

Guidelines for Safeguarding Missional Communities

Missional communities exist when we participate in God's mission of reconciliation beyond the walls of the church through relationship and worship. --Mission Amplification Team, The Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

By definition, missional communities function in unique, non-traditional ways. Therefore, taking steps in these communities to ensure healthy, safe environments for all participants requires unique approaches. These guidelines supplement the Episcopal Diocese of Texas' Safeguarding God's Children: Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth (SGC), Safeguarding God's People: Policies for Safe Ministry with Adults (SGP), and Safeguarding in the Workplace: Policies Preventing Sexual Harassment (SGP-H). Nothing in these guidelines should be interpreted as overriding or negating established policies. Rather, the intention is to offer contextual clarification for missional communities.

Who Needs Safeguarding Screening and Training?

Designated leaders of missional communities, whether lay or ordained, are responsible for establishing and nurturing environments of health, safety, and mutual care in their missional community. Leaders and participants should be screened and trained as indicated in "Safeguarding Requirements by Position," an appendix at the back of both the *Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth* and the *Policies for Safe Ministry with Adults*. For example:

- Ordained leaders and participants in missional communities must be screened and trained as Clergy.
- All lay members of established leadership teams and small group leaders must be screened and trained as Lay Leaders in Missional Communities.
- Because children, youth, and vulnerable adults may be active participants in missional communities, all adult members are encouraged to be trained as Lay Leaders of Missional Communities.
- Adults who have responsibility for the supervision of children and youth (other than their own family members) must be screened and trained according to their particular role as a volunteer or employee who works with children or youth. See "Safeguarding Requirements by Position. (The Two-Adults rule must be followed for activities for children or youth.)

Who Oversees the Process of Safeguarding Screening and Training?

As in traditional settings, Safeguarding screening and training are accomplished through the electronic Safeguarding Records System (SRS). The screening and training process will be overseen by the Safeguarding Records Administrator (SRA) of the "home parish" until a missional community acquires its own SRA.

Due to the uniqueness of missional communities, leaders must communicate with members of the Wellness and Care Team in the Safeguarding Office to determine best practices in a particular context.