



POLICY Handbook

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

PREPARED BY THE HANDBOOK COMMITTEE
SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD AT THE MAY, 2011 BOARD MEETING
SUBMITTED WITH REVISIONS/ADDITIONS AT THE JULY 15, 2015 BOARD
MEETING
Revised 2017

A. OUR MISSION

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County (UUCSC) is a welcoming, loving spiritual community practicing Unitarian Universalist principles. We offer a safe, respectful environment for personal and spiritual growth for children and adults. The UUCSC serves as a resource for social and environmental action and peace.

B. VISION STATEMENT

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County expresses the power of our faith in making choices to transform ourselves and our community. We serve as a liberal beacon seeking truth, spiritual growth, and celebration in diverse religious traditions and theological beliefs. As we minister to each other with caring and compassion, our strong bonds in love and friendship will sustain our children and our planet through our actions.

Our sanctuary will marshal resources for a warm, inspiring spiritual environment, inviting notice and participation from the broader community. We will become increasingly respected as a principled religious congregation that initiates action and stimulates change to strengthen the broader community.

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CHAPTER 1: BUSINESS AND FINANCE

- a. Stewardship
- b. Finance
- c. Fundraising
- d. Personnel

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Expenses for the fiscal year must be submitted by June 30. Expenses submitted after July 31st will be charged to the following year's budget.

SOURCE: *July 16, 2002 Board Meeting Minutes*

FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

BE IT RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County undertakes to ensure that it will make no investments in the Carbon Tracker 200 (the top 200 publicly-traded fossil fuel companies in the world) or in commingled assets that include holdings in the Carbon Tracker 200, unless such assets have made a commitment to divest from those holdings within 5 years.

SOURCE: *September 17, 2014 Board Meeting Minutes*

SALE OF RELEVANT MERCHANDISE

Social Action policies of the UUCSC and UUA support Fair Trade business. If the items sold are in keeping with the sermon and UU values, it's permissible for guest/lay service leaders to sell products connected to their sermons. It is also permissible for performing artists to sell their merchandise. Merchandise that supports the UUCSC congregation such as Fair Trade coffee, candy etc., UUCSC jewelry, or fundraising for UUCSC is allowed.

SOURCE: *May 20, 2010 Board Meeting Minutes*

SHARE THE PLATE This policy is currently under review. 12/2017

- A. Half of the non-pledged monies collected on the first Sunday of every month will be donated to charity as designated by the Social Justice Committee.

If a proposed Share the Plate recipient does not have the required paperwork in the UUCSC office by Friday nine days before their

- B. scheduled Sunday, then the default recipient will be Welcome House.** House. Passed by the Board 9/27/16.

SOURCE: December 16, 2010 Board Meeting Minutes

RESTRICTED DONATIONS

UUCSC accepts Restricted Donations with the following conditions:

1. Unless expressly agreed upon otherwise, any restrictions on donations shall be in effect for 12 months from the month the gift is received by UUCSC. After 12 months if part, or all, of the restricted gift has not been used for the stated purpose, any remaining funds shall be used as a General Donation and shall no longer be treated as restricted.
2. The UUCSC Board of Directors reserves the right to not accept any gift made with restrictions.

CHAPTER 2: SPIRITUAL SERVICES

- a. Worship
- b. Music
- c. Hospitality
- d. Special services

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Worship Committee determined that brief spoken announcements about UUCSC events will be read by a Worship Associate from a form submitted before the service.

COPYRIGHT

The UUCSC Board supports staff, members and all users of the facility, as reflected in the rental agreement, in their efforts to be in compliance with copyright laws.

SOURCE: June 17, 2015 Board Meeting Minutes

CHAPTER 3: LIFESPAN RE

- a. Adult ENRICH
- b. Adult religious education
- c. Religious Education
- d. UUCSC Film series
- e. Wellness Team

CHILD CARE

- A. An adult planning the meeting or event will take responsibility for contacting and supervising the child-caregivers.
- B. There must be one caregiver for every three children ages 3 and up. For a child younger, the ratio is one adult to every 2 toddlers. Infants will be cared for on a one to one basis, and only when the parent gives personal consent.
- C. Caregivers are paid at an hourly rate, starting with the set-up time and ending when the clean up is complete.
- D. There will be two caregivers at all times

CHAPTER 4: CONGREGATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- a. Membership
- b. Nominating
- c. Leadership Training and initiatives and other UUA links

BOARD BINDERS

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UUCSC Mission and Vision Statements

Expectations for Board members

Current Board member contact list

Job descriptions for each Board member

Description of Coordinating Council Clusters

List of Board Member liaisons to clusters

Job description for liaisons

Updated Board covenant

Updated bylaws

Board calendar

PRESIDENT'S BINDER: All of the above, plus Policy

Handbook and Operations Manual

IMPORTANT – ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE DATED

SOURCE: *January 19, 2009 Board Meeting Minutes updated 11/2017*

BOARD COVENANT

The Board covenant should be updated annually.

Covenant: As a Board we covenant that our responsibility is to represent the best interests of our faith community in a secure, transparent, respectful and democratic manner.

E-VOTING

Any Board member can propose a motion by emailing the group with specific wording. A second is required for discussion to begin. The discussion will be open for at least 24 hours after the

second is received. At the end of 24 hours the tally is being taken. The clerk may initiate a vote to accept minutes via e-mail.

SOURCE: December 7, 2014 Board Meeting Minutes

CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Visitors

Commitment: Exploring

Participation:

Sign the guest book and leave contact information if so desire

Wear a temporary nametag and use a red mug to identify their newness to UUCSC

Join in worship services and ask questions as they try out different aspects of the congregation's activities

Contribute to the plate

UUCSC:

Ministerial conversations, if requested

Email newsletter

Membership contact after 6 months

Make aware of the Path to Membership

Members

Commitment: Full/ total/ life-changing

Participation:

Attends Membership classes

Signs the Membership book

Votes

Pledges

Actively participates in many aspects of congregational life, possibly serving as chair of a committee

Is listed in the directory

UUCSC:

Offers pastoral care

Solicits those to serve in elected positions such as Board officer or director, Nominating committee, or Finance chair

Sends relevant information about congregational meetings

Sends pledging information

Sends all congregational emails, including the newsletter

Offers financial discounts when members use the facilities and celebrates life events such as weddings and memorial services

Friends

Commitment: Participating non-member

Participation:

Attend services regularly

Joins committee work

Contributes financially

Chooses to be listed as a Friend in the UUCSC directory

UUCSC:

Membership asks about the potential for becoming a member

Membership asks if they wish to be listed as a Friend in the UUCSC directory

Offers pastoral care

Sends pledging information

Sends all congregational emails, including the newsletter

The minister has the discretion to offer financial discounts

Inactive members

Participation:

Unable to attend but wish to stay in contact

UUCSC:

Keep listed as inactive in the directory

Send emails and newsletter

CHAPTER 5: FACILITIES

- a. Repair and Maintenance
- b. Janitorial
- c. Landscaping
- d. Aesthetics
- e. Condo representation

FACILITY USE

- A. Use of UUCSC Facilities will be consistent with UUA Principles, be consistent with UUCSC Mission Statement, and comply with State and local law.
- B. Each Event Sponsor becomes the responsible party during their event to ensure that health and safety standards are met.
- C. No drugs are permitted in the building.
- D. UUCSC Alcohol policy must be followed during each event.
- E. No guns or firearms are permitted in the building except those carried by authorized law enforcement officers.
- F. UUCSC is a non-smoking building.
- G. **SOURCE:** *January 19, 2009 Board Meeting Minutes*

LIBRARY

The library will support the congregants' search for truth and meaning by providing a diverse collection that represents many different points of view on spirituality and other topics of interest to the congregation.

The Board will appoint a library coordinator to maintain the collection.

SOURCE: *April 15, 2015 Board Meeting Minutes*

ANIMALS

Only service animals are allowed in the UUCSC facility.

CHAPTER 6: COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Publicity
- b. UUCSC Communications

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

To preserve privacy, the UUCSC e-mail list and directory will be used only for church-related events and not to generate private business.

The president, vice president, minister, and office administrator (or their designee) may send e-mails or letters to the entire congregation. All congregational e-mails will use the Bcc: field instead of the To: field in order to preserve the privacy of members e-mail addresses

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Letters regarding congregational policy and / or specific critical issues sent on behalf of the congregation will be signed by the President and the Minister.

SOURCE: *January 19, 2005 Board Meeting Minutes*

STORM CANCELLATION – October 2005

This policy is currently under review. 11/2017

The most important priority of the UUCSC is the safety and well being of our members and friends. Since we live in New England we can expect snowstorms and inclement weather conditions to occur especially in winter. While we aim to provide Sunday services and other events on occasions when minor snow events occur, no one should feel obligated to attend if they feel travel would be unsafe for them. Anyone not comfortable with their ability to travel safely should feel free to stay safe in their home. It is indeed better to be safe than sorry.

Service/event cancellation due to inclement weather policy

- I. **Determination of service cancellation will be made by the congregation president in consultation with the minister (or lay leader) preferably 12 hours before the service (8 pm Saturday).**

- A. If the president is not available, the vice president shall assume this duty. If the vice president is also not available, the Worship Committee chair shall assume this duty.
- B. If the minister/lay leader is not available, the Worship Committee chair shall assume this duty.

II. Reasons/Conditions for cancellation

- A. Facility not usable
- B. Governor declares a “State of Emergency”.
- C. South Kingstown declares an emergency or closes Rte. 108.
- D. Storm deemed unsafe for travel by minister and president
 - 1. Prediction of active storm at time of service - accumulation of more than 7 inches
 - 2. Saturday night/early Sunday morning storm predicted to exceed 12 inches.
 - 3. Major/massive storm predicted to begin during service
 - 4. Predicted ice storm that conflicts with service hours
 - 5. Other best judgment

III. Procedure

- A. Responsible parties (Section I) confer night before and “make the call” to cancel or delay service.
- B. President (or stand in/worship leader)
 - 1. Activates notice to media – Rhode Island Broadcaster Association
 - 2. Notifies Web Master
 - 3. Notifies facilities chair
- C. Minister (or stand in /worship leader))
 - 1. Notifies Worship Committee chair
 - 2. Notifies staff
 - 3. Notifies Membership chair
 - 4. Sends email notice with Blessing (Section IV)
- D. Web Master
 - 1. Posts cancellation message on the web site

IV. Virtual Service Alternative

- A. It will be the custom of this congregation that when emailing the notice of cancellation, the minister will offer a blessing and meditation or reflection that can be performed at the usual service hour by those wishing to worship together while apart.
- B. In the event the minister is unavailable, the president will perform or delegate this function.

V. Non-service event cancellation

- A. Any other event cancelled will be determined by the event chair

- B. Event chair will call the president or vice president to notify media
- VI. Persons other than president with authority and guidance to activate use of the Rhode Island Broadcaster Association Network:**
- A. Minister
 - B. Vice President
 - C. Worship Committee Chair

CHAPTER 7: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND EVENTS

- a. Social events
- b. Social action
- c. Green task Force
- d. Music at Lily Pads

ALCOHOL – This policy is currently under review. 11/2017

The policy seeks to protect the congregation and its resources from potential liability in the event of misuse of alcoholic beverages at any event hosted, sponsored, or in any way associated with the UUCSC.

It is essential that steps (1-4) are taken to ensure that:

STEP 1. a range of non-alcoholic beverages be available

STEP 2. no one is ever pressured to consume alcohol

STEP 3. no person under the legal age is permitted to consume alcohol

STEP 4. alternative transportation home is available should a person become impaired.

Groups making use of the premises may serve alcohol provided the previous steps (1-4) are taken and that there is advance disclosure that alcoholic beverages may be served. Groups renting the premises where food is served and alcohol consumption may exceed a single toast must employ a certified and insured bartender to dispense alcoholic beverages.

Alcohol may be served at UUCSC social events held off-site (e.g. Dining 4 Dollars, potlucks, etc.) provided the previous steps are taken.

Alcohol may be served at off-site locations where church business is being conducted provided:

1. the previous steps (1-4) are taken
2. there is advance notice that alcohol will be served or sold
3. all actual business, especially voting, must be completed before alcohol is served

4. service complies with all local and state laws and regulations relating to the sale or serving of alcoholic beverages, and appropriate permits and/or licenses are obtained
5. a cash bar has to be staffed by certified and insured bartenders.

Alcohol may be part of a basket auctioned off for fund raising purposes, but the bottle may not be opened on-site.

Board approval is required for alcohol to be served or sold at galas and major fundraisers.

Alcohol may **not** be served whenever there is an AA meeting on UUCSC premises.

Alcohol may **not** be served at ANY UUCSC youth group event off (or on) the premises.

CHAPTER 8: Ministry

- a. Small Group Ministry
- b. Pastoral Care
- c. Caring Connection
- d. Right Relations Task Force
- e. Committee on Ministry
- f. Men's Group
- g. Women's Spirituality Group

AGAPE FUND

A. There shall be an Agape Fund established by the UUCSC. The minister shall have sole discretion to distribute from the fund for the purposes that are consistent with and in furtherance of the goals established by the UUCSC Board.

B. The UUCSC Board resolves by vote that the minister is prohibited from making disbursements for the benefit of himself or herself or any family member. This Board resolution shall be in writing as part of the minister's annual Letter of Agreement. As such, it shall be signed annually by the minister and the president of the congregation.

C. The Board, through the Treasurer, shall retain administrative control over the Agape Fund, to ensure that all disbursements further UUCSC's exempt purposes.

D. Such purposes shall be limited to providing Care for the Needy. Confidentiality regarding such disbursements shall be maintained by the minister, but a report of the general nature of the disbursement shall be reported to the Treasurer in any month when such disbursements are made.

SOURCE: *November 30, 2008 Board Meeting Minutes*

**SAFE CONGREGATION – Submitted September 2006.
This policy is currently under review. 11/2017**

A. SAFETY

1. **Classroom Environment:**

- a. Fire Alarms with Carbon Monoxide detection will be installed in the main classroom area, furnace room and kitchen.
 - b. All curtains, cloth banners and cloth sound buffers will be fire proofed with fire-proofing spray.
 - c. The fire extinguisher will be checked by the local fire dept. as needed. Teachers will be made aware of its location.
 - d. A First Aid box is located in the RE Supply Cabinet. Soon there will be one on the wall near the fire extinguisher as well.
 - e. A Clean Hands notice will be posted in both bathrooms, kitchen and in the Nursery Handbook.
- 2. Fire Drills:**
- a. Fire Drills will take place once per teaching session. Teachers will have the fire drill procedure on their clipboards that also hold the weekly attendance sheets for each class.
 - b. Evacuation notices will be posted in several locations in the Hall and also will be on the teacher's clipboards. Once a final Evacuation notice is created, it will also be available to all church members.
- 3. Nursery:**
- a. Paid nursery caregivers (teens) will now be joined by an adult volunteer
 - b. Nursery Safety Guidelines are given to all nursery caregivers. **(FORM A)**
 - c. All caregivers will sign the Code of Ethics.
 - d. Childcare other than Religious Education class time will be scheduled using the Nursery Guideline Form B. **(FORM B)**
- 3. Classroom Teachers:**
- a. All Teacher volunteers will be approved by the DRE and Religious Education Committee and will sign the Code of Ethics. **(FORM C)** The Code of Ethics will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated each September by the RE Committee.
 - b. All teachers will fill out an injury report if an accident or injury should occur with any of the children or youth. **(FORM D)**
 - c. All teachers and Volunteers will receive a Safety Policy Notice for Teachers. **(FORM E)**
 - d. All teachers will consult the DRE about any planned events off the Church property and utilize the Basic Permission Slip. **(F)**
- 5. Jr. Youth Group:**
- a. All adult volunteers will sign up for events in order to create a complete calendar of events and chaperones for the year. All volunteers will be approved by the RE Committee and DRE.
 - b. All parents/guardians will sign the Jr. Youth Group Permission slip. **(G)**

6. **Youth Group:**
 - a. All Youth Group Advisors will sign the Code of Ethics.
 - b. All Youth Group Advisors will complete a Criminal Background check.
 - c. **Action Item:** Information is being sought for how to handle driving situations for both Youth Group meetings and conferences.

7. **Minimal Safety Standards:**
 - a. Criminal Background check for RE paid employees, Youth Advisors, Owl Trainers/Facilitators, Mentors and Youth Advisors.
 - a. Read/ Sign Code of Ethics – All RE teachers, childcare providers, youth advisors
 - b. At least 2 care providers present at all times.
 - c. All allegations of potential abuse reported to DRE or Minister.
 - d. All reports investigated immediately
 - e. All investigations logged.
 - f. Unless allegation is clearly invalid – report to DCYF or local police.
 - g. All Background checks, code of ethics and license checks will be kept on file in the office (locked). The minister and DRE will have the keys.

B. NURSERY GUIDELINES

1. **Registration:** All babies and toddlers must be registered if staying without their parent/caregiver in the nursery. Let the DRE know if a visitor or unregistered child is in the nursery. There will be an updated list in this folder of registered babies and toddlers.
2. **Nursery Ages:** The nursery area is meant for children ages infant-4 years old.
3. **Safety:** Never leave babies or toddlers unattended. The DRE will always be “floating” around to check on classes and the nursery. We are also working on getting an adult Nursery Supervisor each week to check in with the nursery caregivers during service.
4. **Diaper changing policy:** If it’s really necessary for the diaper to be changed, (sometimes it can hold till service is over), get the DRE and the parent will be notified. Nursery care Adult volunteers or the DRE may change a diaper only with parental consent.
5. **Discipline & Intuition:** Always let Debby or one of the teachers know if you are having a disciplining situation that you feel you can’t handle. Use your intuition in this job. If a circumstance feels dangerous, unsafe or just “not right,” communicate it to an adult ASAP. It’s always better to be safe than sorry.

6. **Benefits:** Have Fun with this job!
 - a. We're proud to have you on the team!

C. CHILD-CAREGIVERS REFERENCE GUIDE FOR UUCSC COMMITTEES

Note: This guide is for meetings and events other than normal Sept.-June services.

Guidelines for successful child care at UUCSC meetings and events:

1. An adult must take responsibility for contacting and supervising the child-caregivers and assisting the child-caregiver with set-up and clean-up.
2. There must be one caregiver for every three children ages three and up. For a child younger, the ratio is one adult to every two toddlers. Infants cannot be cared for unless the parent gives personal consent to a caregiver. This will be a one on one caregiving situation in which the parent is the established caregiver supervisor. (i.e.: checking in on the caregiver every ten to fifteen minutes during the course of the meeting.)
3. The nursery area is provided for children ages infant-4 years old. All other children may use the general RE space.
4. The rate of pay is \$7.50 per hour, starting with set-up time and ending when the clean-up is finished.
5. We strongly recommend that a child-care budget be developed for each committee.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR This policy is currently under review. 11/2017

A. FOR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OF KNOWN ORIGIN

1. If an immediate response to disruptive behavior is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister, if available, and/or the leader of the group involved, e.g. Board President/Committee Chair/RE Director/Music Director, etc.
2. This may include drawing the disruptive person(s) aside and stating that the behavior is not acceptable and to please stop, asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed. If further assistance is required the Police Department may be called.
3. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister or

Board President being present, they both must be notified.

4. If deemed necessary by the Minister or group leader, an ad hoc committee of three or more people (appointed by the Board of Directors) will convene around this incident.
7. A follow-up letter detailing what steps must be taken before returning to the activities
5. involved will be drawn up by the appropriate Leader and approved by the Committee. The letter should state that if the individual chooses to do so he/she can request that the ad hoc committee mediate the dispute. **The individual needs to state the problem to the Committee in writing.** Copies of the letter to the disruptive party are to be sent to the Minister, Congregation President, and Committee.

B. SITUATIONS NOT REQUIRING AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

1. Situations not requiring an immediate response will be referred to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board of Directors. The Committee will respond in terms of their own judgment, observing the following:
 2. The Committee will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define "acceptable" behavior in advance.
 3. Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals; stereotypes will be avoided.
 4. The Committee will collect all necessary information, speaking with all relevant parties if deemed safe to do so.
 5. To aid in evaluating the problem, the following points will be considered:
 - a. DANGER - Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
 - b. DISRUPTIVENESS - How much interference with Congregational functions is going on?
 - c. OFFENSIVENESS - How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away ?
6. To determine the necessary response, the following points will be considered:
 - a. CAUSES - Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the Congregation? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
 - b. HISTORY - What has been the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?

- c. PROBABILITY OF CHANGE - How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
7. The Committee will decide on the necessary response on a case by case basis. However, the following four levels of response are recommended:
 - a. LEVEL ONE- The committee may decide that no action is warranted. In that event, the minister and the Board should be informed.
 - b. LEVEL TWO - The Committee shall inform the Minister of the problem and the Minister and/or member of the committee shall meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern.
 - c. LEVEL THREE – After making reasonable attempts to secure appropriate behavior; the disruptive person remains noncommittal, the offending individual is excluded from the Congregation and/or specific activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear.
 - d. LEVEL FOUR – If after making all reasonable attempts to secure appropriate behavior; the disruptive person refuses to comply, the offending individual is permanently excluded from the premises and all UUCSC activities. Before this is carried out, the Committee will consult with the Board of Directors and the Minister. If it is decided that expulsion will take place, a letter will be sent by the Minister and Board explaining the expulsion and the individual's rights and possible recourse.
8. For any behavior judged to need a Level 2, 3 or 4 response, contact the District Executive. Depending on the nature of the behavior, it may also be appropriate to involve professionals in other fields: e.g. mental health workers, social service agencies, the police.
9. Any action taken under item “D 4” (above) may be appealed to the Board of Directors and/or the Minister.
10. If, in time, the person reconsiders and wishes to reenter the group, he/she may meet with the leadership of the congregation to request reentry, subject to Board approval.

SOURCE: July 18, 2008 Board Meeting Minutes