

Policies for Youth RE Classes

Purpose:

To provide guidance for the execution of the Youth RE classes

Policy:

1. Regular weekly Youth RE Classes:

- a. Regular weekly Youth RE classes shall occur every Sunday during the academic year at which there is a regular Sunday morning service that is not a multi-generational service, generally starting and ending in synchrony with the regular Sunday morning services.
- b. Only Youth RE Team-approved teachers shall lead a regular weekly Youth RE class.
- c. There shall be at least 2 teachers per classroom when Youth RE classes take place in person. When classes are virtual, only 1 teacher needs to be present.
- d. Teachers shall implement the curricula as planned by the Youth RE Team and DRE on the schedule set by the Youth RE Team and DRE.
- e. Youth RE classes are open to the children of congregational members and visitors, and to their parents.
- f. In general, regular weekly courses will begin the curricula in September, coincident with the academic school year and run serially until the curricula are complete or approximately June, whichever is later. Participants in regular weekly Youth RE classes are encouraged to begin attending the course from the initial meeting and to attend each week.

2. OWL:

- a. OWL curriculum shall be offered as needs and interest of the congregation requires. The Youth RE Team shall set and advertise the availability and schedule of OWL courses as needed.
- b. Only OWL-certified teachers shall lead an OWL course sponsored by UUFCM.
- c. Participation in OWL courses shall be open to appropriately aged children of congregation members. At the discretion of the Youth RE Team and the DRE, participation in OWL course may be opened to appropriately aged interested people outside of the UUFCM congregation.

3. Special events:

- a. Special events shall be planned and implemented by the DRE and Youth RE Team as the needs and interests of the congregation require.
- b. The DRE and Youth RE Team shall ensure that the special events are chaperoned by

Youth RE Team-approved volunteers. At least 2 staff members or Youth RE Team-approved volunteers are to be present at all times during in-person events.

- c. If children's parent(s) or guardian(s) are not in the fellowship building during events and their child(ren) do not have emergency contact information already on file, parent(s) or guardian(s) will fill out an Emergency Contact Form prior to departing for the event.

4. Selecting Volunteer Youth RE Teachers and Nursery Volunteers

- a. The Youth RE Team shall create the policies by which volunteers are selected.
- b. At a minimum the approved volunteers must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Be members or friends of UUFCM, although non-members may be selected at the discretion of the DRE and Youth RE Team should the needs of the RE program exceed the availability of acceptable and willing volunteers from within the congregation.
 - ii. Be open to a liberal religious education.
 - iii. Have a criminal background-check that is reviewed by the DRE or member of the Youth RE Team and deemed acceptable.
 - iv. Demonstrate themselves to be free of concerns of criminal activity or other behavior related to the care of children or that might interfere with the mission and purpose or with trust of UUFCM RE, parents, and students.
 - v. Be able to execute reasonable requirements for teaching a class of children and/or providing childcare for approximately one hour.

Policies for Disruptive Behavior During Youth RE Classes

Purpose:

To provide guidance to Youth RE teachers for appropriate action when a child is disruptive.

Background:

The following policy was developed to be consistent with Youth RE goals. We concentrate on affirming each child and recognize that problems can occur when a child's needs are not being met. Children, youth and adults are expected to behave in a manner that promotes learning and good will. We encourage children to solve their own problems by talking with teachers and peers.

Policy:

1. At the beginning of each course students and teachers shall develop a behavior covenant together that will be posted in the classroom. The behavior covenant shall be reviewed each time a new student joins the class and as necessary with regular attendees to ensure everyone adheres with the covenant.
2. Teachers are encouraged to discuss a child's behavior with the RE Director before the problem becomes serious. Experience of previous teachers, registration information from parents, and classroom management ideas are available to help the teacher.

3. Children will not be permitted to disrupt classes. If a child loses control or repeatedly ignores the class rules, teachers will send the child away from the rest of the class. The child removed from the class will remain with the DRE, extra childcare person, or the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
4. If problems from a child continue beyond a single session or occur frequently at regular weekly RE classes, the DRE shall arrange a conference with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) to develop and implement strategies for remedying the situation.

Guidelines for Teachers

Behavior problems in the classroom may present the most frequent test of our abilities to put ideals into practice. It is important for teaching teams to work together to create a consistent and respectful atmosphere within the class that promotes positive behavior.

It is vital that there be an agreed-on set of guidelines for the group in the form of a behavior covenant. When there are different expectations from week to week, it is confusing for the children and ultimately does not contribute to a sense of community among the children and adults. Be sure that in your first meeting you come to consensus on what the expectations are for both the children and the adults. The Covenant will be a valuable resource for this. It is better to be proactive rather than reactive.

Our UUFCM Mission:

We are a religious community, guided by love, transforming our lives and our world.

Our UUFCM Covenant:

Granting each other freedom of mind and spirit, we commit to this community of mutual care. In that spirit of caring, we pledge to be mindful when speaking of and to one another. We will walk in the ways of truth and loving-kindness that we and our children may always be fulfilled. So that the world may be fulfilled, we dedicate ourselves to the work of justice and peace, seeking always to soothe sorrow and to inspire joy.

Guidelines for Volunteer Teachers for Youth RE Classes

Make boundaries immediately clear. Kids want to know what the limits are. Let them know what acceptable and unacceptable behavior is for you.

Avoid criticizing a child in class.

If you are provoked, be authentic. It is better to be honest than to be hypocritical, but at all costs avoid sarcasm. Do not berate the child. Try to give the child or the class a way out of the difficulty. If it is an individual, give him or her a way back into your good graces – a smile, a hug or a touch. Children can learn from your politeness, forgiveness, and generosity of spirit.

Be prepared. Know your material well enough so that you know exactly what is to be done during the meeting. Have everything ready when the kids arrive. The better prepared you are, the more relaxed and confident you will feel. The more relaxed you are, the easier it will be to calmly deal with problems and challenges that may arrive.

Additional suggestions that may help to insure a positive outcome:

- A warm greeting for each child goes a long way.
- Remember and use your sense of humor.

- A gentle voice is often more effective than a loud voice.
- Avoid making comparisons or encouraging competition.
- Let the children know who you are and what you think. Express your opinions freely but acknowledge that their opinions are valid as well.

Children are special and are welcome at UUFCM! We want children to feel at home here. To help us be together as our best selves, we ask that parents help their children remember the following guidelines:

- All children are welcome in the church service and are expected to be present for the beginning of the service and then in their Youth RE class.
- Sunday morning from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm is time to spend with friends. Please refrain from using video games and other distractions during this time.
- We are a peaceful community and prefer that toy weapons are not part of our space.
- The sanctuary is not an appropriate place for playing.
- Be courteous to others...
 - Please use inside voices.
 - Walk inside. Run outside.
 - Use respectful language and be considerate of others' feelings.

Likewise, we ask adults to remember these guidelines:

- Children are a treasure in our community. Please treat them with kindness, respect, and patience.
- Remember to look down when you're walking in a crowd, especially if you're carrying hot coffee!

Guidelines for Use of Preschool Room

The preschool room shall be available during the coffee hour that follows the service each Sunday. The following guidelines should be observed with its use:

- The room is child-friendly and designed for children ages 0-third grade.
- Childcare will be provided until 12:15. After that time, a parent is required to be present in the preschool room.
- If you and your child(ren) use the room, please remember to clean and tidy up messes and toys before you leave.

Guidelines for Use of Middle Level Room

This room is dedicated and designed for use by UUFCM first-grade and older youth.

First-grade through seventh-grade youth must have adult supervision in order to use the room during fellowship time. Older youth do not have to have supervision but must have read and signed the Guidelines agreement below.

To ensure all feel safe and comfortable while in this space, please keep the following considerations in mind while present:

Appropriate activities for the room (with parent/ guardian permission) include the following:

- respectfully participating in youth group;
- resting, studying and reading;
- socializing;
- playing games;
- hanging out.

Please remember that:

- aggression, inappropriate physical conduct and disrespect are not allowed in this room so it can remain a safe, inviting and peaceful place to spend time with friends;
- you should leave the room as you found it to show your appreciation for this space.

I _____ have read and agree to conduct myself according to these guidelines.

(Student Signature)

(Parent Signature)

UUFCM Childcare Policy

In order to provide childcare for programs of the congregation, such as Adult RE, children's RE activities, congregation retreats, movie nights, etc., the following steps and policies will be in place.

Steps:

- There will be a childcare coordinator in charge of getting the child caregivers.
- The person(s) in charge of an event announces that childcare will be available and asks the participants who will need childcare, giving a deadline by which to request.
- Then the person(s) in charge of an event contacts the coordinator with the necessary information (date, time, and how many children).
- The coordinator then arranges the childcare for that event.

Policies:

- There must be at least 2 people, one of whom must be 18 years or older, the other at least 15 years old, providing childcare.
- The adults in charge must have consented to and passed a background check provided by UUFCM.
- Childcare compensation is \$15 per hour, including time required for clean-up.

This document was reviewed and approved by the RE Team of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Central Michigan on 05/09/2021.

Policy for Nursery Workers Payment When No Children Are Present

Should there be a Sunday when no children are present, the nursery teacher and assistant are welcome to leave and will be paid for one hour of service.

December 11, 2022