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*Number 6.7* UUFC POLICY ON CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND REPORTING

PURPOSE

To provide a safe and nurturing environment for all children and youth who attend UUFC. To describe the procedures to be used if abuse of a child or youth is suspected.

BACKGROUND

UUFC, as a spiritual community, takes seriously the responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all. We recognize that we may be in a unique position to learn of circumstances in the lives of children and youth where there may be a need for intervention and healing.

POLICY

1. The goal will be to maintain a minimum of two adults with any group of children or youth.
2. Self-esteem and personal responsibility will be promoted in all our RE programs.
3. Age-appropriate information about development and sexuality will be provided to children and youth.
4. Training and support will be provided for RE teacher/guides, youth advisors and families in the areas of growth and development, sexuality, abuse and related issues.
5. A sex education program for children and youth will be presented on a regular basis.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. If a child or youth tells you a story of possible abuse, listen with kindness and compassion, affirming their courage for telling you. Believe them and affirm their story. Do not ask leading questions! Let them know you will tell the minister or Director of Religious Education who will get some help.
2. It's a good idea to make notes as soon as you can about what the child or youth said. Take care to keep your own thoughts and emotions out of it.
3. As soon as possible share the story with either the Director of Religious Education or the Minister.
4. It's very important to keep this confidential. This is critical for everyone involved, especially the child or youth.
5. After the conversation, the Minister and DRE will decide if a report is appropriate and call Child Protective Services.
6. There may be times when you are suspicious about a child or youth being abused or neglected. You may simply feel uneasy. Please speak to the Director of Religious Education or Minister immediately to decide if some action needs to be taken. It is better to raise concerns than do nothing and possibly allow a harmful situation to continue.

Approved by the Board of Trustees *on 11 May 2009.*

*Carl English-Young, Board President*