

# **Child Abuse Prevention Policy**

## **First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn**

*Updated January 2026*  
*Board of Trustees Approved February 2026*

As a community of faith First Unitarian is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities, and a community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship, learn, and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, and intimidation. All persons associated with First Unitarian should be aware that the congregation is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and harassment, and that such behavior is prohibited by congregational policy. It is the intention of the congregation to take action to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those who violate. First Unitarian is committed to creating safe, nurturing spaces for our youngest members and friends.

### **Screening and Hiring**

All clergy, staff, and volunteers who work with children or youth are given NY State and federal background checks before beginning employment or service.

### **Family Registration**

Registration is required for all minors participating in congregational activities. Registration information will include guardian contact information, media use permissions, information about allergies, medical conditions, dietary restrictions or behavioral accommodations necessary for the child/youth. Registration information is updated annually. Specific written permission by a parent or guardian is required for any off-site visit or outing involving children or youth.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

First Unitarian will adhere to legal requirements regarding the reporting of child abuse. NYS NYC legal requirements, First Unitarian will report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the State Central Registry, if the congregation has reasonable cause to believe that a

minor g abused or neglected. Any Minister, staff or volunteer of the congregation who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the future shall immediately report the matter to the Senior Minister or Director of Religious Education so that the congregation may take appropriate action in a timely manner.

## **Clergy**

All allegations of behavior that call into question the fitness for ministry of any Minister will promptly be forwarded to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

## **Mandated Reporting Training**

Staff and volunteers are trained yearly to recognize signs of abuse and understand their obligation to report to the NY Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR).

## **Supervision Policies:**

First Unitarian requires two adults to be present in any class or activity involving children or youth. We require that all classes have an open-door policy- doors to classrooms are never locked, and parents are not restricted in their access.

## **Virtual/Online Meetings**

All virtual or online meetings involving children and youth are subject to the same requirements as in person activities: no fewer than two unrelated adults will be online with children and parental consent will be required for participation. Additionally, parents will be provided with attendance credentials and invited to attend. Youth and adult attendees at a virtual event shall conduct themselves in a manner befitting a congregational event and be attentive to their

backgrounds and what is visible to others. Persons behaving inappropriately will immediately be excluded from the meeting.

### **Communications with Youth:**

No adult may communicate with any child one-on-one via email, social media, text, or phone call. If a child initiates the communication, the adult must immediately add another adult to the communication and inform the child of the policy. Parents should be copied on all electronic communications and should be members of any social media group maintained on behalf of First Unitarian, of which children are members.

### **Policy on Sex Offenders in the Life of the Congregation**

Convicted sex offenders, registered sex offenders, or those who have been convicted of a sex related offense who wish to participate in the life of the congregation by attending worship, attending congregational functions, as a congregational member, or as a visitor must identify themselves to the most senior Authorized Minister prior to participating. A limited access agreement will be required. The staff is responsible for enforcing this policy.

### **Policy on Excluding Behaviors Harmful to the Life of the Congregation**

First Unitarian reserves the right to require a limited-access agreement of any individual who has exhibited behavior that is unwelcome to the congregation or who has broken the congregational behavioral covenant, the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees. The Board also reserves the right to exclude any person from the property events the congregation, or membership in the congregation, who has exhibited behavior that, in the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees, is harmful to the life of the congregation. The Board of Trustees is responsible for enforcing this policy.