

UUFHC Religious Education Committee Religious Education Volunteer Screening Policy

Background

In keeping with the Safe Congregation Policy adopted by congregational vote at the April 17, 2005 Annual Meeting, the Religious Education Committee identified a need for a Religious Education Volunteer Screening. This includes teachers, assistants and youth group leaders (JYG and YRUU). The establishment of the following policy will help to create and maintain a safe environment for the children in our program and serve as a deterrent to possible child predators.

The Policy

All Religious Education volunteer applicants are required to sign and act in accordance with the UUFHC Code of Ethics. In addition to the Code of Ethics, those wishing to be Religious Education volunteers will answer a brief questionnaire addressing the nature of the volunteers' desire to work with children. All volunteer applicants will also submit to a felony background check to be conducted by a UUA or JPD recommended agency (such as ChoicePoint).

The Procedure

A. The Religious Education volunteer applicants will sign a Code of Ethics, complete an RE Volunteer Screening Questionnaire and sign off on the submission of the volunteer applicants' Social Security number to the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and no one else, for the felony background check by the recommended agency. In the event of an emergency and the DRE is unavailable to submit the Social Security numbers to the recommended agency, the Minister will do so.

B. Sample questions for the RE Volunteer Screening Questionnaire are: 1. Why do you want to work with youth? 2. Is there any reason you should not work with youth? 3. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, please explain.

B. Upon receiving the Social Security number, the DRE will enter the necessary information into the recommended agency's system within 72 hours. After the Social Security number is entered, the DRE will shred the Social Security number. The shredding of the Social Security number must be witnessed by another UUFHC staff member. During the time that the Social Security numbers are being held by the DRE, they will remain in a locked cabinet on the UUFHC property, accessible only to the DRE and minister.

C. Upon receipt of the background check results, if a Religious Education volunteer applicant has committed a felony, he/she will not be allowed to volunteer with the children in the program. If the Religious Education volunteer applicant still wants to volunteer at this point, he/she must appeal to the UUFHC Executive Board. If when answering the RE Volunteer Screening Questionnaire, the convicted volunteer applicant did not disclose a felony conviction, he/she will not be allowed to appeal.

D. The results of the background checks are to be kept in the strictest confidentiality, to be known only by the DRE and Minister. A list of approved volunteers, along with the date of the background check, are to be kept in a locked cabinet on the UUFHC property. The results of any volunteers who are denied are to be kept and dated, for the sake of a future DRE and/or Minister, in a locked cabinet on the UUFHC property, accessible only to the DRE and Minister. Background checks are then to be conducted every 5 years.

Board Approval

Date