Policy on Inclusion in Fellowship Activities of Persons Accused or Convicted of Sexual Offense

approved/adopted November 8, 2017 by the UUFA Board of Directors

This policy establishes an outline of steps for inclusion of persons accused or convicted of sexual offense in the life and activities of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames (UUFA), as a visitor, friend or member. The safety of children within our Fellowship is particularly paramount. No person who has been convicted of, or with an unresolved accusation of, any sexual misconduct can be permitted to be involved in any children’s religious education or youth group activities.

When Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Are Made Against a Friend or Member of the Fellowship:

When allegations of sexual misconduct are brought to the attention of the Minister, the Religious Education Coordinator, the Board President, or other member, the person accused should be asked to meet privately with the Minister to discuss the concerns. The Minister should also meet separately, and privately, with the party making the accusations.

If the Minister determines that there is genuine cause for the concern, the person accused should then be asked to meet with the Minister in consultation with the President of the Board, the Religious Education Coordinator, and a member of the Healthy Relations Team.

As an interim measure, a Limited Access Agreement or Interim Agreement should be signed by the necessary parties. This agreement will be instituted until such a time as the allegations are resolved.

When a Convicted Sexual Offender Desires to Join or Participate in Fellowship Activities:

Any person convicted of sexual offense, who expresses a desire to join our community will be asked to sign a Limited Access Agreement or Interim Agreement, which will be reviewed annually. If the person refuses to do so, they will be excluded from Fellowship activities and property.

The person will be asked to sign a release form so that the minister can contact his/her sex offender treatment provider and/or current therapist and/or parole officer. The therapist and, if applicable, the parole officer should be asked for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the sex offender will re-offend and whether additional restrictions beyond the standard Limited Access Agreement ought to be placed on the person’s participation. It will be helpful to know the number, timing and nature of offenses.

If the professional assessment indicates that the person is at high risk for re-offending, it is appropriate to deny that person involvement in the faith community until treatment is deemed successful at reducing the risk.

If the minister, in consultation with the Healthy Relations Team, has determined that the crime or accusation of the person is of such a nature that any participation in fellowship life would create an unacceptable level or risk to the children of the Fellowship, the UUFA reserves the right to exclude the person from all Fellowship activities.

Once a Limited Access Agreement is signed by all necessary parties, the congregation will be informed of the presence of a convicted person within the community. The person’s identity will not be disclosed.
**Reason for Excluding a Person from All Fellowship Activities:**

At times it is appropriate to exclude persons from Fellowship activities. Reasons for excluding a person could include any of the following:

- Refusal to allow the minister to contact the treatment provider and parole officer.
- Refusal to participate in a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
- Report by a treatment provider that the person is at too high risk for recidivism.
- Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement or Interim Agreement.
- It has been determined that the crime and/or accusation is of such a nature that any participation in Fellowship life would create an unacceptable risk to the children of the UUFA.
- Failure to comply even one time with any requirement of the Limited Access Agreement or Interim Agreement.

Any person who has been excluded from Fellowship life because of sexual offenses is found at Fellowship activities or on Fellowship property, will be asked to leave by the Minister, the Religious Education Coordinator, Board President or any Board Member. If the person refuses to leave, local police will be called to assist.

Once an individual decides that they can comply with these conditions, the process would begin again to reassess the individual and see if they could be welcomed into the life of the congregation anew.
Limited Access Agreement
for Persons with Convictions of Sexual Offense

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames (the Fellowship) affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles.

However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk of an incident or accusation for both you and them.

We welcome you to our congregation and our membership but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to ensure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Agreement:

Within these guidelines, the Fellowship welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult education, all adult social events, and well-supervised intergenerational events. You are to avoid all contact with children on Fellowship property or Fellowship-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- Do not talk with children.
- Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, youth group events, activities with direct interaction with children and youth during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
- Remain in the presence (within sight) of an unrelated support person who knows your situation at all times when children are present.
- Be accompanied by an unrelated support person to the restroom when children are in the building.
- If a child in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- Avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session.

The following activities checked "Yes" are activities that we feel are appropriate for your participation.

- Worship services:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
- Coffee Hour:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
- Adult activities when children are also in building:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
- Adult meetings without children in building:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
- Intergenerational church activities:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
• Alone in building with minister or other staff: □ No □ Yes
  With support person*: □ No □ Yes
• Social activities in members’ homes with children present: □ No □ Yes
  With support person*: □ No □ Yes
• Other:
  ○ Activity: ____________________________ □ No □ Yes
    With support person*: □ No □ Yes
  ○ Activity: ____________________________ □ No □ Yes
    With support person*: □ No □ Yes
  ○ Activity: ____________________________ □ No □ Yes
    With support person*: □ No □ Yes

*A support person is a person who knows about your history/situation and has been designated by you with our approval to accompany you to activities where children and youth may be present.

Support Person’s Name: ____________________________

I accept that the following people will be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care:

  Minister: ____________________________________________
  Religious Education Coordinator: _______________________
  Board President: _____________________________________

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future Fellowship functions and property.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________
Minister: ____________________________ Date: ____________
Religious Education Coordinator: _______________________
Date: ____________
Board President: _______________________
Date: ____________
Limited Access Agreement
for Persons Alleged to Have Committed a Sexual Offense

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames (the Fellowship) affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles.

A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the Healthy Relations Team and/or Minister. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children and youth in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement.

Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confession of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known only to the Minister, the Religious Education Coordinator, the Board President, and the members of the Healthy Relations Team. It will be kept in a locked file in the office. Upon resolution of the allegations, this Interim Agreement will be revisited in a private meeting with the Minister, Religious Education Coordinator, Board President, and/or members of the Healthy Relations Team.

We welcome you to our congregation and our membership but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to ensure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Interim Agreement:

Within these guidelines, the Fellowship welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult education, all adult social events, and well supervised intergenerational events. You are to avoid all contact with children on Fellowship property or Fellowship-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- Do not talk with children.
- Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
- Remain in the presence of an adult who knows your situation at all times when children are present.
- If a child in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- Avoid being in the building unsupervised when activities involving children are in session.

The following activities checked "Yes" are activities that we feel are appropriate for your participation.

- Worship services:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
- Coffee Hour:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
- Adult activities when children are also in building:  □ No  □ Yes
  With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
Adult meetings without children in building:  □ No  □ Yes
   With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes

Intergenerational church activities:  □ No  □ Yes
   With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes

Alone in building with minister or other staff:  □ No  □ Yes
   With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes

Social activities in members’ homes with children present:  □ No  □ Yes
   With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes

Other:
   ○ Activity: ____________________________  □ No  □ Yes
      With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
   ○ Activity: ____________________________  □ No  □ Yes
      With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes
   ○ Activity: ____________________________  □ No  □ Yes
      With support person*:  □ No  □ Yes

*A support person is a person who knows about your history/situation and has been designated by you with our approval to accompany you to activities where children and youth may be present.

Support Person’s Name: ____________________________

I accept that the following people will be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care:

   Minister: ____________________________
   Religious Education Coordinator: ____________________________
   Board President: ____________________________

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future Fellowship functions and property.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every six months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signature: ____________________________  Date: ____________
Minister: ____________________________  Date: ____________
Religious Education Coordinator: ____________________________  Date: ____________
Board President: ____________________________  Date: ____________