

Religious Education Program Policies

UU St. Pete Religious Education

Safety and Supervision

In the spirit of affirming healthy relationships among adults, children, and youth, UU St. Pete's congregation worked together to draft and adopt a [Safe Congregation Policy](#). This policy establishes guidelines for a community where all children, youth, and vulnerable adults are safe.

UU St. Pete's Safe Congregation Policy is written for the entire congregation to follow -- not just the Religious Education program. However, we are especially mindful of our responsibility to the children and youth entrusted to our Religious Education classes. To that end, in addition to abiding by our Safe Congregation Policy, we have adopted the following guidelines specific to Religious Education classes.

- **Class Supervision**
 - a. Each class must have at least one background-checked supervising adult.
 - b. It is our goal that each class will have at least two supervising adults in attendance at all times.
 - c. Some youth classes (ages 14 and up) may have only one adult teacher in attendance. In these instances, doors to the classroom will remain open and there will be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. If there are fewer than three students in a class with one teacher then there are four options:
 - Move the class to a public area of the church where other persons are in and out of the area where the teacher is working with the one or two students.
 - Share space with another class.
 - Find a qualified adult to join the class.
 - Cancel class and join the congregation in the sanctuary.
- **Staffing**
 - a. All paid RE staff members and regular RE volunteers must:
 - Read and agree to our code of conduct.
 - Read and agree to our policy for interacting with youth online.
 - Complete an application for paid or volunteer employment.
 - Complete a disclosure statement.
 - Consent to a background check.
 - b. All occasional RE volunteers must:
 - Read and agree to our code of conduct.
 - Read and agree to our policy for interacting with youth online.
 - Agree to a background check, at the discretion of RE leadership and church leadership.
- **Family Responsibilities**

- a. All families must fill out a registration form and supply emergency information to have their children participate in the Religious Education program.
- b. Families are expected to sign their children in for class prior to each Sunday service. Please note that although families sign their children in before service, parents or guardians remain responsible for their children until they leave the Sanctuary for their classes.
- c. Families are expected to sign their children out of class promptly at the designated time.
- d. Outside of Sunday class time and special RE events, it is the parent or guardian who is responsible for the supervision of his or her child while on UU St. Pete property.

Student Behavior

Our aim is to develop a class environment that is safe, fun and engaging for all who participate. The focus in our program is on supporting and encouraging appropriate behavior rather than on punishing inappropriate behavior.

By and large, inappropriate behavior does not threaten the physical or emotional safety of the participants. However, there is some inappropriate behavior that cannot be tolerated:

- Physical violence (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting)
- Bullying
- Verbal attacks
- Behavior that is persistently disruptive to the class

If such behavior occurs, the teacher and/or RE leadership will speak with the student outside of class. The student's family will be informed of what happened and asked to help the teachers work with their child to ensure that all involved have a positive experience. If the behavior persists, a parent or guardian may be asked to accompany the student to class until the issue is addressed.

Sick Child Policy

As a general rule, if your child is sick, please keep your child at home. Use your best judgment in determining your child's health:

- Does your child feel well enough to participate comfortably in the activities? A child who is lethargic, whiny, irritable, almost continuously crying, and/or requires constant attention would probably be happier resting at home.
- Does your child have a contagious illness? Illnesses such as pink eye, scabies, head lice, impetigo, strep infection, measles, whooping cough, and chicken pox are highly

contagious. In this case, your child should remain home and separate from other children until the risk of passing on the illness has passed.

In addition, we advise assessing specific symptoms:

- If your child has a **fever**, please keep your child home until s/he has been fever-free for 24 hours.
- If your child has had **diarrhea** in the past 24 hours, keep your child at home until the child has been diarrhea-free for 24 hours.
- If your child is **vomiting**, please keep your child home for up to 24 hours after the vomiting has ended.
- If your child has a **runny nose**, accompanied by fever and crankiness or difficulty breathing, please keep your child home until s/he is acting better and fever free.
- If your child is experiencing **itchy, watery eyes and/or eye discharge** (thick mucus or pus draining from eye, or pink eye), please keep your child home until the condition has been evaluated and treatment has begun.
- If your child exhibits an **unexplained skin rash**, please keep your child home until the condition has been evaluated and treated.
- If your child has a **sore throat with fever and swollen glands, or severe coughing**, please keep your child home until the child is acting better and fever free.
- If your child appears to have **yellowish skin or eyes**, please keep your child home until the condition has been evaluated and treatment has begun.

If your child arrives at class with any of the above symptoms, or manifests them during class, please be aware that you will be asked to take your child home.