

**Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation**  
**Safety Policy for Children and Youth**  
**April 2, 2015**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and secure environment for Children, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and Paid Staff by.

1. Evaluating the suitability of Volunteers and Paid Staff to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of Children.
2. Satisfying the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for Paid Staff and Volunteers.
3. Providing a system to respond to alleged victims of sexual or other abuse and their families, as well as any alleged perpetrator.
4. Reducing the possibility of false accusations of abuse made against Volunteers and Paid Staff.

**Applicability**

This policy applies to all Mission Peak events that involve Children or Youth including events sponsored off-site by Mission Peak. It does not apply to other events that might involve Children or Youth from Mission Peak.

**Definitions**

The following terms used in this policy are defined as follows:

1. Paid Staff: Any minister, director of religious education, or employee who is paid.
2. Child/Youth/Minor: Any person who has not reached his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
3. Adult: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday.
4. Volunteer: Any unpaid person engaged in carrying out a program at Mission Peak.
5. Mission Peak: Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation.
6. Child Abuse or Neglect: includes any of these actions with respect to a Child or Youth – sexual abuse or exploitation, neglect, willful harm or injury, endangerment of his or her health, and unlawful corporal punishment, all as defined in the California Penal Code Section 11165.

**Abuse of a Child or Youth**

The following acts or omissions will not be tolerated during any Mission Peak activity. Such acts or omissions are to be stopped and reported immediately to the adult responsible for Child and Youth supervision at the time the act occurs, and to the Minister, Director of Religious Education, or President of the Board.

- Any sexual advance or sexual activity of any kind by an Adult directed toward a Child or Youth.
- Any sexual or other abuse directed by a Child or Youth toward another Child or Youth.
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a Child or Youth.
- Physical neglect of a Child or Youth, including failure to provide adequate supervision.
- Mental or emotional injury to a Child or Youth deliberately caused or exacerbated by any adult.
- The display of pornographic materials.
- Corporal punishment.

**Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation**  
**Safety Policy for Children and Youth**  
**April 2, 2015**

**Requirements**

There must be at least two adults present in each religious education classroom, at Youth group meetings, and at any other program for Children and Youth. A Youth of age 12 or older may act as a second adult for supervising children age 6 and under. Exceptions may be made for emergencies or for unplanned circumstances when approved by the Minister, Director of Religious Education, or the adult in charge, or when one adult drives on a field trip, in which case at least two children or youth must ride in the vehicle.

A staff professional may meet alone with a Child or Youth. A Congregation member may meet alone with a Child or Youth only with permission of the Child's or Youth's parent or guardian and approval of the Director of Religious Education or the Minister (*e.g.* for Coming of Age mentors).

Childcare at adult events shall be arranged at the discretion of the event organizer. Details of Childcare arrangements must be made known to and approved by the Child's parent or guardian and the person in charge of the venue where the event is taking place.

There must be no use of alcohol or illegal drugs at Child or Youth-centered events. Alcohol may be served to adults over age 21 at family events such as the Black and White Service Auction.

A parent or guardian must sign a permission slip in order for a Child or Youth to attend an off-site event sponsored by Mission Peak. The destination and expected return time must be provided to his or her parent or guardian. The leaders should take a list of the names of the Children or Youths, emergency contacts, and medical conditions with them.

Drivers for off-site events must be at least 21 years old with a current, unrestricted driver's license and proof of insurance coverage (such as a valid insurance card). No driver may be under the influence of alcohol or use any form of drug that may impair physical or mental performance during or before transporting Children or Youth. All California laws involving seatbelts and child safety restraints must be followed.

Adults and Youth who work in supervisory roles with Children or Youth are required to read this policy and any associated guidelines.

**Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

Any Adult responsible for supervising Children or Youth, whether Paid or Volunteer, who acquires knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that a Child or Youth has been physically, sexually or mentally abused, molested, exploited, or injured shall immediately report the incident to the adult in charge of the event. The Adult in charge will promptly notify the Minister or Director of Religious Education or, if not possible, the President of the Board.

If Child Abuse or Neglect takes place at a Mission Peak event, the Minister or Director of Religious Education, or if they are not available, the Adult in charge shall call and report it to the police or Child Protective Services immediately and notify the parent or guardian of the affected Child or Youth.

**Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation**  
**Safety Policy for Children and Youth**  
**April 2, 2015**

The Director of Religious Education or Minister will prepare a written report and send it to Child Protective Services or to the police within 36 hours of any of the above incidents. Reported allegations will be held in confidence, available to Mission Peak officials only on a need-to-know basis. If the alleged abuse takes place at a Mission Peak event, the Adult in charge will consult with the Minister, Director of Religious Education, Children and Youth Religious Education Chairperson or the President of the Board about what, if anything, is to be said to others.

If Paid Staff or a Volunteer is reported to the police or Child Protective Services as a possible offender, he or she will be immediately suspended from working with Children and Youth until the case is resolved. (See the section below: Sex Offender)

**Mandated Reporting**

California law (Penal Code 11166.5) specifies that “clergy member,” “religious practitioner” and “any custodian of records of a clergy member” are “mandated reporters.” A mandated reporter who has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect” is required to report that abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services or the police within 36 hours of acquiring that knowledge.

Any Mission Peak mandated reporter is required upon employment to read and sign the Required Statement of Mandated Reporter. This statement will be retained in Mission Peak’s files.

**Screening**

The following screening procedures are to be used with those who are entrusted with the care and supervision of Children or Youth.

1. Paid Staff and Volunteers who will work with Children or Youth, without a second adult present must complete and sign the Screening Application.
2. Mission Peak will conduct a criminal background check on all Paid Staff and on Volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of Children without a second adult present. All criminal background checks will be updated about every three years.
3. Before working with Children, Volunteers are required to have been a member or active friend of Mission Peak for at least six months.

**Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation**  
**Safety Policy for Children and Youth**  
**April 2, 2015**

4. No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of Children who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any such offenses, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any such offenses. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of Children or Youth:
  - Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
  - A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor, possession of or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, incest, or family violence.
  - Any other behavior that raises questions about the appropriateness of working with Children.
5. The decision regarding approval of a Volunteer to work with Children or Youth shall be made by consensus of the Minister and the Director of Religious Education.
6. Information obtained for screening Volunteers will be kept in strict confidence, except as required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above referenced means will be kept in a secure location. A copy of the screening report will be provided the person who is the subject of the report.

**Sex Offenders**

A sex offender who has been convicted of child abuse or a sex offense, or is the subject of unresolved allegations of child abuse or a sex offense, is not allowed to be involved in any activity which is primarily focused on Children or Youth. Such offender will be given a copy of this policy and may attend other Mission Peak events subject to a signed agreement with Mission Peak stating any limitations and requirements on his or her participation). The Minister and DRE will develop the agreement (with consultation as appropriate), will determine whether others should be informed and how, and will follow up to verify compliance.