

## **Statement of values and expectations for FUS membership For congregational consideration May 2006**

It is the intention of the First Unitarian Society to create a culture of mutual respect and personal safety that supports the growth of individuals and community. In the service of this goal and its mission, the Society holds certain expectations of its members, its volunteer leaders, its professional leaders, and those who relate to its children.

The society expects members:

- not to endanger the health or physical safety of others;
- not to harass, bully, intimidate or physically or verbally abuse others;
- to communicate respectfully, honestly, and directly;
- to respond with acceptance to differences in culture, theology, ability and status;
- not to engage in sexually exploitive or offensive behavior;
- to abide by the bylaws, policies, and organizational structures and procedures established by the Society;
- not to endanger the organizational status of the Society, including its tax exemption, or break the law, except by a thoughtful and deliberate act of civil disobedience.

In addition to the above, the Society expects its volunteer leaders:

- to exercise their leadership fairly, respectfully, and competently;
- to abide by democratic principles;
- to uphold the best interests of the Society in general;
- to support the safety and growth of those they lead;
- not to exploit the authority of their role;
- to consent to background checks as required by law, insurance, or prudence;
- not to use Society facilities or resources to which they may have access for purposes other than their assigned role.

In addition to all of the above, the Society expects its professional leaders:

- to protect the confidentiality and trust reposed in them by members;
- not to use their position at the Society for personal financial advantage;
- not to speak on behalf of the Society unless formally authorized to do so;
- to abide by the code of ethics of their professional organizations;
- to respect healthy boundaries of sexual behavior.

In addition to the membership and leadership expectations above, the Society expects all who work with its children:

- to care for the children's physical, mental, moral and spiritual growth;
- to treat them with respect and dignity;
- to be positive and affirming toward them, even in the process of correcting behavior;
- to refrain from behavior with them that is in any way erotic, seductive, or sexual in nature;
- to abide by the UUA statement of ethics regarding work with children and youth;
- to consent to background checks as required by law, insurance, or prudence;
- to abide by all policies determined by the Religious Education or Youth/Adult committees.

Questions regarding these expectations, or concerns as to whether they are being met, should be referred to the minister or the board of trustees. A description of the procedure to be followed in this case may be obtained from the Society's office or website.

## **Implementation procedures for FUS values and expectations**

When a member of the FUS community has a concern related to the statement of values and expectations, that concern should be communicated to the minister or the board of trustees. A Response Team will then be assembled, to look into the concern and determine how to proceed with it.

The Response Team will consist of four people, including the immediate past president of the FUS board, the chair of the Religious Education committee or the Youth/Adult committee, a representative from the Ministerial Relations Committee, and the Senior Minister. If the concern deals with treatment of children, appropriate substitutions should be found if any of the above-named people are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse according to state law. If the concern deals with the minister, a member of the current FUS board of trustees should be appointed in place of the senior minister.

The Response Team will make a determination under one of the following broad categories:

- the concern is without foundation, or warrants no further action;
- the concern is credible and involves matters that should be reported to legal authorities;
- the concern is credible and involves matters specific to FUS values and expectations.

If the concern is found to be without foundation or warranting no further action, the Response Team will make a brief report of their findings in writing to the person who raised the concern, and to the FUS board of trustees.

If the concern is found to be credible and to involve matters that should be reported to legal authorities, the Response Team will meet with the FUS board of trustees or its executive committee to advise them that such a report is being made. The Response Team will then contact the appropriate legal authorities.

If the concern is found to be credible and to involve matters specific to FUS values and expectations, the Response Team will report this finding to the FUS board of trustees, together with recommendations for a process of accountability and reconciliation. The goal of such a process will be to restore right relations among members of the FUS community, to protect the integrity of the congregation, to maintain the dignity and encourage the growth of all persons involved, and to promote healthy and transparent systems of relationship. As part of such a process, individuals may be asked to forego certain functions of congregational life, such as working with children, handling money, or holding leadership positions, either on a temporary or permanent basis. Individuals who are unwilling to participate in such a process may be asked to discontinue their affiliation with FUS.

The work of the Response Team will be confidential in process, but its findings will become public record as part of the minutes of the FUS board of trustees. All other reports, notes and documents produced in the process will be destroyed when the work of the Response Team is concluded. The Response Team may consult as necessary with others inside or outside of FUS. In all cases, the recommendations of the Response Team will be presented to the FUS board of trustees, and the decisions of the board will be final.