



## **East Shore Unitarian Church Parent Handbook**

Welcome to the East Shore Unitarian Church (ESUC) Religious Exploration (RE) program. Our RE program works in partnership with parents and guardians and congregation members to provide the children and youth of the community with the opportunity to explore Unitarian Universalist values. To ensure that staff and volunteers are informed, please review the policies and procedures of the program.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

ESUC does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, and sex, marital or veteran status. This is a commitment made by East Shore Unitarian Church and is in accordance with federal, state and local laws and regulations.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### **Parents Provide**

Parents and caregivers are responsible for updating their children's registration forms to include current allergies, phone and email information, grade level, and all other pertinent information. If your address, phone number, or emergency contact number is changed please let us know immediately. This information will be posted and shared with classroom teachers.

#### **Parent-Church Communication**

Communication is essential between Sunday school and parents. Please communicate with us to share information and express any concerns/praises that you might have about our program.

#### **Classroom Guidance**

At ESUC our goal is to create an interesting and exciting learning environment where children experience a Unitarian Universalist community. "Rules" are established only to provide safe and fair guidelines in which children may participate equally and freely.

Adult supervision and guidance are always available. Guidance techniques are positive, fair, consistent and related to the child's behavior and individual needs. We seek to avoid behavior problems through reinforcement of appropriate behavior, offering positive alternatives to misbehavior, redirection and continual teaching of the tools, which provide for self-discipline. Corporal punishment is never used.

#### **ESUC Child Safety Policy**

The East Shore Unitarian Church follows a church-wide safety policy. A copy of this policy is available by request from

the congregation.

Children and youth must be supervised by two unrelated adults at all times. All leaders agree to refrain from engaging in any sexual, seductive, or erotic behaviors with children and youth during their time in our programs and after young people have graduated. Parents and primary caregivers must always be aware when adults are in contact with their children, and such contact should have a justifiable and reasonable basis. Two adults must be included on all communications with minors.

### **Registration, Pick Up, Drop off**

All children and youth, including visitors, are required to have an updated registration form on file to participate in programming under the supervision of ESUC staff and volunteers. All other children are required to be under the supervision of their parent/guardian.

Children and youth can only be released to individuals named on their registration or update forms. Staff and volunteers are permitted to verify the ID of unknown pickup persons.

Children will not be released to unauthorized persons. In order to release any child, we must have written permission from the child's parent or guardian, listing the individual's full name. Anyone other than the parent or guardian known to staff will be asked to show photo identification before being allowed to pick up a child.

### **Photos**

Because ESUC is a public space, we cannot control who is taking photos any time. However, staff and approved volunteers will use photos or videos that display the faces of minors in ESUC media with permission from the parent or guardian. Photos are not shared or stored on personal computers.

### **Allergies**

If your child has allergies, please notify the director and teachers during enrollment. If a child is prescribed with an EpiPen, it should be kept on the premises every time when the child is attending the school.

### **Clothing**

Dress your child casually and ready for play. Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. We go outside "rain or shine" unless it is absolutely pouring.

### **Birthdays**

You are welcome to bring treats for your child to share with their class on birthdays. Let us know in advance if you plan to bring a treat. Do not bring food with nuts.

### **Items from Home**

Please do not bring toys, games and other personal items from home unless you have been asked for a special activity.

East Shore has a policy against bringing any types of weapons onto church grounds. Our staff is committed to keeping children safe and we will immediately dispose of any toy weapon brought into the congregation. It is important for children to learn that church is not a place for guns and other weapons. All pretend gunplay discouraged here.

### **Evaluation Process**

ESUC reserves the right to request the withdrawal of a child who is developmentally, emotionally and socially not able to adjust to the program or poses a risk to themselves or others. If we have concerns related to the developmental and behavioral issues or the child shows significant difficulties in participation our program, an evaluation process may be

started. This process involves staff, family, and if needed outside professional assistance. Our first priorities are safety and well-being of individuals, volunteers, and the program.

### **Illness**

Children must be well enough to participate in all activities while at school, including outside play. Parents will be called to come and sick children should be taken to home as quickly as possible. Please remember that anyone with a fever (99.0 or above) must remain at home. Students may come to school 24 hours after the fever breaks without the aid of fever-reducing medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin). Also, any student who has experienced vomiting or diarrhea should wait 24 hours after the last episode before returning to school. Please report any contagious disease to the ESUC staff immediately.

### **Emergency Medical Plan**

The injured or sick child's parents will be contacted as soon as possible. If deemed appropriate, an aid car will be immediately called. The child will be transported to the nearest hospital by aid car. If the parent is not available to accompany the child, the program manager or another staff member will accompany the child if possible. The staff member will remain at the hospital until reunification with the family.

### **Severe and Inclement Weather**

ESUC prioritizes the safety of its employees, friends, and members, therefore the church will be closed during severe weather conditions, with decisions made based on local weather forecasts and official announcements. Staff leadership will determine if a closure is necessary based on the severity of weather conditions, including heavy snowfall, ice storms, severe thunderstorms, or other extreme weather events. If the church is closed, delayed, or dismissed early due to weather, power outage, or any other emergency, you will be notified via email, social media, and the church website by 8:00 am on Sunday morning if the church is closed.

### **Evacuation Process**

In the case of an emergency evacuation, children will be taken outside to a designated area by the playground or nearby park across the street. In the event of a fire or other event requiring evacuation or shelter in place protocol, the DRE or other designated adult in their absence assumes the lead. All children and adults in the RE space are to follow their directions.

Parents should always evacuate from the exit nearest to them. They can plan to pick their child up from the playground or other designated meeting area.

When lockdown procedures are implemented, no person will be allowed into locked spaces until an all clear is given. ESUC staff and volunteers will care for children and youth until they can be retrieved by a family member or other pickup person named on their registration.

All RE teachers will have a clipboard with printed contacts for all families. This will go with them in an evacuation. The DRE also has access to contact information through the Realm App. In addition to registering, visiting families are required to sign children in with a phone number in case they need to be contacted.