

# Unitarian Universalist Society of Rockport (UUSR)

## Email List Policies

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### Overview, Terminology, and Features

An email list is a system for exchanging information between a group of people. When a list member (aka a list subscriber) sends an email to the list address (e.g. [rockportuu@googlegroups.com](mailto:rockportuu@googlegroups.com)) every other list member will receive that email. When receiving an email from the list, an individual can choose to reply only to the original sender or to reply to the entire list.

**Archive:** An email list may keep an archive of past messages. Access to the archive is available only to current list members and will require either a password or some other method of authentication.

**List membership data:** The names and email addresses of all list subscribers will be available to list members. To access the list data, a member will have to provide a password or use some other method of authentication.

**Administrators:** An email list has one or more volunteer administrators. Administrators manage day-to-day list maintenance, such as adding new members, helping members change their subscription data (e.g. to a new email address). One important task of a list administrator is moderation, described next.

**Moderation:** Based on the [“list etiquette”](#) guidelines below, it may happen that some list members appear to violate the standards of respectful communication. In that case, list administrators may “moderate” the list, in which case every email to the list, or every email from some subset of list members, is subject to review by the list administrators before being approved and sent to the entire list, or rejected. If misbehavior persists, as discussed below, list members may be removed from the list. Cases where emails need to be reviewed, or a list member may be violating list standards, may be noticed by the administrators themselves or may be reported to the administrators by list members.

### List Membership

The list is open to members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Rockport. The use of “friends” in the previous sentence is intentionally vague; the bias will be to allow people to join the list if the list administrators believe the potential list member has a sincere interest in keeping in touch with the UUSR community.

Emails sent to the list will be accepted only if the “from” email address matches the email address of a list member. This means that when a list member gets a new email address and posts to the list from that new address, the email will likely bounce back to the sender. The list

software has an interface for allowing list members to update their email address. Also, the list administrators will help individuals to update their subscription details if needed.

It is possible for a single individual to subscribe to the list via multiple email addresses; in that case, the individual will likely want to receive email to only one of their addresses, but to have the option to send email from multiple addresses. This sort of fine tuning is supported by the list management interface.

## List Etiquette (aka “Netiquette”)

List subscribers are urged to follow these guidelines when sending an email to the list:

1. **New York Times rule:** Assume that anything you send to the list may become public knowledge. Sometimes this is referred to as the “New York Times” rule, namely: if you are not comfortable with your message appearing on the front page of tomorrow’s New York Times, don’t send it.
2. **No personal attacks**, no bullying, no disparaging other list members.
3. Refrain from language that could reasonably be expected to upset or offend other members of the community. If in doubt, ask for advice first from the minister or the list administrators. Keep in mind that there are a large number of list subscribers, and you can assume that you do not know everyone who will read your messages.
4. **No trolling:** Refrain from inflammatory language that could reasonably be expected to elicit angry or strongly opposed viewpoints. A mailing list is not an appropriate forum for subtle or emotionally charged subjects. Consider working with the minister or other members of the UUSR congregation to organize an in-person (or hybrid in-person/online) forum, with professional moderation, for discussion of sensitive topics.
5. **Commercial postings:** We ask that list members limit the number of postings to the mailing list advertising their services to at most twice a year.

## In case of breach of Netiquette

In the case that list administrators or other members of the UUSR community believe that list etiquette has been violated, list administrators, in collaboration with the minister and UUSR Board members, will proceed as follows:

1. Turn moderation on for the offending poster. If a multi-person “flame war” has erupted, turn on moderation for the whole list.
  - a. Send email to the list explaining the actions taken and what will be the next steps
2. Individually contact the offending poster(s)
  - a. Explain to each offending subscriber what are the issues with their posts. Work with this person until they fully understand the repercussions of their previous posts and the list etiquette guidelines that must be followed
  - b. Work with the offending subscriber to avoid future issues. This may involve moderating posts from the subscriber for some amount of time.
3. Contact community members who are upset
  - a. Communicate actions that have been taken and plans for the future

If the above interventions do not stem what seems to be a persistent unwillingness or inability to conform to list etiquette guidelines, then list administrators will contact the UUSR Board of Trustees to consider removing any offenders from the email list. The administrators and Board will consider whether additional actions should be taken in order to reestablish an understanding of list etiquette and an atmosphere of respect and safety within the community.