

Sex Offender Policy
Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
1135 State Park Road, Greenville, SC 29609

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I. POLICY

As a member of the faith community, the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship recognizes the delicate balance of embracing those who search for and need an open and welcoming congregation and who are in sympathy with and ready to support this Fellowship's goals while balancing the need to protect its members and children from being exposed to risk by known and unknown sex offenders.

II. PROCEDURE

- A. The Board of the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship directs the Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE) to supervise the check of all current members and potential members against the South Carolina Sex Offender Registry. Such checks shall be completed within thirty days of the passage of this policy and as needed thereafter. More extensive background checks may be conducted on any member or friend, including alleged perpetrators (Section III), at any time.
- B. The Minister, President or President-Elect of the Board, and/or the DLRE shall meet with any member, friend or potential member who is revealed to be registered as a Sex Offender and execute with him or her Conditional Limited Access COVENANT for participation in Fellowship services and activities.
- C. The Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will maintain records of all background checks performed and Covenants made per Sex Offender Policy.
- D. The Board further declares that it will investigate any and all reports of alleged behavior (Section III) which would be considered criminal, even if the member or friend has not yet been convicted, and may take appropriate actions to ensure the safety of congregants, members, friends, visitors and the children of the Fellowship (Section IV).
- E. The Board, Minister, or DLRE may prohibit persons known to be sex offenders from participation in Fellowship services and activities involving potential victims and may exclude anyone considered to be a threat to a congregant or child from Fellowship services or activities. Any party excluded from participation in a Fellowship activity may appeal the exclusion to the Board. Unless appropriate authorities are conducting an investigation after our

contacting them, a hearing may be held with one or more Board members, either the Minister or DLRE, and the Covenant Partner/witness to review the violation.

III. RESPONSE TO ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE

- A. The Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will respond promptly to investigate any allegation of sexual abuse. Allegations of sexual abuse shall be reported to the President of the Congregation, the DLRE, the Office Administrator or the Minister. They shall make all members of the Board aware of any complaint within 72 hours of the receipt of such a complaint. The matter shall be confidentially investigated by the Board, and the Board shall be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of both those who allege and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.**
- B. When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint and the person accused will be provided a copy of the Fellowship's Sex Offender Policy. Depending on the allegations, the Sexual Harassment and Disruptive Behavior Policies may also apply. The Board Member, Minister, DLRE or appointed persons will inform the complainant of the procedures to be followed, and the Board shall appoint a committee to begin investigating the allegations as promptly as practicable. The Board may further choose to obtain legal counsel or other consultants. Should a Board Member, Minister, or the DLRE either be the individual accused of sexual abuse or be the leader of the service or activity during which the offending behavior occurred, that leader shall be excluded from discussions surrounding the offense and in selection of the committee to conduct the investigation.**

IV. REPORTING AND ACTIONS

- A. When appropriate, the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will report allegations of sexual abuse to the appropriate authorities in accordance with applicable state mandatory reporting laws.**
- B. The Board Member, Minister, or the DLRE or appointed persons will report all results of the investigation of sexual abuse allegations to the Board in Executive Session.**
- C. The Board, depending on whether results of the investigation of the alleged sexual abuse fall under Sex Offender, Sexual Harassment, or Disruptive Behavior Policies, may take a range of actions from counseling to removal from participation in the Fellowship and/or its leadership.**

D. The Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will maintain records of all persons removed from the Fellowship on the basis of the Sex Offender Policy.

Judith Root, President of the Board

DATE

**GUUF Board of Trustees
Approved at Meeting 5-9-12**