

Policies and Procedures to Safeguard Children and Youth at First Parish in Needham UU (Rev Jun 2009)

A. Religious Education Registration

All children and youth who participate in the Religious Education program at First Parish in Needham shall be registered in the program. The only exception is occasional visitors or children previewing the program for the first time.

If a new family attends the program for three consecutive Sundays, they must register their children in order to continue.

B. Youth on Site

On church property, children and youth are the responsibility of their parents or parental designee. The only exception is for participation in scheduled Religious Education programming or children in the care of church-approved child care workers for other church related activities. Children attending congregational worship services are the responsibility of their parent(s) or parent designee.

1. All groups of children on the playground after church programs have ended must be supervised.

C. Religious Education Leadership Requirements

1. No person known to have been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) or a violent crime may work with children or youth in any church-sponsored program.
2. Leaders involved with children or youth must have been active in the church for at least six months of the church school year. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to children. The only exception is a person who has come into the community from another UU church and is approved by the professional staff.
3. Leaders must observe the “two leaders rule” which states that at all times no one is ever alone with children or youth. Two adult supervisors should be present during any activity where a child is present in the church or is part of a church sponsored activity. One of these two leaders must be at least 25 years old. This policy also applies to children or youth being transported in automobiles to a church sponsored activity. *If one of the classroom leaders/teachers needs to leave a classroom, he or she must notify the adjacent classroom leaders that they are leaving the classroom and THE CLASSROOM DOOR MUST BE LEFT OPEN. This assures the safety of the children remaining in the classroom. If there is no connecting classroom, one of the leaders must seek out the “Sunday Floater” or Director of Religious Education, or person in charge that day.*
4. There must be one adult present for every ten youth at all youth group activities. All advisors working with senior youth must be at least 25 years of age.
5. Leaders must sign a Code of Ethics statement annually. This policy includes the staff and members of the congregation who have contact with children and youth.

D. Staff Child Care

First Parish in Needham employs two adults to staff the nursery on Sunday mornings. The two caregivers should have experience in working with babies and/or young children. Parents need to follow these procedures for childcare:

1. Infants/Toddlers must be signed in so that we know who to reach in case of an emergency.
2. First Parish requires parental consent in order for our caregivers to change diapers. Consent forms are kept in the Attendance Notebook.
3. All items belonging to an infant/toddler should be labeled (diaper bags, extra clothing, jackets coats, pacifiers, etc.) First Parish in Needham cannot be held responsible for the loss of such items.
4. One or both staff childcare providers must be CPR and First Aid trained.

E. General Child Care

Childcare is the responsibility of the congregation as a whole and is not considered part of the religious education program. Whenever childcare is provided at church, at least one adult, 18 years or older will be on site, available and responsible for overseeing childcare. There must be a minimum of two childcare workers at all times. Childcare workers must be at least thirteen years old and must be selected by the Parenting Group. If parents are not remaining on site, a written permission form must be given to the person in charge in case of emergency.

F. Health and Safety

1. For the safety and comfort of all of the children at First Parish in Needham sick children should be left at home.
2. Random safety checks will be made of all Religious Education classes in session.
3. An accident report must be completed for any injury, no matter how small. It must be signed off by the parent/guardian and a copy made for the Director of Religious Education. Our insurance carrier will be notified accordingly.
4. Each classroom must be equipped with hand sanitizer and a first aid kit.

G. Emergency and Emergency Preparation

All staff and participants working with children and youth as well as childcare staff should be trained in the church evacuation procedures. Emergency Fire Exits and Emergency Exit Procedures shall be posted in each classroom. Standard religious education procedure is to conduct at least two mock evacuation drills during the course of the church school year. Evacuation plans are checked annually by the Fire Chief.

1. Attendance must be taken routinely so that in case of an emergency completed attendance forms can be taken out of the building with the children or youth and utilized as a safety checklist.