

**Called
to Right
Relationship**

Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth



Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth

This policy is adopted in compliance with 2003 General Convention Resolution B008. The aim of this policy is to make our Church a safe place, safe for those who worship, safe for those who minister, safe for those who come in need, safe for children and safe for all who seek or serve Christ. This policy helps us live out our Baptismal Covenant to respect the dignity of every human being.

The diocese will do background checks on all clergy who are deployed or licensed to officiate within the diocese. The diocese is also responsible to conduct background checks on any diocesan employees who regularly work with children or youth.

Application and screening

Lay employees and volunteers whose work includes regular contact with children and youth must be screened, using at least the following mechanisms, before being offered employment or the opportunity to minister with children and youth:

1. written application that includes verifiable personal information;
2. personal interview;
3. screening (reference verification and background checking); and
4. signature indication that they have received a copy of this policy, including any local procedures or variations.

Reference verification and background checking

Congregations are required to verify personal information and check all references as made available in the application process, and maintain these records as part of their compliance and auditing requirements.

In addition, potential employees, keyholders, and volunteers must submit to a public records (background) check. Congregations shall use a provider approved by the diocese, www.shieldthevulnerable.org, to conduct public records checks, and such checks must be completed before the employee or volunteer begins programmatic interaction with children or youth.

**Screening
and
Selection
for
Ministry
with
Children
and Youth**

Education and Training

Congregational employees and volunteers who work with children or youth must complete diocesan-approved training on how to prevent child abuse and promote healthy boundaries in church settings via www.shieldthevulnerable.org. Training must be appropriate to their level of responsibility, and certification must be renewed every three years. Each congregation must maintain a record of those who have attended such training and report their compliance with training requirements as part of the *Safe Church Self-Audit* process — [form available here](#).

The diocese requires all clergy and employees and volunteers who work with children or youth at diocesan events to complete training on how to prevent child abuse and promote healthy boundaries in church settings via www.shieldthevulnerable.org. Individuals serving in ministry with children and youth at diocesan events are required to maintain their own current training certification and provide evidence thereof during the application and screening process.

Current training requirements and online training programs may be found at www.diocal./safechurch.org.

Training the whole congregation

It's not enough to train the volunteers and staff alone. All members of a congregation are impacted by safe church policies and therefore should be given adequate opportunity to understand this policy, its local application, and their responsibility for meeting its requirements. This policy strongly encourages a congregation-wide program of awareness-building and education — including but not limited to preaching, adult education, parenting education, use of communications media such as newsletters, bulletins, and website — to ensure that all members of the community have a chance to support the safe church practices as they are implemented.

Programs and Interactions with Children and Youth

Safe ministry practices

There should be at least two unrelated adults present at ministry settings and events designed for children and youth. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youth, that adult shall report those circumstances to the rector/vicar, senior warden, or person in charge of the event as soon as possible.

In well-monitored, visually accessible program space on the church grounds, such as a Sunday School classroom, it may be acceptable to have only one adult in the room, provided that another adult can maintain visual contact with the adult program

leader. These exceptional circumstances must be specifically described in the congregational safe church policies.

All adults who have ongoing contact with children and youth through programmed church activities, including musical practices and intergenerational activities, must meet the screening and training requirements for volunteers working with children and youth as outlined in this policy document and adhere to the behavior standards outlined below.

Safe space

It is important to anticipate and avoid circumstances in which children and youth may be exposed to inappropriate consumables, materials, or unmonitored adult contact on the church grounds. Some specific risks to minimize are given below.

1. **Alcoholic beverages.** Alcohol — sacramental or otherwise — should not be stored in publicly accessible areas of the church buildings.
2. **Computers.** Congregations should have adequate supervision (by congregation staff or authorized persons) of anyone using a congregation computer to access the Internet. Congregation computers should have adequate password protection.
3. **Persons with keys and access to locked spaces.** Anyone with keys to church buildings must meet all the requirements for screening and training of volunteers as outlined in this policy.

Off-site programming

Programs, trips and events away from the church site are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional development of children and youth. They also present additional challenges for maintaining best practices for safe and healthy ministry. The expectations for safe space, as outlined above, should be observed in venues used for off-site trips or events that involve children or youth. In the event of uncertainty about safety of off site meeting space and accommodations, the program leader should be in touch with their diocesan ministry liaison about options for reducing risk.

All such off-site programs must be given prior approval by the vestry/bishop's committee and are subject to the *Guidelines for Off-site Programs*, below, which details the expectations for registration, transportation, accommodations, wellness, justice and safety.

Guidelines for Off-site and Diocesan Programs and Interactions with Children and Youth

Christian leaders must be capable of using discretion in planning programs. Off-site programming with children and youth presents unique opportunities for spiritual growth as well as unique risks that cannot all be anticipated or described in detail. In addition, there are times when it may be appropriate to include sexually explicit materials — portions of an “R” rated movie, photographs or frank conversation about intimate subjects — in a program facilitated by appropriate personnel in a safe space for the purposes of teaching. For this reason it is important to obtain permissions and manage documentation as described below.

Approvals

1. New programs, trips or events that involve children or youth should be given prior approval by the rector/vicar and the vestry/bishop’s committee.
2. No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the vestry/bishop’s committee.
3. Written parental approval must be acquired for “R” rated movies and sexually explicit conversation or program content.

Registration and medical release forms

1. All participants and staff (of any age) should complete and sign a registration form and medical release form before participating in any program. A **Medical Release** form may be [downloaded here](#).
 - a. There must be a parent/guardian’s signature on the completed medical information and release form of a minor. (For legal reasons, digital signatures are not currently acceptable.)
 - b. Registration/medical release forms kept on file in the congregation are good for a year before a new one is required. For diocesan events, a new form will be required for each specific program.
2. Permission slips for specific events should be provided and signed by the guardian/parent of a minor.
3. Permission for a minor to be photographed or recorded on film, video tape, audio tape, or other electronic media is required before use in a public forum. An **Image Release** form can be [found here](#).

**Guidelines
for
Off-site
and
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Programs
and
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First aid and medications

1. Current certification in First Aid and CPR is strongly encouraged for those who work with children and youth.
2. A stocked first aid kit should be made available in an easily accessible location.
3. A first aid log should be filled out any time first aid is administered.
4. All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors must be given to an adult leader unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents and person in charge. Exceptions may include inhalers and epi-pens.
5. Only the designated adult leader should administer medications.

Supervision

1. There should always be at least two unrelated adults (at least two years older than the eldest participant) at any gathering of children or youth, preferably male and female adults where children or youth of both genders are present.
2. The adult to child/youth ratio should be at least 1:5.
3. All leadership teams should have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to support new leaders-in-training.

Pastoral counseling

1. When one-on-one conversation or pastoral care is advisable between an adult leader and a child or youth, another adult is to be present, or at least aware of, the place of consultation and who is being counseled.
2. There are times when it is appropriate or necessary for an adult leader to be alone with a young person (e.g., pastoral counseling). This standard advises the adult to arrange pastoral meetings in public places such as restaurants or a corner away from the action but in full view. Always inform other responsible adults about the appointment or plans.
3. Spontaneous, secluded or secretive activity with a single young person may foster a high-risk situation, and is therefore to be avoided.

Guidelines for Off-site and Diocesan Programs and Interactions with Children and Youth

Basic needs

1. No one is to be deprived of the basic human needs of food, shelter, sleep, safety and clothing at any event.
2. Exceptions may be made for programs intended to teach youth about poverty, need, and hunger, such as a 30-hour Famine program or Hunger Banquet. In these cases and in any case in which youth will not have the usual access to basic needs, parents or guardians must give specific, written permission for youth to participate in a program of this kind, and youth who wish to withdraw or who are unable to complete the fasting program must be fed. Such programs must also have a written permission form that includes the parent's certification that the child does not have a medical condition that would put the child at particular risk by fasting or missing sleep.

Overnight programs

1. Participants will have access to three substantial meals each full day and access to hydration
2. Participants will be given time for at least eight hours of sleep each 24-hour period, except for programs where parental permission is given to miss sleep. The parent must certify that the youth is not at medical risk in the case of lost sleep.
3. Participants will have some time set aside each day for rest or free time
4. Overnight programs will provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements. In most cases, this will mean gender-specific sleeping areas.
5. A single adult and a single youth will never sleep alone in the same space.
6. Separate bathroom/shower facilities will be provided by gender (or specific times will be assigned to use a single facility.) Adults should either have separate shower facilities or shower at other times than the youth. Separate dressing facilities should also be provided.
7. If private dressing rooms, bathrooms and adult supervision are provided, there may be situations in which it is best for male and female participants to sleep in the same open area.

**Guidelines
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Transportation

1. Although anyone with an unrestricted California driver's license may legally transport passengers, a congregation may be found liable if a driver under the age of 21 "officially" transports other minors to/from a church-sponsored event and any mishap occurs.
 - a. To avoid the risk, church leaders should never organize transportation using drivers under the age of 21 that originates or terminates at the church.
 - b. Each driver should be required to provide proof of insurance and a current driver's license. A *Volunteer Driver Information* form may be [downloaded here](#).
2. Young people who are under 18 are expected to have written permission from their parent or guardian to drive to an event.
3. All drivers and riders must comply with California law regarding seat belts and cell phone usage.

Discrimination

No one will be intentionally discriminated against at any program on the basis of her/his race, color, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability, origin, ancestry, religion (except when relevant to program participation), or class.

Violence

1. No one is to strike, hit or otherwise physically threaten anyone at any time.
2. No weapons of any kind (concealed or otherwise) are to be brought to an event.
3. Anyone in possession of a weapon will be sent home and the weapon may be confiscated. A rector or vicar may make special exceptions for off-duty police officers or others required to carry firearms.

Camps

Episcopal summer camps provide an extended time for youth in the diocese to spend an intentional week together. While they follow the model of a youth weekend event, the additional time together allows for deep spiritual development as well as powerful emotions to arise. To attend to these community needs there are additional guidelines to create a safe and supportive community. All camps in the Diocese of

California will follow the guidelines for off-site programming established in this document. In addition, camps should aim to follow American Camp Association standards to the best of their retreat center's ability.

Camp staff will be two years older than the oldest camper, background checked, and provided a staff training to familiarize themselves with the camp and retreat center's policies and facilities. The camp director will clearly explain the center's Emergency Action Plan and provide adequate first aid training to staff members, preferably CPR/First Aid training, as well as abuse prevention training. There will be a chaplain available for spiritual support to campers and staff members, a camp director to coordinate staff members' personal and professional needs and a designated nurse or "first aid person" to dispense medication and respond to first aid needs.

Insurance for overseas mission trips

All mission trips to destinations outside the United States must have adequate insurance in case of emergency. For more information, contact the Church Insurance Agency Corporation (CIAC), 800.293.3525.

Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children or Youth

Adults who work with children or youth within a church setting are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationship that children and youth deserve in all settings. Interactions should meet the safe personnel and safe space requirements outlined above, and adults should be discouraged from having a private relationship with any unrelated child from the church away from sanctioned on- or off-site church activities. When one-on-one conversation or pastoral care is advisable between an adult leader and a child or youth, another adult is to be present, or the meeting space should be visually accessible to another adult.

Exhortations

Adults are encouraged to:

1. have healthy emotional and spiritual lives; and
2. spend time with and listen to children and youth, and advocate for them as ministers within the Body of Christ; and
3. offer appropriate physical expressions of affection, which may include:
 - a. high fives and hand slapping,
 - b. hand-holding while walking with small children or in prayer,

Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children or Youth

- c. touching shoulders, hands, or arms,
- d. group “huddle,” and
- e. brief hugs and arms around shoulders.

“... [T]he most important safe touch of all really isn’t a touch. We call it ‘Eye Touch’ and it means looking at each of your kids in the eye, on the same level. Most kids today don’t get a lot of eye contact from adults unless it is direction or scolding, and fewer still get looked directly in the eye from an adult who is not towering over them. Get to their level, look them in the eye and let them know that they are an important part of God’s plan.”

— Monte Lysne, *Faith Inkubators*

Prohibitions

Adults shall not under any circumstances:

1. provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs (including cigarettes) or pornography;
2. consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children’s or youth event, or when they are in a role of responsibility for children or youth at a congregational event;
3. be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or misused legal drugs at any children’s or youth event or when they are in a role of responsibility for children or youth at a congregational event;
4. engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior;
5. engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; or
6. discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth.

Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies shall immediately report the violation to the rector/vicar and senior warden. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies by a clergy person shall immediately report the violation to the bishop’s office. A sample *Confidential Notice of Concern* may be [downloaded here](#).

Responding to Concerns

Responding to Concerns

Anyone who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place at church, or that a child from the church may have been abused in another setting, should inform his or her rector or vicar immediately. Any mandated reporter (including the rector/vicar so informed) who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place shall report it to the appropriate civil authority. (In a case where the alleged perpetrator is related to the alleged victim, Child Protective Services must be contacted. If there is no legal relationship, the police or sheriff would be contacted.)

Rectors/vicars hearing reports of violations of this policy shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer ministry with the Church.

The bishop, hearing reports of violations by clergy, or by adults at diocesan events, shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action, up to and including canonical disciplinary action.

Local resources by county

City and County of San Francisco

www.ccsf.edu/Resources/Family_Resource_Center/Parent_Support/San_Francisco_Child_Abuse_Council.htm
Children's Emergency Services, 415.558.2650; San Francisco Child Abuse Hotline, 800.856.5553

Marin County

www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/HH/main/ss/Children_Services/children.cfm
Children and Family Services, 415.473.2200; 24 hour hotline, 415.473.7153

Alameda County

www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/children_and_family/responding.cfm
Child Abuse Hotline, 510.259.1800

Contra Costa County

www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=2536
877.881.1116

San Mateo County Children and Family Services

www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/humanservices/menuitem.ef2c94fdbdc30
800.632.4615



Each congregation is required to conduct a *Safe Church Self-Audit* annually to confirm compliance with diocesan safe church policies within the congregation. The audit form is [available here](#).

Procedures to be confirmed by audit will include (but are not limited to):

1. application forms and relevant records for screening and verification of volunteers and paid employees (sample *Volunteer Application* [form here](#));
2. background and reference checking procedures;
3. individual records of compliance with relevant diocesan “safe church” training requirements;
4. incident reporting procedures (*Incident Report* form and *Sample Incident Reporting* [available here](#));
5. diocesan and site-specific behavior signed by all staff and volunteers covered by their provisions; and
6. evidence of compliance with “safe space” requirements.

Congregations may adopt local safe church procedures that are consistent with and/or exceed the requirements in this policy. Site-specific variations from diocesan policies — where permitted — should be described in detail and should include the circumstances under which those variations should be permitted.

Congregational safe church policies should be posted in areas where activities for children and youth take place, and should be given to parents, guardians, and all paid persons and volunteers whose ministries include contact with children and youth.

Congregational policies should include the names and phone numbers of the rector/vicar or priest, senior warden, and contact person in the bishop’s office, and outline the procedures for reporting incidents or suspected policy violations.

The Diocese of California adopts the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church definitions on sexual misconduct as follows:

Definitions

Advocate — A friend, family member, support person or other advocate (or diocesan-assigned advocate), of complainant’s choice, that accompanies the complainant in meetings with diocese personnel.

Complainant — A protected person who, either him/herself or through another person, makes a complaint, whether or not in writing, of sexual misconduct pursuant to this policy.

Coordinator — A person, appointed by the bishop, who shall be responsible for coordinating the diocesan response to allegations of clergy sexual misconduct and for assisting the bishop with regard to any proceeding hereunder in any other manner the bishop may see fit.

Diocese — The Episcopal Diocese of California.

Domestic abuse — A pattern of physically, sexually and/or emotionally abusive behaviors used by one individual to maintain power over or to control a partner in the context of an intimate or family relationship.

Lay leader — An elected or appointed lay person (whether paid or volunteer) with leadership responsibilities in the church, when engaged in church activities.

Organization(s) — the cathedral church and all diocesan departments, commissions, institutions, charter organizations, religious orders, schools, ecumenical associations and other organizations listed on the Episcopal Diocese of California website www.diocal.org/about/organizations/ministries.

Pastoral support team — A team appointed by the bishop, in consultation with the diocesan coordinator, trained for sensitivity to the issue of clergy sexual misconduct. The pastoral support team includes men and women, lay and ordained, heterosexual and LGBT persons, and persons of color, who can serve as pastors and canonical advisors to complainants and respondents.

Respondent — A cleric or lay leader against whom a charge is made hereunder.

Sacramental use — Consecrated or unconsecrated wine used in the setting of Eucharist.

Sexual Abuse — Sexual involvement or conduct by a cleric or other church employee or volunteer with a person who is a minor or is legally incompetent.

Sexual exploitation — A betrayal or trust in a pastoral relationship by the development, or the attempted development, of a sexual or romantic relationship between the cleric or other church worker and a person with whom she or he has a pastoral or fiduciary relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.

Sexual harassment — Unwelcome or unwanted sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference, physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements, in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, or colleague relationship between persons involved.