I. Statement of Policy

As a community of Christian faith, Upstate Community Co-op (UCC) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, and volunteers can learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, physical violence, or intimidation. UCC requires individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the co-op in fulfillment of the standards set by our Christian faith. UCC strongly opposes and prohibits the use of physical violence as a means of punishment, "sexual exploitation," "sexual harassment," or any form of exploitation or abuse of others regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identification, behavior, or mental capacity. It is the intention of our con-op to affirmatively nurture good behavior, and to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, as necessary, remove those persons who violate this policy. UCC shall nurture good conduct as demonstrated by personal behaviors that are consistent with our Christian values

Participation in Abuse & Reinstatement

Participation in Abuse

Upstate Community Co-op (UCC) maintains a zero-tolerance policy for abuse. This includes not only those who initiate abuse, but also any student who **participates in, encourages, assists, coerces, covers for, or perpetuates abusive behavior** toward another student, youth, or vulnerable adult.

Participation in abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse
- Bullying, hazing, intimidation, or coercion
- Encouraging or facilitating abusive acts
- Recording, sharing, or mocking abuse
- Pressuring others into silence or secrecy
- Repeated boundary violations after correction

Immediate Removal

Any student found to have participated in abuse will be **immediately removed from all UCC classes, programs, and activities**. This removal may be temporary or permanent, at the sole discretion of UCC leadership, based on the severity, pattern, and impact of the behavior.

Removal from UCC does not require criminal charges or legal adjudication and may occur based

on credible reports, internal investigation, or substantiated policy violations.

Conditions for Possible Future Reinstatement

Reinstatement is **not guaranteed** and will be considered only after a substantial period of removal. If reinstatement is considered, the following conditions must be met:

1. **Documented Professional Therapy**
   The student must provide written documentation from a licensed mental health professional stating that the student has:
   - Participated in required therapy
   - Addressed abusive behaviors and underlying causes
   - Demonstrated accountability, insight, and behavioral change
   - Been assessed as safe to re-enter a group educational environment
2. **Written Reinstatement Request**
   A formal written request must be submitted by the parent or guardian (and student, when age-appropriate) acknowledging:
   - The abusive behavior
   - Responsibility for harm caused
   - Commitment to follow all UCC behavioral expectations
3. **Behavioral Contract**
   If reinstatement is approved, the student may be required to return under a written behavioral agreement outlining expectations, boundaries, monitoring, and consequences for any further violations.
4. **Leadership Discretion**
   UCC leadership reserves full discretion to deny reinstatement if it is determined that return would compromise the safety, emotional well-being, or learning environment of others.

Priority of Safety

The safety, dignity, and well-being of all students always take precedence over reinstatement considerations. UCC is not obligated to readmit any student whose return could reasonably place others at risk.

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II. General Definitions

1. Physical abuse is physical pain or injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a youth.

2. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a youth and an adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.

3. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

4. Neglect is the failure to provide for a youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a youth from harm.

5. A Minor is anyone under the age of 18 (also referred to as youth throughout policy).

6. A Vulnerable Adult is anyone aged 18 or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

7. Mandatory Reporters are those persons required by South Carolina law to report suspected incidents.

III. Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adults

The following Code of Conduct is intended to assist all members, teachers, students, and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with youth and vulnerable adults. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your director.

UCC is committed to creating an environment for youth and vulnerable adults that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from UCC. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth and vulnerable adults or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. UCC will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adult outlines specific expectations of All members, teachers, students, and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated with respect at all times.

2. Youth and vulnerable adults will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, age, or religion.

3. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by UCC.

4. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will avoid affection with youth and vulnerable adults that cannot be observed by others.

5. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by UCC.

6. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will not stare at or comment on youth and vulnerable adults' bodies.

7. All members, teachers, and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth and vulnerable adults.

8. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth and vulnerable adults.

9. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on UCC property.

10. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will not have secrets with youth and vulnerable adults and will only give gifts as a group event or with prior permission.

11. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will comply with UCC policies regarding interactions with youth and vulnerable adults outside of our programs.

12. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth and vulnerable adults.

13. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth and vulnerable adults in a private setting. Church staff, employees, and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youth and vulnerable adults.

14. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers will not abuse youth and vulnerable adults in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:

    Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints;

    Verbal abuse: degrading, belittling, threatening, cursing;

    Sexual abuse: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations;

    Mental abuse: shaming, mocking, snide and rude comments, humiliation, cruelty;

    Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter.

    UCC will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth or vulnerable adult by another youth or vulnerable adult. In addition, UCC will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

    Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

    a. *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.

    b. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.

    c. *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

    d. *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:

        - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
        - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
        - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
        - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
        - Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.

- Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth and vulnerable adults, Church staff, employees, and volunteers.

16. All members, teachers, and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. They should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. They will:

    a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.

    b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youth and vulnerable adults against abuse.

    c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.

    d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

    All members, teachers, and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other members, teachers, and volunteers, adults, or youth to supervisor or Anonymous Helpline at 855-347-0751.

    UCC cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. All members, teachers, students, and volunteers shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.

    All members, teachers, and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of youth and vulnerable adult abuse, indecency with a youth and vulnerable adult, or injury to a youth and vulnerable adult.

IV. Policies for Working with Youth

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to youths, when staff know and understand policies, they can identify, interrupt, and report policy violations. Simply interrupting a policy violation can prevent a false allegation of abuse or put an offender on notice that no one works in private, the rules apply to everyone, and violations will be detected.

A. Physical Contact

UCC's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youths, members, teachers, and volunteers. UCC encourages appropriate physical contact with youths and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by members,teachers, and volunteers towards youths in the organization's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the co-op.

UCC's policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	***Inappropriate Physical Interactions***
● Side hugs ● Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs ● Pats on the shoulder or back ● Handshakes ● High-fives and hand slapping ● Verbal praise ● Pats on the head when culturally appropriate ● Touching hands, shoulders, and arms ● Arms around shoulders ● Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)	● Kisses ● Showing affection in isolated area ● Lap sitting ● Wrestling ● Piggyback rides ● Tickling ● Allowing a youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg ● Any type of massage given by or to a youth ● Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the teachers or volunteer ● Compliments relating to physique or body development ● Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

B. Verbal Interactions

Church staff, teachers, members, and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youths in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Church staff, teachers, members, and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youths. Church staff, teachers, members, and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with youths.

UCC's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	***Inappropriate Verbal Interactions***
• Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise	• Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths in the personal problems or issues of members, teachers, and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming • Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths • Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family

C. One-on-One Interactions

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth. UCC aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the organization administration.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, Church staff, employees, and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions
• When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others. • Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes. • If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by. • Inform other members, teachers, and volunteers that you are alone with a youth and ask them to randomly drop in. • Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

Tutoring/ Private Coaching:

One-on-one situations, such as tutoring and private coaching sessions, introduce additional risks for false allegations. Members, teachers, and volunteers should be aware of our policies regarding tutoring and private coaching:

a. Members, teachers, and volunteers must have supervisor approval for any tutoring or private coaching sessions.

b. Tutoring and coaching sessions with UCC's youths may not occur outside of the organization.

c. Supervisors must keep a schedule of private tutoring and coaching sessions, which should include times, youths involved, and location of sessions.

D. Off-site Contact

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and UCC at increased risk.

UCC strongly recommends that members, teachers, and volunteers do not have outside contact with youths from the organization. However, if off-site contacts are unavoidable (such as during mentoring programs), UCC has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

Appropriate Outside Contact	*Inappropriate Outside Contact*
● Taking groups of youths on an outing ● Attending sporting activities with groups of youths ● Attending functions at a youth's home, with parents present	● Taking one youth on an outing without the parents' written permission ● Visiting one youth in the youth's home, without a parent present ● Entertaining one youth in the home of staff or volunteers ● A lone youth spending the night with staff or volunteers

In addition, when outside contact is unavoidable, ensure that the following steps are followed:

1. Supervisors should identify for members, teachers, and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
2. Ensure that staff or volunteers have the parents' permission to engage in outside contact with the youth. Consider requiring the parents to sign a release-of-liability statement.

E. Electronic Communication

Any private one-on-one electronic communication between staff and youths, including the use of social networking websites like - Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, texting, etc. - is prohibited. All communication between staff and youths must be transparent.

The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

Appropriate Electronic Communication	*Inappropriate Electronic Communication*
● Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youths ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth's parent ● Communicating through "organization group pages" on Facebook or other approved public forums ● "Private" profiles for Church staff, employees, and volunteers which youths cannot access	● Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments ● Sexually oriented conversations ● Private messages between members, teachers, and volunteers ● Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites ● Posting inappropriate comments on pictures ● "Friending" participants on social networking sites

In addition, provide this information to your participant's parents so that they know what is appropriate and inappropriate from your staff.

Cell Phone Use:

While assigned to work with youths, staff are not permitted to use electronic communications devices except during approved breaks and emergency situations. Internet use for text messaging and/or emailing pictures while assigned to work with youths is strictly prohibited regardless of the type of device used and whether for business or personal reasons. Employees need to ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy.

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) organization members and/or program participants for personal and/ or inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

There are occasions in which staff will need to use personal or organization issued electronic communication devices. In these cases, staff will have explicit direction from supervisors governing use. Situations which may require use of organization issued or personal electronic communication devices include:

a. Field Trips;

b. Off-site Programs; and

c. Emergencies.

F. Gift Giving

Molesters routinely groom youths by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the youth. They might instruct the youth to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the youth to keep secrets from parents. For this reason, members, teachers, and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youths, and only under the following circumstances:

1. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift.
2. Parents must be notified.

V. Screening and Selection

The process of screening and selecting employees and volunteers is an essential element of management due diligence. There are several elements required which serve a number of purposes. Criminal background checking by itself is inadequate simply because very few predators, or people who would become predators, have been through the penal system. A would-be predator requires three things: Access, Privacy & Control.

The following screening and selection procedures are strongly recommended for all Church staff, employees, and volunteers.

Note: Each board member, employee or volunteer now serving and regardless of length of service must be willing to set an example for all others who follow in their ministry. Therefore, at the time this policy is first adopted, all incumbent board members, employees and all incumbent volunteers who work with children shall execute the following procedures.

A. Interviews

All members, teachers, and volunteers should be interviewed during the selection process and prior to employment. The purpose of the interview is to determine whether the applicant possesses the skills needed to perform the job requirements and whether the applicant demonstrates characteristics of a potentially abusive person and to assess suitability for working with children, and specifically discuss the UCC's commitment to protect children and other vulnerable persons from abuse. The interview should also provide the applicant with information about job responsibilities and expectations.

B. Background Checks

Criminal history and sexual offender registry checks will be conducted for all applicants. Generally, the information should be obtained prior to employment of the applicant; however, if the length of time needed to receive the results of these checks is unduly long, UCC could have the applicant start the position and remain in the position until the criminal background results are obtained and reviewed. New volunteers should not be left unsupervised with youths until the criminal history results are returned.

The background check(s) should include the following:

- National multi-state criminal records search;
- National sex offender registry search;
- Social security number trace and alias search; and
- County criminal records search for every county where the applicant has lived or worked for the past 7 years

Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check.

In addition, all applicants should undergo criminal drug screening prior to employment, and applicants responsible for transportation should have a driver's license check performed to identify past driving concerns.

A. Monitoring High Risk Activities

i. Bathroom Activities

Most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in the bathrooms. Therefore, the following supervision guidelines are recommended:

When supervising restroom use, adult members and volunteers should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing youths to enter.

a. For "Group Bathroom Breaks":
   - Require teacher or volunteer to take groups of two or more youths to the bathroom – following the "rule of three" or more.
   - If the bathroom only has one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the volunteer.
   - If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many youths as there are stalls.
   - Minimize youths of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.
   - Require teacher or volunteer to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.

b. For single use restrooms:
   - Require youths to ask permission to use the bathroom.
   - Require all volunteer monitors to frequently check bathrooms.

ii. Playground Activities

The playground procedures require:

a. Youths to remain in line-of-site of staff at all times.
b. Definition of specific and narrow geographic boundaries around the playground area.
c. Specific instructions on how to monitor barriers of supervision (such as storage sheds, playhouses, tunnels, and shrubs).
d. That all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise ("zone monitoring").
e. Specific bathroom procedures.
f. Staff to conduct periodic roll calls for each age group.
g. Supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and assessments of the activity period and of the entire activity area.

iii. Transition Times and Free Times

Transition times and free-choice times (or free times) pose a high risk for incidents because during these times, Members, teachers, and volunteers may be assigned a particular group of youths to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following procedures:

a. Require youths to remain in line-of-site of volunteers at all times.
b. Specify the volunteer-to-youth ratio.
c. Specify narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
d. Ensure that all volunteers are assigned specific areas to supervise ("zone monitoring").
e. Include bathroom procedures.
f. Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
g. Require volunteers to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

VI. Responding

How an organization responds to suspicious or inappropriate interactions, policy violations, and incidents or allegations of abuse can dramatically affect the harm to the individuals involved and the damage to the organization. Once a member, teacher, volunteer, youth, or parent has expressed a concern or made an allegation about the treatment of a youth, swift and determined action must be taken to reduce any subsequent risk to the youth, to the accused staff member or volunteer, and to the organization. Organizations must establish precise, unequivocal requirements for reporting to the authorities and for adhering to a serious-incident response plan.

A. Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations

Because UCC is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone actively participates in the protection of youths. In the event that a member, teacher, or volunteer observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of others, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations.

Remember, at UCC, the policies apply to everyone.

Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Youth
• Violation of the abuse prevention policies described above • Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youths • Buying gifts for individual youths • Making suggestive comments to youths • Picking favorites

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youths will be taken seriously. Our procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected.

i. Employee and Volunteer Response:

If an employee or volunteer witness suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from another employee or volunteer, they are instructed to do the following:

Guidelines for Employees/Volunteers Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations
• Interrupt the behavior. • Report the behavior to a supervisor, director, or other authority.

ii. Supervisor and Administrator Response:

In the event that a supervisor or an administrator receives a report of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from a staff member or volunteer, the supervisor is instructed to do the following:

Guidelines for Supervisors and Administrators Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations
• Report to the next level of administration and determine the appropriate administrator to respond to the concern. • Determine the appropriate response based on the report. • Speak with the employee or volunteer or volunteer who has been reported. • Review the file of the employee or volunteer or volunteer to determine if similar complaints were reported. • Document the report on the appropriate form. • If at any point in gathering information about a report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises about possible abuse, contact the state authorities and file a report. • If appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians. • Advise the person who reported the behavior that the report is being taken seriously.

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

a. Increase monitoring or supervision of the employee, volunteer, or program.

b. If policy violations with youths are confirmed, the employee or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and prosecution. Disciplinary action will follow the Progressive Disciplinary Process outlined in this manual.

c. If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other Church staff, employees, and volunteers or youths.

iii. Organizational Response:

Guidelines for Organizational Response
• Review the need for increased supervision. • Review the need for revised policies or procedures. • Review the need for additional training.

B. Responding to Suspected Abuse by an Adult

i. Employee or Volunteer Response to Abuse:

As required by mandated reporting laws, Church staff, church employees, teachers, and volunteers must report any suspected abuse or neglect of a youth—whether on or off organization property or whether perpetrated by employees, volunteers, or others—to state authorities. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith and without malice. **Refer to state specific mandated reporting requirements for definitions of abuse more specific reporting information.*

In addition to reporting to state authorities, Church staff, church employees, teachers, and volunteers are required to report any suspected or known abuse of youths perpetrated by church employees, teachers, or volunteers directly to leadership so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims and others who may be at risk. Reports of suspected or known abuse may be made confidentially to the following:

a. Immediate supervisor
b. Directors
c. Administrators

ii. Supervisors and Administrators Response to Abuse:

In addition to the above response procedures, supervisors and administrators should ensure the following:

Guidelines for Supervisor and Administrators Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Abuse
• First, determine if the youth is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm. • Gather as much information about the allegation as you can. For example, who made the report, who was allegedly abused, who was the alleged abuser, what was the nature of the alleged abuse, where and when did the alleged abuse occur, etc. • Accurately record everything you learn in as much detail as you can. Remember your notes may be read by others. Stick to the facts. • Contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by your mandatory reporting procedures. Make sure you get a case number and the name and contact information of the person with whom you speak at the reporting agency. • If the alleged abuse involves an employee or volunteer, notify your crisis management team and follow your crisis management plan. • Suspend the accused employee or volunteer until the investigation is completed.

A. Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Abuse and Sexualized Behaviors

The thought that one youth may sexually abuse another youth does not occur to many people. Unfortunately, abuse between peers has increased 300% in the past few years. Youth-to-Youth

sexual activity and sexualized behaviors often remain unreported in organizations because Church staff, teachers, and volunteers are not comfortable documenting these situations, or may not know how.

Most serious incidents of youth-to-youth abuse are preceded by more subtle incidents such as name-calling, taunting, or roughhousing. Interrupting these interactions early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can keep the program environment safe. UCC recognizes that the following interactions are high risk and should be prohibited:

Prohibited Youth-to-Youth Interactions
• Hazing • Bullying • Derogatory name-calling • Games of Truth or Dare • Singling out one child for different treatment • Ridicule or humiliation

In order to adequately respond to and track incidents within the organization, all sexual activity between youths and sexualized behaviors of youths must be consistently documented.

i. Employee and Volunteer Response:

Youth-to-youth sexual behaviors can include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity, and similar types of interactions.

If employees or volunteers witness youth-to-youth sexual behaviors, they are instructed to follow these guidelines:

Guidelines for UCC members, teachers, and and volunteers Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity
• If you observe sexual activity between youths, you should immediately separate them. • Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted and separate the youths. • Notify your supervisor. • Complete the necessary paperwork including what you observed and how you responded. • Follow your supervisor's instructions regarding notifying the authorities and informing the parents of the youth involved. • Once the incident has been properly reported, parents should expect the youth(s) to not be allowed to return to the co-op. Teachers may but are not required to continue to send online materials, tests, quizzes, etc. • Parents of any student who has been removed for youth-to-youth sexual activity must prove student has completed adequate recovery therapy. See Participation in Abuse section.

ii. Supervisors and Administrators Response:

In the event that a supervisor or administrator receives a report of a youth's sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the supervisor should do the following:

Guidelines for Supervisors and Administrators Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity

- Meet with the staff who reported the sexual activity to gather information.
- Confirm that the youths involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
- Review the steps taken by the staff on duty.
- Review the incident report to confirm it is accurately and thoroughly completed.
- Meet with parents of the youths involved.
- Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the children involved.
- Notify the proper authorities.
- Develop a written corrective action or follow-up plan in response to the incident

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

a. Review the need for additional supervision.
b. Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
c. Review the need for additional training.
d. Alert others in the organization.

iii. Organizational Response:

After the internal review of the sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the organization will determine what can be done to prevent a recurrence, such as:

Guidelines for Organizational Response

- Review the need for additional supervision.
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- Review the need for additional training.
- Alert others in the organization.

B. Responding to Victims

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of UCC is to be responsive to the needs of victims within the constraints or obligations imposed under insurance contracts. In general, we will attend to the immediate needs of victims by providing support and referring to pastoral care.

C. Notification of Parents

A minor child may be party to an incident either as an initiator or as the victim. Whether a child is

initiator or victim may not be clear in all circumstances, such as a child-on-child incident. And violation of policy does not necessarily create a victim. While notification of parents of such circumstances may be warranted, utmost care in communication is required.

While communicating with a parent, and **being mindful of the importance of timely communication**, care shall be given to assessing:

- The specific facts;
- Whether a disciplinary or termination process is required;
- Whether a child should be dismissed from a program (requiring notification of other parents/guardians);
- Whether "mandatory reporting" is a factor;
- Who shall and in what manner communicate with the parents/guardian;
- Whether the Pastor of the host church should be involved in the communication;
- Tentative remedial steps to prevent a further incident.

Notification of parents shall not be delayed when immediate medical care is required.

D. Responding to Media

Media publicity following an incident of abuse or exploitation may be detrimental to the reputations of individuals, and UCC. Without intending ever to evade the media, contacts with media must be managed and conducted only by a person specifically designated by the Board of Directors to represent the co-op. No other person(s) may speak on behalf of the co-op.