

UUNB Sexual Misconduct Policy

While the Unitarian Universalists of New Braunfels (UUNB) is a welcoming community, it strives to provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in its programs and services, and there is a zero tolerance policy for sexual misconduct.

The Religious Education Safety Policy and Procedures document defines policies to ensure the well-being of children at UUNB, and this document outlines policies to ensure the safety of adults and children from sexual misconduct.

Measures to Prevent Sexual Misconduct

Several specific steps are taken to ensure a safe environment.

- Recognizing the critical role that staff play, UUNB conscientiously screens each new employee by requiring a written application, personal interview, reference checks, and criminal background check.
- Volunteers must sign a code of ethics and have at least six months of attendance at UUNB before they work with children.
- Keys to the building are assigned by the chair of the Building and Grounds Committee and tracked by individual key numbers and security codes.

Responding to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

Any incident suggesting sexual misconduct is to be reported immediately to the minister or a member of the Board of Trustees (BoT). Depending on the nature of the incident, the minister and board president will promptly refer the incident to appropriate law enforcement or to the Safety Committee. All actions taken up to this point will be recorded in a detailed action log and kept in a secure file available only to the minister and BoT president.

If the incident is referred to the Safety Committee, the minister will work with members to investigate. This work will be done expeditiously and confidentially to ensure that both the alleged victim's and accused person's privacy and dignity are respected. The investigation may include, but is not limited to, talking to the people involved together or separately, interviewing others present or knowledgeable about the incident, investigating pertinent background information, or talking to licensed professionals. A detailed record of the proceedings will be kept in a secure file available only to the minister and BoT president.

Results of Investigation

If the minister and Safety Committee determine that sexual misconduct did occur, action will be taken on a case by case basis. Possible actions include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to law enforcement,
- Private counseling by the minister or referral to a therapist,
- Involvement of appropriate staff such as the director of Religious Education,
- Creation of a limited access agreement for continued participation at UUNB.

These proceedings will be confidential on a need-to-know basis in keeping with respect for the individuals involved.

If the committee and minister decide the accused person is innocent of the charges, the record of proceedings will be destroyed and efforts made to reconcile the accused person with the accuser in accordance with UU principles.

Presence of Registered Sex Offenders

UUNB affirms the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and sex offenders who have completed mandated sentences and treatment and who have successfully met criteria specified by UUNB representatives are welcome with some on-going requirements to ensure the safety of all.

When a known sex offender comes to UUNB, the minister, chair of the Safety Committee, and director of Religious Education (DRE) will meet with the person to discuss concerns and areas of restriction. The person will be asked to complete a background information form so that the church representatives can assess the level of restrictions to require. They may also contact the person's therapist or treatment provider for more information.

If the assessment indicates the person is at low risk for recidivism, a limited access agreement will be created and reviewed quarterly the first year by the minister, DRE, and Safety Committee chair. The minister and DRE will inform church members and parents whose children participate in UUNB activities that a known sex offender is attending services and inform them of steps taken to insure the safety of their children and all members of the congregation.

After the first year, the limited access agreement will be reviewed yearly, with revisions as required. Failure to provide background information, an assessment suggesting high risk of re-offending, or lack of adherence to the limited access

agreement will cause the person to be denied the opportunity to participate in any activities at UUNB.

A copy of all proceedings and forms will be kept in a secure file available to the minister, DRE, BoT president, and chair of the Safety Committee.

Sample Limited Access Agreement

The Unitarian Universalists of New Braunfels, in recognizing the worth and dignity of all people, welcomes you to participate in our church. However, based on your past actions and to ensure the safety of all involved, limits to your involvement and contact with members are necessary.

The limits to your access are checked from the items listed below.

___ Avoid all contact with children on UUNB property or at UUNB-sponsored intergenerational events.

___ Avoid being in designated children's areas on UUNB property.

___ Only attend services and activities in the main gathering room.

___ At UUNB, remain in the presence of a "buddy," a support person designated by the minister and Safety Committee chair who knows your situation.

___ Avoid being alone on UUNB property or with only a few people, such as before or after services.

___ Other

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future UUNB functions and church property. I understand that this contract will be reviewed quarterly the first year and then annually by the minister, DRE, and Safety Committee chair.

Signature

Date

Minister

Date

DRE

Date

Chair of Safety Committee

Date

BoT President

Date