

Selection, Screening, and Training of Volunteers

In order to meet the variety of needs and positions required to provide education and supervision for infants, children and youth while they are in the care of Foothills Unitarian Church, two different levels of volunteers will be selected and screened. These levels are described below.

1. **Primary Volunteer:** A primary volunteer is an adult who is at least 18 years of age and works with infants, children, or youth on a regular basis within Foothills Unitarian Churches approved and on-going programs. All youth advisors for our YRUU high school youth group must be a minimum of 25 years old. Examples of primary volunteers would be Parish Visitors, RE Group Leaders who are assigned to a group of children or YRUU advisors.
2. **On-call Volunteers:** An on-call volunteer is an adult who is at least 18 years old and works with infants, children, or youth on an occasional basis within FUUC's approved and on-going programs. Examples would be childcare volunteers for Foothills Unitarian Church events, volunteers providing transportation, chaperones for overnights, one day summer RE teachers, or substitute teachers.

All primary volunteers must be active participants in the life of the congregation for at least six months before being considered for any positions involving children, youth or vulnerable adults. This requirement may be waived if a potential volunteer has been active in another congregation and is given a favorable reference by the minister and/or religious education director of that congregation.

With the exception of parents assisting in their child's program as required or as requested, all staff and all volunteers assigned to work with vulnerable adults, infants, children and youth on an on-going basis must agree to a criminal background check by an agency approved by the Foothills Unitarian Universalist Church Board. The purpose of this check is to ascertain if a potential volunteer has ever been convicted of a crime involving abuse of a child or vulnerable adult. These checks will be repeated every third year and the congregation will bear the costs of this check. e. Background checks will be performed by an entity approved by our insurance carrier.

The background check reports will go directly to the Director of Religious Education (DRE) for RE Volunteers and to the Church Administrator for Parish Visitors. The specific information from the report will not be shared with any other volunteers. The DRE or Minister (s) have the authority to veto a volunteer on the basis of the information received from the background check or other confidential information regarding the volunteer. Volunteers have the right to discuss a veto with the Minister and to take action on their own behalf, which may include an appeal to the Board.

All volunteer RE Group Leaders will submit a Teaching Agreement, including two references and will have an interview with the DFM and others he or she may designate. The DFM or assistant will conduct reference checks and keep a written record of references.

Screened on-call volunteers will be utilized whenever possible to fill unexpected, one-time needs in our programs for children and youth. In the event that a screened on-call volunteer is not available to fill an unexpected, one-time need, a parent may be utilized to fill the vacancy, as long as the second adult present is a screened volunteer or another screened staff member or adult is in the vicinity. The DRE also has the discretion of using a screened teen assistant as the second volunteer. If a second volunteer is not available the children or youth will be placed in another classroom or returned to their parents or guardians.

In keeping with UUA best practices, RE group leaders or advisors who are married or involved in a romantic partnership may not serve as the sole two adult primary volunteers in The OWL (Our Whole Lives) Programs or in any program where RE Staff or other adults will not be present in the building.

Training and Supervision of Volunteers and Staff working with Children and Youth

All primary volunteers who work with children and youth will be required to complete a training prior to volunteering with minors or vulnerable adults. All volunteers working with children are required to sign a Teaching Agreement before being approved to teach in our programs.

This training will cover the congregations' policies regarding relationships between adult volunteers and children or youth, information on child abuse and how to recognize child abuse, and how to handle and incidence of child abuse or the report of child abuse.

Nursery Care Staff must be trained in infant/child CPR and first aid. Church staff is required to be trained in infant/child CPR and first aid and with the AED (defibrillator located in the church foyer).

Substitutes / Back-ups

If a substitute is required for a class or meeting, teachers and advisors should attempt to arrange for a substitute in this order:

- Other team members
- Substitute from the approved list
- Parents of child in the classroom or group, a child care staff member may be used as an assisting teacher.