

OOUF Safety Policies and Procedures

As a community of faith, the Oberlin Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (herein known as OOUF) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of abuse, discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. It is the intention of OOUF to take action in an attempt to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy.

It is the policy of OOUF to encourage all of its leaders, be they volunteer or professional, to nurture safety by attending to their own personal mental health and education; by maintaining appropriate boundaries; and by referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. It is important that all ministers are adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they work and understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

I. Requirements for Religious Exploration Staff for Children and Youth

OOUF is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience UU history and values. In order to promote this, the Fellowship hereby establishes the following requirements that fall within the purview of Religious Exploration for any person who has not reached his or her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law. It is the policy of the Fellowship to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for minors.

I-A. In Religious Exploration situations in which all participants are not readily visible to each other, no fewer than two unrelated adults shall be present with children. Youth may assist an adult in supervising activities; however, such assistance does not alter the requirement that at least two adults shall be present. For the purpose of this policy, persons aged 18 or over shall be deemed adults. Supervision shall increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.

I-B. For all activities that take place away from the Fellowship and for any overnight activities, a written consent and a medical release form completed by one parent or guardian of each minor is required. Both forms are appended hereto as Attachment 2.

I-C. The applicants for paid positions shall complete and submit the application/disclosure form appended hereto as Attachment 1 and shall be interviewed in person to assess the suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek. All paid and volunteer positions will undergo a background check at the time of hiring and every three years thereafter. If a background check has been completed by another source, it can be submitted for review.

I-D. All volunteers shall have been members of the Fellowship for at least six months or, if they are not members, shall have been associated regularly and frequently with the Fellowship for at least six months. New members who have been Friends of the Fellowship for six months need not fulfill an additional six-month requirement.

I-E. Once the "Safety Policies and Procedures" document is adopted, the Director of Religious Exploration shall provide awareness training and policy orientation to all participants.

OOUF Safety Policy (*Continued*)

II. Suspected Abuse and Neglect

Definitions:

Suspicion of Abuse: Report of or evidence of the use of physical force that can reasonably be expected to result in physical harm or serious physical harm; sexual abuse; or verbal abuse.

Suspicion of Neglect: Report of or evidence of the lack of supervision for a child under 10 years of age; or a person unable to care for themselves; or the lack of basic needs being met by a responsible adult.

II-A. Child Abuse and/or Neglect

1. Apart from any legal requirements, OOUF shall transmit a report to appropriate authorities including but not limited to the Lorain County Children Services, if at any time OOUF representatives have reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be abused or neglected.
2. A person who becomes aware of facts or circumstances indicating that child abuse or neglect may have occurred or may occur in the reasonable foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the Director of Religious Exploration so that OOUF can take appropriate action in a timely manner.
3. The current Lorain County Hotline for Child Abuse is 440-329-5340 to speak with a referral specialist, after hour calls can be made to the Hotline at 440-329-2121.
 - a. Two adults must be present to document suspicions of abuse or neglect.
 - b. Director of Religious Exploration must be contacted immediately, prior to a formal report.
 - c. Together these three adults will decide whether to make the call.
 - d. The Director of Religious Exploration will make the call if required.
 - e. A report will be made to the Religious Exploration Committee within 48 hours of the incident.
 - f. The Director of Religious Exploration will follow the directions given by the referral specialist of the Lorain County hotline.

II-B. Suspicions of Elder Abuse and/or Neglect

1. Apart from any legal requirements, OOUF shall transmit a report to appropriate authorities including but not limited to the Lorain County Department of Senior and Adult Services, Adult Protective Services, if at any time OOUF representatives have reasonable cause to believe that a dependent adult may be abused or neglected.
2. A person who becomes aware of facts or circumstances indicating that elder abuse or neglect may have occurred or may occur in the reasonable foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the Minister or (if there is no Minister) the Commissioned Lay Leader(s) (CLL) so that OOUF can take appropriate action in a timely manner.
3. The current Lorain County Adult Protective Services hotline for Elder Abuse is 440-284-4465; or call a referral specialist at 440-329-5340.
 - a. Two adults must be present to document the evidence of the suspected abuse or neglect.
 - b. The Minister or the CLL(s) must be contacted immediately, prior to a formal report.
 - c. Together these three adults will decide whether to make the call.
 - d. The Minister or the CLL(s) will make the call if required.
 - e. A report will be made to the Committee on Ministry within 48 hours of incident.
 - f. The Minister or the CLL(s) will follow the directions given by the referral specialist of the Lorain County hotline.

II-C. It is the intention of this policy that the point person be someone with pastoral care knowledge and/or experience. It is presumed that this will be a minister, DLF/D and/or CLL. Should the fellowship not have these people, then an appropriate person will be identified in a timely manner by the Board and/or Committee on Ministry.

III. Disruptive Behaviors

Separate policy linked here: <https://www.ouuf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Disruptive-Behavior-Policy.pdf>

IV. Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment

Sexual Exploitation and/or Sexual Harassment by any person are unethical behaviors and shall not be tolerated.

IV-A. Sexual Exploitation is defined as "sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which any person takes advantage of the vulnerability of another person.

IV-B. Sexual Harassment is defined as "repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to their wishes". It includes behavior directed at another person with the effect of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing that person or subjecting them to public discrimination.

1. Unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute Sexual Harassment when:

a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any fellowship activity;

b. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by a person is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or fellowship related decisions; and

c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with a person's performance or participation in fellowship activities or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

2. Prohibited Sexual Harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones particularly:

a. Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mail messages, or invitations;

b. Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, or sexual propositions;

c. Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another person's body, impeding or blocking a person's movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse

d. Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another person's body, gesturing or displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

3. Sexual Harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and/or using sexual behavior to control, influence or affect the career, salary, work, learning or worship environment of another.

IV-C. Procedure for Handling Complaints

1. Several approaches may be taken in addressing an incident of alleged Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment:

a. The complainant may attempt to resolve the matter directly with the person who is accused of Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment.

b. The complainant may report the incident to the Minister, COM, or Director of Religious Exploration in an effort to resolve the matter informally.

c. The complainant may request formal proceedings through COM.

2. The group evaluating the potential offense will include the Minister, COM, and the Director of Religious Exploration if there is a minor involved.
3. The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence shall excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. At any time, the Fellowship may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process specified in this document.
4. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.
5. No person who files a complaint of Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment or who assists in the investigation of such a complaint shall be adversely affected in terms and condition of employment or Fellowship membership, or affiliation, or shall be otherwise discriminated against or discharged.
6. A written summary of the COM proceedings shall be maintained in all cases.
7. Formal proceedings shall comprise the following steps and action:
 - a. The COM shall gather statements and/or other information from the complainant, the accused, and any other persons involved in the alleged Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment and from others who may have pertinent information. The team shall present such information to a select Panel of Trustees, to include the President or Vice President and two other trustees not the President or Vice President, except that no Trustee involved in the case as complainant or accused shall have any role in this process or the ones set forth in Section 8 below.
 - b. The Panel shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter.
8. Resolution of the complaints shall take two forms:
 - a. If the Panel finds that Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment did not take place, the COM may seek advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions; or
 - b. If the Panel finds that Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment did take place, one or more of the following actions will be taken:

- i. A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
- ii. An offer to refer for psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling, and/or treatment;
- iii. Probationary standing, with terms of the probation clearly defined; and/or
- iv. For paid personnel, dismissal from employment; for volunteers, dismissal by loss of affiliation with, or membership in, the Fellowship.
- v. If either the complainant or the accused is not satisfied with the Panel's disposition of a matter of Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment, they have the right to appeal to the full Board of Trustees. The Trustee who chaired the Panel shall not chair the full Board for this purpose. The subject of such appeal shall be limited to whether the procedures specified in this policy were followed. The matter shall not be reconsidered on its merits.

If the Board determined that the procedures or policy were not followed, it shall refer the matter back to either the COM or to a new Panel of Trustees, depending on where the departure from procedures occurred, to complete the processing of the complaint in accordance with the procedures.

OOUF Board of Trustees voted to adopt this policy on March 20, 2011, with its implementation date of January 2012.

Application/Disclosure Form for Paid Staff Who Work with Children and Youth (Attachment 1)

Name

Address

Day Telephone Cell E-mail

For Paid Position Only

I am applying for the position of _____

Contact Information for a Reference Who Is Related to You

Name

Address

Day Telephone Cell E-mail

Contact information for two references who are NOT related to you

Name

Address

Day telephone Cell E-mail

Name

Address

Day telephone Cell E-mail

I have never been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to, a crime other than minor misdemeanor. NOTE: Exclude convictions of offenses about which enquiry is not permissible in Ohio.

_____ True _____ Not True

If not, briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the dates and place of your conviction, and the legal disposition of the case. The Fellowship will not deny you a position solely because you have been convicted of a crime. The Fellowship, however, may consider the nature, date, and circumstances of your offense, as well as whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position for which you are applying:

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?

_____ YES _____ NO

If yes, please provide a brief explanation:

I understand that, for the health of the Fellowship, covenants with applications for paid or volunteer positions require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness. I therefore attest that the information set forth in this application/disclosure form is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, my application.

I acknowledge that it is my duty to amend, in a timely fashion, any responses I have provided if I learn that the information in them is incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, is no longer accurate.

I hereby authorize the Fellowship and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding my character and qualifications, including all statements I have set forth above.

I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, and law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries by the Fellowship concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background, character, and qualifications.

I encourage such persons and entities to respond openly and responsibly to inquiries by the Fellowship. I hereby release them from all liability arising from their comments and statements.

The Fellowship's process for recruiting volunteers involves the sharing of information regarding applicants with any and all persons in a position to recruit, secure, and/or supervise employees in the position to be filled. To that end, I hereby authorize the Fellowship and/or its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with my completed application/disclosure form to such persons for these purposes. I understand that the Fellowship will share with me information it has gathered about me if I request it to do so.

I acknowledge receipt of the Fellowship's Safety Policies and Procedures and attest that I have read them and do understand them.

Sign your name

Date

Print your name

If you are under 18, the permission of your parent or guardian is required.

Signature of parent or guardian

Date

Print name

For Fellowship Office Use Only

Personal interview conducted by: _____

Reference inquires completed by: _____

Background check completed (if applies) : _____

Sex Offender review (if applies): _____

Membership/Friend for 6 month checked by: _____

Fellowship Safety Awareness Policy training by: _____

Parent's or Guardian's Consent and Authorization to Treat Minor

(Attachment 2)

I hereby grant permission as a parent or guardian for any representative of OUUF to seek emergency medical treatment for my minor child and declare that the information provided on this form is complete and accurate.

Parent or guardian signature

Date

Parent or guardian signature

Relationship to minor

Minor's name

Date of birth

Gender

Minor's address: Street

City

State

Zip code

Minor's telephone numbers: Cell

Work

Home

Telephone numbers of parent or guardian: Cell

Work

Home

If neither a parent nor a guardian can be reached, contact:

Name

Relationship to minor

Telephone No.

Name

Relationship to minor

Telephone No.

Minor's Family Information

Insurance company

Policy number

Physician's Name

Telephone number

Physician's address: Street

City

State

Zip code

Minor's Medical Information

Current Medications:

Know medical conditions to be aware of:

Allergic to:
