

**Excerpts from the UUI Safe Congregation Policy Regarding Communication
March, 2020**

f. Communication.

- i. All communication, regardless of the method, between adults to children and youth **must be AND appear to be** above reproach.
- ii. All communication between adults and children or youth should be thought of as though it were occurring in-person, regardless of whether it is occurring face-to face, over the phone, or electronically.
- iii. The vast number of communication possibilities, and the quickness with which new applications and devices are created, requires that adults working with children and youth be cognizant of the need to maintain appropriate relational boundaries at all times, no matter the means of communication.

g. Guidelines for Electronic Communication. We encourage the use of electronic communication between volunteer teachers, youth advisors, UUI staff, and UUI families (including children and youth), subject to the following guidelines:

- i. Volunteer teachers, advisors, and staff may communicate with the parents/guardians of children and youth enrolled in the Religious Education program by using email, texting, and other forms of electronic communication.
- ii. Electronic communication between volunteer teachers, youth advisors, staff and Religious Education families, children and youth should be used to communicate facts and information relevant to the Religious Education program, or other UUI or Unitarian Universalist programming and business only.
- iii. When adult teachers, advisors, staff, and mentors communicate with youth through email, Facebook, or any other electronic forms of communication, the appropriate UUI staff and/or youth's parents or guardians should be copied (CC'd) or included whenever possible, or notified of the communication ASAP.
- iv. If a youth should contact a mentor, advisor or church staff member privately through electronic communications, the recipient must send a reply with a CC (copy) to either the youth's parent/guardian, the appropriate church staff member and the DLRE.
- v. Social Network communication between adult leaders and high school youth related to UUI activities, youth programming, regional & national UU youth events, and other church business is permissible with advance parent/guardian notification/approval. Any such communication should, whenever possible, occur in a public space and must **BE and APPEAR TO BE** above reproach.
- vi. Group communication through email, Facebook, group texting, etc. is appropriate. Any such communication should occur, whenever possible, in a public space, such as the "Facebook wall" rather than messaging. Whenever possible, parents/guardians and/or the appropriate church staff member should be copied or included.

vii. The use of text messaging with high school youth (grades 9-12) as a means of communicating about Religious Education & youth group programming is permitted with advance parent/guardian approval.

viii. If an adult is in doubt about the appropriateness of any ongoing or emerging forms for communication, they must consult with the DLRE as soon as possible.

h. Confidentiality vs. Secrets.

- i. If a child or youth discloses incidents of abuse or neglect, or is exhibiting self-destructive tendencies, the worker must report it immediately to the DLRE. Adult workers should never give children or youth the impression that they will keep secrets for them, or promise to keep such information confidential.
- ii. If workers hear or encounter sensitive personal information from a child or youth which, in their judgment, necessitates notifying other church personnel for support or guidance, they should inform the DLRE as soon as possible.