

Tennessee Valley UU Church Safe Congregation Policies for Building Safety and the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Physical Abuse and Harassment

I. Right Relations Team Philosophy

The Right Relations Team will be guided by a philosophy statement which will be developed by the Team when they convene, and will be reviewed for updates and re-affirming annually.

II. Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sexual Ethics

One of the Leader Resources in *Creating Safe Congregations* restates our Principles in terms of sexual ethics, and appears in every age level of *Sexuality and Our Faith*, the companion volume to *Our Whole Lives*¹.

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person. *Every person's sexuality is sacred and is worthy of respect, and therefore, is not to be violated.*
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relationships. *We treat others as we would want to be treated; therefore, sexual exploitation and interpersonal violence is wrong.*
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation. *Accepting each other, as we are, means doing no harm and fostering well-being in one's self and others.* [SEP]
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. *In our relationship to others, our freedom of sexuality is as important as the responsibility for it.*
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large. *As a community and as an institution, we are responsible for creating a secure and safe environment.*
- The goal of a world community with peace, liberty and justice for all. *We have the opportunity to create the kind of environment that lends itself to peace, liberty and justice in human sexuality, and we can become a model for the rest of society.*
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. *When we respect each person's sexual integrity we honor the wholeness of life and we respect the web of all existence.*

III. Definitions

Used in this document, the following words/ phrases will have these meanings:

- Abuse** includes non-accidental conduct that involves bodily injury or impairment; offensive physical or sexual contact' including physical or sexual abuse; physical or sexual harassment; physical or sexual molestation; or physical or sexual exploitation.
- Disruptive Behavior** is any actions that inhibits or interferes with a member or visitor's ability to fully participate in congregational activities. It may include but is not limited to physical abuse, harassing phone calls, texts or emails, verbal abuse, slurs or name calling or deliberate disruption of planned events.

- C. **Physical abuse** includes offensive physical contact or activity that causes bodily injury.
- D. **Sexual abuse** means any sexual touching of a child or any activity that causes a person to engage in any sexual act or conduct without that person's consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.
- E. **Physical harassment or molestation or exploitation** means activity that places a person in fear of bodily injury by such acts as threatening or tormenting behavior, compelling a person by force or threat of force to engage in conduct from which the person has a right to abstain, knowingly restricting substantially the movements of another person without that other person's consent, communicating to a person a threat to commit an act against that person or another person or entity where the natural consequence of the threat is to place that person in fear or cause that person to engage in conduct in which that person otherwise would not engage, or similar repeated offensive physical or verbal conduct.
- F. **Sexual molestation and sexual exploitation** means activity that places another person in a situation where that person feels compelled to engage in sexual conduct to which that person would not otherwise voluntarily consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to refrain from consenting due to age or mental capacity or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.
- G. **Sexual harassment** means making sexual advances or requests for sexual favors to another person, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where the other person by words or conduct has indicated that such words or conduct are not desired, or where a reasonable person would expect that such words or conduct would not be desired.

IV. Special Relationship Between Minister and Congregants

“Congregations confer powers upon their ministers through roles which the minister is expected to assume-worship leader, teacher, counselor or representative in the larger community...Ministers need to be fully aware of those powers and use them responsibly for the building of spiritual community, not for personal gratification. Exploiting ministerial powers for personal advantage abuses those congregants who become the inappropriate sexual objects of a minister’s personal interest. Such abuse damages the religious community of which the abuser is minister” *Excerpt from Thomas Mikelson, Reflections Toward a Unitarian Universalist Theology of Clergy Misconduct through Sexual Abuse, December, 1992*

We as a community expect the Minister to abide by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association’s (UUMA) Code of Professional Practice, which acknowledges that ministers are the recipients of automatic trust, and comments directly on the issues of clergy sexual misconduct

and the abuse of the trust congregations place in their ministers. In subscribing to this code, ministers agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles. The complete text of the code is published in the UUMA Guidelines which is available on the UUMA website (<https://uuma.site-ym.com/?guidelines>).

In the case of a violation of this code, the Right Relations Team will contact the Regional Executive and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) who will initiate an investigation. The Safe Congregation Response Team will then work with the Board of Directors to establish the most appropriate methods of communicating, counseling and responding to those members who are most directly affected by the misconduct and to reactions within the congregation and the community.

V. Special Relationship Between Professional Religious Educator and Congregants

“I recognize that as a religious leader in whom trust and power have been placed, I am both morally and legally in a professional relationship to which I am called to be faithful...I must never abuse the authority of my position by manipulating others to satisfy my personal needs, which may include, but are not restricted to-sexualized behavior with any child, adolescent, or vulnerable adult seeking advice or comfort; with any adult in another committed relationship; with interns or with youth advisors. Nor will I engage in any other exploitative relationship that abuses the power and damages the trust that a specific individual, a congregation, or an institution has placed in me. As a religious education professional, I have the responsibility to be aware of, to advocate, and to live by this Code of Professional Practices,... Furthermore, I will be aware of and observe the legal requirements of my State or Province regarding reporting of physical or sexual misconduct.” *Excerpt from the Religious Educator’s Code of Professional Practices*

We as a community expect the Director of Lifespan Religious Education and other professional religious education staff to abide by the Liberal Religious Educators Association’s (LREDA) Code of Professional Practice, which acknowledges that religious educators are also the recipients of special trust. In subscribing to this code, professional religious educators agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

The complete text of the Code is published in the LREDA Guidelines and Code of Professional Practices which is available on the LREDA website (<http://www.lreda.org/code-of-professional-practices>).

In the case of violation of this code, procedures as outlined LREDA will be followed. The Right Relations Team will work with the board of Directors to establish the most appropriate methods of communicating, counseling and responding to those members who are most directly affected by the misconduct and to reactions within the congregation and the community.

VI. Special Relationship Between Professional Staff and Congregants

We as a community expect the professional staff to abide by the Code of Conduct/Ethics for their respective UU professional organizations. In subscribing to this code, TVUUC staff agree not to exploit the powers inherent in their roles.

In the case of violation of the respective professional code, procedures as outlined by the respective professional organizations will be followed. The Right Relations Team will work with the Board of Directors to establish the most appropriate methods of communicating, counseling and responding to those members who are most directly affected by the misconduct and to reactions within the congregation and the community.

VII. Recruitment, Training and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

A. Selection and Screening of Staff & Volunteers working with Children & Youth

TVUUC will carefully screen all applicants for paid and volunteer positions working with children. TVUUC will utilize screening documents, which applicants must complete, sign and submit as a condition of employment or appointment, both for initial hire and ongoing work. **Screening will be conducted every three years for ongoing service.** During the recruitment process, which is conducted for each position by the immediate supervisor or supervising committee, additional screening inquiries will be made. Paid or volunteer staff known to have criminal charges pending or who have been convicted of or pled guilty to any sexual or physical abuse or assault charge will not be allowed to work with children or youth. For any applicants under the age of 18, the parent or guardian must also sign the forms described below.

The screening documents are as follows, copies of which are found in the Appendices of this policy:

1. Nursery Staff Application (paid child care workers only)
2. Voluntary Disclosure Statement (all other RE staff or volunteers)
3. Code of Ethics for Adults work with Children and Youth

These documents will be used for the Minister(s), Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Youth Program Coordinator, RE Program Assistant, church staff, paid nursery staff (over 18 years of age), Youth Advisors, Religious Education teachers including Our Whole Lives (OWL) and Coming of Age (COA) teachers and mentors, and members of the Right Relations Team. Volunteer RE teachers under 18 will be exempt from background checks, but will be required to complete the voluntary disclosure statement and have it signed by a parent/guardian.

For all religious-education related positions, including youth leaders, advisors, mentors, and religious education teachers, in addition to the documentation stated above, candidates must attend teacher/mentor workshops as provided and a one-day training given by the DLRE and Youth RE Committee on related congregational policies and procedures.

B. Screening Process and Documentation

The Search Committee and/or the DLRE shall be responsible for overseeing completion of the appropriate paperwork and submitting contact info to the Administrator, who will initiate the background screening process. The immediate supervisor and/or the DLRE shall follow up to ensure that the reference checks have been completed and submitted appropriately. If the applicant is not known to the DLRE or Search Committee, confirmation of identity will be requested.

For all RE-related volunteer positions, including teachers, advisors and mentors, the applicant shall have been a congregant for at least six months, or have been a member of another Unitarian Universalist Congregation and be able to supply a reference from the DLRE or Minister of the prior affiliation. RE teachers must be at least 16 years older and Senior High teachers and advisors must be at least 25 years of age.

The DLRE will keep records of the screening and related forms in a confidential file. When criminal records checks are performed, they will be initiated by the Administrator and reviewed by the immediate supervisor and kept confidential. Access to such information will be limited to the Search Committee, Minister, DLRE, and Right Relations Team as necessary.

Paid or volunteer staff that are known to have criminal charges pending or have been convicted of or pled guilty to any sexual or physical abuse or assault charge will not be allowed to work with children or youth.

If it is determined that a potential volunteer should have restricted access to children, he/she shall be requested to sign a Limited Access Agreement, as described in the Section 8 of this policy. If the same is determined for a potential church staff person, the person shall not be hired.

C. Training and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

Upon hire each staff person shall receive a copy of this Safe Congregation Policy and acknowledge receipt in writing (Appendix 4). This policy will be reviewed with the entire congregation at least annually. All TVUUC teachers, advisors and mentors will receive training on this policy and related procedures at least once a year. The Youth Religious Education Committee (YREC) and DLRE, and/or Minister will include a discussion of

this policy to families during orientation to the RE program. The Right Relations Team will work with staff to provide education, awareness and support to all adults, youth and children as needed throughout the year.

As described in this policy and using supplemental materials, staff and volunteers working with children and youth shall be trained to understand the following:

- Definition of child abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Sexual and physical abuse symptoms
- What constitutes inappropriate conduct
- Church policies that govern working with children or youth
- The civil and criminal consequences of misconduct
- Reporting procedures for observed or suspected misconduct
- The rationale behind screening procedures.

Various supervisory methods are listed below. They will help leaders avoid setting up situations in which personal boundary issues can become a problem. Some of these methods will help leaders and teachers decrease the risk of misunderstandings and offer some support for handling various concerns.

- Regular consultations with the Director of Lifespan Religious Education
- On-going training
- Parental permission for any activities outside of routine RE class programs (field trips, special events, etc.)
- Visible classroom activity
- Support for following the behavior guidelines of the Safe Congregation Policy.

Teachers, helpers, or youth group leaders who have gained the trust of young people, are in a unique situation to observe behavior or be party to a conversation in which a possible abusive situation (either within or outside the congregation) is revealed. In this situation, it is the adult's responsibility to report any reasonable cause to suspect child abuse to legal authorities as required by TN law. Please see Section (XI). for additional information on reporting procedures. The Youth RE Committee will provide regular training on dealing with suspected abuse or neglect.

VIII. Youth Religious Education Safety Procedures

A. Supervision of Children and Youth

The supervision of children and youth while on church grounds and during TVUUC functions is a very important aspect of maintaining a safe congregation. Everyone in the congregation needs to understand that proper supervision of children will prevent many incidents and accidents from occurring. Parents or guardians of children and youth must

supervise their children at all congregational functions and outings, unless specifically left in the care of RE volunteers or staff.

1. All classes including the nursery must be taught by a minimum of a two person teaching team. This requirement applies to off-site TVUUC RE activity as well as on-site classes. Teams should consist of at least one person who has been an active participant at TVUUC for at least six months (can be waived if they have had previous teaching experience in a UU setting, as laid out in Section VII.B). Parents may serve as classroom aides and/or visit classes at any time. Teachers are subject to the approval of the YRE Committee.
2. One individual may be briefly alone with a group when the other must leave as dictated by common sense and necessity for such purposes as bathroom breaks and escorting individual children away from the group, if a Hallway Helper is not available to provide additional supervision.
3. Prior to the start of RE classes, children Pre-K through 5th grade are signed in on the classroom sign in sheets on the RE Greeter Table.
4. At the end of RE classes, parents are expected to pick up their children from their RE teachers or nursery staff. At this time parents again resume supervision responsibility for their children until leaving the grounds. No child through 5th grade will be dismissed from religious education without an appropriate parent or guardian. Youth in grades 6-12 may be dismissed on their own.
5. All children Pre-K through 5th must be signed out from their RE Classes.
6. During coffee hour, and before or after any function for which childcare is provided, children must be supervised by their parent or guardian. RE classrooms will not be open to children or youth for any activity until at least two volunteer teachers or staff are present. Parents are responsible for supervising their children or youth until two adult supervisors are present. During RE classes, every attempt will be made to ensure that both will be present at all times, but there may be times when one will temporarily be out of the classroom (snack run, walking child to bathroom, first aid situations). In those situations a Hallway Helper or an RE staff member will step into the room to maintain the two adult policy.
7. Adults are not permitted to shut the door of a classroom or bathroom if alone with a child who is not related to them. Assistance may be given to a child with clothing or hand washing, with the door open and the knowledge of the DLRE or other roaming supervisor.
8. A roaming supervisor (DLRE or designee) will be present in the RE area during religious education to provide supervision for children going to the bathroom or removed from class for disciplinary or other purposes. This supervisor must meet the requirements listed in Section 2 of this policy.
9. Each child should have either a registration form or visitor form on file that includes information about special needs and parent contact information. Parents will be asked to submit registration forms at the beginning of each program year. All personal

information is held confidential.

B. General Field Trip & Offsite Event Guidelines

For church-related field trips and off-site functions, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Volunteers and employees are not allowed to pick up children/youth to/from home, from TVUUC, or to be alone in a car with one child/youth except by prior parental arrangement and notification of DLRE via email or phone.
2. Permission slips and medical release forms for each child/youth must be signed and submitted to the activity supervisor prior to the start of the trip/activity, and will be submitted to staff for filing after the event. (Appendix 5)
3. Group leaders must have a list of participant names, emergency contacts, medical conditions and allergies with them at all times.
4. Proof of auto insurance for every driver must be submitted to the DLRE prior to the start of the trip/activity.
5. Every person transported in the vehicle must wear a seatbelt and/or booster seat as required by law.
6. A First Aid Kit must be brought to every function by the group leader. There is a fully stocked first aid kit in the RE Kitchen that is labeled "RE Field Trips."

C. General Sleepover Guidelines

For church-related overnight events involving minors, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Adults supervising youth overnights must be active participants at TVUUC for at least one year or after six months if they have had previous youth group experience in a UU setting before volunteering. Parents who are staying over with their own youth need not have been active participants.
2. There will always be a minimum of two adults present during sleeping hours regardless of the numbers of youth attending. Two adults must remain awake during these sleeping hours. During a sleepover at TVUUC, there should be a minimum ratio of one adult to ten youth with one additional adult required for up to every five additional youth when more than 15 youth are participating.
3. During sleepovers at the church, all outside doors will be locked against entry once the last youth has arrived, and will remain locked until parents arrive for pick-up in the morning.
4. A Parent/Guardian Permission and Medical Release Form will be required for each youth at the sleepover, and will be submitted to staff for filing after the event. (Appendix 5)
5. The adult supervisors will maintain a list of attendees.

D. RE Fire and Emergency Evacuation Process

In case of fire or emergency, the following evacuation process shall be adhered to:

1. In the event of fire or other emergency evacuation, infants will be placed in the emergency crib and wheeled out through the playground to the designated waiting

area via the designated route posted in the nursery. Toddlers in the nursery will be walked out on a lead rope through the playground to the designated waiting area.

2. In the event of an emergency evacuation, all children will be escorted out of the building by their teachers via the designated route posted in their classroom.
3. The designated waiting area for all children and youth is the line of trees leading from the RE Wing of the building towards Kingston Pike.
 - a. If the designated waiting area is unsuitable for any reason, a secondary waiting area is designated in the Memorial Garden.
4. Once the building has been evacuated and all children are accounted for parents may retrieve their children from the designated waiting after signing them out per standard RE protocol.
5. Once a year a fire drill is required to be conducted during a Sunday service to ensure the safety of our congregation.

E. First Aid and Incident Reporting

First aid kits are maintained by the Religious Education staff. The main kit is located in the RE kitchen small kits are located in each RE Classroom.

1. In case of serious injury, 911 will be called for emergency assistance. A land phone is located in the RE Office and the Nursery. Phones are also located in the Main offices and the Main Kitchen. Parents and/or guardians will be notified as soon as possible and an incident report shall be completed and submitted to Religious Education staff.
 - a. In case of minor injury, appropriate first aid will be applied, the parent/guardian notified, and an incident report completed and turned over to Religious Education staff.
 - b. A file is maintained in the RE office for all incident/accident reports.

F. For Staff/Volunteer meeting alone with a child

With as much advance notice as possible, the volunteer or staff is required to inform the DLRE as to the date, time, location and purpose of any private meeting. Any private meeting must happen by arrangement with and the express permission of the child's parents.

G. Nursery-Specific Information

The TVUUC Nursery is offered to families with children aged three and under for childcare during regular Sunday services and other specified congregational functions. TVUUC will hire and train paid childcare providers. The following guidelines shall be applied to regular Sunday morning nursery and childcare times as well as special events. The primary role of the childcare workers is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children. In order to accomplish this, the Childcare Policy (Appendix 6) which is posted in the nursery and provided to parents upon request, must be followed by all parties involved, including staff, volunteers and parents who use the nursery. The childcare guidelines include safety and supervision related information, including use of the bathroom, diapering, and transferring children from the nursery back to their parents at the end of care.

1. Childcare providers shall be trained in First Aid, CPR and AED usage.

H. Alcohol and Drug Usage

Any adult actively on duty supervising children or youth may not consume alcohol or use any form of drug which can affect physical or mental performance before or during the carrying out of his/her responsibilities.

IX. Physical Safety of Children and Adults

Proper attention to and management of physical safety concerns is another important aspect of maintaining a safe congregation. TVUUC has established a Buildings and Grounds Committee that meets regularly to address all physical safety-related issues that arise, and to discuss future project and planning needs. In order to protect everyone's physical safety, all congregants are asked to be aware of their surroundings, and to bring any physical safety concerns immediately to the attention of the DLRE or Buildings and Grounds for action. Any area of our grounds may be a potential safety risk if children are left unsupervised, and proper supervision is extremely important.

In addition to taking action on immediate safety issues that arise, the following steps will be implemented to routinely monitor physical safety:

A. Safety Inspections

In August and March of each year, a semi-annual safety inspection will be performed of both the interior and exterior grounds of TVUUC by the DLRE, Chairperson of Buildings and Grounds Committee, and a designee of the Board. These inspectors will pay special attention to child safety areas of plant and playground.

1. Fire and Electrical Safety

- a. Child-proof plugs are to be placed in unused electrical outlets in the RE Space.
- b. Smoke Detectors are hard-wired and checked yearly.
- c. Fire Extinguishers are located in the Main Kitchen, the RE Kitchen and the RE Hallway and the Front Hallway.
- d. Emergency Evacuation Signs are posted in the RE Classrooms.
- e. A Sunday morning fire drill shall be conducted annually for all Sunday Religious Education classes and coordinate with adult services.

X. Responding to Complaints of Sexual or Physical Abuse or Harassment

As the Church should be a safe environment for all, no form of sexual or physical abuse or sexual harassment can be tolerated. Accordingly, complaints of sexual harassment or sexual or physical abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice. A standard procedure will be followed by those who have a complaint relating to any incident.

- A. There are several situations which may prompt a response regarding a complaint or concern about sexual or physical abuse or sexual harassment, including but not limited to:
 - 1. A child, youth or adult reports possible abuse by a Church official, member or attendee;
 - 2. A Church official, member, friend, or attendee suspects that a child or youth is being abused;
 - 3. A child or youth reports possible abuse by a family member or other individual; or
 - 4. Church officials learn that a Church member, friend, or attendee (child, youth or adult) is under investigation for allegedly abusing others.
- B. Anyone wishing to make a complaint may speak with one of four people: the Senior Minister, the Minister for Pastoral Care, the Director of Lifespan Religious Education, or the President of the Board.
- C. Because child abuse is addressed directly in Tennessee state law, such cases require that reporting laws be followed (<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/child-safety.html>). When any of the situations described above is reported, the procedures outlined in Section (XI) will be utilized.
- D. In all cases, the Minister will also notify the President of the Board and the Regional Executive, and seek their advice and counsel. Additionally, the Minister will notify the Church's insurance company.
- E. In the event the accused abuser is the minister, reports will be filed by, and the notifications referenced above will be the responsibility of, the President of the Board of Directors.

XI. Reporting Child Abuse to Community Authorities

- A. It is not the function of the Minister, Director of Lifespan Religious Education or President of the Board of Directors to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. Rather it is both Tennessee law and the policy of TVUUC to immediately report any situation in which any person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected. Such a report must be made to the TN Department of Children's Services (DCS), at 1-877-237-0004.
- B. Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, TVUUC will rely on the decisions of those authorities as to the validity of the complaint. It is also TVUUC's responsibility under these guidelines to develop an appropriate plan of response to the allegations.
- C. In all cases, the Minister will also notify the President of the Board and the Southern Region Executive, and seek their advice and counsel. Additionally, the Minister will notify TVUUC's insurance company.
- D. In the event the accused abuser is the Minister, reports will be filed by, and the notifications referenced above will be the responsibility of, the President of the Board of Directors.

XII. Right Relations Team

- A. In order to ensure continuity, the Right Relations Team (RRT) will be established and on call at all times. This Team will be composed of the Senior Minister, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, and three members of the congregation (appointed annually by the Board of Directors). It is preferable that these members include a woman, a person of color, and person(s) who is familiar with issues likely to arise including but not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, human resources, legal issues, and pastoral care.
 - 1. In cases of a conflict of interest, a Team member must be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate.
- B. Guided by the Philosophy Statement, the RRT's function, individually and collectively, will be to offer confidential support, advice, and counsel with concern for the safety of all parties involved. The RRT will generally have the following responsibilities:
 - 1. Know about community resources for child abuse, treatment for sex offenders, and support groups for survivors.
 - 2. Know about state laws regarding reporting.
 - 3. Be a resource for people to share their concerns.
 - 4. Evaluate applications for Religious Education (RE) teachers and youth group leaders that are flagged by the Minister or DLRE as needing more information or follow up.
 - 5. Receive allegations of possible abuse and develop a process for expedient handling of such allegations.
 - 6. Receive allegations of disruptive behavior, evaluate the problem and determine the appropriate response
 - 7. Meet with convicted sex offenders to develop a Limited Access Agreement for participation in the Church's activities.
 - 8. In all cases, the Minister will also notify the President of the Board and the Regional Executive, and seek their advice and counsel. Additionally, the Minister will notify the Church's insurance company.
 - 9. In the event the accused abuser is the minister, reports will be filed by and the notifications referenced above will be the responsibility of the President of the Board of Directors.
- C. All activities of the response team will be conducted in a confidential fashion and may only be disclosed when necessary.

XIII. Safety Needs of the Congregation Regarding Reports of Abuse

A. Interim Safety Plan

When a report is filed by any person on behalf of any child and the suspected abuser is a church employee, member or attendee, the Right Relations Team will develop an interim safety plan during the investigation of abuse. This plan may include, but not be limited to implementation of a draft Limited Access Agreement, with the assistance of legal counsel if the Right Relations Team determines that such counsel should be obtained. If the

accused abuser is another youth, the plan must be developed with input from both sets of parents or guardians. The plan will be clearly communicated to the accused abuser or, if a minor, to their parents or guardians, by the Right Relations Team. The Minister and or DLRE may implement similar steps while awaiting initial recommendations of the Right Relations Team.

B. Permanent Safety Plan

Upon final disposition by appropriate authorities that determines that abuse has occurred, a permanent Limited Access Agreement will be developed by the Right Relations Team, and that among other provisions, complies with any orders imposed by such authorities.

XIV. Pastoral Needs of the Congregation Regarding Reports of Abuse

Following a report of suspected abuse, the Right Relations Team will also develop, in consultation with the Minister and Spiritual Care Team, a plan to address the pastoral needs of our congregation, including:

- A. The needs of the person or child who has allegedly been sexually abused: This may include providing information about or referrals to appropriate professional, community and UU resources as needed. Additionally the Right Relations Team may coordinate assistance with appropriate authorities.
- B. The needs of other members and friends of our congregation, including the following:
 - 1. Members, friends, or attendees immediately affected by the incident (such as family members or partners) whose needs we can help meet, either directly or indirectly;
 - 2. The Minister or the DLRE who will aid in providing the pastoral needs of the victim or accused person;
 - 3. Other members and friends of the congregation who witnessed one or more incidents or, who having heard about them, are reminded of their own concerns and prior experiences;
 - 4. The needs of the accused person: Support may include helping the accused person access the appropriate professional, community and spiritual resources. It remains the mission of this congregation to recognize and support the integrity and inherent worth and dignity of that person even though we do not condone inappropriate behaviors, and to treat them with compassion.
 - 5. The needs of other individuals who have allegedly been sexually abused by the accused and who have been reluctant to come forward: If warranted, the response plan will include a way of reaching out to these individuals in a manner that is non-threatening.

The plan will aim to bring no further harm and to maximize the safety of the alleged victim or victims, the accused, and other members of the congregation.

XV. Safety and Pastoral Needs of the Congregation Regarding Reports of Harassment

- A. Incidents of alleged sexual or physical harassment of minors, which do not warrant involvement of the DCS or law enforcement, after reporting, shall be referred to the DLRE and Minister. They may request that the RRT investigate such allegations. A plan shall be developed to address and resolve these complaints which shall make clear to the accused person that this Congregation will not tolerate harassment of any form and will provide information about appropriate counseling or other resources for both the child being harassed the alleged offender. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the minor(s) shall also be informed of this plan and involved in its development, as appropriate.
- B. Incidents of alleged sexual or physical harassment of minors which are not accepted for investigation by the DCS shall be referred to the DLRE and Minister. They may request that the RRT investigate such allegations. A plan shall be developed to address and resolve these complaints which shall make clear to the accused person that this Congregation will not tolerate harassment of any form and will provide information about appropriate counseling or other resources for both the child being harassed the alleged offender. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the minor(s) shall also be informed of this plan and involved in its development, as appropriate.
- C. Incidents of alleged sexual or physical harassment of adults shall be referred to the DLRE and Minister. These allegations may also be referred to the RRT who will then make clear to the accused person that this Congregation will not tolerate harassment of any form and will provide information about appropriate counseling or other resources for both the adult who has allegedly been harassed and the alleged offender. The RRT would also be available to discuss concerns regarding situations that have felt uncomfortable but may not constitute abuse or harassment as defined in this Policy. The function of the RRT would be to help individuals clarify the source of their discomfort, brainstorm effective means of resolving the problem, and share information about appropriate resources.
- D. Incidents of alleged sexual or physical harassment of staff are handled in the Harassment Policy in the TVUUC Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

XVI. Guidelines Regarding Sexual Offenders

Situations may occur involving individuals who have been accused or convicted of sexually aggressive or violent behavior. Those situations will be addressed as follows:

- A. An individual who has been convicted of or pled guilty to a charge of sexual misconduct or who has been determined to have engaged in any form of child abuse in any civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical forum will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved.
- B. If an individual has been legally accused of sexual misconduct and is currently involved in civil or criminal litigation of such a charge, that individual will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved until there is final disposition of the case (resolution).

- C. In the event that a person has been convicted of a sexual offense and completed a term of incarceration and seeks to enter the life of the congregation, the Right Relations Team will meet to make a determination as to whether or not and the ways in which the individual may be safely involved in the life of the congregation. If it is determined that the person can participate in congregational life, a Limited Access Plan will be developed and implemented.
- D. In all cases the Right Relations Team may seek legal counsel before proceeding with either a draft or permanent Limited Access Agreement.

XVII. Disruptive Behavior

The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC) has enjoyed a long tradition of peace, fellowship, and civility within its congregation. Each Sunday we affirm our commitment to be a free and open church community where differences are respected. In order to secure our tradition of civility and inclusion, we recognize the need to address the presence of behaviors that may challenge our sense of individual and communal safety and well-being. Disruptive behaviors include any actions that inhibit or interfere with our ability to fully participate in congregational activities. Therefore, the following shall be the policy of the Church if and when such a challenge may arise:

- A. Situations involving disruptive behavior will be brought to the attention of the President of the Board of Directors and the Minister who may refer the situation to the Right Relations Team. The Board of Directors will be notified of this action.
- B. The Right Relations Team will investigate the matter using this policy for guidance.
- C. If an immediate response is required, it will be undertaken by the Senior Minister (if available), and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include 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. Any time any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister being present, the Minister and the President of the Board of Directors must be notified. All plans for follow up steps will be referred to the Right Relations Team.
- D. Persons identified as being disruptive will be responded to as individuals of dignity and worth.
- E. Information concerning the alleged incident(s) that led to concern will be systematically collected from the concerned parties by delegated Right Relations Team members and documented before any action is take.
- F. To aid in evaluation the problem and determining the appropriate response, the following points will be used in assessing the nature and severity of referred problems.
 - Dangerousness: Is the individual a source of threat or harm to persons or property?
 - Disruptiveness: What is the extent of disruption to Church function?
 - Congregational Integrity: How likely is it that existing or prospective Church members will be driven away by the alleged behavior?

- Causes: Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the Church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
 - Probability of Change: How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
 - History: What has been the frequency and the degree of disruption caused by the individual in the past?
- G. The Right Relations Team will meet to assess the findings and decide on a course of action, with the following four levels of response recommended to them.
1. Level One: A Right Relations Team member or members contacts the person named as the source of the disruption and informs them of the nature of the concern. The person's viewpoint of the matter will be elicited, valued, and documented. Right Relations Team members will then assess the situation.
 2. Level Two: If the basis of the original concern is determined to be valid, this finding will be clearly communicated to the person in question and if necessary, a contract for clearly defined behavior change may be negotiated. Such communication and contract will be documented.
 3. Level Three: If the person in question refuses to respond to the communication of concern for the behavior, refuses to negotiate a contract, refuses to abide by a contract, or is engaging in behavior of sufficient severity, he or she may be excluded from the Church Community and the Church premises for a specified period of time, with reasons for such action, and conditions for return, clearly communicated and documented.
 4. Level Four: The person in question is permanently excluded from the Church Community and the Church premises with steps taken as needed to enforce the integrity of the decision.
- H. Should the Right Relations Team decide that exclusion or expulsion from the Church Community is necessary, they will consult the Board of Directors prior to action being taken.
- I. The four levels of response recommended by this policy may be applied in the order determined by the Safe Congregation Right Relations Team and the Board of Directors in their judgment.
- J. If appropriate, the Right Relations Team may offer referrals for professional services.
- K. All documentation developed in the course of investigating and resolving allegations of disruptive behavior will be kept confidential. The President of the Board of Directors will be responsible for determining access to such documentation and for ensuring its security.

XVIII. Management of Possible Risk and Hazards

A. Firearms

No firearms are allowed on the premises.

1. If a person possesses a gun on the premises, the person will be asked to leave immediately.
2. If the person refuses to leave, the Knoxville Police Department will be called.

IX. Appendices

1. Application for Nursery Caregiver
2. Voluntary Disclosure Statement
3. Code of Ethics for Adults working with Children and Youth
4. Safe Congregations Policy Verification of Receipt
5. Permission Slip for YRE Field Trip or Overnight
6. TVUUC Child Care Staff Policies and Procedures

Appendix 1

Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church
2931 Kingston Pike
Knoxville TN 37918

Application for Nursery Caregiver position

Thank you for your interest in the position of Childcare Provider. Our congregation takes seriously our responsibility of assuring the safety of our youth. Please fill out this form and return to the Director of Youth Religious Education. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for our youngest children.

Name (first, middle, last) _____ Date _____

Have you ever used a different name? ___ yes ___ no

If yes, please list with dates _____

Address: _____

Street

town, state, zip

Number of years at current address: _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Cell _____ Email _____

Place of current employment, position, dates of employment, job-related experience, supervisor including phone number. _____

Are you a member of TVUUC? _____ How long? _____

Have you had any early childhood development education/training? _____ degree? _____

Please explain _____

Are you certified to perform infant and child CPR? If not, we do require all Childcare Staff to obtain certification as soon as possible once hired. _____

Do you have access to reliable transportation? _____

A. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense? If yes, please explain.

B. Have you ever been accused and/or convicted of any crimes against a person? If yes, please provide details

C. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by any employer for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse? If yes, please provide details:

D. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth? If yes, please provide details.

Please list previous employment and job-related experience, including phone number position, supervisor.

Please list two references who are not relatives who have known you for at least five years and who are familiar with your character as it pertains to your experience with children:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Relationship to you _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Relationship to you _____

How long do you want to work in childcare at TVUUC? _____

I authorize Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC) to contact the reference information contained herein regarding my character and fitness for work with children. I authorize references to provide such information about me. I hereby release and hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless TVUUC, its Board members, employees and volunteers.

Furthermore, in accordance with TVUUC's safety procedures, I authorize TVUUC to carry out a background check. This information will be available only to those responsible for screening staff or volunteers or participating in a response team, or as required by law.

I attest that the above information is true and correct.

Signature _____ Date _____

Voluntary Disclosure Statement

Date of application _____

Name _____ **Birth Date** ____ / ____ / ____
last first middle

Home Address _____
Street address City State Zip

Social Security # ____ - ____ - ____ **Other names used (e.g. birth name)** _____

Home Phone () ____ - ____ **Alternative** () ____ - ____

Drivers Lic. # _____ **State issued** _____ **Expiration** ____ / ____ / ____

1. Previous residence(s) for last 7 years (include college and home residences):

Address _____	State _____	Years _____
Address _____	State _____	Years _____
Address _____	State _____	Years _____
Address _____	State _____	Years _____

(continue on a separate sheet if needed)

2. Have you ever been convicted of any crime relating in any manner to children, youth, or vulnerable adults and/or your conduct with them?
 Yes No **If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)**

3. Have you ever been convicted of any crime whatsoever involving children, youth or vulnerable adults? Yes No **If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)**

4. Have you ever been adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children, youth, or vulnerable adults? Yes No
If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)

5. Are you now or have you ever been subject to any court order involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor, youth, or vulnerable adult, including, but not limited to a domestic order for protection? Yes No If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)

6. Have your parental rights ever been terminated for reasons involving sexual or physical abuse of children? Yes No If yes, please explain: (use a separate sheet if needed.)

I understand that:

- a. The congregation may deny employment, paid or volunteer, to any person who answers "yes" to any one of questions 2-6. If hired and the congregation later discovers circumstances that would indicate a "yes" answer to any of the above questions, employment may be terminated immediately.
- b. The congregation may terminate employment or volunteer services of any person if that person is found, regardless of when discovered, to:
 - 1) have a history of complaints of abuse of a minor;
 - 2) have resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position whether paid or unpaid, due to complaint(s) of sexual abuse of a minor, youth, or vulnerable adult; and/or
 - 3) have falsified or omitted information in this disclosure statement.
- c. The information provided on this form is subject to verification, which may include a criminal history check and request from any central registry of child abusers.
- d. This disclosure must be updated yearly.

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed by Minor's Parent or Guardian _____ Date _____

Code of Ethics

for adults working with children and youth:



Adults and older youth that are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and 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 nurturing, care and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized.

One of the most important areas of growth is the development of self-worth and a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that 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 any kind of sexual behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with children or youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

Adults should also model the positive and respectful behaviors that we expect of children and youth: courtesy, timeliness, orderliness, use of affirming verbal and body language, and refraining from smoking in front of the children and youth.

Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this role, appropriate action will be taken.

I have read the above "Code of Ethics" and agree to abide by this code while serving as an advisor for youth.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Role: (Advisor, Chaperone, Teacher, etc.) _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix 4 Safe Congregation Policy Verification of Receipt

SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT

The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church takes seriously its responsibility to enact policies and procedures to ensure the safety of all who participate in the life of our congregation.

The information, policies and procedures described here are necessarily subject to change. I acknowledge that revisions may occur, and that I will be informed of any changes and provided an updated copy of the manual at that time. I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

I have received the TVUUC Safe Congregation Policy and Procedures manual, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with all policies contained in this manual and any revisions made to it.

Employee/Volunteer's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 5

Tennessee Valley UU Church
2931 Kingston Pike
Knoxville, TN 37919
865-523-4176

PERMISSION SLIP FOR YRE FIELDTRIP OR OVERNIGHT

EVENT DESCRIPTION:

Child's Name: _____ Allergies: _____

Parent's Name(s): _____

Home Tel #: _____ Parent's Cell _____

Additional Emergency Contact: Name and Phone: _____

Medical Insurance Company _____

Policy Holder's Name _____

Group Number _____ Member I.D. Number _____

Doctor's Name and Phone: _____

I hereby give my consent for my child to attend. I authorize the drivers and/or supervising adults to take any reasonable action to ensure the safety, health and welfare of my child. In the case of an accident or emergency I give my consent for any immediate necessary medical treatment or surgical or diagnostic procedures deemed necessary by the attending physician and performed under the supervision of a member of the medical staff of the hospital providing the medical services. It is understood that in the event of a serious illness or injury, reasonable efforts to reach me will be attempted.

I agree and hereby release and hold harmless TVUUC and/or any and all adult supervisors of the activity, from and for any and all liability which may arise from damages, loss or injuries, either to person or property, which my child may sustain while engaged in the activity named above, including but not limited to, any damages, loss or injuries that may be sustained through transportation to and from the activity.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Detach and keep for your records:

What:

Date:

Where:

Departure Time:

Return Time:

Advisor:

Appendix 6

TVUUC Child Care Staff Policies and Procedures

Reminder: All child care staff are required to have completed TVUUC Child Care Training and to have current Infant/Child CPR certification from the American Red Cross or American Heart Association. They must also agree to uphold all child care policies and procedures of TVUUC. The Child Care Coordinator is responsible for training and orienting child care staff on all the procedures and document that the training has occurred.

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1 Childcare Policy

Requirements of individuals providing childcare

- 1.1 Anyone providing childcare in TVUUC facilities must consist of two unrelated Individuals, both of whom meet the following criteria:
 - 1.1.1 At least 18 years of age
 - 1.1.2 Having a background check on file with the TVUUC office

- 1.2 Anyone providing childcare in TVUUC facilities must follow all policies and procedures as outlined in the TVUUC Child Care Staff Policies and Procedures Manual.

2 Work Policies

2.1 Timesheets

- 2.1.1 Fill out your time sheet after every event.
- 2.1.2 If you need a substitute, contact one of the other nursery workers. If you cannot arrange for a substitute, call the RE Program Assistant (REPA), preferably with 24 hours notice. If you can't reach the REPA, contact the DLRE.
- 2.1.3 Cell phones and other electronic devices (mp3 players, iPods, cameras, etc...) should only be used for work-approved purposes.
- 2.1.4 Only scheduled childcare workers, paid TVUUC staff, approved volunteers for that event, or guardians of a child currently signed in may be in the room with you.

2.2 Attendance

- 2.1.1 You are expected to work all shifts scheduled for and to arrive on time.
- 2.1.2 If you are unable to present for your scheduled shift for any reason, you are expected to contact the REPA or the DLRE before your shift begins.
- 2.1.3 Any employee accruing more than one unexcused absence without contacting the REPA in any one year period is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with no further notice.
- 2.2.4 Acceptable cause of absence is defined as sickness, injury, inclement weather or other emergency.

2.2 Personal Property

- 2.2.1 Put your personal property (purse, books, etc...) out of children's reach in the diapering room between the Nursery and Room H.

2.3 Tardiness

- 2.3.1 All incidences of tardiness must be recorded on the employee's timesheet.
- 2.3.2 All incidences of tardiness greater than 15 minutes will also be recorded by the REPA.
- 2.4.3 Any employee accruing more than three recorded incidences of tardiness in any six month period is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with no further notice.

3 Procedures

3.1 Ratios

3.1.1 Staff to child ratios

- 2:8 for children 24 months and under
- 2:10 for children 25 months to 4 years
- 2:16 for children 3 and up

- 3.1.2 In a mixed age group the ratios for the youngest child present will be followed
- 3.1.3 When the ratio is met, post a “Full” sign on the door.
- 3.1.4 Additional children can be admitted if a guardian stays to help.
- 3.1.5 The maximum amount of children allowed in the nursery is 8.
- 3.1.6 The maximum amount of children allowed in Rooms G and H (with the door opened between the two) is 16.
- 3.1.7 Only scheduled childcare workers, paid TVUUC staff, approved volunteers for that event, or guardians of a child currently signed in may be in the room with you.
- 3.1.8 If for any reason the ratio is exceeded, call the RE Representative or Responsible Adult (a guardian of one of the children in the room who has agreed to help if necessary). If additional help is not immediately available, take all children (as a group) to their guardians. Have the guardians sign their children out. Fill out an incident report if this happens.

3.2 Supervision

- 3.2.1 Never be alone with a child!
- 3.2.2 2 childcare staff should be with the children at all times and you should always remain within approved child to adult ratios.
- 3.2.3 Use common sense when watching the children inside. Prompt children to use inside voices and walking feet. Don’t let them climb on the furniture in the room or stand on chairs.
- 3.2.4 Maintain visual supervision of the space and do frequent headcounts.

3.3 Before Children Arrive

- 3.3.1 Wash your hands when you first arrive. See attached sheet for proper hand washing guidelines and other times to wash hands.
- 3.3.2 Mix bleach water (every shift) or use approved Clorox spray.
- 3.3.3 Clean the tables with a disinfecting solution.
- 3.3.4 Look over the room you’ll be in and do a safety check of the room.
 - Make sure all the outlets are covered and there are no dangling electrical cords.
 - Check for choking hazards, especially in the infant/toddler rooms (i.e. small toy parts, pebbles from outside, etc...)
 - Close doors to other rooms and outside.
 - Close door to bathroom in preschool room and to the diapering area between toddler and infant rooms
 - If going outside, check that all gates are closed and there are no hazards on the ground.
 - Make sure you have a functioning cell phone available.
 - Make sure the sign in sheet is in place and there is a pen available.
 - Get together any snacks/drinks from the RE kitchen and bring them into the room so you don’t have to leave the kids during the event.
 - Put on your nametag.

3.4 Communication with Guardians

- 3.4.1 Acknowledge each guardian/child as they enter the room and introduce yourself if you don't already know them.
- 3.4.2 Try and give each guardian a simple sentence when they pick up telling them how their child was during the event and anything unusual that happened.
- 3.4.3 If you need to contact a guardian during the event either (1) call their cell phone / text them or (2) contact the RE representative on duty.

3.5 Sign-In/Sign-Out

- 3.5.1 All children must be signed in and signed out by an approved guardian. Please verify who will be picking up the child.
- 3.5.2 If they are new to childcare at TVUUC have him/her fill out a TVUUC visitor form and give them a copy of our policies.
- 3.5.3 If you don't know the child put a nametag on them.

3.6 Interaction with Children

- 3.6.1 Lead activities and interact with children during the event.
- 3.6.2 Follow TVUUC Behavior Management Policy (attached)

3.7 Playground

- 3.7.1 If you are on the playground there must be 2 child care staff on the playground at all times (i.e. one worker cannot be inside the room with some children).
- 3.7.2 If a child needs to go to the bathroom have one staff member stand in the door to the room and still help monitor the playground.
- 3.7.3 Monitor the entire playground. Position yourselves so that corners of playground are within lines of sight.
- 3.7.4 Make the upper playground off-limits if all staff are needed in the graveled area.
- 3.7.5 The first person that takes the children out to the playground will take the aqua stretchy playground key bracelet with him/her. It is located on the wall as you go out and fits all gate locks except the one near Kingston Pike near the Second Presbyterian driveway. The key should immediately be put back when you come inside.
- 3.7.6 Guardians may not leave a child unattended on the playground. Child care staff should not supervise children who are not signed in for child care.
- 3.7.7 Follow Playground rules (see attached sheet)

3.8 Universal Precautions

- 3.8.1 Universal Precautions is the term for infection control measures all health care workers and child care providers should follow to protect themselves from infectious disease. Universal Precautions are followed at TVUUC. See the attached sheet for more information.

3.9 Diapering

- 3.9.1 If the Nursery is open we will change diapers as needed. If the Nursery is not open we will contact the guardian if his/her child needs a diaper change.
- 3.9.2 Always follow TVUUC approved diaper changing policies (see attached sheet) when changing diapers.

3.10 Bathroom

- 3.10.1 All children must use one of the bathrooms attached to the classroom. There is a child-sized toilet between rooms G and F and an adult-sized toilet between room H and the nursery. Make sure children wash hands after using the bathroom.
- 3.10.2 Never enter a bathroom alone with a child. If you must help a younger child with toileting (e.g., pulling up pants) make sure the door to the bathroom is open and you tell the other staff that you are going to help the child.
- 3.10.3 If a child has an accident and needs new clothes, contact the guardian to help clean up their child and change him/her into clean clothes.

3.11 Food

- 3.11.1 Serve a snack when it seems appropriate, usually half way through the event.
- 3.11.2 Unless the child has food restrictions or allergies, only TVUUC provided snacks may be eaten in the room. Exceptions can be made as needed by the Child Care Coordinator.
- 3.11.3 Please don't bring food or hot drinks for yourself (e.g., take-out from McDonald's etc...). Cold drinks stored out of the children's reach are fine.
- 3.11.4 Guardians may bring in clearly labeled snacks and drinks in sippy cups for children in the Nursery. Properly labeled water bottles may also be brought for older children.

3.12 Clean Up & Closing Rooms

3.12.1 Nursery Room

- Put toys away.
- Spray all toys with bleach water or use another approved disinfecting method.
- Disinfect toys that have been in mouths and leave to dry or put away as appropriate.
- Clean and disinfect diaper changing table and table in room.
- Wash and disinfect any leftover dishes and cups.
- Make sure all windows are closed.
- Turn off lights and return food to RE Kitchen.

3.12.2 Preschool/School age room

- Put toys away.
- Clean and disinfect tables.
- Spray toys with bleach water or use another approved disinfecting method.
- Wash and disinfect any leftover dishes and cups.
- Make sure all windows are closed.
- Turn off lights and return food to RE Kitchen.

3.13 First Aid & Injuries

- 3.13.1 Follow common sense when dealing with injuries. For anything more than a minor scrape/bruise contact the guardian/s. If appropriate, call 911 first then contact the RE representative and guardian/s.
- 3.13.2 For minor scrapes, wash with mild soap and water and apply a band-aid if needed. Do not apply any topical creams/sprays.
- 3.13.3 For minor bruises/bumps apply an ice pack if necessary. Ice packs can be found in the RE Kitchen.
- 3.13.4 Fill out an incident report for any accidents, injuries or other out of the ordinary occurrences involving a child, including occasions where you call the guardian to the room.
- 3.13.5 We do not administer medications, except in instances of allergic reactions.

3.14 Incident Management of Bodily Fluids

- 3.14.1 If a child vomits, or has an accident resulting in urine, feces, or blood on the floor, move the children away from the spill immediately. Contact the child's guardian and the RE Representative. Ask them to come to the room immediately. When the two adults arrive the guardian should help comfort and clean up his/her child. The other adult and one staff member will take the remaining children into another room if appropriate. There will always be two adults with the children. The other staff member will clean up the spill following proper procedures for bodily wastes outlined below.
 - The staff person handling the situation must first put on disposable gloves.
 - Use disposable paper towels to wipe up as much of the visible material as possible, then place the soiled towels and any other soiled materials in a plastic bag that has been securely tied or sealed. If the spill occurs on a hard surface, the entire area must be disinfected immediately with a solution of ¼ C. bleach to 1 gallon water.
 - If the spill occurs on carpeting, blot the area with paper towels immediately, and then spot clean the area with a detergent-disinfectant rather than a bleach solution. Additional cleaning with a carpet shampooer or steam cleaner may be necessary. When cleaning of the area is completed, put contaminated gloves into a plastic bag, then tie securely or seal the bag and discard it. ^[L]_[SEP] Then wash your hands thoroughly.

3.15 Emergency Procedures

- 3.15.1 Evacuation routes are posted by the inside doors of each room. If you need to evacuate, take the contact information binder and first aid kit with you.
- 3.15.2 Put infants/young toddlers in evacuation cribs to evacuate.
- 3.15.3 Use the walking ropes for the older toddlers/3-year-olds.
- 3.15.4 Always count the children and make sure everyone is evacuated.

4 Child Abuse: Prevention and Response

Tennessee law requires *anyone* who has substantial reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected to report the situation to the Department of Child Services. See the attached handout labeled Child Abuse: Prevention and Response to further educate yourself about this important issue.

5 Attachments

5.1 Incident Report

5.2 How and When to Wash Hands

5.3 Childcare Information and Emergency Form

5.4 Childcare Policy for Guardians

5.5 Behavior Management Policy

5.6 Playground Rules

5.7 Diaper Changing Procedure

5.8 Child Abuse: Prevention and Response

How and When to Wash Hands

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. It is best to wash your hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds. However, if soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast acting.

When washing hands with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend!
- Rinse hands well under running water
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet

Remember: If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based gel to clean hands.

When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply about ½ tsp. product to the palm of one hand
- Rub hands together
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.
- Do not use if hands are visibly dirty.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom
- Before and after tending to someone who is sick
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound

Childcare Policy for Guardians

Welcome to the TVUUC Childcare program! We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and fun environment for your child/ren. To that end, we have a few guidelines. We appreciate your help in following these guidelines.

- All children must be signed into the room by an approved guardian. The staff needs to know who will be picking up your child, if other than you. Please make eye contact and speak with a child care staff member when you sign in and out.
- The approved guardian must remain on TVUUC premises.
- Each child must have a Childcare Information and Emergency Contact form on file and have it updated yearly, or as necessary when information changes.
- If the nursery is open, the child care staff will change diapers. Unfortunately we don't have the staff to be able to change diapers when the nursery is not open. In the event your child in diapers needs a diaper change when the nursery is not open, we will contact you.
- Clearly labeled snacks and drinks from home are welcome in the nursery or for children under the age of 24 months.
- For children over 24 months a TVUUC approved snack (i.e. goldfish, graham crackers, apple juice) will be provided for events lasting more than 2 hours. Please do not bring in outside food unless your child has dietary restrictions or allergies. It is unfair to the other kids in childcare.
- Clearly labeled water bottles are welcome for older children.
- Please reinforce with your child before you leave that they need to follow the rules of the playground and inside spaces and be respectful of the child care staff and other children in the room.
- Part of providing a safe environment is discipline. We use positive guidance methods and staff is trained to interact with the children in a positive manner. If an instance occurs where positive guidance is not working despite our best efforts, we will contact you to come and help.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Child Care Program at TVUUC please contact the RE Program Assistant or Director of Religious Education.

Behavior Management Policy

At TVUUC, we strive to create a safe, supportive environment where children and adults alike can learn to think, feel, and judge for themselves what is true and right, and then act from their own internal guidance. In our childcare program, we employ positive guidance methods, as outlined in our procedures, to help children learn to be responsible for their own behavior, promoting the development of healthy self-esteem and self-discipline. Since we believe that children learn through example, we expect our staff to model appropriate values and behaviors, keep a calm and positive attitude, and show interest in and remain actively engaged with our children, as well as maintain safe, clean, and developmentally appropriate environments. It is our policy to never submit children to discipline that is severe, humiliating, or frightening.

Behavior Management Procedures: Overview

The following pages outline various techniques for helping children learn to manage their own behavior in a group environment. However, caregivers can minimize the need for such techniques by working to create an atmosphere that promotes positive behavior. This can be done as follows:

Maintaining A Developmentally Appropriate Environment:

The environment in which childcare takes place has a profound effect on children's behavior. With younger children, it is important to create and maintain a safe, hazard-free environment, allowing for the most freedom for exploration, and fewest limits possible. For older children, providing activities and materials that are age appropriate is critical for ensuring a positive experience. Providing materials that are either too young or too old for the children will result in their misusing those materials, which creates a chaotic and unsafe environment.

Before children arrive, childcare providers should complete a safety checklist to identify any potential hazards in the room. If a hazardous situation develops (for example, a toy breaks or a spill occurs,) staff should work immediately to correct the situation. Caregivers should also ensure that they have enough activities prepared in advance for the ages of children who will be in their care.

Fostering Positive Relationships Between Caregivers, Children, and Guardians:

*Respect for Families--*At TVUUC, our parenting styles and choices are as diverse as our spiritual beliefs. For the limited amount of time we care for children in our building, at most a few hours each week, it is important to provide as much consistency between our care and their guardians' care as possible, as long as it is not an immediate health or safety risk for the children. Regardless of our own views about pacifiers, attachment objects, bottles, etc., such items should be welcome in our program if they provide the child with the consistency and security they need to feel safe in our care. It is also important that caregivers speak respectfully about the diverse parenting choices present in our congregation.

Respect for the Children—The caregivers should develop a positive attitude toward all children in their care, and be respectful of their needs and feelings. It is sometimes tempting to laugh at or gently tease children for their “childish” behavior. Try to look at it from their perspective and level of understanding. Allow them to make as many choices about what happens to their bodies as possible, while providing a safe environment. A caregiver's job is to build children's self-esteem and confidence.

Positive Interactions--Regardless of age, all children are trying to figure out appropriate ways to act in a community. Caregivers set the tone for the group in how they speak and interact with the children. For younger children, this means actually getting down on the floor, playing, talking, and singing with them. For older children, this means participating in their activities, games, and conversations. This allows caregivers to model the communication skills, behaviors, and values they wish the children to adopt. It also ensures that the caregivers will be continuously aware of what is occurring in the group, and will help them detect conflicts quickly. Most importantly, it allows caregivers to develop trusting, positive relationships with the individual children. Children who feel liked and respected will want to maintain those feelings by behaving in ways that the caregiver will approve of. Caregivers who remain mindful of how their words and actions affect group dynamics will find that they need to use the following behavior management techniques much less.

Behavior Management Procedures—School Age

Behavior management includes setting limits and correcting misbehavior. It also includes encouraging children, guiding them, helping them develop self-esteem, and teaching them to think for themselves by offering opportunities for choice. To this end, we use the following methods in our childcare program:

Social Contract:

6. On the first day (when appropriate), staff should sit down with the group of children and have them brainstorm and vote on a basic set of rules for the group, called a “social contract.” By creating this contract for themselves, the children will feel more ownership of it, and will be more likely to internalize the rules.
7. Child care providers may add three nonnegotiable rules.
8. If it's not appropriate or possible for the staff to create a “social contract” with the children the Child Care Coordinator will provide a list of rules and consequences for the group.
9. Child care providers should then make sure all children understand the reasons behind the rules, and then work with them to establish consequences for each rule that are logical, and a natural result of breaking the rules.
10. The social contract should be displayed in the room, and should be explained to any new children.
11. The social contract should be recreated occasionally, whenever there is a significant number of new children, new situations that call for new rules, or group “buy-in” has diminished.

Behavior Management Techniques:

Staff should employ the following behavior management techniques, as appropriate to the situation:

- 1) *Remain in close proximity*—When a child's misbehavior is not serious, but could become so if not addressed, make your presence known to the child by moving close to him or her, without interfering. In some cases, this may be enough to cause the child to self-correct his or her behavior.
- 2) *Redirect behavior*—Minor behavior problems can also be stopped from escalating by removing the child from the situation. Redirect the child's behavior into another activity and guide him or her to appropriate behavior.
- 3) *Facilitate discussion*—When conflict arises between children, encourage helpful discussion. Give the children a chance to explain the situation, and then ask them questions to guide them to a solution. Facilitate this by making sure that negative language and insults are not used. Help them take pride in resolving the issue peacefully themselves.
- 4) *Give verbal reminders*—When a child is acting in opposition to the limits and expectations of the center, but is not creating an immediate danger to others or the facility, the staff should give verbal reminders, firmly stating the limit and the reason behind it. Although saying the same phrases over and over again may be tiresome to the child care provider, it is this repetition that helps the children internalize the rules, promoting the development of self-discipline.
- 5) *Have "time-in"*—When a child continues to act in opposition to limits and expectations after receiving a verbal reminder, the child care provider should take the child aside, and privately and respectfully speak to the child about his or her behavior in a serious manner.
- 6) *Personal behavior contract*—When the following methods do not create results or the misbehavior creates an immediate danger to others or the facility, staff will contact the Child Care Coordinator (if on site) and guardians immediately. The Child Care Coordinator and guardian will work with the child to create a personal behavior contract, using the same procedures as with the social contract. The Child Care Coordinator, in consultation with the senior minister will also decide if a child's serious or chronic misbehavior should result in exclusion from our care for a certain period of time.

Behavior Management Procedures—Younger Children

Having Developmentally Appropriate Expectations:

The most common “misbehaviors” with young children are usually due to developmentally inappropriate expectations on the caregiver's part. These types of behaviors are not character flaws to be corrected; they are developmental stages to be respected. Here are the most common examples:

Sharing—Young children are naturally egocentric; their brains have not developed to a level where they can consistently feel empathy for other people. They also do not have the cognitive ability to understand the concept of sharing until about the age of three, and it takes some time after that to perfect the skill. Before this age, toddlers mainly engage in “parallel play,” where they play side-by-side with similar toys. It is therefore important to have multiples of the same toys wherever possible. When only one toy is available, encourage children to take turns, and carefully monitor them. Or, attempt to redirect one child to another activity. Reinforce any steps toward sharing that you see, but realize that you are only laying the groundwork for future skills. Never punish or shame a young child for her inability to share.

Separation from guardians—Young children are supposed to have strong attachments to their guardians, and object permanence is still a shaky concept. Guardians can be encouraged to make this separation easier by remaining calm and positive, reassuring children that they will return soon, and naming the adults to whom they are transferring care. (“Mommy is leaving, but she will be back soon. Miss Jenny will take care of Abby while Mommy is gone.”) If guardians “sneak out,” this leaves the child unsure that they left on purpose, if they will return, or whom they should trust to care for them. Caregivers can ease this separation by acknowledging and respecting the child's feelings, reassuring him that the guardian always comes back, and distracting him with a book, activity, or song. Establishing a routine, where the same events occur at each separation, can help the child make this transition more smoothly over time.

Transitions—It is very difficult for a young child to move from one activity to another if it is not his idea. Caregivers can make transitions easier by providing one or two minute warnings before the transition occurs, singing songs to make the transition more fun, and remaining calm but firm when transitions must occur.

Similarly, since young children do not have the same sense of time as adults, waiting is very difficult for them. Caregivers should strive to minimize the amount of time young children need to spend waiting. This means having activities prepared in advance, and creating routines to make transitions occur smoothly and quickly.

Hitting, pushing, and biting—Young children develop the need to say things before the ability to say them. They are also egocentric, and are simply unable to empathize with another person's needs and feelings. When facing conflict, they often use physical force. This is normal. When it occurs, caregivers should set clear limits about the behavior, ensure that

neither child is hurt or scared, and then remind them to “use their words.” Give the children simple phrases and actions they can use. (Tell him, “Stop!” and hold out your hand like this.) Teach them to respect each other's bodies. (When she says, “Stop!” you need to stop. She chooses what happens to her body.) It is important to acknowledge and be empathetic to the feelings of both children; both are reacting in developmentally appropriate ways. As always, expect repetition as children learn the new skills.

Biting is a common occurrence in groups of young children. It is no different from other forms of physical conflict from the children's perspective, but is much scarier for adults, and is more likely to cause injury and spread germs. Handle an incident of biting like any other physical conflict, remaining calm and addressing the needs of both children. Use proper sanitation techniques to care for any wounds. If one child continues to bite, try to be preemptive in preventing the situation that causes it. Offer the child an object to bite on when they are frustrated, and encourage them to “use their words.” It is important not to shame the child, as this is a developmentally appropriate behavior. The child care coordinator should be informed whenever a bite has occurred, and (s)he will fill out appropriate paperwork and speak to the guardians.

Using Positive Behavior Management Techniques When Necessary:

Simple, Clear, Consistent Boundaries--It is the job of young children to test boundaries. It is the job of caregivers to consistently and gently enforce them. Use simple language to state a limit and the reason behind it. Try to state the limit positively whenever possible. For instance, instead of “Don't run,” a caregiver may say, “Walk please.” Expect young children to test the same boundary over and over again; this is their way of ensuring they can trust your limits, “practicing” the new behavior, and internalizing the boundary. It is therefore important that boundaries remain relatively static, so that children receive the same message each time.

Distraction and Redirection—When stopping a child from engaging in an undesirable behavior, offer them an activity that is acceptable. The caregiver may offer this activity to prevent a behavior (s)he believes is about to happen (“distraction”) or to correct a behavior that is already occurring (“redirection.”) Many “misbehaviors” are simply developmentally appropriate behaviors that need to be redirected to a proper outlet. For instance, if a child is throwing cars at other children, redirect her to throwing soft toys against a wall, or playing “catch” with you. If there is a behavior that occurs continually but has no safe outlet, discuss this with the Child Care Coordinator so that adjustments can be made to the materials in the room.

Offer choices—Young children are obsessed with power...mainly because they have so little of it. Imagine how frustrating it would be to have almost all of your choices made by people who are bigger, stronger, and older than you! Caregivers can ease this power struggle by providing children with as many choices as possible, but limiting them to two or three options. (Instead of “Which toy would you like to play with?” ask, “Would you like to play with the trucks or build with blocks?”) When a child must obey a caregiver, the caregiver can help the

child “save face” by offering little choices. (“You must put your clothes on. Would you like to put your pants or your shirt on first?”)

Communication with Child Care Coordinator—If the above methods prove ineffective, or there is an especially chronic or disruptive behavior, the child care staff member should consult with the Child Care Coordinator to decide how to properly address the behavior.

Our Playground

To ensure that our playground is a fun and safe place for all children we ask your help in observing the following guidelines and rules.

Playground Guidelines:

1. An adult must be on the playground anytime youth or children under the age of 18 are present.
2. YOU, the guardian, are responsible for making sure your child is supervised and following the rules while on the playground.
3. If your child is signed in for Sunday School or childcare the adult in charge is responsible for supervising the playground. If the children are playing on the playground when you drop off/pick up it is your responsibility to sign your child in/out and verbally speak with the adult in charge.
4. Report any suspicious or dangerous activities to the office or the sexton on duty as quickly as possible.

Playground Rules:

1. Play safely
 - a. No rough housing
 - b. No throwing sticks, rocks or other dangerous items.
2. Swing and slide on your bottom.
3. No climbing on the outside of the play structures.
4. Sand and pea gravel stay on the ground.
5. Bring trash and dishes back into the building.
6. Put toys away when not in use.
7. Do not enter the wooded area of the hill for any reason (poison ivy is present).
8. Treat each other with respect.

Diaper Changing Procedure

Please note: children should not be given anything to play with while being diapered. These toys/objects become contaminated and spread germs. You can entertain children by talking to them – your face and voice are better than any toy.

Step 1: **Assemble all of the supplies you need.** Diaper, wipes, paper liner to cover changing surface, disposable gloves, clean clothes (if needed), plastic bag for soiled clothes (if needed), diaper cream (if needed), and facial/toilet tissue for diaper cream.

Step 2: **Place the child on the changing surface.** Always keep a hand on the child. Remove the child's shoes or socks if the feet cannot be kept out of the diaper. Remove soiled clothes and put in a plastic bag.

Step 3: **Clean the child's diaper area.** Unfasten the diaper, but leave the soiled diaper under the child. Use disposable wipes to clean from front to back, and use a fresh wipe each time. Put the soiled wipes in soiled diaper or directly into a covered, plastic-lined step can.

Step 4: **Remove the soiled diaper.** Fold the soiled surface inward and put soiled diaper into step can. If gloves were used, remove them and put into step can. Whether or not gloves were used, use a disposable wipe to clean your hands and another to clean the child's hands. Dispose of wipes in step can. Check for spills under the child. If there are any, fold the paper over so a fresh paper surface is under the child's bottom.

Step 5: **Put on a clean diaper and dress the child.** Slide a fresh diaper under the child. Examine the skin for any cracks, redness, or bleeding. Use a facial or toilet tissue to apply any diaper ointments or creams. Dispose of tissue in step can. Fasten the diaper. Re-dress the child.

Step 6: **Wash the child's hands and return the child to a supervised area.** It is best to use soap and water. If not able to wash child's hands at a sink, use disposable wipes.

Step 7: **Clean and sanitize the diaper- changing surface.** Dispose of paper liner. Spray the changing surface with soap and water. Dry surface with disposable towel. Spray entire changing surface with sanitizing bleach solution or approved sanitizer. If using bleach, leave it on for 2 minutes. Dry surface with disposable towel. Put away spray bottle of sanitizer. If using a sanitizer other than bleach, follow manufacturer's instructions for required contact time and if surface requires a water rinse after use.

Step 8: **Wash hands thoroughly.**

Child Abuse: Prevention and Response

Why is it important that I know about this?

Tennessee law requires *anyone* who has **substantial reason to believe** **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has been abused or neglected to report the situation to the Department of Child Services. Since our staff and volunteers have contact with our children, and may develop relationships of trust with them, they are more likely to notice signs of abuse or to have a child disclose a case of abuse to them.

Furthermore, sexual predators often specifically target churches to find victims. This is because churches are welcoming to the larger public, rely heavily on volunteers, inherently engender high levels of trust, and can lack the security procedures found in all other organizations involving children. This is why it is so important to educate all staff and volunteers who come in contact with our children about this subject.

Abuse has devastating long-term effects on communities, and most importantly on the children involved. While TVUUC has never had a known case of abuse occur within its building, it is important that we do everything we can to prevent such an incident. It is equally important that, if any staff or volunteers **s** becomes **a**ware of an abusive situation, either in our building or elsewhere, ~~he or she is~~ **they are** prepared to recognize the abuse, and respond quickly and appropriately.

How can I recognize an abuser or sexual predator?

You can't. Abuse happens in all types of families and communities, regardless of race, religion, or wealth. Furthermore, you cannot learn to recognize a sexual predator. They do not look or act a certain way. In fact, they rely on being able to "blend in," and winning others' trust, in order to gain access to children. The most important thing to understand is that *anyone* can be an abuser; *anyone* can be a predator.

The key to preventing and stopping abuse isn't recognizing the offender. It is:

- 1) Following the preventative measures established by TVUUC, and holding others accountable
- 2) Helping our children learn appropriate personal boundaries
- 3) Being able to recognize abuse if it occurs
- 4) Knowing how to respond if you suspect abuse

How can I help prevent abuse from occurring at TVUUC?

While no institution can guarantee an absolutely risk-free environment, TVUUC has a number of procedures in place to help protect our children, staff, volunteers, and community, from cases of abuse.

Before having access to our children, we require staff and volunteers to:

- 1) Be active in our community for at least six months (volunteers only),

- 2) Complete an application, including references and a background check,
- 3) Sign a behavior covenant.

We also have certain procedures in place to prevent situations where abuse could occur, including:

- 1) Requiring two adults to be present and visible to each other with any group of children,
- 2) Banning the use of cell phones, cameras, or other electronic media devices around our children, without the permission of staff and guardians,
- 3) Keeping track of all children in our care, and never allowing children out of our lines of sight or range of hearing.

By following these procedures, and holding others accountable to them, you help maintain an environment where the opportunities for abuse are minimal.

How can I help children learn to protect themselves?

We can help our children learn to have healthy boundaries, by maintaining appropriate physical and verbal interactions with them. It is important to remember that any physical or verbal interaction you have with a child in our building teaches him how adults in general are allowed to speak to or touch him, not just you. Here are some guidelines on physical touch to help ensure that the interaction is healthy:

12. The child initiates the touch, or the adult asks the child's permission. If the child says "no," resists physically or verbally, or seems hesitant to engage in the interaction, the adult stops the touch, and speaks respectfully about the child's feelings. The child is able to stop the touch if it becomes uncomfortable.
13. If the touch seems inappropriate to the adult, (s)he stops it from happening, and explains to the child that it does not feel okay. The adult then models touch that is appropriate (for example, a high five.)
14. The touch is clearly socially acceptable within the terms of the relationship between the adult and child, and takes place in a social setting, visible to other adults.

Adults have different levels of comfort with physical touch. So do children. You would never force an adult to hug you, nor ridicule her if she resisted a hug. Children should be taught to expect the same level of respect for their preferences.

What is abuse and what are the signs of it?

There are four main types of abuse:

Physical abuse is defined as acts by guardians or caregivers that cause physical injury to a child by other than accidental means. Physical abuse is often used in the name of discipline or punishment.

Behavioral indicators of physical abuse:

- Hostile or aggressive behavior
- Random friendliness with strangers
- Poor relationships with other children
- Being unaware of the presence of others
- Regression or slow development
- Perfectionism
- Fearfulness of guardians and/or other adults
- Destructive behavior towards self, property, others, or animals
- Rocking and/or uncontrollable crying
- Eating problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Extremely low self-esteem
- Mood swings
- Irrational fears
- Depression
- Constant anger or temper tantrums

Physical indicators of physical abuse:

- Injuries such as lacerations, fractures, bruises, patterns of bruises, burns, or facial injuries that are inexplicable and/or inappropriate for a child's developmental stage

Emotional abuse is defined as acts or omissions by guardians or adults that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders. The five main types of emotional abuse are rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, isolating, and corrupting.

Behavioral indicators of emotional abuse:

- Habit disorders, such as sucking, biting, or rocking
- Conduct/learning disorders
- Neurotic traits, such as sleep disorders, inhibition of play, and unusual fearfulness
- Hysteria
- Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- Phobias
- Behavioral extremes
- Developmental lags
- Suicidal threats or attempts
- Extreme attempts to please adults

Physical indicators of emotional abuse:

- Speech disorders
- Lags in physical development
- Failure to thrive
- Hyperactive/disruptive behavior
- Extreme passive or aggressive patterns

Neglect is defined as a guardian or caregiver's failure to provide for a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, emotional support, protection, and healthcare.

Behavioral indicators of neglect:

- Vacant or frozen stare
- Whispering speech
- Loss of or excessive appetite
- Passiveness
- Feeling deserving of punishment
- Being afraid to go home
- Underweight appearance

Physical indicators of neglect:

- Inappropriate dress for climate
- Chronic hunger
- Bald patches on the scalp
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor hygiene
- Abdominal distension

Sexual abuse is defined as contact or interaction such as fondling or penetration between any minor and an adult, or a child and another minor who is older and has power over the younger child, during which the child is being used for sexual stimulation of that adult or another person. It also includes coercing a child into watching pornographic material or sexual acts, or into posing for pornographic photos or videos.

Behavioral indicators of sexual abuse:

- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge or behavior
- Depression
- Promiscuous behavior
- Running away
- Sexual acting out on younger children
- Regressive behavior
- Sleeping disorders

Physical indicators of sexual abuse:

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain, swelling, or itching in the genital or anal area
- Bruises, bleeding, or lacerations in genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Pain during urination
- Excessive masturbation
- Obsession with genitals

Besides the above indicators, what are other ways that I may become aware of abuse?

Some children, especially older ones and youth, may confide in a trusted friend or adult. However, direct disclosure is difficult for a child because:

1. There is a sense of shame associated with the maltreatment
2. There is a sense of loyalty to the abuser
3. There is a real fear of not being believed
4. There is a fear of negative consequences—to the child or to family members

Because of this, children may try to tell you of the abuse in an indirect way, such as:

Indirect hints — “My babysitter keeps bothering me.”

Disguised disclosure — “What would happen if a girl was being touched in a bad way and she told someone about it?”

Disclosure with strings — “I have a problem but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell.”

Acting out the abuse, either in their imaginative play or with other children

If a child discloses abuse to me, how should I respond?

How you respond to the child’s disclosure or attempts at disclosure has important consequences. Not responding may leave the child feeling abandoned or unprotected. On the other hand, being overly emotional or intrusive may scare the child and hinder the disclosure.

Here are some ideas about how to respond to disclosure:

- Always take the child seriously! Listen carefully and document his or her comments.
- Sit near the child to put him or her at ease.
- Don’t touch the child without permission. Touch may be associated with the abuse.
- Remain calm. If you react with horror, disgust, or disbelief, a child may withhold further information.
- Ask open-ended questions. These are questions that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no.” This ensures that the information is provided by the child, and not the adult. For example, ask, “How did that bruise on your face happen?” instead of “Did your dad hit you and make that bruise?”
- Use the child’s language. Avoid words he or she might not understand or might find embarrassing.
- Encourage the child to tell you what happened, but don’t press for details beyond that which the child is able or willing to provide.
- Honor the child’s method of disclosure. If the child is making a disguised disclosure (for instance, claiming that the abuse happened to someone else), encourage the child to tell you about the situation. The child will often reveal that he or she is the actual victim after talking for a while.
- Avoid asking “why” questions. Children often feel they have done something wrong or must defend themselves when asked why.
- Reassure the child, but be sure to do so realistically. Let the child know that he or she is not to blame for what is happening.

- Try to get enough information to determine the child's safety. Immediate action is needed if you think the child is in imminent danger.
- Support the child. Even though you will be turning over responsibility to a Child Protective Services worker, the child will continue to look to you for support since you know about the situation, and the child will see you as a safe person.
- Let the child know what you will do now that you know about the abuse/neglect.
- Reassure the child that you will not share this information with other staff or children. But, do let the child know that you may need to tell a "helping person."

When should I report a suspicion of abuse?

If you have reasonable cause to believe suspect that a child has been abused, you should must report it. This includes noticing physical and behavioral indicators, as well as an actual disclosure from the child. A person filing a report in good faith is immune from civil or criminal litigation. This means that you cannot be prosecuted or sued for reporting with reasonable evidence, even if your suspicion turns out to be incorrect. However, failure to report is a Class A misdemeanor, and is punishable by law. Remember, it is not your responsibility to decide if abuse has occurred; it is your obligation to report if you suspect it has occurred.

Here are some sample scenarios to help you become more comfortable with what injuries should be suspected to be caused by abuse. Read each scenario, and decide whether you believe it to indicate abuse. Then, check your response against the one provided:

5.8.1—Scenario #1

You overhear your student Johnny telling some other children about how he was caught shoplifting over the weekend and his father gave him a beating with his belt for it. You take Johnny aside and tell him what you overheard. You ask if the nurse can examine him, and he agrees. The nurse finds no bruises or marks on Johnny. You call Johnny's father and he confirms that he did indeed hit Johnny with a belt, as punishment for shoplifting. Johnny's father picks him up from school as usual, and Johnny seems happy to see his father.

What are the Indicators?

Johnny was not injured by the corporal punishment he received. Since his and his father's versions of events are the same, and since Johnny does not seem fearful of his father, it is likely that this was an isolated incident of corporal punishment.

5.8.2—Scenario #2

You notice that Eric has been shifting in his seat all day. When you ask him what's wrong, he tells you that he fell down and hurt his butt. You take him to the nurse. Eric has strap-shaped welts and bruises on his butt and his lower back in various stages of healing. When you question him about it again, he admits that he sometimes gets "spanked" by his father when he makes a mess in the house. He is very afraid that you might call his father.

What are the Indicators?

Eric has been injured by corporal punishment. Furthermore, his injuries suggest he receives corporal punishment on a regular basis. This—in conjunction with the relatively minor nature

of his misbehavior (making a mess), his secrecy about his injuries, and his fear of his father—should lead you to suspect that this is an abusive situation.

5.8.3—Scenario #3

Susan, a six-year-old girl, has a bruise on her cheek, her upper arm, and her torso. She tells you that over the weekend she fell down the stairs. Susan often has bruises on her upper arms. Her mother confirms that she fell down the stairs—she says Susan is a tomboy and is always falling down.

What are the Indicators?

This explanation is highly suspect. Studies have shown that most children who fall down stairs do not sustain multiple or serious injuries. They are more likely to sustain injuries if they are being carried down the stairs and the adult falls. Furthermore, Susan's injuries are on soft, rather than bony, parts of the body, and she has sustained similar injuries in the past.

5.8.4—Scenario #4

Craig has arrived at school with bruises on his elbows and a bad scrape on his knee. When you ask what happened, he tells you that he was riding his bike on a busy street where his father had told him not to, he swerved to avoid a car, and he fell off. When you ask how he got hurt, he says it was in the fall.

What are the Indicators?

Craig's injuries are consistent with a fall from a bike. They are on the bony parts of his body, not the soft parts.

How do I report suspected abuse?

- 1) It is a good idea to write down all details of your encounter with the child as soon after it occurs as possible. This will help you remember them when you report them.
- 2) Call **1-800-4-A-CHILD** **1-877-237-0004**, as soon after the encounter as possible. Tennessee law requires reporting within 72 hours.
- 3) You should also report your suspicions to the Director of Religious Education, or the Senior Minister.
- 4) Maintain confidentiality. Do not share information about the situation with people outside the situation.

I saw an interaction between another adult and a child that wasn't really abuse, but it just didn't seem right to me. I don't want to get anyone in trouble. What should I do?

Fill out an incident report, and bring it to the Child Care Coordinator or the Director of Religious Education. Expressing a concern is not the same as making an accusation, and will not be treated as such. However, at the very least, your report may help us identify a need for further training. If you don't know whether you should report something or not, always err on the side of caution, and report it.

You should also fill out an incident report if an adult in the building, either intentionally or unintentionally, fails to follow the security measures that we have in place, such as allowing

himself or herself to be alone with a child. Again, at the very least, he or she is creating a security risk in our building, and needs further training.