

The Missionary Diocese of CANA East

Policy for the Protection of Children



Advent 2016

Purpose of the Policy

1. Jesus teaches clearly that children are of great value to His Kingdom (Mt 18:1-6). Caring for our children and youth is a sacred trust.
2. It is our responsibility as Christian adults to provide a safe place for children and youth to grow in the nurture and stature of the Lord. They must not fear being hit or touched in an inappropriate way. Unfortunately, sexual abuse is a real threat, especially to the most vulnerable and marginalized children and teenagers. Statistics regarding sexual abuse and misconduct toward minors in church settings are distressing, and we must do what is prudent to keep our children safe.
3. Abuse of any kind significantly damages an individual, causing devastating lifelong effects. Men and women who were abused as minors tend to have difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships, and most importantly they often struggle with seeing themselves as worthy of God's love and saving power in Jesus' death and resurrection.
4. Every state has laws regarding the safety of children, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual misconduct toward minors. We are to submit to the government in authority over us, and we should give no reason for them to question our integrity. In addition, there are civil penalties for willfully failing to follow the laws.

Responsibility for this Policy

The Bishop in cooperation with the Standing Committee is responsible for maintaining the diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children in accordance with the Canons of the Diocese.

Responsibility for Implementing this Policy

The rector has overall responsibility for the administration of this policy within the church he leads and for providing all reports requested by the Diocese. In the absence of a Rector, the Priest-in-Charge, Lay Leader, or the Senior Warden will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except where noted.

Clarification of Relation between this Policy and Insurance

A congregation's adoption of written standards of conduct may be required by insurers as a condition of coverage. This Policy and related Procedures are not intended as a substitute for understanding the conditions of a congregation's insurance coverage, and the diocese assumes no responsibility for a congregation's non-compliance with their insurance carrier's policy.

Clarification of Relation between this Policy and a Church's Policy on the Protection for Children

Each congregation within CANA East is required to have a policy regarding the protection of children that reflects the statutes of the state or territory in which it is located. This Diocesan Policy does not replace a church's policy but sets expectations for the church and its policy, unless it is affirmatively adopted by vestry action.

Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children

The term “child abuse” is defined for this policy as:

an act committed by a parent, caregiver, person in a position of trust interacting with a minor, or any other individual that is intentional and which harms or threatens to harm a child’s physical or mental health or welfare and may include any or all of the following:

- physical abuse
- physical and/or mental neglect
- sexual abuse and/or exploitation

Note well: Each state and territory has statutes that define “abuse” or “child abuse” or “abuse toward minors”. Each congregation is fully expected by the diocese and is legally responsible to adhere to relevant laws and legal definitions of the jurisdiction in which it is located.

The CANA East Diocese will not tolerate any form of child abuse involving any clergyperson licensed by the bishop; any seminarian or person at any stage of seeking holy orders with the diocese; any lay employees and volunteers of the diocese or its congregations; or any other person who might interact with children or youth in a diocesan or congregational setting.

No one in the employment or volunteer service of the Diocese or its congregations:

- who has a civil or criminal record of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct of any kind toward a minor or adult;
 - who has admitted committing prior such acts toward a minor or adult;
 - or who (except where inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with a paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including but not limited to pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism;
- will be permitted to serve with children or youth, unless they have gone through repentance and extensive rehabilitation. To help ensure this, all individuals seeking employment or to volunteer in a ministry working with children or youth must be screened according to the procedures outlined below.

Everyone who serves the church through educational, pastoral, recreational, administrative (including vestry), or other activities is expected to maintain the highest biblical standards in relationships with those to whom they minister, avoiding any form of misconduct, including child abuse. Those who work with children and youth are also expected to be alert to any signs of child abuse by parents, peers, or other people in a child or youth’s life and to follow proper reporting procedures for their state or territory. In order to help provide adequate common understandings of proper boundaries and signs of abuse, all such employees and volunteers shall be trained according to the procedures outlined below.

Each individual congregation within the CANA East Diocese is required to have a policy regarding the prevention of child abuse. The policy must be customized according to the statutes of the state or

territory in which the congregation is located. In addition, the leader responsible for each educational, pastoral, recreational or other program involving children and youth will write a Supervisory Plan detailing what measures are in place to keep the children and youth safe and to meet the diocesan standard for supervision. A copy of the Plan must be shared with any clergy, staff, or volunteers participating in the activity.

Known sexual offenders, anyone who self-discloses a history of sexual misconduct, and anyone who self-discloses a struggle with sexual attraction toward minors will not be excluded from any congregation in CANA East without first consulting the Chancellor and the Bishop. Should such a person wish to participate in the life of a church, the clergy shall inhibit that person from any contact with children and shall require (except as otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel) the person to sign a contract that details expectations, defines boundaries and off-limits locations, and establishes appropriate supervision for the offender while on church premises or at church activities. Where appropriate, the Rector shall consult the individual's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been met. The church shall have a plan in place to deal with any violations of the contract.

A "home group" or "small group" meeting in a home for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship is not under the oversight of the Diocese or its congregations. The care and protection of children in such settings is *always* the responsibility of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of each child present, as well as of the leader of such groups. The Diocese recommends that home group leaders become familiar with the Policy, be trained, and develop a Supervisory Plan that ensures child supervision by two screened and trained adults, the environment is child-proofed, and that only parents/guardians change diapers and help children with restroom use.

Congregations will help keep children safe by

- posting photos of minors on the church's website, social media accounts, or downloadable print publications, only if parental consent has been obtained
- posting any personally identifying information online of minors only if written parental consent has been obtained
- ensuring that the church's website is COPPA-compliant

Should an incident of child abuse occur, the Diocese and the congregation shall respond in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender, the loved ones of both parties, and the congregation. Such measures will include timely communication with lay leadership and the congregation.

Screening and Training Procedures

Table 1: Screening and Training Requirements specifies what is required for clergy of the diocese, lay employees, interns, fellows, day camp staff, wardens, vestry members, and lay volunteers who work with children and youth. Below are descriptions of the requirements that require explanation.

Background Checks

National and state sex offender and criminal background checks are important and must be completed regularly. The diocesan office currently uses the Oxford Document Management Company.

Each state has stated which background checks are required in order to work with minors in a religious setting. Some states, for example, require a fingerprint-based FBI check. Procedures for completing these state-required background checks can be found on official state-government webpages.

You may use www.ministrysafe.com for this purpose.

Personal Screening Statement

A ready-to-use example of a Personal Screening Statement can be found in Appendix A. If the form provided there is not used, the statement must include the definition of child abuse used in this Policy and whether or not the applicant and/or other members of the household:

- have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse or any crime of sexual misconduct or found to have abused or neglected a child by a family or other civil domestic court for the protection of children;
- had such a conviction expunged;
- been charged with child abuse or neglect in a civil proceeding;
- committed an act of child abuse or neglect;
- been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism;
- is or has ever been a registered sex offender in any state.

Signed Policy Acknowledgement

Every category of person included in Table 1 must have a signed statement on file acknowledging that he or she has read and understood the CANA East Policy for the Protection of Children and their individual church's policy on the same. A ready-to-use example is provided in Appendix A.

Ministry Safe Training

Ministry Safe is an extensive safety system designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in a congregation. This program has been endorsed by the Anglican Church in North America and is considered the *minimum* standard for training programs. [Each congregation will need to appoint an administrator.] Being an online service, individuals can watch the course video and take the test when

convenient. Be sure to note that some features within Ministry Safe should be customized to state requirements before using. Find more information at www.ministrysafe.com.

Church-Specific Training

In an individual congregation, it is critical to have regular training on how child abuse prevention standards will be applied with specific groups in specific settings, including all relevant Supervisory Plans. It is generally time-efficient to have annual trainings prior to children and youth programming launches in which changes to programs and Plans can be discussed.

Table 1: Screening and Training Requirements

	Clergy of Diocese	Lay Employees	Interns, Fellows, Day Camp Staff	Wardens and Vestry Members	Lay Volunteers Serving with Children or Youth
National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background Check	Every 5 years; filed by diocesan office	Every 5 years	Every 5 years	Not required	Every 5 years
Any state-required background checks for those in religious institutions working with children or youth	Every 5 years; filed by diocesan office	Every 5 years	Every 5 years	Not required	Every 5 years
Reviewing signed job or volunteer applications	When applicable	Yes	Yes	Not required	Yes
Reference checks	Personal and professional	Personal and professional	Personal and professional	Not required	Personal
Face-to-face interviews	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not required	Yes
Personal Screening Statement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Six-month minimum attendance	Not required	Not required	Not required	Per requirements of church constitution or bylaws	Yes, except where the Bishop has granted a variance
Signed Acknowledgement of Diocesan and Church	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Procedures for Adults Interacting with Children and Youth

Verbal Communication

- Be positive and uplifting, encouraging, constructive, aiding in the spiritual growth and development of children and youth
- Avoid harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating speech
- Refrain from swearing or other coarse language
- Refrain from commenting on children and youth's bodies
- Direct concerns about children to parents, legal guardians, the ministry leader, or clergy
- Avoid any sexually-oriented topics for discussion except where age-appropriate and Rector-approved (or designee-approved) materials are being used in order to address human sexuality, sexual abuse prevention, and/or sexual purity. These materials should be made available for review to parents beforehand, and an opt-out should be allowed for those with concerns.
- Refrain from discussing inappropriate or explicit information about personal relationships, dating experiences, or sexual activity
- Report to the appropriate minister leader or clergy any sexually-oriented communication initiated by a minor or by another person toward a minor (follow through with any state-required reporting if necessary!)
- Refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than 16 years of age.
- Model appropriate personal interactions when connected to youth on social media

Physical Interaction

Physical contact

- Must be for the benefit of the child and never be based upon the emotional needs of the adult
- Never force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child
- Never give even the appearance of wrongdoing (even for the sake of humor)
- Should always occur in observable (i.e. public) places

Discipline

- Physical discipline is prohibited in any manner, including but not limited to spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force used for retaliation or correction
- Acceptable discipline methods include time-outs and other non-physical strategies
- If a child or youth's behavior requires physical restraint to prevent self-injury or harm to others or to property, the incident must be immediately reported to parents, Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, and/or clergy

Physical affection

- Appropriate: high-fives, handshakes, fist bumps, thumbs up, pat on head or back, side hug, smiling
- Inappropriate: wrestling, tickling, sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children), kissing on lips, full-frontal hugs
 - Inappropriate touching and displays of affection are forbidden and must be reported immediately in accordance with the church's policy for protecting children

Calls of Nature

Diapers

- Only a child's parents, legal guardian, or screened, trained individuals identified in writing by parents or legal guardian will change diapers for either gender
- Children and Youth Ministry leaders will work with parents of special needs individuals wearing diapers in order to find the best plan for them

Toilet training

- Only a child's parents, legal guardian, or screened, trained individuals identified in writing by parents or legal guardian will participate with parents in toilet training efforts
- No child will ever be forced to toilet train regardless of age

Restroom Use

- Preschool children will never be left unattended in bathrooms but bathroom door should be open
 - If program staff assists child in stall, stall door must be partially open
 - Children should be assisted in straightening clothing if needed before returning to area with other children
 - "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child
- Elementary children always receive the minimum amount of help needed
 - Child toilets in stall alone, staff stands in hallway with foot in door to monitor and verbally assists if necessary
 - Two children can go to the bathroom together

General Behavior

- Refrain from the use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, prescription medications not prescribed by a doctor, or any illegal drugs while in church facilities, while traveling with or in the presence of children or their parents, during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children
- Never be nude in the presence of children or youth; in situations where changing clothes or showering are necessary, such as on retreats, the Supervisory Plan should make provisions for adults to do so privately

Supervisory Plans

Remember that the minimum number of adults required with any group of children or youth is two. State or territory statutes may specify required ratios of adults to children. If a church's jurisdiction does not specify ratios, the following (based on Virginia's requirements) is recommended:

	Adults to Children	Maximum group size for 2 adults
Infants	1:4	8
Young toddlers	1:5	10
2 and 3 years	1:8	16
4 years	1:10	20
School Age	1:16	36

All Supervisory Plans shall include the following:

- Description of the nature of the activity, including what age groups are involved
- Details of the registration process; the registration form should be attached
- Leaders responsible for running the activity
- Number of adults needed
- Description of physical environment (e.g. classroom, gym, rotating rooms)
- Bathrooms that will be used and which procedures apply
- First aid and medication procedures
- Reporting methods for disciplinary concerns
- Procedure for release of children

Supervisory Plans for Off-Site activities shall also include:

- Transportation plan
- Dining arrangements, including provision of those with special diets, if applicable
- Sleeping arrangements, if applicable
- Showering arrangements, if applicable, for adults and minors

Responding and Reporting Procedures (FINISH)

To a Disclosing Minor

To the Authorities

These procedures will vary by state. It is a church's responsibility to be familiar with and train their volunteers to follow the state-mandated procedures.

Within the Congregation

The supervisor over the children's and/or youth programs should notify the rector and senior warden as absolutely as soon as possible regarding disclosure by a minor or regarding a suspicion of abuse expressed by a staff member or volunteer.

Please see Appendix A for a ready-to-use internal reporting form.

To the Diocese

The rector must notify the bishop immediately.