

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
Adopted August 24, 2007

Purpose

One of the goals of All Souls Unitarian Church (“All Souls”) is to provide a safe environment for all children, youth and adults while engaged in church activities. The purpose of the All Souls Child Protection Policy (the “Policy”) is to provide uniform policies, procedures and guidelines to achieve that goal.

Scope

This Policy applies to all circumstances when All Souls is entrusted with the care of children and youth, including, but not limited to, the nursery, Children’s Religious Education, all youth groups and all choirs. The Policy does not apply to situations where a young person is employed by All Souls or by a single member of All Souls.

Policy

Volunteers:

1. Except as specifically provided herein, all volunteers for any children’s or youth related activity must have been an active member of All Souls for a minimum of six (6) months prior to serving as a volunteer. This policy does not apply to ASK Workshop leaders, parents of the month, choir monitor and adults (persons over the age of twenty-five (25)) who drive on field trips. However, even in those circumstances, the staff shall try to ensure that at least one other adult who has been an active member of All Souls for more than six (6) months is present during the activity.
2. All volunteers for children’s and youth activities must provide All Souls with accurate and up to date contact information, including, but not limited to, birth date, social security number, full name and other names that they have previously gone by, address and phone number.
3. Background checks shall be conducted on all staff and volunteers before they are permitted to work or volunteer in connection with children or youth activities. All Souls shall request that all volunteers pay the cost of the background check but no person shall be denied the ability to volunteer because of an inability to pay the cost. Follow up background checks shall be conducted on each volunteer or member of the staff at least every two years. In the intervening year, All Souls staff shall conduct internet searches at reliable databases on all staff and volunteers.
4. No person shall be permitted to be connected with All Souls children’s and youth activities who has been charged with any type of child abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual abuse).

5. If a background check reveals any areas of concern, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director of All Souls for a final determination on whether the person can be involved in any activities related to the children and/or youth.

Two adult rule:

1. The goal is to have two (2) adults present with the youth and children at all times.
2. The exceptions to the two (2)-adult rule are arts teachers and childcare workers and staff under certain circumstances.
3. In the event that any member of the All Souls staff is alone with a child or youth, they shall be in a location where others can see them.
4. The door to any room in which All Souls sponsored activities for children or youth are taking place shall remain open. If there is an observation window the door may be closed but the activities must be visible from outside the room through an observation window.
5. No single child or youth engaged in All Souls sponsored activities may ride in a car with an adult who is not his or her parent, without the express consent of the custodial parent. The exception to the foregoing is if an adult is transporting a child or youth for the purpose of obtaining medical care and/or treatment for an injury sustained, or illness that arose, while engaged in an All Souls sponsored activity.
6. When taking children to the restroom, staff or volunteers will enter to assist the child only when it is necessary because the child is unable to care for him or herself.

Drivers/Transportation:

1. All persons who drive children or youth at All Souls activities must be at least twenty-five (25) years of age.
2. All drivers must provide All Souls a copy of a valid driver's license and a copy of their current insurance verification form. See, www.dsp.state.ok.us/dls/.
3. No youth shall be permitted to drive themselves to or from All Souls sponsored activities that are not at All Souls.
4. Every child, youth or adult who is transported to an All Souls activity shall have and use a seat belt and an approved child-safety seat if required by law.

Field Trips:

1. No youth or child shall be permitted to go any activity away from All Souls unless All Souls has a copy of the Medical Release and Field Trip Authorization Form (Exhibit A), which has been executed by the custodial parent for the child.

2. Exceptions to be the foregoing rule (Field Trips paragraph 1) may be authorized by the All Souls staff in charge of the activity if the staff receives verbal permission directly from the custodial parent.
3. A parent with custody of a child or youth who is a visitor to All Souls may sign an authorization form for the visitor.
4. At least three (3) persons over twenty-five (25) years of age must be on every field trip and there must be at least one (1) adult male and one (1) adult female except for single gender group trips when all adults may be the same gender as the field trip participants.
5. Each Souls group that provides programming for children and youth, including child care, Children's Religious Education, youth department and choir, may adopt codes of conduct that must be executed by the child/youth and/or their parents as a condition to participation in a field trip so long as the code of conduct does not conflict with the terms of this Policy.
6. All field trips must be planned in advance and approved by the staff member who is responsible for the activity.

Medical information:

1. Each year All Souls shall require the parents to provide information regarding each child and youth that will participate in All Souls sponsored activities. The information shall include any information regarding child custody and/or medical issues that the parent believes All Souls should be aware of.
2. Although All Souls is not governed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the staff should endeavor to treat any information disclosed as confidential and provide it only to those other members of the staff and volunteers who need the information for the benefit and safety of the child or youth.

Sexual misconduct:

1. Any person who has any knowledge of any allegations or acts of sexual misconduct or molestation or abuse (sexual, physical or emotional) is required by law to report the matter. In addition, the person shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the All Souls staff. The staff shall not attempt to investigate the alleged misconduct but shall take such actions as the staff member believes are necessary for the safety of the child(ren) and/or youth involved.
2. A written record of the report shall be maintained by the Executive Director of All Souls for future reference.

Punishment: Corporal punishment or abusive language may not be used by the staff and/or volunteers involved with children and youth activities under any circumstances. This includes behavior that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse, and behavior or language that is threatening or demeaning.

Compliance:

1. It shall be the responsibility of the staff to ensure that the volunteers who assist the program comply with the foregoing Policy and it shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that the staff complies with the Policy.
2. Any instances of violations of the policy shall be recorded and the staff member and the Executive Director shall keep a copy of the written report. A copy of the record of a violation by a staff member shall be put in the staff member's personnel file.
3. Every year, each volunteer and member of the staff must be provided a copy of this Policy and sign an acknowledgement form (Exhibit B) acknowledging that they have received a copy of the Policy and agreeing to comply with its terms.

**ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH
PARENT/GUARDIAN'S CONSENT AND MEDICAL RELEASE
FORM**

I _____(name of parent or guardian) am the parent or legal guardian of _____ (child's name). I give my consent for him/her to participate in any and all events, activities and field trips sponsored or endorsed by All Souls Unitarian Church (the "All Souls") during the period from Aug. 1, 2007 to Oct. 31, 2008 (the following year).

I give my consent and authority for the All Souls staff and designated adult volunteers to take action to help insure the safety, health and welfare of my son/daughter/ward. I also empower and authorize the All Souls staff and designated adult volunteers to authorize medical personnel, physicians and hospitals that they select to provide all medical care and treatment, including but not limited to hospital tests, emergency surgical care, pathology, radiology, anesthesia, surgery, injections and prescriptive drugs for the health of my child. I understand that I am responsible for any charges incurred. I also authorize the release of any and all information necessary to provide for the medical care and treatment.

I acknowledge that by participating in All Souls sponsored events my child/ward may be involved in activities occurring both on and off church property, during both day and evening hours, occasionally involving overnight stays, requiring transportation by motorized vehicle, involving the preparation and consumption of food and involving the use of tools, equipment, fire and other materials. I further acknowledge that by participating in All Souls related activities my child/ward may become involved in recreational and sporting activities, including but not limited to hiking, climbing, bicycle riding, rafting/canoeing, Frisbee, laser tag and bowling. Accordingly, I acknowledge that participation in All Souls sponsored activities involves certain dangers and risks and may expose my child to hazards of bodily injury and property damage.

In recognition of these risks and in consideration of my child/ward being allowed to participate in and benefit from these All Souls sponsored events, I agree on behalf of myself and my child/ward, to release, waive and disclaim any and all liabilities of, or claim against All Souls, its officers, board members, staff, agents, servants, employees and all persons volunteering services without charge to transport, supervise and/or chaperone my child/ward while participating in such All Souls sponsored activities, including but not limited to any and all liabilities or claims for personal injury, property damage, court costs, attorneys' fees and interest, however caused or accrued as a result of my child/ward participating in such All Souls sponsored events.

I understand that this document is valid for all of the current church year, unless revoked in writing and delivered to the business office of All Souls. I further understand that it is my responsibility to keep current the information contained in the records held in the church office including, but not limited to, my address, phone number, emergency contact and insurance information.

A photocopy of this consent form shall be as binding as the original.

Dated this ____ day of _____, 20____.

Parent/Legal Guardian

Witness

Emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____

Medical Insurance Carrier

Policy Number

Group Number

Please describe below any medical conditions, including medications and allergies, that your child has that you believe that the All Souls staff and volunteers should be aware of to provide for the care and safety of your child/ward:

All Souls and its staff and volunteers will keep all medical information provided as confidential.

