



**DIOCESE** *of*  
**CHRIST** *our* **HOPE**

# **POLICY & MANUAL FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS**

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## A: Introduction

The Diocese of Christ our Hope (DCH) gratefully accepts the trust given by God to nurture and care for people through our congregations. In fulfilling this trust, we are committed to discipling children, youth, and adults in our ministries. However, to do this, we must also take particular care to defend and protect these people. This policy will enable churches to do their best to fulfill this dual responsibility, leading people to lifelong faith and discipleship as followers of Jesus and doing all within our power to protect them from harm while under our care.

### A.1 Bishop's Biblical Foundation for this Policy

Children have an unusually formative place in the Christian understanding of human identity, the value of life, and the nature of the Gospel of grace itself. They are cherished as bearers of the image of God and are singled out by Jesus as models of trust, humility, and faith:

*And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.*

Additionally, Jesus issues a dire warning against harming children.

*"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."*

These statements give ample reason for discipling and protecting children and youth. But in fact, this dual call is built on a comprehensive foundation of biblical truth.

- The protection of children and adults – and indeed, the value of all human life – begins at the moment of conception. "Therefore, from the moment of conception to natural death, every human body and every human life should be cared for, protected, and loved."<sup>1</sup>
- God's word is clear in calling his people to care for the vulnerable and needy, proactively intervening to rescue them from oppression or danger and seeking justice on their behalf.
- God's people are charged to pass on the faith to every next generation. We have a mandate to minister to children and youth. Parents and families are

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<sup>1</sup> Question 114, To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism, Approved Edition, p. 54.

particularly responsible to train up children and youth in Christian faith and discipleship.<sup>2</sup> Ministries of the Church should partner with, support, and supplement families.

- Biblically, the world is not spiritually neutral. Abuse and exploitation of the vulnerable plague our world. Scripture provides the only logical explanation to the root causes of such abuse.
  - Scripture teaches that all people are sinners who commit sins. Abuse and exploitation are personal choices with profound consequences for both abusers and the abused.
  - Second, pervasive spiritual principles and entities infiltrate our world and fuel abuse and exploitation. Those principles and entities are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.
    - The World describes a systemic mentality that devalues human life, its meaning, and its purposes. It includes an anti-child, anti-God system that promotes the sexualization of children and as well as the supposed disposability of children, all in order to promote its interwoven definitions of pleasure, prosperity, and freedom.
    - The Flesh is the disordered appetites and passions that reside in the heart of humanity. Abusers are driven by unbridled personal sinful passions.
    - The Devil animates the system of the World and the power of the Flesh in order to steal, kill, and destroy. His personal goal is the destruction of the image-bearers of God, particularly the innocent. "He seeks those whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)
- It is the particular work of the Church to meet the forces of evil head-on. This necessarily includes intervening on behalf of those most at risk from the forces of evil. (Proverbs 24:11)
- The Church's efforts to care for and train children in the faith are checkered with successes and tragedies. Tragically, the Church has sometimes failed to take seriously the corruptive power of sin in the hearts of people we have

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<sup>2</sup> The founder of Anglicanism, Bishop Thomas Cranmer, was particularly passionate to see parents enabled to be the primary disciplers and caretakers of their children according to God's good plan for the nuclear family. To that end, his goal was "a Bible and a Prayer Book in every home in England," and the constant encouragement of family worship following the Daily Offices.

entrusted with the care of the vulnerable. Wounds inflicted within the house of God are particularly traumatic and life changing.

- The Church is meant to be a place where God's truth and love reign over sin and its impact. Biblical faith offers comprehensive principles and practices for identifying sin, calling sinners to account, offering redemption, and setting examples of godliness. Biblical faith also offers comprehensive principles and practices for the healing of wounded souls.
- The public, prophetic disciplinary actions against abusers and exploiters in the Old Testament is not the Church's prerogative in this phase of the Kingdom. We live within a system of civil authority. Following the clear teaching of Jesus, St Paul, and St Peter, the Diocese calls all its leaders and ministers to obey the laws of the state in dealing with sexual, physical, emotional, and psychological abuse.
- Additionally, God graciously enables us to develop and utilize tools and means by which we fulfill our mandate of doing good in this world, including effective tools for helping with both protection and recovery from abuse and its wounds. We do well to utilize the best principles and practices of law, psychology, pedagogy, and justice in our care for those under our charge. Addressing sin and wounding through God's truth and love must be combined with the "best practices" (and best practitioners) of healing and justice available to us.
- As a final principle, we must remember that God's calling to leadership and authority is given solely for the purpose of serving his people, his flock. Leaders and ministers have a weighty calling that can be used for great good or great harm. Anyone in a position of influence and power must hold that stewardship with humility, always standing under the judgment of God. Pastors and Christian leaders are enjoined to act with gentleness, and tenderness, to serve sacrificially, and to always seek the true good of those they serve.

Current statistics regarding child abuse are alarming. The effects of such abuse can damage children at the core of who they are and often follow them into adulthood. As the Church, we declare that we will work together to see that the proper love and care are extended to the children entrusted to us. We issue a call to establish a secure environment where the perfect love of God works to cast out all fear (1 John 4:18) and the nurture and love of God are made known to all, and in particular to our children and youth. In this way we can fulfill the biblical mandate to train up our children in the way they should go, and we can make every effort to build a high wall against child abuse within the congregations of the Diocese of Christ our Hope.

Gratefully serving among you,

Bishop Steven A. Breedlove

## A.2 Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of this policy the following uses of these terms are in place. In addition, the Diocese has created a Glossary of Terms used throughout all documentation. This Diocesan Glossary is linked here for this Policy and any related terms: <https://adhope.org/about-us/resources/>

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

**Certified Adult or Certified Individual:** An adult of the clergy, staff, vestry or volunteer who has completed the screening and training requirements as described in this policy. This certification is updated every 3 years.

**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. Individual states have specific laws defining these terms. Each state definition details are found here: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

**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. Information about state and local agencies is found here: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

**Complainant(s):** 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.

**Dean(s):** For this Diocese, the Dean is an appointed member of clergy placed by the Bishop to assist in communication and fostering care to regional organizing of parishes in the Diocese.

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

**Ecclesiastical Abuse of Power:** Ecclesiastical abuse, often referred to as pastoral abuse, involves a pattern of emotional mistreatment perpetrated by a church leader who exploits their authoritative position within a ministry context.

**The Diocese:** In this document, this refers to the Diocese of Christ Our Hope (DCH) of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

**Fellow(s)/Intern(s):** adult college graduate interns who undergo a vetting process and application at the hosting parish. They serve in ministries at the church, in the community, and in local businesses.

**Guardian(s):** A court appointed adult to have custody of the child(ren) and the authority to make decisions concerning the child(ren)'s protection, education, care, discipline, etc.

**Lay, Laity, Lay member, or Layperson:** people distinct from 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.7 for your specific state laws.

**Ministry Leader(s):** Any clergy, staff or volunteer with leadership of any ministry within the parish. Though this individual is not the person with final authority, s/he must abide by the policies outlined in this document. Examples may include: Sunday school teachers, camp counselors and program team leaders that include anyone under 18.

**Minor(s):** All states define an "age of majority", usually 18. Persons younger than this age are considered minors, and must be under the care of a parent or [guardian](#) unless they are [emancipated](#). Minors are treated differently from adults for many legal purposes. Check the state in which the parish is located to confirm coordination with local laws and this policy.

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

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

**Program(s):** Official activities and ministries sponsored by the Diocese or parish(es) (examples may include: Youth Event, mission experiences, camp programs, acolyte festivals, etc.).

**Provisional Volunteer(s):** a lay individual who has completed the full screening requirements and the online awareness training, but has not completed the synchronous Diocesan Policy Training hosted by their parish or Deanery. The training date is on record and they may work with a certified individual. A person shall hold provisional status for no more than 4 months.

**Sexual Coercion:** The use of physical or emotional power to gain sexual gratification

**Sexual Exploitation of Adults:** Including but not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop, a sexual relationship between a member of the clergy, employee, or volunteer affiliated with the DCOH and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual. Sexual exploitation includes activity during the course of a pastoral relationship, such as sexual involvement or sexually demeaning comments. The apparent consent of a possible victim to a sexual or romantic relationship seldom determines whether there has been sexual exploitation. Non-clergy consensual dating between individuals not involved in supervisory relationships is excluded from the definition of sexual exploitation.

**Sexual Exploitation of Children:** Including, but not limited to, obscene or pornographic photographing, filming or depiction of children for commercial purposes or exploitation, the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct, or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of any sexually explicit conduct, or the rape, molestation, incest, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children.

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, quid pro quo behavior, sexually motivated physical contact or other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature; including but not limited to, sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference, undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements. This applies with children and with adults where there is an employment, mentoring, or collegial relationship between the persons involved. This might include:

- Inappropriate touching;
- Sexually oriented comments about an individual's body;
- Sending sexually explicit or offensive communications (e.g., text messages, emails, social media messages or posts).
- Voyeurism, and "peeping", including viewing, displaying objects or pictures that are sexual in nature.
- Submission to such sexual conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or their continued status in an institution
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual,
- Conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
- Subjecting an individual to sexual jokes or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.

**Sexual Misconduct:** A category of sex crimes that encompasses acts undertaken for sexual gratification against the will of another or without his or her permission. The exact acts encompassed by the crime vary significantly by state and require a careful reading of state statutes.

**Staff:** Any clergy or clergy-approved adult layperson, employed by the parish or a regular, hourly paid worker. Though this individual may not be the person with final authority, they still must abide by this policy. Examples include Youth Minister, Children's Pastor, Family Life Director, etc. This also includes hourly paid staff such as Nursery Care support and babysitting.

**Vestry/ies:** A group of women and men who are elected by the congregation to manage the affairs of the church and function as a council of advice to the rector. In the absence of a rector, the vestry is the official representative of the parish. This body may also be called the Board, Council, Leadership Team, or a similar name.

**Volunteer(s):** A Layperson who is not a paid member of the parish staff. In this document, when volunteer is used, it specifically refers to an adult lay person who is donating their time to work with minors. See "work with" definition and footnote for this document.

**Warden(s):** A Lay leader of the vestry. In many Anglican parishes, there is a Senior Warden and a Junior Warden who 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.

**Works with:** as stated in and throughout this policy means: any clergy, staff, vestry, or volunteer individual that serves in or supports a ministry, program, guild, event, or function to or with minors where the minor is not in the immediate care and responsibility of their parent(s)/guardian(s)

### A.3 The Diocesan Committee for Ethics and Safeguarding

The Bishop, in consultation with the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding, creates the Ethics and Safeguarding Committee with representatives from each Deanery and other experts. The representative from each Deanery will serve as its Deanery Ethics Coordinator. Each Coordinator will be trained by the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding annually in the first quarter. This group is responsible for the edits, communication, and training of the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children and Adults and other safeguarding content, under the authority and oversight of the Diocesan Council and the Bishop and in accordance with the canons of the Diocese.

From time to time, but not less than annually by July, the Committee will review and, if necessary, revise the policy in light of practical experiences, recommendations from clergy and leaders, medical and other scholarly research, legal developments, and other relevant considerations.

The Committee for Ethics and Safeguarding will meet quarterly per the schedule for the Document Review Plan, outlined in section [G.2, Deanery Compliance Tracking](#).

#### A.4 Responsibility for this Policy

The rector, not the Diocese or Province, has responsibility for the administration and application of this policy within the congregation he leads and for providing all compliance and reporting requested by the Diocese. In the absence of a rector, or in the case of church plants and missions, the Vicar, 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.5 Pastoral Care of Children and Youth

The Diocese and its parishes are committed to providing pastoral care to all affected by and involved with instances of 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. Guidance, support, referrals, consolation, and confrontation may all be needed in order 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.6 Diocesan Policy on Child and Adult Abuse

The Diocese will not tolerate any form of child abuse perpetrated or condoned by our clergy, staff, lay leaders, volunteers, or other congregants within our parishes. 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 and adults. That commitment extends to sexual behavior and all forms of child and adult abuse.

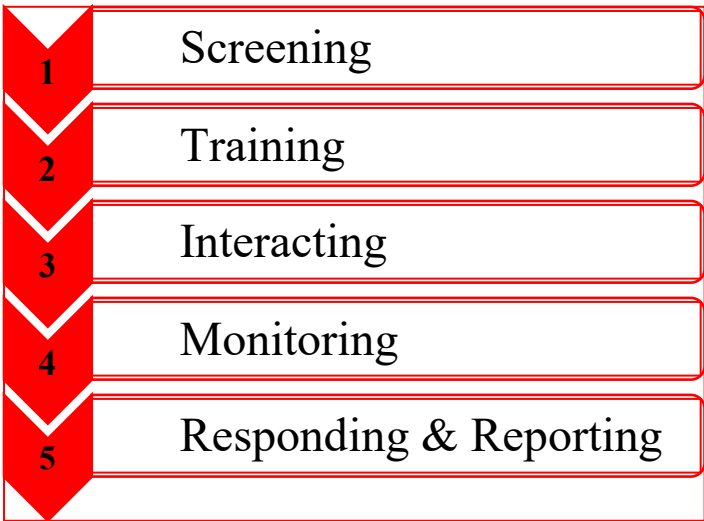
No one in the employ or volunteer service of the Diocese or its parishes who has a civil or criminal record of child abuse, or who has admitted committing prior sexual abuse of a child, will be permitted to work with children or youth.

A.7 Child Abuse in each State

The Diocese member churches span across several states. Child Abuse reporting laws that are specific to each state can be found [here](#).

A.8 Basics of the Policy

The Diocese of Christ Our Hope (DCH), requires each congregation, parish, church, mission, and church plant to have the following policy procedures in place. This policy applies to a parish in DCH even if there are no children. Therefore, the Diocese and its parishes commit to creating a positive and healthy environment for children and youth through the 5-step approach:



- 1. **SCREENING** is an opportunity to prevent any offender or suspected offender from having access to personal contact with children and youth. The Diocese is responsible for screening all clergy. Each parish has a responsibility to carefully screen staff, vestry, and volunteers who work with<sup>3</sup> children and youth within its ministry and programs.
- 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

<sup>3</sup> "works with" as defined in Glossary of terms and used as such throughout this document.

minors 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 our ministries. These guidelines also help detect problems before they turn into abuse and create healthy boundaries for meaningful relationships within the community.
4. **MONITORING** allows us to detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and also helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse. Clergy, vestry, staff, and volunteers working with minors 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 maximum time for healing. Anyone who knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect a child of being 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**

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

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

Screening clergy is the responsibility of the Diocese and is a matter of permanent record. Careful screening of clergy is conducted initially during the ordination processes and is maintained throughout the ministry of the clergy under Diocesan oversight. In addition, any clergy transferring from another diocese within the ACNA will provide records of any background check within the past three years and undergo further normative DCH screening processes. This clergy screening process includes:

- Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks through Oxford Document Management Company;
- Renewing background checks at least every 3 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
- Providing personal and professional reference checks (three sources recommended)
- Interviews with bishop(s) and canons related to Ordination and Transfers
- Requiring the clergy person completion of Screening Questionnaire and regular ministry ethics training certifications.
- Reviewing this policy with each clergy and requiring each clergy to sign and submit Policy Acknowledgement Form found on the Diocese website:  
<https://adhope.org/safeguarding/>

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

The screening of employees/staff<sup>4</sup>, interns, fellows, vestry, and volunteers who work with minors is the responsibility of the individual church. [NOTE: Each state has 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 in the sixth grade or beyond may volunteer with two unrelated<sup>5</sup> certified individuals and may be utilized for ratio purposes if they are 4 years older than the oldest child present.]

Careful screening of staff, paid child care workers, interns, fellows, vestry and volunteers is required for any worker to become certified and includes:

- Completing and signing hiring, volunteer, or Fellows/Intern Application, and Employment Application (or equivalent) for staff, hourly workers, interns, fellows and volunteers that work with minors in their role;
- Conducting a National Sexual Offender Registry and national and/or state criminal<sup>6</sup> background check at the beginning of service, and repeating that at least every three years (estimated cost is \$15/applicant); or showing proof of the same as provided by the third party child care company.
- Providing personal and professional references as provided on the application or equivalent from child care company;
- Conducting a social media search;
- Interview of applicant;
- For volunteers, a minimum of six months regular attendance or the written recommendation from another Diocesan parish and/or rector discretion based on prior church recommendation of the volunteer;
- Requiring each applicant to sign the screening statement found in the Diocese online resources.

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<sup>4</sup> Staff definition is in the Glossary of Terms.

<sup>5</sup> Unrelated individuals are those that have no familial connection.

<sup>6</sup> State and/or national criminal background check if the state reports to the national criminal database.

## C: Step 2. Training

Training is also an important deterrent to child abuse. Training clergy, staff, vestry, and volunteers that work with children and youth creates communities that become more aware of behaviors that can lead to abuse. These individuals must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse as well as to learn the procedures for reporting abuse and suspected abuse. They also must become familiar with safe practices designed to reduce the potential for abuse occurring.

### C.1 Reading Requirements

DCH requires that all members of the clergy, vestry, staff, and paid workers must certify that they have read, understood, and accepted the Policy and Manual for the Protection of Children and Adults and sign an acknowledgement form of the same.

### C.2 Training Requirements

Every three years, all clergy, vestry, staff, and volunteers who work with minors must be certified by completing the following two training requirements:

- Complete In-Person<sup>7</sup> Diocesan Policy Training: Policy Training<sup>8</sup> 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 and tracking record retained by the church.
- Complete Online Awareness Training: Awareness Training<sup>9</sup> 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 *Praesidium*, *Ministry Safe*, *Protect My Ministry*, *Creating a Safe Environment*). Hourly paid child care workers must provide documentation of equivalent training and sign receipt of Policy with Supervisory Plans.

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<sup>7</sup> In-person may include virtual, synchronous training

<sup>8</sup> Policy training refers to the training workshop provided in a synchronous manner for the application and implementation of this Policy and Manual at the specific parish.

<sup>9</sup> Awareness training refers to a broad category of general topics of abuse and child safety. This training is not location specific nor is it a synchronous training workshop.

A certified individual (or certified adult) has completed the full screening and training requirements as stipulated in this policy. In the event that an individual has completed the screening requirements and the online awareness training as outlined in this section, this person will have Provisional<sup>10</sup> volunteer status. As such, this person may volunteer with a certified individual until their training is complete. This person must complete their policy training within 4 months.

Each rector is responsible to track and document the training/retraining of its vestry, staff and volunteers. Rectors are responsible to submit to the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding evidence of completed training annually. The rector has access to the support and resources of the Deanery Safeguarding Coordinator for this annual verification. The rector may delegate a staff or vestry member to administer this for their parish. This member's name will be provided to the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding.

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<sup>10</sup> Provisional volunteer is defined in the Glossary of Terms

## **D: Step 3. Interacting**

These interacting guidelines and 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, vestry, volunteers working with children and youth, while in the presence of children or their parent(s)/guardian(s), during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children at any venue should not: use tobacco products, possess or use any illicit or illegal drugs, be under the influence of alcohol or use alcohol, or share/view pornographic materials.

### **D.2 Communication**

Interactions, verbal and non-verbal, between clergy, staff, vestry or volunteers should be positive and uplifting, reflecting the fruits of the Holy Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-26. Staff and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging and constructive, and should be mindful of their mission of aiding a parent(s)/guardian(s) in the spiritual growth and development of children.

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

Clergy, staff, vestry 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 or displaying any sexual behavior.

Clergy, staff, 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 may be made available for review for the parent(s)/guardian(s) of participants. Prior to introducing these materials, notice should be provided to parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to allow an opt-out if there are concerns or objections.

### D.3 Interacting Guidelines with Registered Offenders

In the event that a parish in the Diocese has an identified or previously identified Registered Offender in their community, the following steps will be taken to provide safety for the parish:

- Identify the individual and make contact directly
- Contact church insurance provider to confirm their requirements
- Establish a meeting with the local authorities for their input and/or with the individual's parole officer
- Create a detailed and thorough Interacting Contract and Plan with specific guidelines and accountability and/or chaperoning details
- Sample Interacting Contract and Plan sample documentation provided in Resources.
- The above applies to any individual who self discloses abuse history

### D.4 First Aid & Medication

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

### D.5 Small Group/Home Group Procedures

The parish, not the Diocese, controls and manages the home groups/small groups that meet within their ministry context. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child, and the mandatory reporting laws of the state in which the group meets apply. Parishes are recommended, as much as practicable, to encourage

the application of this Policy in any home/small group that meets within their ministry context.

## D.6 Overnight Events

Certain children and youth ministry events and activities may require overnight sleeping arrangements. These events will have a detailed Supervisory Plan that is communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s) for all youth and children's overnight events (including lock-ins, mission trips, camps, retreats and other ministry that involves overnight stays), the following procedures shall be adhered to:

- A Supervisory Plan must be in place with proper Parent(s)/Guardian(s) permission forms signed in advance.
- The "Two Certified Individuals"<sup>11</sup> rule for areas such as cabins, tents or rooms, i.e., a single student should not be alone with a staff or volunteer in a cabin, tent, or room. If a situation arises where only one adult is present, a minimum of two students must also be present.
- Overnight sleeping arrangements 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, a minimum of three is required).
- If any students are actively awake, two certified individuals must be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
- Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn by all.
- Staff 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 and volunteers shall not 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. A "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

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<sup>11</sup> Certified Individuals is defined in Glossary of Terms and two certified individuals shall not be related.

- 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 Certified Individuals 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(s)/guardian(s) and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. R-rated movies require rector and parent(s)/guardian(s) documented approval.

## D.7 Photography and Video

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

## D.8 Interactions

Those who serve, whether as clergy, staff, vestry or volunteers, 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 action should misconduct occur.

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of clergy, staff, vestry or volunteers. It is the diocesan policy that clergy, staff, vestry and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner.

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

- Interactions will occur in observable places. Observable means audible and/or visual accountability for interactions.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing or grooming. The personal behavior of clergy, staff, vestry and volunteers must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct and boundaries must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or display affection on a child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected at all times. Physical touch should be initiated by the child.

Appropriate interactions may include:

- |                             |                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Smiles                    | • Pats on the shoulder or back                                                                       |
| • Encouragement             | • Arm around the shoulder                                                                            |
| • Handshakes and high fives | • Holding or picking up children who are 4 years old and younger                                     |
| • Fist bumps                | • Meetings in public spaces or church spaces with windows and visible and/or auditory accountability |
| • Thumbs up                 |                                                                                                      |
| • Side to side hugs         |                                                                                                      |

Clergy, staff, vestry 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).

Inappropriate physical interactions are those behaviors that present an imbalance in the power dynamic for a child with an adult or older child. Peer to peer child abuse is on the rise. With this rising statistic, clergy, staff, vestry and volunteers need to be vigilant to observe peer to peer child interactions as well as physical interactions between adults and children.

Interactions that are not monitored visually or audibly by certified individuals working with minors can create spaces for grooming behaviors. Abusers will use grooming techniques to gain trust and break down natural and healthy relational and physical barriers. Grooming usually includes gaining access through trust, targeting a particular type of person as a possible victim, slowly eroding boundaries, and employing methods to keep the child from reporting the grooming

behaviors. Therefore, the following interactions with minors are prohibited in this policy:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical discipline</li><li>• Sexual behavior</li><li>• Shaming and/or belittling language</li><li>• Meeting in an unobservable space without visual or auditory accountability</li><li>• Engaging in sexually oriented communications with or in proximity to children</li><li>• Using, possessing, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or illicit or illegal drugs</li><li>• Wrestling; tickling</li><li>• Sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)</li><li>• Commenting on children's bodies</li><li>• Being nude (such as on overnight trips, changing at pool parties, etc.)</li><li>• Showing favoritism or possessiveness</li><li>• Singling a child out with affection</li><li>• Giving gifts to children without the</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>parent(s)/guardian(s) permission</li><li>• Ridiculing the beliefs of a child or youth or those of their parent(s)/guardian(s)</li><li>• Allowing a child or youth to do things against the wishes of the parent(s)/guardian(s)</li><li>• Offering children or youth cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs</li><li>• Asking a child or youth to keep "secrets" from his or her parent/guardian(s)</li><li>• Allowing children or youth to view pornography or to visit inappropriate internet sites.</li></ul> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Any inappropriate behavior, grooming behavior, abuse, or suspected misconduct by clergy, staff, or volunteers must be reported immediately to the ministry leader and rector. If there is suspicion<sup>12</sup> of abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, or abuse of any other nature, contact local authorities and then the rector. If the concern involves the rector, the Senior Warden, or the Bishop Ordinary, they will be notified.

## D.9 Release of Children

Staff 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(s)/guardian(s), or other persons designated by parent(s)/guardian(s). It is presumed that a person who drops off a child or student has the authority to pick up the child. In the event that staff or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately contact their ministry leader or rector before releasing the child.

## D.10 Restroom Use

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

Parent(s)/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, staff and volunteers will observe the following policies:

#### **Diapering**

- Only certified nursery workers or the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 once their soiled diaper is removed and discarded.

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<sup>12</sup> State and local laws differ on these definitions. Check the state where the parish resides to understand the definitions of abuse and mandated reporting laws. Each state's laws are found here: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

## **Toilet Training**

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) should take the child being toilet trained to the restroom before checking them into the classroom.
- No child will be forced to toilet train while under the supervision of the parish.
- Only certified nursery workers or the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 changing diapers, 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 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, s/he should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, s/he 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.11 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. The parish 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 (and the ministry staff under his oversight) is responsible for local adaptation around specific ministry situations and with regard to suitable protection practices that embody DCH guiding values.

## D.12 Digital Communication

Digital communications, virtual gatherings and Social Media have the potential to empower ministry. And yet, 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 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.

### **Required Minimum Guidance**

- All communications sent digitally (email, social media, notes, texts, posts, etc.) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and can be shared or reposted to others.
- 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 and accountability.
- 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.
- Each digital tool and platform has age requirements for usage and these are required guidelines for use in ministry applications.

- Virtual spaces (ZOOM, Google Hangouts, MS Groups, or other collaborative, interaction web-based platforms) are to be treated the same as in-person spaces. This means two certified adults must be present in the virtual “room”. The parent(s)/guardian(s) should be aware that the child/youth is in conversation with leaders.
- Because virtual and digital spaces need accountability and management, where applicable the church will provide details for how they manage digital spaces. If the ministry utilizes digital space, then the details of such tools and management will be detailed in a Supervisory Plan.

## **Recommended Practices and Guidelines**

- Establish a policy of transparency. Best practice is to have the church or organization create and own a social media accounts and have multiple administrators or supervisors (who are certified adults) with access. Clergy, staff, vestry and volunteers should not use their personal accounts for communicating with minors. Regular review of the privacy settings and participants in these groups should be completed.
- 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.
- Prudent judgment should be used in the time of day a child or youth is contacted through digital media. Under normal circumstances, they should be restricted to exchanging texts, chats, emails, or photos in the church’s social media in an agreed upon time frame and documented in the Digital/Virtual Communications Supervisory Plan.
- When using digital groups such as Discord, Slack, WhatsApp, etc. these tools will be a part of the Supervisory Plan and shared with adults, youth, and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Sample Supervisory Plans are located here:  
<https://adhope.org/safeguarding/>

## D.13 Transportation

Clergy, staff and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children and youth. The following guidelines are required for transporting children and youth within ministry purposes:

- Certified adult drivers must provide to the church copies of valid driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance. The church is responsible for keeping record of this for both lay and clergy.
- Certified adult drivers must undergo an insurance approved background check including a DMV record check. (A DMV record check is completed as part of the background check the Diocese does for all clergy.)
- 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.
- An unrelated certified adult and one child traveling alone in a vehicle should not happen<sup>13</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 for all passengers and drivers are required. No cell phones, including hands--free devices, may be utilized by the driver while driving, unless in an emergency, with the exception of GPS navigation.
- Transport children directly to their destination. Unplanned stops to a non--public place shall be avoided.
- Adults should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- In general, churches should consult with their insurance provider regarding the minimum age for adult drivers. Further, 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.

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<sup>13</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 parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child. This permission should be written or documented by the volunteer if only verbal consent is obtainable. Text messages from parent(s)/guardian(s) will suffice. The child or youth should be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in such circumstances.

- In special circumstances, transportation details may be altered for emergencies. In these cases, the children/youth director (or ministry leader) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified immediately.
- If a family situation necessitates a special transportation arrangement, the family may sign a waiver stating the deviance from the diocesan policy or church supervisory plans; this change notes the family's acceptance of responsibility.

## D 14. Pornography.

Creation, viewing, or distribution: printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings. All clergy are required to avoid creating, viewing, or distributing pornography at all times, not just while working or in church facilities.

Any clergy struggling in this area should reach out to the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding for an assessment and help with recovery. This is offered without the involvement of the Bishop unless clergy fail to follow through with a recovery plan.

It is never appropriate to view pornography. When this includes a person under the age of legal majority (18/19), it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

## D 15. Spiritual Formation, Spiritual Direction, & Discipleship.

As Christians, we are encouraged to seek discipleship opportunities. This frequently manifests in 1:1, 1:2, or 1:3 relationships where participants meet regularly for a long-term partnership. This is not the same situation as pastoral counseling, which is intended for a singular focus and therefore is limited in scope. If a partnership of spiritual formation, spiritual direction discipleship is entered into long-term, consider these safeguards:

- Ensure this relationship is brought into the light among the leadership team of the church by informing multiple people of this partnership;
- If there are multiple people offering long-term spiritual direction or discipleship in your church, consider meeting every quarter to discuss the process and its benefits to the church, as well as accountability.

- If one clergy person is offering long-term spiritual direction or discipleship to another clergy person, bring the arrangement into the light by informing the office of the bishop of the relationship;
- Meet in a public place, not alone in one another's private living quarters;
- It is recommended that it be conducted by same biological sex participants in groups of at least 3 people total whenever possible;
- Follow guidelines regarding interaction and physical contact;
- Define the parameters of the relationship at the first meeting, articulating how one might discontinue the relationship without further explanation at any time; consider utilizing a signed waiver that outlines expectations, specifically protecting clarity regarding confession, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting;
- Communicate to whom the participant should report if he or she has any concerns (including the names and numbers of senior leadership, the bishop, or the Diocesan Reports Receivers)
- Include prayer and the study of Scripture in your regular time together.
- In order to protect the emotional and spiritual health of all clergy, it is recommended that clergy also seek regular spiritual direction to ensure accountability and a strong support system. Spiritual Formation, Spiritual Direction & Discipleship with Youth: If spiritual formation, discipleship or spiritual direction with a youth is entered into long-term, consider these safeguards in addition to those above:
  - Gain the parent/guardian's consent.
  - Meet in a predictable location at a predictable time (same time/place each occurrence)
  - Guidelines outlined in this policy for interaction with youth (regarding awareness, screening, interaction, and reporting) must be followed.
  - In order to protect the emotional and spiritual health of everyone involved, it is recommended that Youth Directors and Children's Ministry Directors also

seek regular spiritual direction to ensure accountability and a strong support system.

## D 16. Counseling.

One of the expectations of all clergy and other pastoral caregivers serving in the Diocese is that they offer pastoral counseling to members of the congregation if/when necessary and appropriate. Pastoral counseling occurs when church personnel offer spiritual direction or advice concerning moral or spiritual matters. This counseling is recommended to be offered for a small number of sessions per person (3-5). Pastoral counseling typically covers singular issues or questions, conflict management, confession, crisis counseling, premarital counseling, and marriage counseling. If those crises continue beyond a few sessions or if there is a need for ongoing counseling, members should be referred to a certified or licensed professional. Fees or donations to an individual for pastoral counseling are prohibited.

Any clergy or staff member charging fees for counseling must possess appropriate professional credentials and proof of separate professional liability insurance, including coverage for sexual misconduct, at all times. Such persons offering paid spiritual direction or professional counseling shall submit that ministry for approval by the Rector (or, in the case of the Rector, the Bishop).

During any pastoral counseling sessions, clergy and pastoral caregivers are expected to maintain an environment that minimizes any existence, or appearance, of potentially inappropriate behavior or exploitation. It is also advised that clergy [consult with their Bishop and/or refer to Diocesan policy] on boundaries in pastoral counseling, including as they pertain to matters such as mandatory reporting and the seal of the confessional. Exploitation occurs when church personnel take advantage of the pastoral counseling relationship for the benefit of the pastoral counselor. Sexual exploitation includes sexual contact between church personnel and the recipient of the pastoral counseling services, regardless of who initiates contact. Under certain circumstances, it is advisable to bring another pastor or staff member into a conversation or session - for example, if a counseling session raises the possibility of possible illegal activity or abuse, or if someone is making allegations or disclosing abuse or illegal activity. All clergy, employees, and vestry, and Child and Youth Workers should maintain healthy boundaries and strive for emotionally healthy relationships.

Each congregation's leaders are asked consistently to raise awareness about these issues by normalizing the following principles:

- **Transparency:** it can be difficult clearly to state what you think, feel, or see happening, but it is a sign of emotional health to speak up when something is wrong. No one can improve or eradicate inappropriate behavior without exposing the issue. Avoid triangulation and protection of individuals who are acting inappropriately. Whether it is porn addiction, gossip, an affair, bullying, sexual jokes or comments, flirting, etc., bringing the issue into the light is always the path toward healing, accountability, sanctification, and emotional health.
- **See Something, Say Something:** if something is a concern to you, bring it to the appropriate leaders detailed within this document; including more than one leader in the discussion encourages accountability, transparency, and appropriate resolution. Pastoral counseling should always be respectful and consistent with the intent to provide a safe and comfortable environment. Pastoral counseling should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times and should not be held at places or times that would cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person being counseled. Additionally, all clergy, employees, vestry, and Child and Youth Workers should maintain a physical environment that minimizes any appearance of potentially inappropriate behavior at all times, including when traveling or participating in events held at the church after business hours. It is wise to remain in public view when possible. It is strongly recommended that the doors to rooms used for pastoral care contain windows. It is generally not recommended that employees share a hotel room when traveling. No one-on-one pastoral counseling should be conducted in private living quarters.

## D. 17 Ecclesiastical Abuse of Power.

Church members may sometimes find themselves in disagreement with the clergy or encounter situations that require accountability and even church discipline. Such experiences can be essential components of their spiritual life and discipleship journey. However, it is important not to confuse these instances with ecclesiastical abuse of power. Ecclesiastical abuse of power, often referred to as pastoral abuse, involves a pattern of emotional mistreatment perpetrated by a church leader who exploits their authoritative position within a ministry context. It is vital to distinguish between isolated, unintentional acts of harm and ongoing

patterns of abusive behavior. Assessing the severity and frequency of such actions is crucial in determining whether this issue exists within a local church.

Ecclesiastical abuse of power is characterized by manipulative tactics aimed at maintaining excessive control and dominance over those influenced by a leader. These tactics can include intimidation, humiliation, blame, coercion, exploitation, elitism, and isolation. Abusive leaders often use threats and censorship to reinforce their authority during decision-making processes. Moreover, individuals who challenge these leaders frequently endure feelings of shame and ostracism, being labeled as unsubmitive or insubordinate, which ultimately undermines the perceived legitimacy of the church's leadership.

It is essential to acknowledge that ecclesiastical abuse of power can manifest through the improper application of spiritual practices. This may involve manipulating or misrepresenting God's name, Scripture, and ministry activities such as preaching, teaching, or prayer. Such misuse can result in harm or coercion, forcing individuals to conform to a leader's desires that are not consistent with sound biblical and pastoral principles. This behavior can occur even when leaders genuinely believe they adhere to biblical and kingdom principles.

Ecclesiastical abuse of power fundamentally contradicts the teachings of Scripture, which consistently caution against the misuse of power and authority by church leaders (Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:13-15; 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:1-16; Matthew 20:24-28; 23:1-12; Mark 10:41-45; Luke 11:43-46; 22:24-27; John 10:1-15; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-8; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:20; 6:3-5; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 3 John 1:9-10). As such, ecclesiastical abuse of power must be recognized as a sinful and harmful pattern of behavior that requires attention and action.

Please consult the following for more information regarding the expectations of clergy:

- The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
- *The Book of Common Prayer* (2019): The ordination vows (found under Episcopal Services) outline the expectation for faithful diligence in upholding the doctrine and discipline of Christ.
- *The 39 Articles of Religion*: The ACNA upholds the 39 Articles of 1571 and their amendments, which explain our views on the Sacraments as well as the expectation of clergy. In particular, the recognition that clergy are imperfect and should be examined carefully and removed if necessary.
- *The Jerusalem Declaration*: This 2008 declaration outlines our beliefs and expectations regarding Christian living, Sacraments, the authoritative standard of clerical orders, stewardship, unity, and our fidelity to orthodoxy.
- The ACNA's Constitution and Canons, and the Diocesan Constitution and Canons.

## **E: Step 4. Monitoring**

Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred. Clergy, staff, vestry, and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children and youth ministries in all settings at all times. NOTE: Offsite activities increase the risk of abuse due to changes in venue and lack of familiarity with the space/environment. Due consideration should be taken to become familiar with the intricacies of any off-site physical setting by ministry and church leaders.

The Supervisory Plan details for clergy, staff, and volunteers the specific plan to manage safety measures at the parish for a ministry activity. It is recommended that a copy of the Supervisory Plans be provided to and signed by those responsible for ministry leadership for the activity, program, ministry, or event (this may be a staff member or volunteer) and that the plan be accessible. Please refer to the Diocesan website for sample Supervisory Plans:

<https://adhope.org/protect-our-children/>

### **Required minimum guidance**

- Two certified adults, unrelated to each other, shall be present during church-sponsored programming.
- No minors will be left unattended in the building or on the property during or following a church activity.
- Clergy, staff, vestry and volunteers understand their role to monitor interactions during church sponsored ministry programs, activities, events.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have an open/standing invitation to observe ministry activities.
- Interactions with minors and adults will adhere to the policies and guidelines of the Diocese.
- Activities for children and youth will remain in supervised areas.
- Supervisory Plan(s) will be kept on file to document how ministry activities are monitored.

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

Sponsored On-Site events Supervisory Plans should include:

- Description of the nature of the activity/program/ministry;
- Details of the registration process;
- 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 (5-18): 2 adults for up to 40***
  - ***Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group]***
- Ratios for monitoring and working with children or youth in this age group.
- Description of the physical environment.
- Bathroom procedures, including showering procedures, if applicable.
- First aid and medication procedures.
- Procedures for reporting discipline concerns.
- Release of children process.

Note: Emergency plans and procedures, including schematics with fire escape routes, shelter-in-place designations, and plans for reuniting children with parent/guardian(s) may also be helpful. Churches may want to contact their insurance company for specific coverage questions.

## 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.
- 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).
- Release of minors.

### 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 Trail Life, Young Life, or the Boy Scouts, or parties, receptions, 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 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 and Reporting**

State laws 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.

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

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

Recognizing that reporting laws can change over time, the following is a helpful resource to view links to current 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 need to know what their Insurance Policy coverage for Sexual Misconduct includes. The Insurance provider will also have reporting requirements for each parish to consider as it drafts its Response Plan.

### **F.1 Responding to a Disclosure**

One of several ways in which an individual may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that a child may share directly with an adult. If a child discloses abuse or neglect, the adult receiving this disclosure needs to:

- Contact 911 if the child is in immediate danger.
- Tell the child or adult that we will take this allegation seriously.
- Tell the child or adult that they are brave to disclose the abuse, reassuring them that the abuse was not their fault.
- Respect the child's or adult's privacy by finding an appropriate, non-threatening place to talk.

- Ask a staff member, certified adult, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/adult's account.
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Children and adult victims are often vague in their initial disclosure– avoid questions that could make them feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint their 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, youth, or adult disclosed. Samples may be found on the DCH website here:  
<https://adhope.org/safeguarding/>

Per Mandatory Reporting laws in the state, Child Protective Services or other child support services must be contacted. Please check online for each state's reporting hotline and follow all guidelines for reporting alleged abuse of a minor or incapacitated adult immediately.

Statute of limitations laws may apply to an adult who discloses abuse from their childhood. In such cases, consult with legal counsel and contact local authorities accordingly.

After a report is made to the appropriate authorities, discussion about the information shall be limited to appropriate church and legal authorities, as discussed further below. Do not openly discuss details with others, as this can impact the investigation.

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

**If the alleged abuser is a clergy member, after reporting to the authorities, please use the report page <https://adhope.org/safeguarding/> and contact the bishop's office directly.**

## F.2 Incident Tracking

An Incident Tracking Log shall be kept for each parish. An incident is an occurrence of misconduct that demonstrates a breach of this policy and guidelines. This log sample is found on the Diocesan website: <https://adhope.org/protect-our-children/>

The rector, ministry leader, or vestry leader receiving such reports tracks incidents to identify any patterns of misconduct. If the incident log records such patterns, the rector, vestry, or ministry 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, tracking such incidents and minor boundary infringements may be signals of potential abuse. Basically, if a behavior makes the viewer uncomfortable, it should be reported to the ministry leader, rector, or Wardens. If incidents involve the rector, the bishop will be notified immediately.

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 the jurisdiction. Do not ignore or fail to take any reported incident seriously.

Steps on how to plan and implement a response plan can be found in the resources of the Diocesan website: <https://adhope.org/safeguarding/>

## F. 3 Response Plan Guidelines

Having an established Response Plan on file as a reference for each parish. A Response Plan allows for the rector, staff, vestry, and ministry leaders to understand how to respond in the event of abuse. A Response Plan shall include the following minimum content:

- Rector, Wardens, and Bishop contact details
- Mandatory Reporter guidelines for the state
- Contact information for the church's insurance policy
- Details of notification requirements from the Insurance company
- Local contact for Independent Investigations contacts

- Local licensed trauma counselor contacts
- Local Victim Advocate resources
- Diocesan Response Team contact details

In any and all cases of abuse, the rector, staff, and/or vestry must follow the local laws for mandatory reporting protocols. After the appropriate authorities have been notified, a parish in the Diocese may contact the Canon for Safeguarding and Ethics to seek advice and support if it needs additional guidance and expertise. The canon and the Safeguarding Team are also available for best practices and implementation support for Response Plans. Please contact them to:

[ssapunar@adhope.org](mailto:ssapunar@adhope.org)

[safeguarding@adhope.org](mailto:safeguarding@adhope.org)

Parishes may also choose to create a parish Response team. Sample Response Plans and Processes are available on the Diocesan website:

<https://adhope.org/safeguarding/>

## **G. Compliance, Feedback, and Revisions.**

### **G.1 Compliance**

Admittedly, no matter how thorough and detailed Diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures are, no matter how compliant parishes are, no matter how outstanding the screening, training, interacting, monitoring, reporting, and responding procedures are, tragic, damaging things may happen to people under our care. It is, therefore, important to select the right insurance policy, customized to your specific needs, that will enable each parish to provide its best safeguarding procedures and have the needed resources in case something tragic occurs.

It is recommended that each church have an Ethics and Safeguarding Committee (or similar risk management team) to oversee insurance selection and to ensure 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 its insurance policy as well.

There are useful resources for Risk Management and other related documents from the ACNA and Brotherhood Mutual found here:

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/working-together/>

### **G.2 Deanery Feedback Tracking**

To better hold accountability for the training and implementation of this Policy and Manual for the Protection of Children and Adults, each Deanery in DCH will have an Ethics and Safeguarding Coordinator. This person will be on the Ethics and Safeguarding Committee for the Diocese under the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding. 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.

The Ethics and Safeguarding Coordinator from the Deaneries will:

- Meet on a quarterly basis with the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding
- Be a representative on the Committee of Ethics and Safeguarding

- Gather and review feedback, suggestions and updates to this and any other related Ethics and Protection policies
- Stay abreast of training updates and touch base with the parishes in their Deanery at least quarterly.
- Train their member parish trainers using the Train-the-Trainer model as led by the Coordinators and the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding.

This Policy, any updates and changes, and all other Ethics and Safeguarding Policies, will be presented to the Diocesan Council for approval.

**The Diocesan process to update this and other related policies will follow this timeline:**

- First quarter of each year, the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding will attend each deanery retreat where the Policy is presented and if training has not yet occurred yet, to provide training at that retreat.
- Quarter 1 Committee for Ethics and Safeguarding meeting will be held in February.
- Quarter 2 Committee for Ethics and Safeguarding meeting will be held in May.
- By July 1, each Deanery Ethics and Safeguarding Coordinator will be notified that their documentation and training tracking is due to the Committee for Ethics and Safeguarding by July 15. This will be the Quarter 3 meeting.
- The Committee for Ethics and Safeguarding will meet in July and will draft any changes and updates to the Policy. These changes will be presented to the Diocesan Council no later than the October Diocesan Council meeting.
- Quarter 4 meeting will be held at Synod.
- All changes will be finalized and presented at Synod in November.

## G.3 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.

It is acceptable to save electronic copies of scanned documents in a secure location. Each parish will have an individual who catalogs the details below and confirms annually the status of compliance:

### **Screening Standards:**

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

### **Training Standards:**

- Certification that all clergy, vestry, staff, and volunteers working with minors have:
  - Read, understood, and accepted the diocesan Policy on the Protection of Children and Adults.
  - Attended the synchronous policy training and Workshop (Five Steps to Keep Kids Safe in Our Diocese/Church) and have recertified every three years.
  - Completed a diocesan-approved awareness training and have recertified every three years.

## **Monitoring Standards**

- Written supervisory plans for programs, events, and ministries with minors

## **Responding & Reporting**

- Parishes might establish a Response Team.
- Parishes may develop a Response Plan to keep on file.
- Parishes must have an Incident Reporting Log.