



DIOCESE of  
CHRIST our HOPE



# Policy & Manual for the Protection of Children

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## **A: INTRODUCTION**

### **A.1 A Letter from Bishop Breedlove**

All Saints Day

November 1, 2021

Dear Clergy and Lay Leaders of the Diocese of Christ our Hope,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are profoundly grateful to be able to forward to you the Diocese of Christ our Hope's Policy Manual for the Protection of Children. This policy is the result of years of dedicated work by a team of people who have, on behalf of the Diocesan Council and staff, fulfilled a charge to research and develop a strong, workable policy designed to guard the safety of the children entrusted to our care.

This manual prescribes a proactive and preventive approach for the protection of children to be undertaken in every parish in the Diocese. Because it safeguards the most vulnerable people entrusted to our care by Jesus, it is genuinely as important as any ministry of the local church or the Diocese.

No single resource can comprehensively cover every contingency for the safety of our children; therefore, this policy may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the Diocesan Council and the Committee for Safe Parishes. We will keep you informed of any changes, but until further notice, this policy establishes requirements and standards for every church in our Diocese in its ministry to and with children.

Because this is an official policy of the Diocese, it is not optional: it is mandatory. The deadline for enacting all dimensions of this Child Protection Policy is August 31, 2022.

The Office of Chancellor as well as the Diocesan Council and Staff are committed to assist you in understanding the issues we face in this area. We are also mobilizing teams of people to develop and implement resources, both in the Diocesan Office and Deaneries, to train ministry workers and support the application of this policy. By the time you receive this policy and begin to consider its application in your local church, those teams and

resources will be ready to assist. They will be a fixed feature through which our life together will be shaped for the foreseeable future.

Accompanying this policy, we are developing a clear pathway for properly responding to allegations or responding to any unfortunate instances of misconduct and actual abuse of children and youth. Please be on the alert for that response pathway. In the meantime, we are available to help counsel you through properly responding if a potential crisis should arise.

May God be glorified in all we do, and may he protect and preserve our children in love!

Grace & peace,

The Right Rev'd Dr. Steven A Breedlove

Jessica Patton, Vice-Chair, Diocesan Council

Canon Megan Greto

Chancellor James Cushing, Esq

## A.2 Letter from the Canon for Ethics and Protection

All Saints Day

November 1, 2021

Dear Clergy and Lay Leaders of the Diocese of Christ Our Hope,

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul provides a beautifully detailed account of the Body, the Church of Christ. Specifically in verse 26, Paul writes of the Church, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” And this living out of honoring and suffering together is the unity under Christ, the Head of the Church. When we look at Jesus, the way He gathered the most vulnerable, the weak, the shamed, and the abused, He took them in, cared for them and healed them. The way the church is uniquely poised to do this for our Gospel witness, is a high and rich calling, one that is needed now more than ever.

With that in mind, then, how do we as a Diocese create places within our churches and within our leadership structures that promote transparency, power checks and balances, and systems of interactions to prevent not only the physical and/or sexual abuse of children, but also other abuses of power that can be damaging to children and to adults.

Our Diocese has had in place a detailed Child Safety Policy for several years. In fact, the policy that was laid out in 2019 is very similar to the ACNA Policy for Child Safety because similar teams worked together to create it. Now, on the heels of the ACNA Policy Approval, we are rolling out another layer of compliance and oversight to assist our churches reach the goal to be a safe space for children *and adults*.

In the 2019 iteration of this policy, the Diocese mandated background checks every two years, training, and adherence to the Policy. Now in 2021, as outlined in the attached, revised Policy, we are going to provide training via a Train-the-Trainer model. We will provide samples and checklists for churches

to use, and an accountability structure for reporting from each parish through the Deanery.

To create and manage, as well as develop training and resources, the Diocese has created the Canon for Ethics and Protection. This position is geared towards walking alongside the Deaneries and the parishes to ensure there is clear accountability for this and other related policies.

The Canon for Ethics and Protection will proceed with the given timeline and structure:

1. Child Safety and Protection Policy submitted in draft to Diocesan Council in September. Submitted for final approval by October 2021 meeting.
  - 1.1. Upon approval, notify each Dean of the new individual needed for their Deanery: The Ethics Coordinator. This individual should be named by January 15, 2022. Please contact Canon for Ethics and Protection if help is needed identifying this individual. The Ethics Coordinator should have a meeting with the Canon prior to the Deanery regional retreats in 2022.
  - 1.2. Work with Communications Director to create the ADHOPE web resources for this updated policy. This site will include:
    - The Policy by section
    - Training materials
    - Sample documents listed in the policy
    - Deanery related local resources such as independent investigators and victim advocates as well as licensed trauma counselors
    - Other resources for families
  - 1.3. Train the Trainer Model developed with resources available and templates and slides prepared for the Trainings to begin at each Deanery Retreat in 2022.
    - Canon will coordinate with each Dean and their retreat planning to include time for the in person training, which will be approximately 2.5 hrs.
  - 1.4. Ethics Committee meetings will be held quarterly at the following schedule via ZOOM:
    - Quarter 1 Committee for Ethics and Protection meeting will be held in February.
    - Quarter 2 Committee for Ethics and Protection meeting will be held in May.



- By July 1, each Deanery Ethics and Protection Coordinator will be notified that their documentation and training tracking is due to the Committee for Ethics and Protection by July 15. This will be the Quarter 3 meeting.
  - The Committee for Ethics and Protection will meet on or around July 15 and will draft any changes and updates to the Policy. These changes will be presented to the Diocesan Council no later than September's Diocesan Council meeting.
  - Quarter 4 meeting will be held at Synod.
- 2. Response Team Infrastructure and Resources: November and December 2021 with build out onto the website in January 2022.
- 3. Adult Misconduct Policy draft presented to Diocesan Council in Winter 2022.
  - 3.1. Begin conversations with the Chancellor and CFO of the Diocese in September. Research other ACNA resources on this topic.
  - 3.2. Engage in dialogue with parishes in the ACNA about resources related to Adult misconduct.
- 4. Support Response and Reporting Allegations and Situations within the Diocese -- ongoing
  - 4.1. Act as point of contact for parishes in the Diocese in need of support due to allegations of abuse.
  - 4.2. Model best practices and provide resources to parishes, victims, and the broader ACNA community.

In Christ,

Canon Megan Greto

## A.3 Definitions

### DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following uses of these terms are in place.

**Bishop, or Bishop Ordinary:** The Bishop with canonical and ecclesiastical authority in the Diocese.

**Bullying:** Behavior that intimidates, humiliates, offends, degrades or harms another person, whether verbal, psychological, social, physical or otherwise.

**Certified Individual: Clergy, Staff, Volunteer:** A member of the Clergy or of a Parish Staff who has taken a Diocesan-approved training course within the past two years on issues related to child and youth protection, especially as those issues relate to abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and related issues, and who has a current background check.

**Certified Volunteer:** A Layperson in the Parish who has taken a Diocesan-approved training course on issues related to child and youth protection, especially as those issues relate to abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and related issues, and who has a current background check.

**Child Abuse:** Any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

**Child Protective Services (CPS):** A social services program provided by state and local governments serving children and their families who are in need of assistance. CPS receives and investigates reports of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation. The name of this organization may vary by state. Please see Appendix A.

**Clergy:** Ordained ministers that serve a local Parish, including Priests and Deacons.

**Complainant:** the alleged victim, or person making an accusation.

**Confidential or Privileged Information:** Information of a personal nature that has been shared with a member of the Clergy, Ministry Staff or volunteer leaders with the intention that such information not be shared with others, without prior permission.

**Deacon:** A member of the clergy of the diocese, distinct from a Priest or a Bishop.

**Deanery:** For this Diocese, the Deanery is a defined group of regional churches within this Diocese. Deaneries within the Diocese are lead by Bishop appointed Clergy as Deans.

**Diocese:** The Diocese of Christ Our Hope (DCH) of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

**Infant:** Typically applied to young children between one month and one year of age; however, definitions may vary and may include children up to two years of age. When a child learns to walk, the term "toddler" may be used instead.

**Lay, Lay member, or Layperson:** An individual who is not a member of the Clergy.

**Mandated Reporter:** A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency. State laws vary greatly. See Appendix A for your specific state laws.

**Ministry Leader:** Any Clergy-approved Layperson (adult or youth) volunteering with leadership of any ministry within the church. Though this individual is not the person with final authority, he or she must abide by the policies outlined in this document. Examples include: Sunday school teachers, camp counselors and program teams that include children under 18.

**Staff:** Any Clergy or Clergy-approved adult Layperson, employed providing leadership of any ministry within the church. Though this individual may not be the person with final authority, he or she still must abide by this policy. Examples include: Youth Minister, Children's Pastor, Family Life Director, etc.

**Need-to-Know:** The principle that sensitive information needs to be restricted to those persons who are administratively or legally responsible for reporting allegations of abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harrassment, sexual exploitation, and related issues.

**Off-site:** Any location other than the sponsoring Parish, Parish office, institutional facility, or campus.

**Overnight:** Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.

**Parish:** A local church congregation. Equivalent to church, or church plant or mission.

**Priest:** An ordained member of the Clergy in the Diocese that is distinct from both a Deacon and a Bishop.

**Programs:** Official activities and ministries sponsored by the Diocese and parishes (examples include: Youth Event, provincial youth events, pilgrimages, mission experiences, camp programs, acolyte festivals, etc.).

**Rector:** The senior Clergy of a local parish charged with the regular management, oversight, and care of the Parish. This role may also include the following titles: Priest-in-charge, Vicar, Senior Pastor, Lead Pastor, or similar leadership title/role.

**Sexual Misconduct:** Federal Definition inserted here.

**Staff:** Look at other Staff. Employed persons who work for the Parish under the leadership of the Rector and Vestry.

**Vestry:** The governing and oversight body with fiduciary responsibility for the local Parish. This body may also be called the Board, Council, Leadership Team, or a similar name. The Vestry cannot be related to a member of Staff or Clergy of the Parish.

**Volunteer:** A Layperson who is not a paid member of the Parish Staff.

**Warden:** A Lay leader of the Vestry. In many Anglican parishes there is a Senior Warden and a Junior Warden that assist the Rector in overseeing the parish. Depending on the local Parish, a Warden may have a different title such as Chairman, Vice Chairman, President, or similar title/role.

## A.4 The Diocesan Committee for Ethics and Protection

The Bishop in consultation with the Canon for Ethics and Protection along with the Deans will create the Ethics and Protection Committee. This group is responsible for the creation and promulgation of the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children, under the authority and oversight of the Diocesan Council and the Bishop in accordance with the canons of the diocese.

From time to time, but not less than annually in August, the committee will review and, if necessary, revise the policy in light of practical experiences, medical and other scholarly research, legal developments, and other relevant considerations.

The Diocese also recommends that each church establish a Risk Management Group ([See Section H, page 51](#)). Deans from across the Diocese identify their Ethics and Protection Trainer and this individual is a resource for the parishes in that Deanery. This Deanery Ethics Trainer will be trained by the Canon for Ethics and Protection annually at the Deanery Retreat. The Deanery Ethics Trainer will also be on the Committee for Ethics and Protection.

The Committee for Ethics and Protection will meet quarterly per the schedule and document review outline in section [G.2, Deanery Compliance Tracking](#).

## A.5 Rector Responsibility for this Policy

The Rector, rather than the Diocese, has overall responsibility for the administration of this policy within the parish, mission, or church plant he/she leads and for providing all compliance and reporting requested by the Diocese. In the absence of a Rector, the priest-in-charge, senior warden or other individual appointed by the Bishop will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas specifically delineating action by the Rector.

## A.6 Pastoral Care of Children and Youth

We are committed to providing pastoral care to all affected by and involved with instances of child abuse. Pastoral care grows out of Christ-centered relationships and proceeds with an awareness of the spiritual and emotional needs of both the individual and the community. It may include providing guidance, support, consolation, and even confrontation to minister to each individual as we believe God desires.

*Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. (BCP, #66)*

## A.7 Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse

The diocese will not tolerate any form of child abuse involving our clergy, staff, lay leaders, volunteers or other persons. Everyone who serves the church through educational, pastoral, recreational or other activities is



expected to maintain the highest biblical standards in relationships with those to whom they minister, avoiding any form of misconduct against children. That commitment extends to sexual behavior.

No one in the employ or volunteer service of the Diocese or its parishes who has a civil or criminal record of child abuse, or who has admitted committing prior sexual abuse of a child, will be permitted to serve with children or youth.

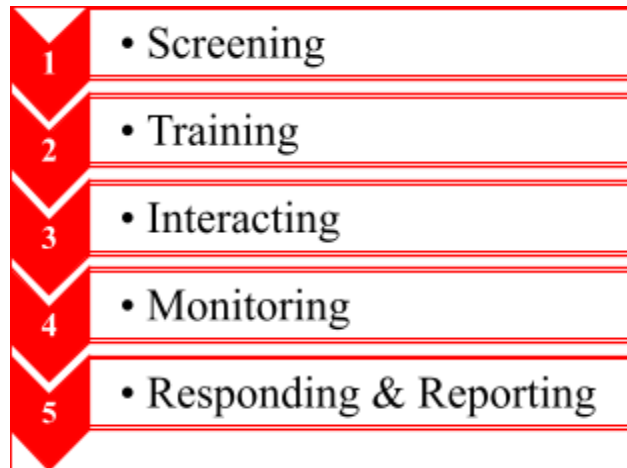
## A.8 Child Abuse in each State

The Diocese member churches span across several states. Appendix A defines the specific definition of Child Abuse for each state and it's corresponding laws for reporting.

Child Abuse reporting laws that are specific to each state can be found [here](#).

## A.9 5 Basics of the Policy

The Diocese of Christ Our Hope (DCH) or The Diocese, requires that, at each congregation, parish, church, mission, and church plant is expected to have in place the following policy procedures. These basic standards apply even if there are no children currently in attendance at church events. The diocese and your congregation are committed to creating a positive and healthy environment for children and youth through the 5-step approach:



1. **SCREENING** is an opportunity to prevent an offender from ever having contact with children and youth in our programs. Each Parish has a responsibility to carefully screen staff, vestry, and volunteers that interact with children and youth.
2. **TRAINING** puts the power to protect in everyone’s hands and is an important deterrent to child abuse. All clergy, Vestry, staff and volunteers who work with children and youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, commit to the safe practices specificified in this policy and learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse.
3. **INTERACTING GUIDELINES** help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse. The modes and forms of how clergy, staff and volunteers interact with children and youth create the foundations for meaningful and significant relationships to form.
4. **MONITORING** allows us to detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse. Clergy, Vestry, staff, and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children and youth activities in all settings at all times.
5. **RESPONDING** quickly gives us the power to prevent or stop abuse and gives the child more time to heal. Anyone, who knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect a child has been abused, abandoned, neglected, or exploited in violation of the law should immediately contact the appropriate state abuse hotline. All reports are confidential and access to these reports is limited by specific criteria described in the appropriate state’s statute(s).





## **B: STEP 1. SCREENING PROCEDURES**

One effective means of reducing the incidence of child abuse is to screen carefully all clergy and lay workers, paid and volunteer, working with minors. The Diocese requires the following screening and background checks for all canonically resident and licensed clergy, vestry, and staff and volunteers who work with children and youth:

### **B.1 Screening Clergy**

The screening of clergy is the responsibility of the Diocese. Careful screening of clergy is conducted initially during the ordination and search processes. In addition, any clergy transferring from another diocese within the ACNA, will provide records of any background check within 2 years and undergo this screening process. This clergy screening process includes:

- Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks through Oxford Document Management Company;
- Managing the record keeping of clergy background checks is the responsibility of the Diocese;
- Renewing background checks at least every 2 years. It is the responsibility of all clergy to cooperate fully in all aspects of the screening process and to submit in a timely manner all documents needed to complete such checks
- Conducting personal and professional reference checks (three sources recommended)
- Interviews related to Ordination and Transfers
- Requiring the clergy person completion of Screening Questionnaire and regular ministry ethics training certifications.
- Reviewing this policy with the clergy person and requiring clergy to sign and submit Policy Acknowledgement Form found in Section [G.5](#).

### **B.2 Screening Staff, Interns, and Volunteers**

The screening of employees/staff, interns, and volunteers is the responsibility of the individual church. Each state has required age limit laws for paid employment. Please check these age limits if the Parish is hiring a minor. The Diocese recommends that youth below 6th grade should not be hired or volunteer. Youth at least 6th Grade may volunteer with two certified adults. They may be utilized for ratio purposes if they are 4 years older than the oldest child present.

Careful screening of adult staff, interns and volunteers to become certified includes:

- Reviewing each signed Volunteer or Employment Application for staff, interns, and volunteers that may interact with a minor in their role;
- Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and state criminal background checks (checks should be renewed at least every two years);
- Conducting personal and professional reference checks as provided on the application;
- Conducting a thorough social media search;
- Holding face-to-face interviews;
- For Volunteers, a minimum of six months regular attendance or the written recommendation from another Diocesan parish;
- Requiring each applicant to sign the screening statement found in Section [G.5](#).

## C: STEP 2. TRAINING PROCEDURES

Training is also an important deterrent to child abuse. Training our parish members also creates communities that become more aware of behaviors that can lead to abuse. Grooming is the process during which a child sexual offender draws a child in by gaining his or her trust in order to sexually abuse the child and maintain secrecy. The offender may also groom the parents by persuading them of his or her trustworthiness with children. The abuser can also groom the organization, such as a parish, in similar ways. Providing training and creating spaces to openly dialogue with clergy, vestry, staff and volunteers about these threats can prevent abuse.

Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, as well as learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse. They also must become familiar with safe practices specific to their church designed to reduce the potential for abuse occurring.

### C.1 Reading Requirements

The diocese requires the following training: all members of the clergy, the vestry, and staff must certify that they have read, understood and accepted the DCOH Policies on the Protection of Children and sign an acknowledgement form.

### C.2 Training Requirements

Every two years, all clergy, vestry, staff and any volunteers who have contact with youth and children must:

- Complete In-Person Policy Training: Policy training will cover the guidelines set forth in this Diocesan document as well as any additional policies specific to state and local government. This training will include signing a certificate of attendance;
- Complete digital Awareness Training: Awareness training can be completed in person as part of the policy training, or it can be completed online through a diocesan approved curriculum (provided by programs such as *Ministry Safe*, *Protect My Ministry*, *Creating a Safe Environment*, etc., detailed in section [I.2](#)).

Deans are responsible to submit to the Canon for Ethics and Protection evidence of completed training annually. Each church Rector or Priest in Charge is responsible to track and document the training/retraining of its vestry, staff and volunteers. The Rector or Priest in Charge may delegate a

staff or ministry lead to administer this for their parish. This name shall be provided to the Canon for Ethics and Protection. All clergy, staff, vestry, and volunteers that work with children and youth must complete the in-person and digital training to interact with minors. Clergy, staff, vestry and volunteers working with minors will be trained every 2-years on Policy and Awareness.

## **D: STEP 3. INTERACTING PROCEDURES**

These procedures are intended to help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.

### **D.1 Addictive Behaviors**

Clergy, staff members, volunteers and participants interacting with minors, while traveling with or in the presence of children or their parent(s), during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children at any venue should not: use tobacco products, possess or use any illegal drugs, be under the influence of alcohol, or share / view pornographic materials.

### **D.2 Communication**

All interactions, verbal and non-verbal, between clergy, staff members, or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parent/guardian(s) in the spiritual growth and development of children.



To this end, clergy, staff members, and volunteers should avoid talking to children or parent(s) in a way that is, or could be construed by any reasonable observer as, harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, clergy, staff members, and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children. Concerns about children should be directed to parent(s), legal guardian(s), the appropriate ministry leader(s), or clergy.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should avoid engaging in any sexually-oriented communications with children, (except as noted in abuse reporting contexts), and should refrain from discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child or youth.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers may employ (subject to limitations imposed by the rector or rector's designee) age-appropriate materials when leading discussions dealing with human sexuality/sexual abuse prevention/sexual purity. Any prospective material should normally be made available for review for the parent/guardian(s) of participants. Prior to

introducing these materials, notice should be provided to parent/guardian(s) in order to allow an opt-out if there are concerns or objections.

### D.3 First Aid & Medication

If possible, medication should be administered by the child's parent(s). Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer as authorized by the parent/guardian. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over-the-counter medication. First Aid kits will be available onsite where activities take place. When medically necessary, medication or first aid may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer consistent with the Supervisory Plan. Parent(s) should be notified whenever medication or first aid has been administered.

### D.4 Small Group/Home Group Procedures

Home group is defined for purposes of this policy as a small group meeting in a home for Bible study, worship, fellowship, etc. A church which holds its primary worship service in a home is, for purposes of this policy, considered to be a church and not a home group. The Diocese and its churches do not have, and therefore do not exercise, control over home groups. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child. The Diocese provides resources that may help empower and equip parent/guardian(s) and the home groups of its churches as they exercise their care and responsibility.

In home groups where children are present, even on an occasional basis, leaders are encouraged to read this policy, take the dual diocesan-approved policy and awareness training, and follow as closely as possible the provisions outlined in this policy, including the development of a Supervisory Plan (see Section E), and the following:

- Supervision by two certified individuals (2 unrelated adults is a minimum standard);
- Inspection and preparation of the physical environment– the location should be inspected and prepared for child safety for the developmental age of those being served, keeping in mind outlet coverings, sharp corners, sharp objects, unsecured furniture, access to outdoors, toxic materials, etc.
- Creation of restroom procedure– for any child who requires assistance, parent(s) should be responsible for diapering and

meeting other restroom needs.

## D.5 Overnight Events

Certain youth ministry activities may require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for youth, staff and volunteers. As part of the Supervisory Plan established and communicated to parent/guardian(s)/guardian for all youth and children's ministry (including lock-ins, mission trips, retreats and other ministry that involves overnight stays), the following procedures must be considered and monitored.

- Supervisory Plan in place with proper Parent/Guardian permission forms signed in advance;
- As always, the two-certified adult rule should be adhered to; a single student should not be alone with a staff member or volunteer. If a situation arises where only one adult is present, a minimum of two students must also be present;
- Overnight sleeping arrangements must be detailed in the Supervisory Plan and shared with those responsible for providing the supervision. An individual student should not be housed alone with another student or adult (in overnight cases, minimum of three is required);
- As long as any students are actively awake, two trip leaders must be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior;
- Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn by all;
- Staff members and volunteers will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, staff members and volunteers should never physically touch a student;
- In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each staff member, volunteer, and student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed;
- In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by student leaders of the same biological sex;
- Staff and volunteers in youth ministry should never be nude in the presence of students in their care. Showering considerations and private areas for changing clothes must be thought through with rotation schedules;

- Leaders should check with parent/guardian(s) and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. R-rated movies require rector and parental approval.

## D.6 Photography

Photos of children will not be used contrary to the wishes of the parent(s). Churches should refrain from posting any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications without prior permission from the parent(s). This is easily handled by including a consent statement on programming registrations that are signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

## D.7 Physical Interactions

Those who serve, whether as clergy or lay workers, paid or volunteer, maintain a powerful relationship of authority and trust with the people to whom they minister. Betrayal of that trust through violation of physical and/or sexual boundaries causes great emotional and spiritual harm. Such misconduct is a denial of our calling as Christians and may be a violation of the law. We must take every step to prevent it, and to respond with swift justice should misconduct occur.

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of clergy, staff or volunteers. It is the diocesan policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.

Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In some circumstances physical restraint may be used to prevent self-injury by the child and/or harm to others or to property. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parent/guardian(s), Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, and/or clergy.

Appropriate physical interaction between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children's development and is generally suitable in the church setting. The following standards of interaction with children shall be carefully followed at all times.

Appropriate interactions may include:

- Smiles
- Encouragement
- Handshakes and high fives
- Fist bumps
- Thumbs up
- Side to side hugs



- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Arm around the shoulder
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Holding or picking up children who are 4 years old and younger

Inappropriate physical interactions are those behaviors that present an imbalance in the power dynamic for a child with an adult or older child. Grooming is a technique used to break down those barriers. Abusers will use grooming techniques to gain trust. Recognizing the pattern of continual testing of boundaries in such a way that inappropriate behavior seeps into the relationship without consent or even acknowledgement. Grooming usually includes gaining access through trust, targeting a particular type of person as a victim, slowly eroding boundaries, and methods to keep the victim quiet. The following are potential ways of interacting inappropriately.

Inappropriate interactions may include:

- Any form of physical discipline
- Shaming or belittling
- Meeting alone in non-public or isolated places
- Engaging in sexually oriented communications with or in proximity to children
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs when in the presence of children
- Wrestling
- Tickling
- Sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
- Kissing on the lips
- Full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Commenting on children’s bodies
- Being nude in front of children (such as on overnight trips, changing at pool parties, etc.)
- Contacting or “friending” a child or youth on social networking sites without permission
- Showing favoritism or possessiveness
- Singling a child out with attention or affection
- Giving gifts to children without the parent’s permission
- Ridiculing the beliefs of a child or youth or those of their parent/guardian(s)

- Allowing a child or youth to do things against the wishes of the parent/guardian(s)
- Offering children or youth cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs
- Allowing children or youth to view pornography or to visit inappropriate internet sites
- Asking a child or youth to keep “secrets” from his or her parent/guardian(s)

Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any seemingly inappropriate behavior or suspected misconduct by clergy, staff or volunteers must be reported immediately to 1) Ministry Leader and 2) Rector. If the concern involves the Rector, the Senior Warden should be notified. They will follow up with the individual per the Response and Reporting steps.

- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in youth and children’s ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child’s preference not to be touched must be respected at all times.

Children’s staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others (this includes unwanted touch from other children/youth).

## D.8 Release of Children

Staff members and/or volunteers in the Children's Ministry are responsible for releasing children in their care at the close of services or activities only to parent/guardian(s), legal guardians, or other persons designated by parent/guardian(s) or legal guardians. It is presumed that a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately contact their immediate supervisor before releasing the child.

## D.9 Restroom Use

### **Nursery Aged and Special Needs Children**

Parent/guardian(s) should take their child to the restroom or change any diapers immediately before a child is checked into a classroom. Because preschool, nursery, and special needs children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

#### **Diapering**

- Only certified nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers; children should not be left unattended while being changed.
- Children should be re--diapered and re--clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

#### **Toilet Training**

- Parent/guardian(s) should take the Toilet Training child to the restroom before checking them into the classroom.
- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- Only certified nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
- When children are assisted in bathrooms the stall door will be left partially open.
- Preschool-aged children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- Accidents should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

#### **Elementary Aged Children**

- Elementary-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) A same-aged/biological sex-peer buddy system may also be used.
- Staff members and volunteers should take steps to avoid being alone with one child in the restroom. If a staff member or volunteer must go

into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

## D.10 Sexual Ethics in the Context of Youth Ministry

We recognize that contemporary cultural trends and attitudes about gender and sexual ethics are complex and rapidly changing. You may find students wrestling with issues around gender fluidity, gender dysphoria, same-sex attraction or other situations which may challenge the existing policies. These situations may require specific knowledge or understanding so the church can care for individual students, in a loving and caring community setting. In consultation with the Bishop, the rector is responsible for local adaptation around specific ministry situations and with regards to suitable protection practices that embody the Diocese guiding values.

## D.11 Digital Communication

Digital communications and Social Media shapes the lives of many. This tool has the potential to empower ministry. These powerfully connective tools are subject to the same dynamic of unequal power and potential for abuse that present a risk in all ministry relationships. Behavior in the digital sphere is never private and posted content may be used out of context putting individuals and churches at risk. Churches face the challenge of identifying and proactively addressing areas of potential risk in social media in the midst of rapidly evolving technology. The following recommended practices and guidelines are designed to be a flexible template for developing policies and covenants governing the safe use of social media and digital communication in ministry settings.

### A. General Information

- a. All communications sent digitally (email, social media, notes, texts, posts, etc.) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and can be shared or reposted to others.
- b. In the virtual world, healthy boundaries and safe practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world. This includes the need for transparency.
- c. Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of children, youth or vulnerable adults apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world.
- d. Virtual spaces are to be treated the same as in-person spaces. This means two trained and certified adults must be online. The parent/guardian(s) should be aware that the child/youth is in conversation with leaders.

### B. Recommended Practices and Guidelines

- a. Establish a policy of transparency. Best practice is to have the church or organization create and own the social media accounts and have multiple administrators or supervisors with access. Regular review of the privacy settings and participants in these groups should be completed.
- b. When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, obtain a media release for each person. "Tagging" of youth or children in online photos or videos would create a hyperlink to that person's personal page and should therefore be prohibited.
- c. Prudent judgement should be used in the time of day a child or youth is contacted through digital media. Under normal circumstances, they should be restricted from exchanging texts,

chats, emails, or photos in the church's social media before 8:00am or after 8:00pm.

- d. An Agreement to Govern Digital Groups should be created and shared with all adults, youth, and parent/guardian(s). This should include:
  - i. Appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and the consequences for inappropriate behaviors.
  - ii. Who may join or view the group. When participants should leave the group.
  - iii. Description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page.
  - iv. Notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed.
  - v. Consequences for breaking the agreement.
- e. Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented:
  - i. Create and use profiles online that meet professional and institutional standards.
  - ii. Connections between personal Social Media pages with a clergy, staff or volunteer and a youth or child should not happen. The use of a church's page such as "Church's Youth Group" should be the medium of connection.
  - iii. Use of closed groups but not private or hidden groups for youth/children.
  - iv. At least two certified adults should have full access to any church or organizations page or groups that involve youth or children.
  - v. Inform parent/guardian(s) of children and youth of social networking sites and platforms used within the ministry.
  - vi. Private messaging inside social media should not be used. All communication should happen on the group page where others can see. If a private conversation needs to happen, it should happen in person.
  - vii. When sending emails to a child or youth that contains personal or private information of that child or youth, their parent/guardian(s) or guardians should be copied in. Examples of these types of emails include payment-due information, specific medical questions, etc.
  - viii. Mass emails sent to an entire group of youth are not required to be copied to parent/guardian(s) or guardians.
- f. For virtual meetings, such as Zoom, similar policies as meeting in person are recommended:

- i. Two certified adults should be present and at least three youth or children.
  - ii. Participants should not be on their beds, or have a bed in the background of their camera.
  - iii. Participants should be fully clothed, including portions of the body that may be “off camera”.
  - iv. Restrictions based on the platform to prevent hackers or strangers from joining the virtual space is recommended. Links should never be included on social media, church websites or in broad email lists.
  - v. If something inappropriate takes place the parent/guardian(s) will be contacted.
  - vi. Participants should not have suggestive, political, racist, or similar materials or images on their screens or in their backgrounds
- g. Photography and Videos
- i. Do not use photos of children and youth without written parental permission.
  - ii. Request permission to use photos of their children and have parent/guardian(s) to fill out a written consent form and keep it on file at the church. It is recommended that churches obtain signed parental consent release forms annually, respecting the parent/guardian(s) who are non-consenting.

## D.12 Discipleship and Mentoring

As Christians, we are encouraged to seek discipleship opportunities across a generational spectrum. This frequently manifests in long term 1:1, 1:2, or 1:3 relationships where participants meet regularly. Long-term discipleship/mentoring is defined as more than **5** meetings. The purpose of this relationship is mentoring, discipleship, and is often connected to a ministry program or curriculum (including but not limited to Pray for Me Campaign, Confirmation Preparation, Catechesis, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion preparation).

If mentoring and discipleship with child(ren) or youth is agreed upon with the parent/guardian(s)/guardians, adhere to the following safeguards:

- Ensure this mentoring relationship is known to the Staff;
- Parental written approval for the mentoring relationship is defined;
- Meet in public places or at agreed upon locations with other adults present;

- Define the parameters of the relationship before the first meeting, articulating how one might discontinue the relationship at any time, and communicate said parameters to the Staff and parent/guardian(s)/guardians;
- Mentor will meet regularly with Staff for accountability and oversight;
- Mentoring relationships should be paired with same biological sex groupings;
- Follow guidelines regarding interaction, physical contact, and digital communication;
- Communicate to whom the participant should report if they have any concerns (including the names and numbers of senior leadership, the Bishop, and a reporting hotline);
- Make it clear to the participants that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a child, youth or adult discloses a situation pertaining to abuse, neglect, self-harm or exploitation because of mandatory reporting laws;
- Prohibit secluded or secretive meetings.

### D.13 Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children and youth. The following guidelines should be observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children or youth whenever possible:

- Adult volunteer drivers must provide to the church copies of valid driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.
- Adult volunteer drivers must undergo an insurance approved background check including a DMV record check. Use of child safety seats that meet federal standards is required. Drivers and passengers must also follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines. Churches are advised to consult with their insurance provider regarding the minimum age for adult drivers. Under no circumstances should anyone under the age of 18 be allowed to drive children/youth as part of an event.



- An unrelated adult and one child traveling alone in a vehicle should not happen<sup>1</sup>. Automobiles will contain either one driver and two or more participants or two adults and any number of children (within the seat belt limitations of the vehicle; seatbelts are required).
- No cell phones, including hands-free devices, may be utilized by the driver while driving church-owned vehicles, unless in an emergency, with the exception of GPS navigation.
- Transport children directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-- public place should be avoided. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be planned in advance and communicated in the Safety Plan for the event. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- No one under age 25 may drive vehicles rented by a church unless explicitly allowed by the rental agreement; no drivers under age 25 may drive church-owned vehicles unless explicitly covered by the church's auto insurance policy.
- In special circumstances these may be altered for emergencies. In these cases, the children/youth director (or supervisor) should be notified immediately.
- If a family situation necessitates a special circumstance, the family may sign a waiver stating the deviance from the diocesan or church policy; this policy should note the family's acceptance of responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> If there is an extenuating circumstance causing only one adult and one child to travel together in an automobile, permission must be obtained by a parent or legal guardian of the child. This permission should be written or documented by the volunteer if only verbal consent is obtainable. Text messages from parent/guardian will suffice. The child or youth should be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in such circumstances.

## **E: STEP 4. MONITORING PROCEDURES**

Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred. Off-site activities increase the risk of abuse due to changes in venue and familiarity with the space/environment. Vestry, clergy, staff, and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children's and youth activities in all settings at all times.

### **Monitoring procedures should include, but are not limited to:**

- Two Certified Unrelated Adult Rule: All child and youth activities shall be supervised by two or more certified individuals, not related to each other;
- No child will be left unattended in the building or on the property during or following a church activity;
- Clergy, staff members, and/or volunteers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children or youth;
- In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, the interactions should take place in a public place or where other persons are present;
- All leaders are expected to watch for policy violations and report them;
- An open invitation should be extended to parent/guardian(s) to visit at any time unannounced;
- Keeping interaction with children in full view of others at all times;
- Keeping unused rooms locked whenever possible; if keys are unavailable then doors should remain open and lights remain on;
- Keeping children and youth in supervised areas within the church building;
- Supervisory Plans: An onsite or offsite written Supervisory Plan (see below) shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children.

The purpose of the Supervisory Plan for any given activity, space, or ministry is to give direction to staff and volunteers to ensure appropriate measures are in place to meet the diocesan standard for supervision. It is recommended that a copy of the Supervisory Plan be provided to and signed by those responsible for supervision and that the plan be posted in a visible location. Please refer to Section G.3 for a sample Supervisory Plan.

## E.1 Sponsored: On-site Supervisory Plans

Sponsored On-Site Supervisory Plans should include:

- Description of the nature of the activity;
- Details of the registration process and a sample registration form;
- Personnel responsible for running the activity;
- Recommended ratio of adults to children, **[insert your guidelines based on your state(s) requirements, such as:**
  - o **Infants: 2 adults for up to 8**
  - o **Young toddlers: 2 adults for up to 12**
  - o **2 and 3 years: 2 adults for up to 16**
  - o **4 years: 2 adults for up to 20**
  - o **School age (5-18): 2 adults for up to 40**
  - o **Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group]**
- Standards for interacting with children or youth;
- Description of the physical environment;
- Bathroom procedures, including showering procedures, if applicable;
- First aid and medication procedures;
- Procedures for reporting discipline concerns; and
- Release of children.

Note: Emergency plans and procedures, including schematics with fire escape routes, shelter-in-place designations and plans for reuniting children with parent/guardian(s) would also be helpful.



## E.2 Sponsored: Off-site Supervisory Plans

Sponsored Off-site Supervisory Plans should include the following:

- Description of the nature of the activity;
- Details of the registration process and a sample registration form;
- Personnel responsible for running the activity;
- Recommended ratio of adults to children, **[insert your guidelines based on your state(s) requirements, such as:**
  - **Infants: 2 adults for up to 8**
  - **Young toddlers: 2 adults for up to 12**
  - **2 and 3 years: 2 adults for up to 16**
  - **4 years: 2 adults for up to 20**
  - **School age: 2 adults for up to 40**
  - **Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group]**
- Standards for interacting with and disciplining children or youth;
- Description of the physical environment;
- Bathroom procedures;
- First aid and medication procedures;
- Procedures for reporting discipline concerns;
- Dining arrangements;
- Sleeping arrangements: see Overnight Events;
- Showering procedures: see Overnight Events
- Offsite transportation plan(s): see [Transportation D.13](#);
- Release of youth.



### E.3 Non-Sponsored: On-site Events

Due to the nature of the facilities and shared ministry, the situation might arise where the church facilities are used by non-sponsored groups for activities and events (such as Young Life, or the Boy Scouts, or parties, etc.). These events may choose to offer childcare on their own, utilizing the facilities available. All churches should consult their insurance policy regarding these types of activities and to be compliant with the restrictions and recommendations in that insurance policy. It is also recommended that all churches use a Facilities Agreement that clearly articulates the outside organization's responsibility and liability for their program and volunteers/employees for every instance of an outside group using the church's facilities.



## **F: STEP 5. RESPONDING & REPORTING PROCEDURES**

### **F.1 Responding and Reporting**

State laws generally require that certain categories of persons responsible for the care or treatment of children report to state authorities when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, or is in danger of abuse or neglect. The specific laws, and thus their specific requirements, vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, some states require any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health and welfare has been or will be adversely affected by abuse or neglect to report immediately to authorities. Other states require only those who have special occupations, such as nurses, counselors, teachers, physicians, law enforcement officers, or the like, to report suspected cases of abuse.

Every church in the diocese should be familiar with, and every person is responsible for the care of children in the church, should be made aware of the applicable child abuse reporting requirements and procedures in that jurisdiction.

Each church in the diocese should review the applicable laws in its jurisdiction and should create a written Response Plan that is consistent with those laws.

As a helpful resource, recognizing reporting laws can change over time, please visit the following website to view links to the child abuse reporting laws in each jurisdiction:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/?hasBeenRedirected=1>

In addition to complying with any applicable legal requirements, parishes should know what their Insurance Policy coverage for Sexual Misconduct includes. The Insurance provider will also have reporting requirements that each parish should consider as it drafts their Response Plan.

At any point in a responding or reporting situation, the Parish may employ an external investigation group. An independent investigation allows for impartiality, transparency, and allows the clergy and parish staff to continue to support the victim and all parties involved in the reporting. If an independent investigation group is hired, the Diocesan office should be notified.

## F.2 Creating a Response Plan

Having a set Response and Reporting Plan in place for each parish allows for the Rector, Vestry and Staff to understand how to respond if an allegation arises. A Response and Reporting Plan should include the following:

- Specific state and local Child Protective Hotline numbers
- Names and contact phone numbers for: rector, senior warden, Bishop
- Response Team members-5 members:
  - 1 rep for victim, preferably trauma-informed
  - 1 rep for accuser, preferably trauma-informed
  - 1 rep communications coordinator, preferably legal experience
  - 1 note taker
  - 1 investigations lead
- Contact information for the church's insurance policy
- Details of notification requirements from the Insurance company
- Local contact for Independent Investigations
- Local licensed trauma counselor
- Local Victim Advocate resources
- Response steps for Clergy and Diocesan Staff report to the Bishop
- Response details for staff, volunteer, and lay person report to the Rector

## F.3 Responding to the Child Victim

One of several ways in which an individual may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that a child himself or herself shares. If a child discloses abuse or neglect, the person receiving such a communication should attempt to:

- Let the child know that he/she is believed;
- Assure the child that any abuse was not his/her fault;
- Respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk;
- If reasonably possible, ask a staff member, certified volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/youth's account;
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage;
- If helpful, tell the child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse;
- Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure- avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint



the child's recollection and account. A safe question is always, "Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?"

Write down as accurately as possible what the child disclosed. This information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Abuse Form ([see Section G.5](#)) and helps capture all the information needed to make a Child Protective Services report.

Be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with, or in front of, other people who do not need to know what happened. Discussion about the information should be limited to appropriate church and legal authorities, as discussed further below.

Depending on Mandatory Reporting laws in the state, Child Protective Services or other child support services should be contacted. For each state's reporting hotline, please see Appendix A. If required by law, the complaint alleging abuse of a minor or incapacitated adult will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials immediately.

The Rector should also be notified that suspicion of abuse or misconduct has been raised by a child or adult.

#### F.4 Reporting Allegations Steps

As well as reporting to the local Child Protection authorities, parishes should also have in place internal procedures and mechanisms for reporting to appropriate church leaders any suspected child abuse or neglect, any other suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child, and any suspicious information or behavior involving a child. Such internal reporting allows church leaders to determine whether a legal reporting obligation has been triggered, whether further information is needed, and/or whether pastoral or other care for children and others should be offered.

At times, when the church leader receiving such reports puts together the separate pieces of information provided by different workers, the leader may discern a pattern or recognize information that triggers further investigation and/or a report to state authorities. Most often, in scenarios of grooming an adult, parish or child, the offender will erode proper boundaries over time with small acts of pushing the limits of physical and emotional interactions. Therefore, reporting even small infringements of boundaries may be signals of potential abuse. Basically, if it makes the viewer uncomfortable, it should be reported to the Rector. If it involves the Rector, it should be reported to the Bishop.



It is critical to be prepared in advance by adopting an appropriate Response and Reporting Plan and following that plan if an incident or allegation of child abuse occurs. When there is reason to believe child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, act immediately per jurisdiction. Do not ignore or fail to take any reported incident seriously.

**Implement Your Response Plan.** The church is expected to have in place an appropriate plan (even if only a very brief one) to use when responding to any allegation of child abuse. That plan may include a response team of individuals instructed with proper response mechanisms, along with additional procedures to implement throughout the church in responding to the allegation.

**Report to the Rector or Senior Warden.** The individual(s) suspecting abuse or neglect should immediately notify the Rector and/or senior warden (or another person designated by the rector or senior warden or otherwise identified in the church's child abuse reporting procedures as authorized to receive such reports) of the suspected child abuse. The church should also identify in its response plan and other children's ministry policies other persons who may receive such a report if the rector or senior warden is the person who is the subject of the allegations or is otherwise suspected of having committed abuse or neglect. If the Rector is accused of abuse, then the person should contact the Bishop directly.

**Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties: Lay persons.** If the person accused of abuse is employed by or volunteering with the church, the rector should immediately remove the person accused of abuse from the situation in which the accusation arose and from any duties where he/she will have any further contact with minors.

This removal may be done quietly and should be done quickly and without exception. An interim transfer to a position that has no contact with children is one possibility; a leave of absence (with pay if the person is an employee) may be another solution. The church leadership will determine whether the person accused of abuse will continue in ministry that does not involve children or youth until the investigation is complete.

**Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties: Clergy.** If the person accused of abuse is clergy, the rector or the Bishop should immediately remove the person accused of abuse from the situation in which the accusation arose and from any duties where he/she will have any further contact with children.

**Notify parent/guardian(s) Where Appropriate.** If the person accused of abuse is not the child's parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the household, the rector or the designee should contact the child's

parent/guardian(s) or appropriate guardians and offer support to the parties involved from the church.

**Notify the Bishop.** The rector or Senior Warden shall notify the Bishop. The Bishop shall notify the diocesan chancellor. At any point a complainant may contact the Bishop's office directly to report any allegation. The Bishop may request periodic updates of the investigation being conducted and subsequent actions taken at the local church level and/or may initiate a third-party investigation into the allegations of child abuse.

## F.5 Reporting to Legal Authorities

The rector or other appropriate church leaders should consult with the church's legal counsel for assistance in identifying and complying with the appropriate abuse reporting requirements within the required time frame under applicable state laws. The Rector should also contact the Parish's insurance provider.

No allegations, complaints or reports of suspected abuse should be ignored. As discussed above, churches should be aware of and should comply with any applicable legal obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Further, even where reports are not legally required, voluntary reports of suspected abuse or neglect are legally permitted in all jurisdictions in the diocese and should always be considered with the assistance of legal counsel. Allowing the legal authorities to investigate allegations of abuse, creates safeguarding for the minor.

If the church determines that a report is legally required or decides that it should make a permissive report even though one is not legally required, contact the appropriate legal authorities. State and Local contact information should be updated by the church regularly.

**Cooperate with the investigating legal authorities.** Subject to advice of the church's legal counsel, the church should cooperate in the investigation conducted by the governmental agency to which the report has been made, as well as any other law enforcement agencies involved with the investigation.

**Notify insurance providers.** Unless the church's legal counsel advises otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company. The Insurance company can provide support and information. This is important for at least four reasons: (1) the insurance policy may require immediate notification for coverage to be effective; (2) the policy may pay for counseling or legal advice; (3) the insurance policy may not provide coverage for lawsuits

involving acts of sexual abuse; and (4) the insurance carrier, having dealt with similar cases, may be a source of helpful advice.

It is the responsibility of each Rector and Vestry to know the coverage details within their insurance policy. Unfortunately, most insurance policies do not generally cover sexual misconduct or negligent hiring/supervision in sexual abuse situations. Separate "riders" can be purchased, although some require strict preconditions to coverage like screening, awareness, and prevention training.

**Appropriately document actions.** Designated clergy should document any actions taken regarding the complaint, and retain that documentation in confidential files. (The church's legal counsel may have specific instructions for how such documentation should be prepared and maintained.) It should be noted that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the legal responsibility of the police or child protective authorities. It is not the responsibility of church leaders to prove that such an incident did or did not take place.

## F.6 Release of Information

**Carefully consider any release of information.** Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise), such as a specially trained management person, and instruct all other workers politely to direct all inquiries to that person. Use an approved, prepared statement to answer media inquiries and to convey news to members of the church. Such a statement should be reviewed by the church's legal counsel.

Do not release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content. Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved by not releasing names or other identifying information, especially that concern minors.

**Maintain appropriate confidentiality.** Protecting the victim and their family is essential and confidentiality is a part of that role. Hold confidential any allegations and of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed and instruct them not to disclose any information regarding the allegations or your investigation to anyone other than law enforcement or child protective authorities. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality will: (1) protect the privacy and reputations of those actually or allegedly involved in the incident; (2) reduce the risk that defamation may occur; and (3) help preserve the attorney-client privilege, where otherwise applicable.

**Reach out to, and care for, any victims.** Each church may want to have a Victim's Advocate in their area. This Advocate can be engaged if needed in an

abuse investigation. In addition to a Victim's Advocate, a trauma and/or abuse counselor should be recommended to the victim and family. One of your church's primary missions is sharing the love of God with children. Offer whatever pastoral care and other help is appropriate and available to the victim and his/her family.

**Treat the accused with dignity and support.** Since the accused has not been formally charged or convicted, he/she should be treated as legally innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Be supportive and objective and it is recommended that Victim Advocates may be a resource for the accused. In addition, licensed trauma counseling may be considerably helpful.

**Bring closure to the investigation.** If the accused is charged and convicted, then discipline or dismissal is generally appropriate. Counseling may also be appropriate. If charges are unsubstantiated, the decision about whether to restore the accused to employment or volunteer service may depend on a number of circumstantial factors. Consult the Bishop and legal counsel for guidance. Of course, all personnel actions should be well documented in writing and kept in confidential files. Attorney-client privileged material should never be disclosed without first consulting your attorney.

It is essential that each church responds to a report or instance of abuse in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the person accused of abuse, and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing in the local church and community (see Section I).

## F.7 Internal Church Communication and Reporting

Clergy, staff members, vestry and volunteers shall report promptly to the appropriate ministry leader, supervisor, rector or Bishop whenever the accused:

- Is arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, is charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; commits an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) is diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
- Becomes aware that a member of his/her household has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by

applicable laws and regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or

- Becomes aware that a person who is attending the church has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; has been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; has committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism. Is involved in or becomes aware of any sexually-oriented communications involving a child connected with the church; or
- Is involved in or becomes aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a child by a clergy person, a staff member, or a volunteer.

## **G: COMPLIANCE**

### **G.1 Compliance Overview**

Admittedly, no matter how detailed the Diocese provides policies and procedures are written, no matter how compliant the parishes and diocesan organizations are, no matter how outstanding the screening, training, interactions, monitoring, reporting and responses are, it is not uncommon for completely unintended things to happen to parishes intentionally following protocols. It is, therefore, important to select the right insurance policy including the correct limits, terms, conditions, and deductibles that are customized to your specific needs.

Parishes in the Diocese need to purchase insurance that covers their specific needs. It is recommended that each church have an Ethics and Protection Committee or similar Risk Management team to oversee insurance selection and the adherence to this policy and other child safety best practices for their parish. It is recommended that each Parish should have sexual misconduct coverage in their insurance policy as well.

A comprehensive user-friendly Risk Management Guide is available on the ACNA website at [anglicanchurch.net/risk\\_management](http://anglicanchurch.net/risk_management).

### **G.2 Deanery Compliance Tracking**

To better hold accountability for the training and implementation of this Child Safety Policy, each Dean in the Diocese will name an Ethics and Protection Coordinator or Trainer. This person will be on the Ethics and Protection Committee for the Diocese under the Canon for Ethics and Protection. This individual will also be the trainer to follow up with training and background requirements for volunteers and staff, as well as, training churches and leaders on safeguarding children and youth.



Figure H.2 Deanery Representation on Ethics Committee

The Ethics and Protection Coordinator from the Deaneries will:

- Meet on a quarterly basis with the Canon for Ethics and Protection
- Be a representative on the Committee of Ethics and Protection
- Review suggestions and updates to this and related Ethics and Protection policies
- Stay abreast of training updates and touch base with the parishes in their Deanery twice a year.
- Train their member parish trainers using the Train-the-Trainer model as led by the Canon for Ethics and Protection.

This Policy and other Ethics and Protection Policies, updates and changes will be presented at Synod each year. The process to update this and other Ethics and Protection policies will follow this expected timeline:

- First quarter of each year, the Canon for Ethics and Protection will attend each Deanery Retreat where the Policy is presented and if training has not occurred yet, it will occur at that Retreat.
- Quarter 1 Committee for Ethics and Protection meeting will be held in February.
- Quarter 2 Committee for Ethics and Protection meeting will be held in May.
- By July 1, each Deanery Ethics and Protection Coordinator will be notified that their documentation and training tracking is due to the

- Committee for Ethics and Protection by July 15. This will be the Quarter 3 meeting.
- The Committee for Ethics and Protection will meet on or around July 15 and will draft any changes and updates to the Policy. These changes will be presented to the Diocesan Council no later than September's Diocesan Council meeting.
  - Quarter 4 meeting will be held at Synod.
  - All changes will be finalized and presented at Synod in November.

### G.3 Non-Compliance Response

Each Rector (or Priest-in-Charge) is responsible for the administration, tracking, and training on this and other related Ethics and Protection guidelines and policies. To that end, there are several steps laid out in this document that provide touch points for the Parish to seek assistance from their Deanery Ethics Coordinator and the Canon for Ethics and Protection.

Churches will be notified by their Deanery Ethics Coordinator on June 15th each year that the comments, documentation, and forms are due by July 15th. The Deanery Ethics Coordinator will collect these materials and follow up accordingly. Churches that have not turned in their documentation will receive a warning by July 30. The Rector will have two weeks to comply with the reporting documents. Then, if the Canon for Ethics and Protection does not hear from the Rector, a formal request will be sent to the Bishop and that Parish will not be eligible for Diocesan funding until they become compliant with the policy. The Rector will receive Godly Admonition from the Bishop to comply within 2 weeks.

### G.4 Sample Deanery Documentation: Compliance Checklist

Churches, not the Diocese or the ACNA, are responsible for obtaining and keeping documentation of the following items in a secured location, in perpetuity, which includes evidence of the following.



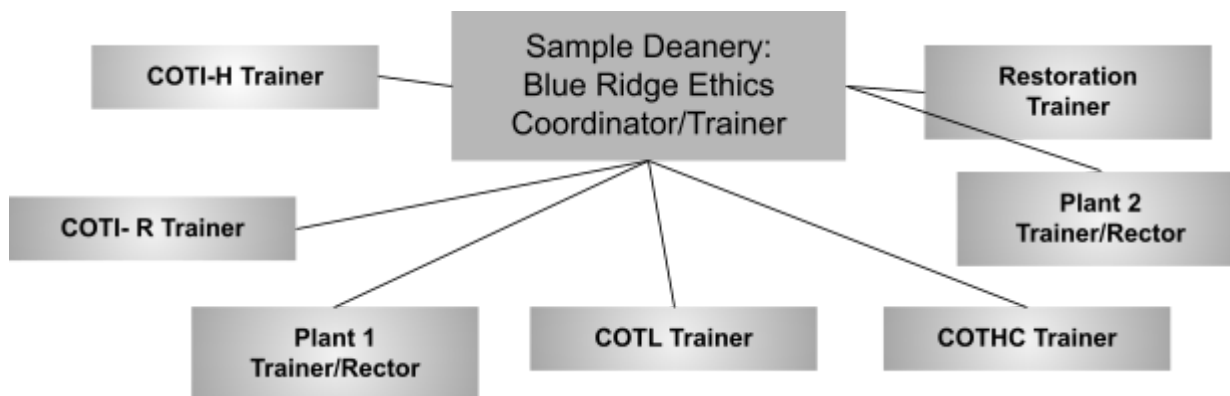


Figure H.3 Deanery Ethics Coordinator Connection to Parishes

It is acceptable to save electronic copies of scanned documents in a secure location. Each Parish should have an individual who administers the details below:

### Screening Standards:

- Volunteer applications for those working in youth and children’s ministries and all employees;
- National Sexual Offender Registry and criminal background checks renewed at least every two years;
- Personal and professional reference checks;
- Social media searches;
- Interviews and screening statements;
- For drivers: copy of valid driver’s license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of auto insurance;

### Training Standards:

- Certification that all clergy, vestry, and staff working in youth and children’s ministries have read, understood, and accepted the Diocesan Policy on the Protection of Children;
- Certification that all clergy, vestry, staff and volunteers working with youth and children’s ministries have attended a diocesan-approved awareness training and have recertified every two years;
- Certification that all clergy, vestry, staff and volunteers working with youth and children’s ministries have attended a diocesan/church policy

training (Five Steps to Keep Kids Safe in Our Diocese/Church) and have recertified every two years;

**Monitoring Standards**

- Written supervisory plans for youth and children’s ministry;

**Responding & Reporting**

- Reports of suspected child abuse.

G.5 Sample Acknowledgement of Receipt of Policies

**Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement of Receipt for all clergy, vestry, and staff<sup>2</sup>**

I have received the Diocese of Christ Our Hope Child Protection Policy and I have read and understand its contents. I understand how this is implemented in my local church and my role in that. I understand that the policy may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by my church. Once notified of any amendments or revisions, I am responsible for reading and complying with them.

I am (check appropriate group):

- Clergy
- Vestry
- Employee, non-clergy

Signature

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Print Name

---

Congregation

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<sup>2</sup> This form must be signed and returned by all clergy; vestry; lay ministers; employees; and volunteers who work with children.

## **Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement of Receipt for all lay leaders and volunteers<sup>3</sup>**

I have received the Diocese of Christ Our Hope Child Protection Policy Training in person. I understand how this is implemented in my local church and my role in that. I understand that the policy may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by my church. Once notified of any amendments or revisions, I am responsible for reading and complying with them.

I am (check appropriate group):

- Lay Leader
- Volunteer

Signature

---

Print Name

---

Congregation

---

### **G.6 Parish Certificate of Compliance**

Each Deanery Ethics and Protection Coordinator will retain the copies of this Compliance Certificate for the parishes in their region. This document is for internal record keeping purposes and will be reviewed by the Diocese annually.

Congregation Name:

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City/State:

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I hereby certify that this congregation:

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<sup>3</sup> This form must be signed and returned by lay leaders and volunteers who work with children.

- Has obtained and will maintain sexual misconduct insurance coverage.
- Has adopted policies and procedures that comply with terms and conditions set forth by the insurance carrier in respect to sexual misconduct.
- Has adopted the Diocese of Christ our Hope Policy Manual for the Protection of Children.

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Rector	Date
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Senior Warden	Date
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## **H: CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

### **H.1 Caring for the Congregation**

Incidents of child abuse, and the secrecy that often surrounds them, can cause devastating harm to the church as well as to the victims. Therefore, where current or past child abuse has been perpetrated by clergy, staff, or volunteers of the church, the church shall provide consultation to encourage the discussion of such incidents and to provide a means to facilitate healing within the church. Section I.3 includes one suggested model of how this may be done: a congregational trauma debriefing model.

It is essential that each church responds to a report or instance of abuse or misconduct in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing within the congregation generally.

Traumatic events have well-documented effects, both immediate and delayed. When a congregation experiences a trauma, the impact is likely to be expressed through symptoms such as:

- Loss of energy or feeling of paralysis;
- Distrust of leadership (often projected onto future leadership);
- Divisions within the congregation;
- Some group members feeling isolated and withdrawing from the group;
- Anger being displaced onto unrelated issues, or blown out of proportion;
- A conspiracy of silence about the traumatic event;
- Despair about the congregation's future;
- Distorting responsibility for the event;
- Seeking a "quick fix" without thoughtful reflection;
- Difficulty making normal and necessary decisions.

All of these symptoms could be carried into subsequent years unless the trauma is processed, integrated into the life of the congregation and healed. A useful model for addressing and integrating a trauma is the "debriefing" model drawn from disciplines that do crisis counseling, such as emergency medicine, law enforcement, military science, crisis chaplaincy, and disaster agencies.

A trauma debriefing allows participants to integrate the reality of the event with their own responses to that event. The Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing Model set forth in [Section H.3](#) is an effective means to

communicate, process, and accept facts, allow feelings to surface, and then, through God's healing grace, head into the future unhindered by the past.

## H.2 Guiding Principles for Healing in the Church

The following guidelines outline steps that can be taken to promote healing in the congregation:

1. **Pastoral Contact with the Family**. Before the process for healing begins, the rector, Bishop or other representative should maintain regular contact with the complainant(s) / injured child and family and describe to the complainant(s) the procedures to be used for promoting congregational healing.
2. **Victim Advocacy**. Consider the engagement of Victim Advocates for the families involved. These are trained professionals to work directly with victims in an abuse situation. Their expertise and experience can provide a specialized level of attention.
3. **Privacy Concerns**. The privacy of the complainant(s) must be balanced against the need for openness with the local church. Insofar as possible, the identity of the complainant(s) and any details which may identify him/her should be kept confidential.
4. **Providing Facts**. The procedures shall consider that church members usually know when "something is going on," and, in the absence of facts, rumor and speculation will grow.
5. **Notifying Lay Leadership**. The lay leadership should be advised promptly of the issues, since that group's participation is vital in planning and implementing the processes for church healing.
6. **Trauma Debriefing**. The healing and unity of a congregation are fostered when there is an open meeting, called a "Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing," at which the Bishop or his representative presents as much factual information as possible.

Since the local church will likely include people who have experienced abuse or misconduct themselves, appropriate personnel trained in crisis ministry should be present and available on a small group or one-to-one basis immediately after the formal presentation. Also, local mental health resources (including sliding scale fee agencies) should be publicized so that members of the congregation know how to find these services. (Note that many communities have publicly-funded survivor services.)

The debriefing should follow this process set forth in [Section H.3](#). The message should be “The Church is a place for truth. We follow Jesus, who described himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life.”

7. **Church Spokesperson.** The vestry, in consultation with the clergy, is encouraged to appoint a church spokesperson. The congregation, including church members and staff members, is urged to refer all media inquiries to the church spokesperson.
8. **Interim Priest.** If the circumstances require that an interim priest be engaged, that priest should have special training in trauma debriefing. The Interim will be appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Vestry. The interim priest should have regular opportunities to report and consult with the Bishop, his or her designated staff person, and counselors.
9. **Consulting Legal Authorities.** Neither the clergy nor any other church worker should attempt to impede persons who wish to consult with legal authorities.
10. **Continuing Pastoral Care.** The clergy and/or vestry should consult with the Bishop about additional resources for the healing and care of the congregation.

### H.3 A Model for Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting

The following procedures are recommended for the information and trauma debriefing meeting, but the church and the Bishop should consult in advance with their respective legal counsel (and, if counsel recommends, insurance provider(s)) before conducting such a meeting or undertaking any such actions.

#### **Steps Prior to Meeting**

1. **Select Leaders.** Carefully choose a Congregational Trauma Debriefing team and a leader or co-leaders who have had experience with a debriefing or trauma-related process. It is important that the rector or the rector’s representative be a visible participant in the debriefing, but not in the role of leadership.
2. **Schedule and Notify.** Schedule the debriefing as soon as possible after the complaint becomes public knowledge. Ensure that all members of the congregation and church staff are notified of the debriefing by telephone, email, overnight mail, or other fast and reliable method of notification. It

is important to get a wide participation, so that all who experience the trauma also share the debriefing experience.

3. **Choose a Meeting Place.** Hold the debriefing in an appropriate place, preferably on the church's property. Although an opening prayer is appropriate, this should not be a liturgical event.
4. **Address the News Media.** While the debriefing should not be confidential, it is important that no one be placed in jeopardy because of any disclosures made during that meeting. Therefore, it is preferable that the news media not be present for the debriefing, but meet after the debriefing with the church spokesperson and Bishop.

### **Agenda for the Meeting**

1. **Open the Meeting.** The Bishop or his representative should welcome the attendees, as should one of the lay leaders. The lay leader then should introduce himself/herself, explain the debriefing process, and outline the guidelines for the debriefing. It is important to keep the debriefing to the specified procedures. Leaders should be prepared for a lengthy meeting.
2. **Present the Facts.** Subject to the advice of counsel, the general facts and approximate chronology of the trauma should be presented verbally, supplemented by written notations such as a summary handout, or by writing notes on newsprint during the factual presentation. The goal is to ensure that all those present have a common record of the traumatic event. Note that this is not a time for feelings to be expressed, and the group may need some direction to withhold those feelings until the next phase of the debriefing.
3. **Solicit Reactions.** Once an appropriate record has been presented, the lay leader should invite church members to express their reactions to the facts. (Some church members may need to be directed to express their own feelings and not those of others.) No feelings, however trivial, intense, or unusual, should be discounted, and no effort should be made to fix, soothe, or smooth them over. The responses simply are to be collected and heard.
4. **Examine Repercussions.** Once reactions have been expressed fully, the leader should ask those present to turn their attention to the repercussions of the event, and consider the congregation's future. This step bridges the trauma with the ongoing life of those involved in the trauma. It may be a time to explore some of the issues the congregation



will face in the near future. As with the presentation of facts, the issues raised may be noted both verbally and in writing.

5. **Seek Context and Perspective.** Members of the congregation also should be invited to place the event within a context or perspective. There may be expressions of confusion, helplessness, or curiosity about how other groups have resolved an issue of this type. In this phase, people may have an awareness of paradox and pose some hard questions such as the following:

- Why do bad things happen?
- How can it be that such a talented priest/leader could be involved in misconduct?
- Why do things like this happen in a church?
- Where does the responsibility lie?
- What about the resources of our faith?

Leaders have discretion whether to respond, or to simply allow others to speak.

### **Actions After the Meeting**

1. **Plan for the Future.** The final step is planning. This could include
  - Scheduling a follow-up session one or two months into the future;
  - Discussing the ways in which the pastoral and sacramental needs of the congregation will be met; or
  - Describing the resources available to people who may need counseling or other specialized attention.
2. **Provide Trained Counselors.** For the immediate needs of those present, it is important that trained crisis professionals be available in the church building so that individuals or groups may process their feelings further. These professionals are present simply to listen and support people in integrating the trauma.
3. **Debrief the Debriefing.** After the debriefing, members of the Congregational Trauma Debriefing Team should meet to discuss their own experiences with the debriefing meeting, in order to do the following:
  - Plan the follow-up monitoring of the congregation in the future;
  - Determine whether there are issues that will need further clarification;

- Determine whether there are complicating factors, or factors that require special continuing attention;
- Decide what the lay leadership of the congregation requires to address the issue further; and evaluate the debriefing meeting itself (or agree to do so at a later date).

### **Additional Responses & Follow-Up**

If new information comes to light after the first debriefing, further meetings may be held. Additionally, regular follow-up sessions with the congregation should be held during the first year after disclosure of the incident(s).

Additional appropriate church responses may include:

- Regular prayer for the complainant(s), the respondent(s), and the congregation should continue;
- Preaching on the subject of violation of trust and liturgical acts of corporate penance;
- Securing a safe place for the complainant(s) and the complainant's family in community life;
- In the event that incarceration or other punitive action follows legal proceedings, developing a means for the congregation to deal appropriately with the person who may be imprisoned.

### **Congregational Follow-up: The First Year**

Even with the best of care, a congregation that has experienced sexual misconduct will likely need an ongoing program of support and assistance, especially in the first year. This year will be devoted to a healing process, in which the congregation slowly will integrate the reality of its experience into its future. If such integration does not take place, the congregation may suffer from prolonged loss of energy, despair about the future, loss and/or isolation of some members, distrust of lay and/or ordained leadership or of the Bishop, and difficulty making decisions or taking risks.

Suggested congregational follow-up activities may include:

- **Meeting with the Bishop.** A meeting with the Bishop or the Bishop's representative and the vestry in order to assess the healing process of the congregation.

- **Staff Input.** Obtaining input from church staff (including an interim priest where present) about their observations regarding the incident and the debriefing process.
- **Study Groups.** Establishing study groups to consider the issue of healing from sexual abuse, perhaps by reading a selected book for discussion.
- **Self-evaluation.** Conducting a congregational self-evaluation, through the use of a questionnaire or survey instrument.
- **Focus Groups.** Creating congregational focus groups to address the issue of where the congregation stands in its process of moving ahead.
- **Committee on Congregational Life.** Forming a Committee on Congregational Life charged with assessing the needs and planning programs for continued healing.
- **Professional Consultant.** Appointing a professional consultant experienced with issues of child abuse to work with the vestry and affected congregation on the components of the healing process.

### **Using the Trauma to Help Others**

Some churches, having worked through a history of child abuse, take up a special vocation in a related area. Such steps signify that the congregation has moved into the redemptive activity of letting its own pain be a gift for others. Among possible actions:

- **Helping Other Churches.** Offering help to other churches confronted with the same issues.
- **Sponsoring Programs.** Sponsoring seminars or programs on ethics and sexuality.
- **Church Building Use.** Offering the church building for use by community groups to address issues of child abuse.
- **Developing programs for young people** about protecting themselves from abuse.

## H.4 Pastoral Response to Known Sexual Offenders

The church must make every reasonable effort to protect children. Special care must be taken when a church interacts with a person who is registered as a sexual offender, or self-discloses a history of sexual misconduct towards children, or self-discloses a struggle with sexual attraction toward children.

When such a person is known to be a participant in the church or its activities, the clergy shall inhibit that person from any contact with children and shall require (except as otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel) the offender to sign a contract/covenant that details expectations, defines boundaries and off-limits locations (e.g. children's areas, acolyte vesting areas), and establishes appropriate supervision (such as, for example, a bathroom escort) for the offender while on church premises and/or at church activities. The church shall have in place a plan to deal with any violation of the contract/covenant.

If the perpetrator is observed acting in an inappropriate manner with children or their families, the rector or wardens shall inform the family/families of a potential danger to their child/children (unless otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel). Where appropriate, the rector or senior warden shall consult the offender's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been met.

*O merciful Creator, your loving hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence, and give us grace to honor you with all that you have entrusted to us; that we, remembering the account we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.***

©Book of Common Prayer, 2019, Prayer 22

## **I: BASIC STANDARDS RESOURCES**

### **I.1 Sample Documentation for the Parish**

Sample Application for Volunteers

Sample Ministry Registration Form

Photography and Digital Communications Release

Waiver for Driving a Minor

Social Media Search Checklist

Screening Questionnaire

Training Attendance Certificates

The Diocese requires that each church shall have in place an Application to Volunteer and/or Work with children and youth in their parish. This application should cover some basic information about the individual, such as: contact information, mailing address, and faith history. The Applicant must provide 3 references and a driver's license number if they will be driving minors. The following are questions to be included in the Application Screening Questions:

Have you ever:

- Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged?
  - Yes
  - No
- Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding?
  - Yes
  - No
- Committed an act of child sexual abuse?
  - Yes
  - No
- Been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)?
  - Yes
  - No

Has any other member of your household:

- Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged?
  - Yes
  - No
- Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding?
  - Yes
  - No
- Committed an act of child sexual abuse?
  - Yes
  - No
- Been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)?
  - Yes
  - No

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Printed Name  
Date

---

Signature

## I.2 In-person and Awareness Training Requirements

The Diocese will train an Ethics and Protection Coordinator for each Deanery. This Coordinator will also be the individual to follow up with training and background requirements for volunteers and staff, as well as, training churches and leaders on safeguarding children and youth. This Coordinator will also meet on a quarterly basis with the Canon for Ethics and Protection.

### **Train-the-Trainer for Policy Training**

The ACNA published that their definition of best practices is to require awareness and prevention training be held in interactive workshops in-person. Since so many in our culture (one in four) have had an experience of child sexual abuse, in-person workshops are often also a very helpful place for ministry and for healing. The topic itself is a difficult one for many to examine

and those in attendance may need help in processing what they have learned or what the training has triggered.

Policy Trainers should be equipped to provide information, support, and referrals and be trained through the Train-the-Trainers model. This model is structured so that each church names a trainer(s) to be trained by the Deanery Ethics Trainer, and the parish trainers host the training for their Parish vestry, staff, and volunteers. These trainers should demonstrate expertise in teaching while also exercising discernment and pastoral care for those who may be triggered by difficult content. This Trainer for each parish may not be an administrator, clergy, or staff member.

Deanery Ethics Coordinator/Contact: One per Deanery. This individual is trained by the Canon for Ethics and Protection and is on the Ethics and Protection Committee. This individual coordinates and administers the trainings for their Deanery member Parishes. This training provides each trainer with the materials to implement the Policy Training in person at their local parish.

Once trained, the church representative trainer will provide instruction for staff, vestry, clergy and volunteers in their parish that mirrors the instruction offered by the diocese, including:

1. Diocesan Child Safety Policy Training

The Diocese will require in-person training of this policy for all clergy, staff, vestry, and volunteers that interact with minors. The Diocese, using a Train-the-Trainer model will train on this policy, best practices, and samples in each Deanery. The Canon for Ethics and Protection will manage and administer the training sessions for each Deanery.

The Diocese will provide the slides, video, and training materials for the approximately 2.5 hour training on this policy.

Each Deanery shall name an Ethics and Protection Coordinator who will be trained in person by the Canon for Ethics and Protection. The Deaneries span multiple states; therefore, at the in-person, train-the-trainer sessions, the Canon for Ethics and Protection will highlight state specific details as listed in Appendix A. Each Dean will have their Ethics and Protection Coordinator to train the identified Parish leaders who will receive the training at each Parish or as a Deanery group, whichever method of training suits the Dean.

The Deanery Ethics and Protection Coordinator will keep records from each church in their region for training attendance, Awareness training tracking and background checks.

## 2. Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Awareness Training

*Protect My Ministry* and *Ministry Safe* offer online learning management programs that keep track of certification. Each congregation should appoint an administrator who will manage online users. Both of these offer discounts for ACNA churches, see below. Another option for small groups is *Creating a Safe Environment*, an in-person group curriculum (an updated version of *Safeguarding God's Children*).]

### Options for Awareness Training Preferred and Approved by the Diocese

The following resources are preferred by the Diocese for Modular and Ministry-specific Awareness training resources:

#### ***Creating a Safe Environment***

*Creating a Safe Environment* is a research-based, facilitator-led, video-based training program that is intended to be completed in small group training within your church. From the publishers of *Safeguarding God's Children*, Praesidium, this *Creating a Safe Environment* curriculum offers case study videos that are watched together and discussed, covering additional topics that go beyond the basics of child protection, such as protecting against peer-to-peer abuse, red-flag behaviors, electronic communications, supervising high-risk areas, and how to handle the conversation when a child discloses abuse. The facilitator guide is a helpful resource for the trainer in each church to know how to navigate difficult conversation among adults, especially when they may be triggered talking about past abuse. For more information or to purchase: <https://praesidium.lpages.co/case/>.

#### ***Protect My Ministry***

*Protect My Ministry* offers child safety training as well as background checks and free screening training videos, helping you fill in the gaps in risk management. *Protect My Ministry* covers protecting children from abuse through its online training and certification, but it also offers extensive resources for screening before the volunteer or employee even begins working with children. One of the unique benefits to *Protect My Ministry* is its social screening, designed to screen a potential worker's social media accounts through a legal process reviewed by the Federal Trade Commission, intended to increase information received beyond background checks. Enrollment fees are waived and the per person cost is



reduced if the organization mentions they are an ACNA church. For more information or to purchase: <https://info.protectmyministry.com/acna>.

### **MinistrySafe**

*MinistrySafe* is a safety system designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in your congregation. *MinistrySafe* provides on-line child sexual abuse awareness training, has sample policies and procedures that can be tailored to your particular situation, and provides training in skillful screening and guidelines for monitoring and oversight of the program. This program has been endorsed by the Anglican Church in North America and is its minimum standard. A church's *Ministry Safe* account will cost \$100/year for ACNA churches and \$5 for each person who successfully passes the test. To set up a *MinistrySafe* account, go to <https://ms.ministrysafe.com/acna/>. Be sure to register as an ACNA church and to sign up for the discount with ACNA2021 code (updated each year).

The following are approved Awareness Training resources:

### **The Evangelical Council for Abuse Prevention**

*The Evangelical Council for Abuse Prevention* is an organization that offers accreditation to churches and schools dedicated to the protection of children. This organization offers resources such as awareness training, but it also offers coaching for churches in the accreditation process seeking to improve their protection of children. For more information visit: <https://www.ecap.net>.

### **From Darkness to Light**

*Darkness to Light* training is available in-person led by a Darkness to Light Authorized Facilitator or can be taken individually online. Training is available in English and Spanish. Darkness to Light training is built to acknowledge and respond to the reality of child abuse. To increase engagement and the potential for behavior change, we enrich learning by incorporating reflection and discussion opportunities, granting learners the opportunity to apply prior knowledge and consider the positive impacts of prevention. Darkness to Light has a wide array of award-winning training for adults looking to help prevent child sexual abuse and protect children. Visit: <https://www.d2l.org/>

For additional Awareness Training resources, please visit: [ACNA Child Protection](#).

## I.3 Sample: Supervisory Plan

## **Sunday Morning SAMPLE Supervisory Plan for Nursery (list ages)**

**Registration:** All children must be registered by their parent/guardian prior to being

welcomed into the nursery. Emergency contact information should be listed on the completed registration form.

**Personnel/Ratio:** Only certified staff and volunteers may work in the nurseries. No one under the age of employment laws in the state may be hired to work in the nurseries and no one under the age of **12** may volunteer in the nurseries as an assistant only. A minimum of two certified staff/volunteers must provide supervision at all times with a minimum ratio set at 1:4. Nursery staff and volunteers are not permitted to allow uncertified friends or family members to assist.

**Supervision:** Children in our care require constant loving supervision. Staff and volunteers are expected to engage children in conversation, direct them to age appropriate activities, and calmly redirect problematic behavior.

**Cell Phone Use:** Cell phone use is not permitted while working or volunteering in the toddler nursery other than in the case of an emergency.

**Discipline Procedure:** Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management in the nursery. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management.

Our disciplinary response includes these four steps:

- a. Friendly reminder
- b. Verbal warning/correction
- c. Time to reset
- d. Summoning the parent to return to the nursery

**Physical Environment:** Windows on nursery doors will not be obstructed. Toys, books, and furniture and apparatus will be cleaned on a **[indicate and adjust how frequently, where to find supplies, etc.]** basis. Rugs and other moveable items that could pose danger will be secured.

**Bathroom Procedure:** Children will be escorted to the bathroom by certified staff and volunteers with one person assisting and another in close proximity. Diapering will be conducted by certified staff/volunteers in the observable diapering areas only.

**Injury/Incident Reporting:** Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report when a child is injured or hurt in any way. Incidents of conflict with parent/guardian(s) should also be reported in the same manner.

**Reporting Concerns:** Concerns about the nursery should be reported to the Ministry Leader or Staff person responsible for the nursery.

**Release of Children:** Staff or volunteers will release children only to those adults who have corresponding identification with the child. Each church will have established a pick up and drop off system.

Acknowledgement from certified staff/volunteer:

I certify that I have read the Supervisory Plan for the following event:

\_\_\_\_\_.

I will abide by this plan and report any breach of it to

\_\_\_\_\_.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**[Note: This is an example of what a supervisory plan may look like. Please consult Section E of this policy sample policy for detailed information about what supervisory plans should include. Plans are required for all children's and youth programming.]**

## I.4 Sample: Reporting Checklist

Use the following steps, considering the situation. Please see the next page for the report.

- 1) SITUATION A: Abuse is suspected (in cases wherein there be no alleged victim coming forward, or enough concrete evidence or first-hand experience, yet reason for suspicion).
  - a) 1. Document the Complaint.
  - b) 2. Does this suspicion involve a minor? If YES, immediately notify 1-800-96-ABUSE.
  - c) Notify the bishop (if allegation concerns clergy/staff) or the Rector/Sr. Warden (if allegation concerns lay person/volunteer) immediately.
- 2) SITUATION B: A complaint is received from an individual alleging abuse by a clergy person or church employee.
  - a) 1. Document the Complaint.
  - b) 2. Is the complainant a minor? If YES, immediately notify 1-800-96-ABUSE
  - c) 3. Notify the bishop immediately.
  - d) 4. Notify Sr. Warden of the Vestry and Rector/Other Clergy (other than the accused).
- 3) SITUATION C: A complaint is received from an individual alleging abuse by a lay person or volunteer.
  - a) Document the Complaint.
  - b) Is the complainant a minor? If YES, immediately notify 1-800-96-ABUSE
  - c) Notify Rector immediately.
- 4) IN ALL CASES
  - a) Assure the complainant of pastoral concern, and that the matter is taken seriously. Explain the policy notifications and procedures that are being initiated.
  - b) Keep strict confidence and do not discuss the matter with anyone who is not required to be informed.
  - c) Note to clergy: after receiving notification of an incident, do not hear sacramental confessions from or agree to privileged communication with the accused.

## I.5 Sample: Form for Tracking Reports

**Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file. [Provide direction here as to where these forms will be stored.]**

Your Information	Name:	
	Date of initial report:	
	Title/Position:	
	Supervisor:	
	Address:	
	Phone:	
	Email:	
Information Regarding Suspected Victim(s):	Name:	
	Age:	
	Biological sex:	
	Address:	
	Telephone:	
	Relationship to the church:	
	Name of any other suspected victim (attach additional forms):	
	How did you become suspicious of possible abuse?	

<b>Information about the Person Suspected of Child Abuse:</b>	Name:	
	Address:	
	Telephone:	
	Relationship to the church, if any:	
<b>Confidential Details (Keep locked up)</b>	Describe any physical evidence of suspected abuse:	
	Describe incidence details such as type, date(s), time(s), and location(s) of suspected abuse:	
<b>Witnesses (if any)</b>	1. Name/phone/age:	
	1. Relationship to church, if any:	
	2. Name/phone/age:	
	2. Relationship to church, if any:	
<b>Reporting Details</b>	To whom was the initial report made (name/title/phone):	
	What is their relationship to the church?	
	On what date was the suspected abuse reported to Child Protective Services?	
	Name of CPS worker who received the report:	
	If reported to police, what was the name of officer receiving report and the date?	
	Were the parent/guardian(s) notified? Date and parent phone number:	

	Was suspected abuse reported to the Diocese, what date, and to whom was it reported?	
	Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation?	
<b>Submission</b>	Date:	Signature:

## I.6 Sample: Report Abuse to Child Protective Agencies

Each state and locality will have their requirements and process. This section is a template for how it may flow in process and is not intended to be an exact representation of the reporting process.

Although the name of the person reporting the suspected abuse may be requested for follow-up purposes, the person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is generally NOT required to give his/her name. The Operator on the line for Child Protection will be trained and guide the call for reporting. If the person reporting does provide his/her name and requests anonymity, there are legal mechanisms in place in each state to protect the reporter from having his/her name given to the alleged abuser, unless otherwise ordered by a court.

It is helpful for the person reporting suspected abuse to provide the following:

- The name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care;
- The names of other persons, especially children, living in the suspected victim's home;
- Address of the child's home if known, but this is not necessary;
- The child's age and gender;
- The name of the school the child attends;
- The name and address of the alleged abuser, if known;
- A description of the alleged abuse and or neglect, including how long it may have been happening;
- The relationship between the person reporting the abuse and the child.

Please refer to Section G.5 for a sample form for Report of Suspected Child Abuse to be used when reporting allegations of child abuse to Child Protective Services and other authorities.

Once completed, that form should be kept in a confidential file with the church.

**Child Protective Services Procedure after Initial Reporting**

If the Child Protective Services worker determines that the report of abuse is a valid complaint, then the complaint must be investigated. To constitute a valid complaint, the official Investigator for CPS will begin their state run, mandated process.