

Safe Church Policy

Adopted by the Council of Trustees May 19, 2009

Preamble

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. We believe this policy helps us to live out our Baptismal Covenant to respect the dignity every human being.

Distinguish between child and youth

A child is defined as anyone less than 12 years of age; a youth is defined as anyone at least 12 years old but not yet 18 years old. A youth in high school who is 18 years or older is considered a youth under this policy

Diocesan screening and selection for ministry with children and youth

The Canon to the Ordinary will perform background checks on all clergy who are deployed or licensed to officiate within the Diocese. In addition, checks will be completed on any Diocesan employee or volunteer who regularly works with children or youth at diocesan events. University and college campus interns and in-house peer ministers will also complete a background check through the Diocese. Peer ministers living in their own homes will complete a screening process that includes an application, interview, and reference checks.

Congregational screening and selection for ministry with children and youth

The following people shall undergo a background check through the diocese:

- a. parish employees who work directly with children and youth shall complete an Oxford background check.
- b. other employees of the local parish and volunteer children and youth directors, or co-directors, will also be required to undergo a background check, such as LifeWay. The company used must be approved by the Chancellor.

Volunteers should not be permitted to work with children or youth until they have been known to the clergy or congregation for at least six months.

Congregational background checks must include criminal background checks and credit history checks, and sexual offender registry in any state the applicant resided in the past 7 years. (The Oxford Management Company and Lifeway include these parameters). The suggested protocol for screening may also include:

- a. an application
- b. an interview
- c. reference checks

Background checks should be completed within 30 days of hire or beginning of service to the church. Employment or service will be contingent satisfactory completion of background checks. A personnel file should be kept on screens with other church records.

Costs and management

The parish will submit a check along with the names and addresses of people who need background checks. The Canon to the Ordinary, or the assistant to the Canon, will contact the

rector to confirm a satisfactory or dissatisfactory report. Costs may vary. Please contact the Diocesan office for current rates.

Occasional ministry with children and youth

Sunday school teachers and all persons assisting with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities generally no more than three times a year, and for one program or activity during a year that lasts less than a month are considered occasional workers. All persons providing transportation no more than three times a year, all persons who work in the nursery three or fewer times a year, and adults who participate in overnight activities with children once or twice a year are also considered occasional workers. Occasional workers who are members of the parish for at least six months will undergo screening in the following manner: application, two reference checks, and interviews by the director or rector. Plans for all events, to include transportation, should include at least two unrelated adults.

Monitoring and supervision of programs

Plans for all events and ministries for children and youth should include at least two unrelated adults present at all times. If unanticipated circumstance result in an adult being alone with children or youth, that adult shall immediately report those circumstances to the rector, or senior warden, and Canon to the Ordinary. It may be appropriate for a Sunday School class to have only one teacher so long as at least one other adult can maintain visual contact with the teacher and/or there is an adult who is in charge of “floating” as a monitor. No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior notice to the vestry and or rector.

The vestry shall be informed of any new program, trips or events that involve children or youth after approval by the Rector. An up-to-date list of approved congregation-sponsored programs for children and youth shall be maintained in the church office and posted in other places, bulletin boards, webpage, newsletter, etc.

Adults are encouraged to build relationships with children or youth outside of the sanctioned church events provided the parents are aware of the contact with the child or youth and the contact is in a public arena, not secluded or isolated from others.

An adult over the age of 21 will directly supervise those who are under the age of 21. An adult must be present at activities involving children and youth.

Church policies

Every congregation is encouraged to develop guidelines and procedures for specific programs to include release of children from the nursery to the custodial parent or legal guardians or designated by them; and procedures for overnights to include appropriate sleeping arrangements, level of supervision, and shower and bathroom supervision; the use of computers and Internet; and chat rooms for youth. These guidelines will be submitted to the diocese. Congregations should have clear guidelines and adequate supervision of anyone using a parish computer to access the Internet. Parish computers should have adequate password protection. Policies governing Facebook and texting should be included.

Education and training

It is the responsibility of the vestry to ensure that wardens, lay employees, Eucharistic visitors, pastoral visitors, Stephen ministers, EFM mentors and volunteers who work regularly with children and youth attend the Diocesan Training to prevent child abuse and promote healthy boundaries in church settings. Sunday School teachers may complete their training on line (Safeguarding God's Children) followed by discussion of congregational and diocesan policies led by the rector, Christian education coordinator, or another designated person who themselves have successfully completed the Diocesan Safe Church program. Campus ministers, interns, and in-house peer ministers will complete the Diocesan training programs for Safe Church. Peer ministers living in their own homes will complete their training on line (Safeguarding God's Children.) Those required to attend the Diocesan training shall do so within six months of beginning duties at the church/Diocese.

In Diocesan sponsored Safe Church programs, the workshop leader will successfully complete the program and undergo an initial training.

Refresher training

Lay persons required to attend Diocesan training shall attend a refresher training once every six years from the date of completion of the original training. Clergy are required to attend refresher training every six years. Clergy refresher training will occur on a six-year cycle beginning in January 2011, 2017, 2023, etc.

Behavioral standard for ministry with children and youth

Adults shall never provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs or pornography; consume non-sacramental alcohol or misuse legal drugs; be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or the misuse of legal drugs at any children's or youth event; engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior; engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; or discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth.

Firearms and concealed weapons are prohibited at any church activity. Rectors may make special exceptions for off-duty police officers or others required carrying firearms.

In extended and overnight activities involving children or youth, adults are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds or sleeping bags with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children and youth in the bed or sleeping bag. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children or youth participating in one open space as church basement or camp lodge. Adults are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing or showering in the presence of children or youth.

Counseling of children or youth shall take place in open or public areas in full view of others.

A pre-authorized sex education program is permitted with the rector's approval and vestry notification.

Physical punishment for behavioral problems with children and youth are prohibited. This includes spanking, pinching, slapping, hitting or any other force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.

Adults are discouraged from engaging in non-church related chat rooms.

Responding to concerns

Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies in a congregation shall immediately report the violation to the Rector or priest, senior warden and the Canon to the Ordinary. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies in a diocesan environment or by a clergy person shall immediately report the violation to the Canon to the Ordinary.

Anyone who has reason to suspect that child abuse involving a member of the church shall report it to the appropriate civil authority. He/she is strongly encouraged to inform the priest or Rector, who will then inform the Canon to the Ordinary.

Clergy hearing reports of violation 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 within 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.

Media

One spokesperson from the congregation is designated as the media contact. The spokesperson will work with the Director of Communications at the Diocesan Office for guidance and development of releases.

Insurance

The parish insurance policies must include coverage for claims.

Contact information

Specific details about how to do background checks, norms for various types of youth events and how to supervise compliance with this policy can be obtained at training events offered by the Diocese.

**The Safe Church Officer for the Diocese of Kansas is the Canon to the Ordinary:
785-235-9255 or 800-473-3563.**

The phone number for the Kansas Protection Report Center is 800-922-5330.

Diocese of Kansas Safe Church Policies

Respecting the Dignity of Every Human Being

Preamble

The Diocese affirms the principle that its employees, members and those who avail themselves of its ministries have a right to be free from sexual harassment by any minister or employer. The diocese shall not tolerate sexual harassment in any form and does not condone any conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive worship or work environment. Any conduct that is determined to be sexual harassment is a violation of our baptismal vow “to respect the dignity of every human being” and will result in appropriate disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment and the presentation of clerics under Title IV.

Understanding sexual harassment and exploitation

- *Sexual ABUSE*: sexual conduct by a cleric or other church employee or volunteer with a person who is a minor or volunteer with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent.
- *Sexual HARASSMENT*: unwelcome or undesired sexually oriented language humor, behaviors, requests, or contact in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, or colleague relationship between persons involved.
- *Sexual EXPLOITATION*: a betrayal of trust in a pastoral relationship by the development or attempted development of a sexual or romantic relationship between cleric or other church worker and a person with whom there is a pastoral or fiduciary relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent.
- *Pastoral Relationship*: a relationship between a cleric, lay church worker, employee or volunteer and any person to whom such a cleric or lay worker provides counseling, pastoral care, spiritual guidance, etc. or from whom a cleric or worker has received confession, confidential or privileged information, or to whom this role connotes trust.
- *Fiduciary responsibility*: exists in a pastoral relationship where there is an implied contract/covenant between cleric/employee/volunteer in a leadership position and the person seeking assistance/guidance, and charges the cleric/employee/worker with the responsibility of placing the needs of the person being served above his/her own needs.

Diocesan procedures for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct

- I. All allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse by those placed in positions of trust by the church shall be reported immediately to the Bishop. In all cases the relevant state statutes are to be followed.
- II. In the case of a verbal allegation the Bishop may invite the party making the allegation to bring forth a written, signed complaint.
- III. When Title IV is applicable, it shall direct the process and this policy shall be considered supplemental.
- IV. When an allegation is brought forth involving lay employees or volunteers, the following procedures will direct the process.

1. Upon receiving allegations of Sexual Misconduct the Bishop or the Bishop's designee will personally assure the person making the allegations of the Church's concern and that the allegations will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. At the earliest opportunity, the Bishop or the Bishop's designee may ask the person making the allegations to sign a written statement that includes the name, address and telephone number of that person. The written statement shall also include the date, location, time and a description of the alleged Sexual Misconduct, as well as the name and title of the respondent and the name, addresses and telephone numbers of any witness, if known. If no written statement is made, the Bishop may decide to follow any or all of the procedures outlined in these policies, as seems appropriate. (If the complainant alleges sexual misconduct by the Bishop, the Council of Trustee will perform the functions assigned to the Bishop by this policy.)
2. The Bishop will assign the matter to an Investigator for investigation and to a Response team for the pastoral care of the person affected. The Bishop's office will immediately notify the complainant, the alleged victim (if not the complainant) and the Respondent that the matter has been assigned to an Investigator for investigation. Simultaneously, the Bishop also will make available to the Complainant, the alleged victim (if not the complainant) and to the Respondent pastoral care resources. The Bishop will personally assure the Complainant, the alleged Victim (if not the complainant) and the Respondent of the Church's concern regarding the allegations and of the investigation and response that the allegations will receive. The Bishop will also immediately direct the Respondent have no further contact with the Complainant or engage in advocacy efforts in the community until the investigation has been completed.
3. In the case of allegations against a member of the clergy, the Bishop shall make a determination of the degree to which the clergy member should continue to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities during the course of the investigation. The Bishop shall make this determination in accordance with the appropriate church canons and the Bishop's judgment as to the best interests of all persons affected, and may draw upon the advice of such persons, as the Bishop deems appropriate.
4. In the case of allegations against lay employees and volunteers, the Bishop will make a recommendation to the leaders of the Congregation or Institution in which the individual is involved regarding the degree to which the individual should continue with his or her current work for the church during the course of this investigation. The leaders of the Congregation or Institution shall then make a determination, taking into consideration the nature of the allegations, the interests of the congregation and the degree to which the investigation may hinder the individual's ability to carry on his or her work during the investigation.
5. It is the pastoral direction of the Bishop that any clergyperson licensed to minister in the Diocese of Kansas must report any allegation against her or him to the Bishop immediately upon discovering it.

6. It is the responsibility of the clergyperson and wardens to make sure these materials are posted in plain view for the entire congregation.