

**First Unitarian Church Of Alton
Board Policy on Disruptive Behavior**

Purpose: To ensure the safety of the congregation whenever that safety or health is threatened by the disruptive behavior of any individual.

Action taken: Approved at 7/07 Board Meeting

First Unitarian Church of Alton strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree that the disruptive behavior of an individual compromises the health of this congregation, our actions as a people of faith must respond in order to maintain the safety and health of our church community.

To this end, the following policy shall be followed in the event that any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions is threatened.

1. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister, if available, and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed. If further assistance is required the Police Department may be called. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister being present, the Minister must be notified as soon as possible. In the event that the Minister is unavailable, the President of the Board of Trustees must be notified. A follow-up letter detailing what steps must be taken before returning to the activities involved will be sent by the Minister or the President of the Board of Trustees to the offending party or parties.
2. Situations not requiring an immediate response will be referred to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board of Trustees. The committee will respond in terms of their own judgment, keeping in mind the following guidelines:
 - a. The committee will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define acceptable behavior in advance.
 - b. Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals; stereotypes will be avoided.
 - c. The committee will exercise due diligence in the collection of all information necessary for a just response.
 - d. To aid in evaluating the problem the following points will be considered:
 - 1) DANGEROUSNESS – Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
 - 2) DISRUPTIVENESS – How much interference with church functions results from the individual's behavior?
 - 3) OFFENSIVENESS – How likely is it that prospective or existing members will avoid church as a result of the individual's behavior?
 - e. To determine the necessary response the following points will be considered:
 - 1) CAUSES – Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
 - 2) HISTORY – What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?

- 3) PROBABILITY OF CHANGE – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
- f. The committee will decide on the necessary response on a case by case basis. However, the following three levels of response are recommended:
- 1) LEVEL ONE – The committee shall inform the Minister of the problem and either the Minister or a member of the committee shall meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern.
 - 2) LEVEL TWO – The offending individual is excluded from the church and/or specific church activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear.
 - 3) LEVEL THREE – The offending individual is permanently excluded from the church premises and all church activities. This action requires consultation with the Board of Trustees and the Minister. If it is decided that expulsion will take place, a letter will be sent by the Minister or the President of the Board of Trustees explaining the expulsion and the individual's rights and possible recourse.