise to ensure that all passengers wear a seatbelt.

Yes/No (Circle one) I affirm that I have never been convicted of a DUI or DWI.

(This will be ascertained during the Background check, however, disclosure and discussion before the fact is preferred.)

Any Comments?

Signature _____

APPENDIX IX: INUUC Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

Each person who works with children and youth must be aware of the definitions and signs of abuse. There are many different types of abuse and it is hoped that INUUC members, volunteers and caregivers identify any potential abuse.

- Physical abuse includes non-accidental injury or mistreatment that harms the child's health, welfare or safety. It includes physical harm, shaking a child under age three, interfering with a child's breathing, threatening a child with a weapon, or any act that causes harm greater than transient pain or temporary marks. A mark is considered minor and temporary if it lasts less than 24 hours.
- Sexual abuse includes intentional touching of intimate parts of a child, or causing a child to touch the intimate parts of another person. Only a parent/guardian or medical person may touch a child's sexual or intimate parts, even for the purpose of hygiene. Authorization from a parent/guardian must be received by a caregiver to provide such hygiene-related care.
- Sexual exploitation includes child abuse, as well as pornographic activities or photos.
- Negligent treatment includes failure to provide adequate food, clothing, healthcare, etc. such that it creates a clear danger to the child. It also includes not meeting the emotional, developmental and safety needs of a child, or a pattern of such behavior.

If any abuse is reported to you by a child, or you have any concerns about a child's welfare, record the information in an Incident Form (Appendix X), discuss it with the CFM Representative and the Minister.

Confidentiality: Sometimes children or youth may share information that they do not want to be communicated to others outside the group or individual. This is often the case with OWL Sexuality classes. There is, however, an important caveat that needs to be communicated in these situations: **If we learn that someone is at risk of harming themselves or another person, or if they're being hurt by someone, we will share that information in order to get help for them.**

Safe Touch: You are the adult, so it is always your responsibility to set safe and appropriate limits. Never touch a young person unless they initiate the contact or without first getting their consent. This includes hugs! (Adults appreciate being asked before hugging, too.) Never touch anyone if they express discomfort with it.

High fives and handshakes are OK. Touching children on the head, hand, arm or upper back is fine. A conservative "no touch zone" is from the shoulder to the knees. If there is a medical emergency or safety situation, ensure there is another adult present, clearly explain what you are going to do and why, and ask permission. "I need to apply pressure to this wound to stop the bleeding. Is that OK?" "I am going to check your safety harness to make sure it is secure. Can I check your harness now?"

APPENDIX X: INUUC Incident Report Form

Discuss and provide a copy of this form to the Minister and the CFM Representative. If this is a dangerous situation, immediately inform them as well as the Governing Circle.

Today’s Date: _____

Child’s Full Name: _____

Name of person making the report: _____

Name of person to whom the report was made: _____

Parent/caregiver #1 Name: _____

Home address or Phone number: _____

Parent/caregiver #2 Name: _____

Home address or Phone number: _____

Description of the Incident (include names of the parties involved, what happened, conversations, and any outcomes):
