

Document #:	General Policies – G-6	Created:	4-15-2008
Title/Subject:	Youth Lock-Ins & Conferences 1/18/19	Revised:	12-26-2017,
Purpose:		Reviewed/Unchanged:	
Operational Authority:	Director of Religious Education, Minister, RE Council		

Policy

Purpose:

This policy is intended to address concerns with past conferences, protect the safety and wellbeing of participating youth and adults, and conserve the property of the church. It also respects the MidAmerica Region of the UUA regulations for youth events.

This policy is designed to respect both the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) guidelines and the UU MidAmerica Region regulations for youth events.

Pertinent Terms & Definitions:

Religious Education (RE): The Unitarian Universalist Sunday school programming that we provide using UUA-provided curricula.

Youth Adult Committee (YAC): The governing/oversight body of the youth group including both youth and adult members.

Director of Lifespan Faith Development (DLFD): Staff person who oversees both adult RE and RE for Children and Youth, and who supervises the CC & YPC positions and the nursery.

Director of Religious Education (DRE): Staff person who oversees RE programming for Children and Youth, and who also supervises the CC & YPC positions and the nursery.

Youth Programs Coordinator (YPC): Staff person who oversees the RE youth programming and events.

Childcare Coordinator (CC): Staff person who oversees the infants and toddlers in the church Nursery when it is open.

Youth Lock-In: A one-night on-site sleepover event for youth with chaperones. Lock-Ins can be for youth from 6th -12th Grades.

Youth Conference “Con”: A two night on or off-site sleepover event for youth with sponsors. Designed primarily for high school youth but can sometimes be expanded to include middle school youth if the workshops are kept age appropriate.

Advisor: Usually, the DLFD, DRE, YPC, or volunteer Youth Group Coordinator who often attends events with the youth. May also be a sponsor or a chaperone.

Sponsor: An approved adult who is directly responsible for up to seven youth at a Conference.

Chaperone: Any approved adult providing oversight and supervision at any youth Lock-In or Conference.

Approved Adult: Any adult who has completed the church background check and is cleared to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults as per our **Abuse Prevention Policy (G-13)**. All attending approved adults are considered to be supervisors at events.

Children: Kindergarten through 5th grade children.

Youth: 6th through 12th grade children.

Procedure

Prior to the Event:

- The RE staff person must approve the chosen date and clear it with the Congregational Administrator before the date is reserved on the church calendar. Request should specify whether event is a Lock-In or Conference and insure ALL needed days and areas of the church are reserved. As much advance notice as possible is appreciated; up to a year advance notice for conferences and several months for Lock-Ins is ideal.
- ALL youth participants and their parents will be required to be registered in the RE Program and sign all applicable event release or consent forms. Forms specific to each event may also be required. In addition, the youth must also notify the RE Staff via e-mail of their planned attendance of any off-site event and must register with that host church. For on-site events, youth must register for the event with our church. Pre-registration is required at ALL events.
- Any medications must be noted on the health form and the adult advisors must be made aware of medication location and dispensing instructions. Any controlled substances or sharps must be turned over to the adult advisors to be counted and stored. All information will remain confidential.

Conferences at Other Locations:

- When youth from our congregation attend events at other locations, policies relevant to First Unitarian Universalist Church of Rochester will supersede less stringent policies specific to the event/conference.
- Youth from our congregation will attend district Regional conferences only with the support of adult advisors from our congregation.
- An adult may “sponsor” no more than seven youth at any conference.
- Drivers to a conference will ensure that all occupants of the vehicle wear seat belts at all times.
- Only adults aged 25 years or older may transport youth to church-sponsored conferences or events outside of Rochester. It is understood that their vehicles must be in safe driving condition, they must have valid driver’s licenses and car insurance.
- Since conferences are designed for high school youth in grades 9-12, we recommend that participants at Regional Conferences fall within that age group only, unless specifically designed to include middle school youth in grades 6-8.
- If a youth is asked to leave the event, it is the responsibility of the youth’s parent(s) or guardian(s) to pick up the youth at the church or make alternate and immediate arrangements to have the youth involved returned to parental/guardian care. Youth may be released only to a parent or to an adult designated by the parent or guardian as expressed clearly to a supervising adult from our congregation present at the event.
- Parents or guardians of youth drivers must be contacted before allowing any youth to drive home after having been asked to leave.

On-site Events:

- A ratio of one adult to seven youth must be observed.
- At least two unrelated adults must be present at all times, even if seven or fewer youth are present. This means two advisors need to arrive before the youth and two adult advisors must be in attendance until all youth have left the church building.

During the Event:

- All outer doors are locked following the arrival of the last participant. The doors at the back of the church are to be used only in an emergency. No one enters or exits the building without the knowledge and approval of the adult advisors.
- No animals (except guide dogs) and no illegal substances (drugs, alcohol) or weapons are allowed.
- There will be no sexual contact of any kind between participants. All rooms must remain open and unlocked at all times to the supervising adults. Adult supervisors will be present in all sleeping areas during overnight hours. Co-ed sleeping rooms may be accommodated at the discretion of adult supervisors. The Congregational Administrator should be consulted concerning rooms available for the overnight. Some rooms may be off limits during events.
- No candles allowed ... Burning candles must be attended at all times, should be placed with care to avoid potential combustion issues, and are not to be left burning overnight.
- Refrain from answering the church phone if it rings; the church phone system will manage calls and messages.
- Participants are welcome to use most Religious Education supplies. If any items are left in short supply following use, please inform the RE staff or adult advisor so that replacement can be made. When it is known in advance that supplies will be needed for activities it is preferential to make clear plans about whether materials should be purchased especially for the event.
- Church property and furnishings must be treated with respect. Standing on furniture or engaging in behavior that could damage church property will not be tolerated. Responsible parties may be held financially accountable for any damages caused by misuse or lack of respect for church furnishings.

Concluding the Event:

- For a Saturday night Lock-In, all equipment, personal belongings, and food must be out of the church by 8:00 AM on Sunday morning or stored and labeled neatly in a spot designated by the RE staff. Checkout times for Lock-Ins scheduled for any other day of the week will be dictated by the church calendar of activities.
- All furniture must be returned to original locations. If necessary, garbage cans should be emptied, and new can liners inserted, bathrooms cleaned and stocked, and floors swept or vacuumed.
- The Property Chair or current Sexton are to be contacted for urgent issues regarding the condition of the building. The Congregational Administrator should be notified of all other building-related issues to be addressed. Custodian will be notified via the Congregational Administrator of any minor repairs, refilling or cleaning that needs to be done following the event.

Social Media Use for and at Events:

- Use of RE computers, tablets, recording devices, cameras, or other electronic equipment as well as the church A/V system is possible with permission of RE staff and with supervision and agreement to appropriate usage. (trained A/V techs only)

- Staff or Volunteers who communicate with youth through Social Media should never ‘like’, ‘post’, ‘pin’, ‘tag’, ‘tweet’ or ‘retweet’, ‘friend’ or ‘unfriend’ any posts to or about specific individuals. These actions could be misconstrued as favoritism or bullying by exclusion. The church private Social Media sites are to be used to communicate and promote events to all youth and to clarify times, or details about said events. They are not to be used for a personal nature and should always show respect for the church and its members and friends.
- All Social Media posts to the secured, private church sites must be public in that it is viewable by the entire congregation, not just one member, observable (no hidden or private posts) and monitored by staff.
- NO attendee of any event may post any image, recording or data related to any person attending the event with the exception of RE Staff and the Congregational Administrator. They retain the media permissions forms for every individual of the church and it is their job to protect those who do not wish to have their images or info shared publicly. The church may post images of events for the promotion of RE, but only if the image has no one in it who denies consent and then only without names.
- Visiting RE staff may share event images within their church community with the same understanding of and respect for our policy.
- The image sharing policy extends beyond the dates of the event, in perpetuity.

Cell Phone Use & Emergency Contact During Events:

- Emergency contact persons for events shall NOT use the church phone number, but rather their personal cell phone numbers as the number for parents to contact in the event they must reach their youth during an event.
- Youth may have cell phones at events, but it is within reason to limit phone usage during events by asking youth to adhere to “no phone” times at events.
- Inappropriate use of phones may result in the confiscation of the phone and possibly more severe or serious consequences depending on the offense.

Reporting Misbehavior or Abuse at Events:

- At events, we are in covenant with parents, the congregation, RE staff, the Minister, the UUA, the Mid-America Region, and our insurance company.
- Understanding should be present that events can only happen when there is trust. Both adults and youth at events are encouraged to seek assistance with experience or perception of an event that is “weird” or “uncomfortable” without fear of retribution. Anonymity should be attempted if so desired by reporting events to those the members of the YAC who are overseeing the event. Thereafter, the YAC will interview those involved with compassion and with the intent of safety, inclusion, restoring right relationship, and restoring trust.
- Abuse reporting will follow our **Abuse Prevention Policy (G-13)**; as such, staff and the Minister must be informed of any reporting actions made or behavior consequences issued at an event.

Associated Documents

General Policies – G-13 Abuse Prevention Policy

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