

# Policy Manual for the Protection of Children



International Diocese  
Anglican Church in North America



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## ***Policy Manual for the Protection of Children***

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International Diocese

Anglican Church in North America

P. O. Box 5343

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# International Diocese



To all clergy, wardens, vestry members, and parishioners of the International Diocese of the ACNA,

Greetings, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As servants of Jesus Christ, one of our highest callings is to feed and protect His “lambs.”

We live in especially trying times, when reports of abuse – physical, sexual, and emotional – are manifold. As part of caring for Christ’s Body, one role of the Church is to identify and deal with these issues. Although we cannot always identify potential perpetrators of these horrific acts, we do have the responsibility to provide a safe place by establishing boundaries and dealing with any issues as they arise.

To this end, we have put together this *Manual for the Protection of Children* for those who will be working directly with children and/or adolescents in the various parishes, missions, and church plants in the International Diocese. Everyone who has contact with children and/or adolescents in the International Diocese is expected to read this manual and to sign an acknowledgment, provided at end, of having done so. Adherence to the details is of utmost importance for the protection of everyone involved.

If for some reason you would like to apply for a variance to these standards, you should make written application to me as Bishop and to the Standing Committee.

We are extremely grateful to the Rt. Rev. John A. M. Guernsey, Bishop of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, and Rt. Rev. Jack Iker, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Ft. Worth (ACNA), for their assistance and for permission to use their manuals as foundations for creating this one.

May you be blessed abundantly as you invest your time and energy in our young people, and may the blessing stated by the writer to the Hebrews be unto you:

*Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20,21)*

Lovingly in Him,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+Bill".

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bill Atwood

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# Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children

The International Diocese accepts with deep gratitude and seriousness the trust given us by God to nurture and care for his people, especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of protection. This responsibility is especially true when caring for children and youth.

Current statistics regarding child abuse are alarming. One in every four girls and one in every eight boys are sexually abused before age 18, and approximately one in 20 children are physically abused annually.<sup>1</sup>

Physical and emotional abuses can damage children at the core of who they are, and the effects often follow them into adulthood. Abused children are children at risk. They often become adults who suffer from low self-esteem, who are unable to form and keep healthy relationships, and who struggle to maintain healthy boundaries.

The International Diocese does not tolerate any form of child abuse involving our clergy, lay employees, volunteers, or other persons. 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 or youth. That commitment extends to sexual behavior.

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

We are also committed to providing pastoral care to all involved with, and/or affected by, instances of child 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. It may include providing guidance, support, consolation, and even confrontation in an effort to minister as we believe God would desire.



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<https://www.psychologytoday.com/conditions/child-abuse>



## Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this document is to give instruction to the clergy and laity of the churches of the International Diocese that will inform our decisions and methods with regard to safeguarding the children and youth entrusted to us, providing minimum standards of care and vigilance.

## Biblical Foundation

As the Church, we declare that we will work together to see that the proper love care, and protection are extended to the children and youth entrusted to us.

Jesus teaches explicitly that children are of much value in Kingdom terms and that to cause one to sin has the gravest of consequences. Caring for and protecting our children and youth are sacred trusts.

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. "If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (Matthew 18:1-6)*



Mark, in his Gospel account, adds the dimension of Jesus taking the children in his arms and blessing them (Mark 10:16).

As Christian adults, we are called 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, 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 (Proverbs 22:6).

## Responsibility for Creating and Revising the Policy

The Bishop, in consultation with the Standing Committee, appoints committee members to the Committee for the Protection of Children. The Committee is responsible for the creation and promulgation of, as well as adherence to, the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children, under the authority and oversight of the Standing Committee and the Bishop, in accordance with the Canons of the International Diocese. Periodically, the Committee will update and revise the Policy in light of practical experiences, medical and other scholarly research, legal developments, and other relevant considerations.

## Responsibility for Implementing and Enforcing the Policy

The Rector or Priest-in-charge has overall responsibility for the administration of this policy within the parish, mission, or church plant and for providing all reports requested by the Diocesan Office. In the absence of a Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Lay Leader or the Senior Warden will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas for which the Rector is specifically delineated as being responsible.

## Diocesan Documentation Requirements

Churches are responsible for obtaining and keeping documentation, in perpetuity, which includes evidence of the following:

1. Employee /volunteer applications for those working in youth and children's ministries
2. National Sexual Offender Registry / Criminal Background checks renewed every 2 years
3. Personal and professional reference checks
4. For drivers: copy of valid driver's license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of auto insurance
5. Interviews with employees and volunteers
6. Certification that the clergy, vestry, and all lay workers, paid and volunteer, working in youth and children's ministries has read, understood, and accepted the Diocese of the International Diocese Policies on the Protection of Children
7. Diocesan-approved workshop or online course completion and certificate renewal every two years
8. Written supervisory plans
9. Reports of suspected child abuse, see [Appendix A](#) (keep in a secured location)

## Minimum Standards

The International Diocese requires that, at a minimum, each congregation, mission, and church plant has in place the following procedures for:

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*These minimum standards apply  
even when no children are currently in attendance at church events.*



The *MinistrySafe* program provides samples of materials used for screening, training, interacting, monitoring, and reporting. It can be accessed at [ministrysafecom.com](http://ministrysafecom.com)



## **Screening**

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# Screening Procedures for Clergy

The screening of clergy is the responsibility of the Diocesan Office. Careful screening of clergy is done initially during the ordination and search processes and includes:

1. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks through Oxford Document Management Company or other diocesan-approved screening providers. Checks should be renewed every two years. It is the responsibility of all clergy to cooperate fully in all aspects of the screening process and to submit to the screening providers, in a timely manner, all documents needed to complete such checks.
2. Conducting personal and professional reference checks.
3. Conducting face-to-face interviews.
4. Requiring the clergy person to state whether or not the clergy person and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in **Appendix B**.
5. Reviewing this Policy with the individual and requiring the individual to sign and submit the **Policy Acknowledgment Form** found on the last page of this Manual.

*Note: In addition, a full Oxford Document Management Company background check will normally be done every five years for all clergy in active ministry in the International Diocese.*



# Screening Procedures for Employees

The screening of employees is the responsibility of the Rector, Priest-in-charge, Lay Leader, or Senior Warden.

Careful screening of employees includes:

1. Reviewing signed job applications for those employed in youth and children's ministries
2. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed no less often than every two years
3. Conducting personal and professional reference checks
4. Conducting face-to-face interviews
5. Requiring each applicant to state whether or not the applicant and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in [Appendix B](#).
6. Reviewing this Policy with the individual and requiring that individual to sign and submit the [Policy Acknowledgment Form](#) found on the last page of this Manual.



# Screening Procedures for Interns, Fellows, and Day Camp Staff

The screening of interns, fellows, and day camp staff is the responsibility of the Rector, Priest-in-charge, Lay Leader, or Senior Warden.

Careful screening of these individuals includes:

1. Reviewing signed applications for those working in youth and children's ministries
2. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed at least every two years
3. Conducting personal and other appropriate reference checks
4. Conducting face-to-face interviews
5. Requiring each applicant to state whether or not the applicant and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in the [Appendix B](#).
6. Reviewing this Policy with the individual and requiring that individual to sign and submit the [Policy Acknowledgment Form](#) found on the last page of this Manual.



# Screening Procedures for Volunteers

The screening of interns, fellows, and day camp staff is the responsibility of the Rector, Priest-in-charge, Lay Leader, or Senior Warden.

Careful screening of these individuals includes:

1. Requiring a six-month minimum attendance rule for volunteers in children's and youth ministries, except where the Bishop, in consultation with the Committee to Protect Children, has granted a variance
2. Reviewing signed applications for those working in youth and children's ministries
3. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed at least every two years

4. Conducting personal and other appropriate reference checks
5. Conducting face-to-face interviews



6. Requiring each applicant to state whether or not the applicant and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in the [Appendix B](#).
7. Reviewing this Policy with the individual and requiring that individual to sign and submit the [Policy Acknowledgment Form](#) found on the last page of this Manual.



# Training Procedures

Training is another important deterrent to child abuse and is the responsibility of the church, under the direction of the Rector, Priest-in-charge, Lay Leader, or Senior Warden. Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, as well as learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse. They also must become familiar with safe practices specific to their church designed to reduce the potential for abuse occurring.

The International Diocese requires the following training:

## Reading Assignments

All members of the clergy, all members of the vestry, and those staff members with direct supervision over youth or children must certify that they have read, understood and accepted the International Diocese of the ACNA's *Policy Manual for the Protection of Children*. A Policy Acknowledgment Form can be found on the last page of this Manual



## Workshop Attendance

Every two years, clergy, vestry, and those staff and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must either:

Attend a diocesan-approved training workshop on the prevention of child abuse or

Complete the online Sexual Abuse Prevention Course and follow-up test provided by MinistrySafe. Instructions on the implementation of the **MinistrySafe** program are detailed **Appendix C**.

Clergy are responsible to submit to the diocesan office evidence of completed training **every two years**. Each church is responsible to track and document the training/retraining of its vestry, staff and volunteers.

*In addition to these Diocesan Requirements, all clergy, vestry, staff, and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must also be trained in safe practices specific to their church.*



## Interacting

These procedures are intended to help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.

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## Communication

Verbal interactions between clergy, staff members, or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting.

Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging and constructive and to be mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

Hence, clergy, staff members, and volunteers should avoid talking to children or parents in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as being harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, clergy, staff members, and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children. Concerns about children should be directed to parents, legal guardians, the appropriate ministry leader, or the clergy.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should avoid engaging in any sexually-oriented communications with children (except as noted in the following section in educational or 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 in the program.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should report any sexually-oriented communications involving a child or youth to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy.

Clergy, staff members, volunteers, and participants in youth and children's ministries should refrain from the use of, possession of, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs while in church facilities, while traveling with or in the presence of children or youth or their parents, during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children.







## Physical Interactions

Those who serve, whether as clergy or lay workers, paid or volunteer, maintain a powerful relationship of authority and trust with the people to whom they minister. Betrayal of that trust through disciplinary actions or violation of 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 justice should misconduct occur.

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child and never be based on the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. It is the policy of the International Diocese of ACNA that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children.

Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In some circumstances, physical restraint may be used to prevent self-injury by the child and/or harm to others or to property.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents, the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, and/or clergy.

The following standards of interaction with children shall be carefully followed at all times:

## Appropriate Physical Interactions

Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children's development, and is generally suitable in the church setting. Appropriate physical affection may include but is not limited to:

1. High-fives
2. Handshakes
3. Bumps
4. Thumbs-up
5. Side Hug
6. Smiling
7. Pats on Back
8. Holding hands while praying



## Inappropriate Physical Interactions

Inappropriate physical interaction may include but is not limited to:

1. wrestling
2. tickling
3. sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
4. kissing on the lips
5. full frontal hugs
6. commenting on children's bodies
7. forcing unwanted affection
8. piggy-back rides
9. For other examples of inappropriate behavior, see [Appendix E](#).

# Restroom Use

## Nursery-Aged and Special-Needs Children

Because nursery-aged and special-needs children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

### Diapering

1. Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
2. Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers; children should not be left unattended while being changed.
3. Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.<sup>1</sup>



### Toilet Training

1. No child will be forced to toilet train.
2. Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
3. When children are assisted in bathrooms, the stall door is to be left partially open.
4. Preschool-aged children are never to be left unattended in bathrooms.
5. Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
6. "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

<sup>1</sup> Churches are encouraged to be sensitive to the fact that nationally one of every three to four women has been the victim of some form of child sexual abuse, typically by a male offender. Researchers have documented that at certain times in the lives of abuse survivors they are more prone to triggers (internal or external reminders of the trauma). The birth of a child is often such a trigger. To build trust, churches may determine that diapering, toilet training, and restroom monitoring will be done only by screened and trained female staff/volunteers or the child's parent/guardian.

## Elementary-Aged Children

1. Elementary-aged 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 individual capabilities.) A same-aged, peer-buddy system may also be used.
2. Staff members 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, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she 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 verbally to assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

## Sexually-Oriented Materials

Staff members 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 should normally be made available for review for the parents of participants. Prior to introducing these materials, notice should normally be provided to parents in order to allow an opt-out should there be concerns or objections.

## Social Media

Facebook and all social media avenues are important ways for youth ministry staff and volunteer leaders to connect with students. Their world is often constructed around social media. Having personal interactions in this venue allows adults to model appropriate behavior in social media, and it forms valuable connections with students.



The International Diocese strongly recommends that each church have a proactive policy for social media and other forms of electronic communication in the context of children's and youth ministry. Clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (for example, Facebook's minimum age is currently 13).



# Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in transporting children:

1. Adult volunteer drivers must provide to the church copies of valid driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.
2. No one under age 25 may drive vehicles rented by a church unless explicitly allowed by the rental agreement.
3. No drivers under age 25 may drive church-owned vehicles unless explicitly covered by the church's auto insurance policy. Churches are advised to consult with their insurance provider regarding the minimum age for adult drivers. Under no circumstances should anyone under the age of 18 be allowed to drive children/youth as part of an event.
4. It is understood that the adult driving the child must have undergone a background check including a DMV record check.
5. Use of child safety seats that meet federal and state standards is required.
6. Drivers and passengers must follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines.
7. At no time shall there be one adult and one child traveling in a vehicle (except in a parent/child, other familial, or emergency situation, or local variance approved by the Bishop). Automobiles will have 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 are ALWAYS required). If there is an extenuating circumstance causing only one adult and one child to travel together in an automobile, permission must be obtained from the child's parent or legal guardian. This permission should be written and signed by the parent/guardian or documented by the volunteer if only verbal consent is obtainable. The child or youth must be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in such circumstances.
8. No cell phones, including hands-free devices, may be utilized by the driver while driving church-owned vehicles, except in an emergency.
9. Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be done as a group. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
10. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.

# Monitoring Practices

The following protocol will help to ensure that church activities are conducted in a safe and secure environment for all children involved:



1. All children and youth activities shall be designed to be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals.
2. No child will ever be left unattended in the building or on the property during or following a church activity.
3. Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children.
4. In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, all interactions should take place in a public place or where other persons are present
5. Everyone should watch for policy violations.
6. Parents should have an open invitation to visit at any time, unannounced.
7. A careful review should be made of new programs and/or significant changes to a program structure.
8. Interactions with children are to occur in full view of others at all times.
9. Keep unused rooms locked when possible.
10. Keep children and youth in supervised areas within the church building.
11. Having windows installed in doors of all rooms where children are involved is recommended.
12. An onsite or offsite written **Supervisory Plan** shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children.

The purpose of the supervisory plan for any given activity is to give direction to staff, both volunteer and paid, to insure appropriate measures are in place to meet the diocesan standard for supervision. All staff for the activity need to be informed of the contents of the supervisory plan. It is recommended that a copy of the plan be provided for staff persons, and that the plan be posted in a visible location. Please refer to **Appendix F** for a sample **Supervisory Plan**.

# Supervisory Plans for On-Site Activities & Events

On-site supervisory plans should include:

1. A list of the personnel responsible for running the activity
2. The details of the registration process and registration form for the activity
3. A description of the physical environment in which the activity will occur
4. A policy for bathroom procedures related to the specific activity or the general church restroom procedures
5. Procedures for first aid and medication related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to first aid and administration of medication
6. A policy for reporting of discipline concerns
7. Instructions for the release of children related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to the release of children

## Adult:Child Ratio

The following is the recommended ratio of adults to children (recommendation of the International Diocese, but the parish is responsible for complying with all state guidelines):

Age	2 adults for up to	One additional adult for every additional
Infants	8 children	1-4 infants
Young Toddlers	10 children	1-5 toddlers
2- & 3-year-olds	16 children	1-8 children aged 2 - 3 years
4 years	20 children	1-10 children aged 4 years old
School age	30 children	1-15 school-aged children

For mixed groups, the ratio should correspond to that for the youngest child in the group.

# Supervisory Plans for Off-Site Activities & Events



Off-site supervisory plans should include:

1. A list of the personnel responsible for running the activity
2. The details of the registration process and registration form for the activity
3. A description of the physical environment in which the activity will occur
4. A plan for off-site transportation to and from the activity
5. A plan for dining arrangements related to the activity
6. A policy for bathroom procedures related to the specific activity
7. A plan for showering arrangements
8. A plan for sleeping arrangements
9. Procedures for first aid and medication related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to first aid and the administration of medication
10. A policy for reporting discipline concerns
11. Instructions for the release of children related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to the release of children

## Dressing & Showering\*

\*Staff members and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e., changing clothes during a pool party, a weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the Children's Ministry Director or Youth Pastor will detail procedures for showering or changing clothes in the supervisory plan for the scheduled event.

## Home Group Monitoring Procedures

The International Diocese of ACNA and its churches do not have and, therefore, do not exercise, control over home groups<sup>1</sup>. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child.

The Diocese provides some resources that may help empower and equip parents/guardians and the home groups of its churches as they exercise their care and responsibility. In home groups where children are present, even on an occasional basis, leaders are



encouraged to read this policy, take Diocesan-approved child abuse prevention training, and follow as closely as possible the provisions outlined in this policy, including the development of a Supervision Plan, which should consider the following:<sup>1</sup>

Supervision by two screened and trained individuals. Supervision by a single individual is never a good idea.

Physical environment should be inspected and prepared for child safety for the developmental age of those being served, (keeping in mind outlet coverings, sharp corners, sharp objects, unsecured furniture, access to outdoors, toxic materials, etc.).

Restroom procedure. For any child who requires assistance, parents should be responsible for diapering and meeting other restroom needs.



## **Responding & Reporting Procedures**

When there is reason to believe child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, act immediately. Do not ignore or fail to take seriously any reported incident.

<b>Prepare in Advance</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Deal Appropriately with All Individuals Involved</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Implement Appropriate Action</b>	<b>34</b>

## Prepare in Advance

### Know the Law in Your State

State laws generally 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, including specific requirements, vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some states require any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health and welfare has been or will be adversely affected by abuse or neglect to report immediately to authorities. Other states require only those who have special occupations, such as nurses, counselors, teachers, physicians, law enforcement officers, or the like, to report suspected cases of abuse.

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

Each church in the Diocese should review the applicable laws in its jurisdiction<sup>1</sup> and should create a written response plan that is consistent with those laws.

### Have a “Procedures Policy” in Place

In addition to complying with any applicable legal requirements, churches should have in place appropriate procedures plan (even if only a very brief one) for reporting any suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child and any suspicious or unusual information about a child. *It is critical to be prepared in advance by adopting an appropriate plan and following that plan if an incident or allegation of child abuse occurs.*

The plan should identify the appropriate person(s) (e.g., Rector, Senior Warden) to contact in the case of suspected child abuse. It may include a “response team” of individuals instructed with proper response mechanisms, along with additional procedures to implement throughout the church in responding to the allegation.

The plan also should designate other persons who may receive such a report if the Rector or Senior Warden is the person who is the subject of the allegations or is otherwise suspected of having committed abuse or neglect. Such internal reporting allows church leaders to determine whether a legal reporting obligation has been triggered, whether further information is needed, and/or whether pastoral or other care for children and others should be offered.



When dealing with the media:

1. Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise), such as a specially trained management person
2. instruct all other workers politely to direct all inquiries to that person.
3. Have an approved, prepared statement to answer media inquiries and to convey news to members of the church. Such a statement should normally be reviewed by the church's legal counsel.
4. Do not release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content.
5. Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved by not releasing names or other identifying information, especially that concerning minors.

Have in place appropriate *internal procedures and mechanisms* for reporting to appropriate church leaders any suspected child abuse or neglect, any other suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child, and any suspicious information involving a child.

At times, when the church leader receiving such reports puts together the separate pieces of information provided by different workers, the leader may discern a pattern or recognize information that triggers further investigation and/or a report to state authorities. (Such internal church reporting procedures are not intended to supersede any applicable legal reporting requirements.)

## **Purchase a Rider on the Insurance Policy, Where Applicable**

Unfortunately, most insurance policies do not generally cover sexual misconduct or negligent hiring/supervision in sexual abuse situations. Separate "riders" can be purchased, although some require strict preconditions to insurance coverage like screening, awareness, and prevention training.



# Deal Appropriately with All Individuals Involved

## Offer Pastoral Care

One of your church's primary missions is sharing the love of God with children. Offer whatever pastoral care and other help is appropriate and available to the alleged victim and his/her family.



## Treat the Accused with Dignity and Support

Since the accused has not been formally charged or convicted, he/she should be treated as innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Be supportive but objective.

## Bring Closure to the Investigation

If the accused is eventually convicted, then discipline or dismissal is generally appropriate. Counseling may also be appropriate. If charges are unsubstantiated, the decision about whether to restore the accused to full employment or volunteer service may depend on a number of circumstantial factors. Consult the Bishop and legal counsel for guidance. Of course, all personnel actions should be well documented in writing and kept in confidential files. Attorney-client privileged material should never be disclosed without first consulting your attorney.



## **Implement Appropriate Action**

It is essential that each church responds to a report or instance of abuse in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the person accused of abuse, and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing in the local church. The following section of the diocesan policy briefly outlines several response and reporting procedures:

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Reporting to Legal Authorities	36
Reporting to Parents	36
Reporting to Church Authorities	37
Taking Appropriate Actions	37
Releasing Information	38
Reporting Internally	38

## Responding to the Child Victim

One of several ways in which the clergy, staff member, or volunteer may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that *a child himself or herself shares*.<sup>1</sup> If a child discloses abuse or neglect, the clergy, staff member, or volunteer receiving such a communication should attempt to:

1. Ensure the child's immediate security and safety.
2. Respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk.
3. If reasonably possible, ask a staff member, trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/youth's account.<sup>1</sup>
4. Remain calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
5. Let the child know that he/she is believed.
6. Assure the child that any abuse was not his/her fault.
7. If helpful, tell the child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse.
8. Avoid asking questions that could make the child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint the child's recollection and account. (Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure.)
9. Write down as accurately as possible what the child discloses. This information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Abuse Form (**Appendix A**).
10. Keep the matter confidential. Refrain from discussing the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened. Discussion about the information should be limited to appropriate church and legal authorities, as discussed further below.



If you witness the offense committed by an individual working for the church, ensure that the child is separated from the abuser and in a safe place before following the steps

<sup>1</sup>Reasonable suspicion that a child is abused or neglected may also occur in other ways. For example, a perpetrator may confess such abuse or neglect to a clergy member, or a church worker may observe physical or behavioral indicators of abuse or neglect in a child. However, at times the child's communication may occur so quickly and/or unexpectedly that there may not be time to involve another responsible adult.

## Reporting to Legal Authorities in Accordance with Applicable Laws

No allegations or complaints or reports of suspected abuse should be ignored. Individuals working with children should be aware of and should comply with any applicable legal obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Further, even where reports are not legally required, voluntary reports of suspected abuse or neglect are legally permitted in all jurisdictions in the Diocese and should always be considered with the assistance of legal counsel.

This information, although current as of the date of publishing, should be updated by the church annually. Please see [Appendix G](#) for more complete reporting information.



### Reporting to Parents

If the person accused of abuse is not the child's parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the household, the Rector or his designee should contact the child's parents or appropriate guardians and offer support from the church.

### Reporting to Church Authorities

Any individual reporting the suspected abuse should report the situation to the appropriate church authorities.

1. **Report to the Rector (or other appropriate individual).** The individual(s) suspecting abuse or neglect should immediately notify the Rector and Senior Warden (or another person designated by the Rector or Senior Warden or otherwise identified in the church's child abuse reporting procedures as authorized to receive such reports) of the suspected child abuse.
2. **Appropriately Document Actions.** The individual reporting the abuse and designated clergy should document any actions taken regarding the complaint, and retain that documentation in confidential files. (The church's legal counsel may have specific instructions for how such documentation should be prepared and maintained.)

**NOTE:** *the investigation of suspected child abuse is the legal responsibility of the police or child protective authorities. It is not the responsibility of church leaders to prove that such an incident did or did not take place;*

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**NOTE:** *the investigation of suspected child abuse is the legal responsibility of the police or child protective authorities. It is not the responsibility of church leaders to prove that such an incident did or did not take place.*

## Taking Appropriate Actions

In accordance with the policies and procedures put in place, the Rector or other designated individual should immediately:

1. **Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties.** If the person accused of abuse is employed by or volunteering with the church, the Rector (or his designee) should immediately remove the person accused of abuse from the situation in which the accusation arose and from any duties where he/she will have any further contact with children. This removal can be done quietly and without fanfare but should be done quickly and without exception. An interim transfer to a position that has no contact with children is one possibility; a leave of absence (with pay if the person is an employee) may be another solution. The church leadership will determine whether the person accused of abuse will continue in ministry.
2. **Notify the Bishop.** The Rector shall notify the Bishop of the International Diocese of ACNA immediately. The Bishop shall notify the diocesan Chancellor. The Bishop may request periodic updates of the investigation being conducted and subsequent actions taken at the local church level and/or may initiate his own investigation into the allegations of child abuse.
3. **Notify the Church Legal Counsel.** In most circumstances, the Rector should notify the church's legal counsel. Obtaining competent legal advice at the very outset of the matter will help protect the church from failing to comply with legal duties and/or being exposed to additional legal liability.

In addition, if the investigation is conducted by legal counsel, the information gathered and conveyed to the attorney may be privileged from disclosure as a confidential attorney/client communication under certain state laws.

Subject to advice of the church's legal counsel, the church should cooperate in the investigation conducted by the governmental agency to which the report has been made, as well as any other law enforcement agencies involved with the investigation.

4. **Notify Insurance Providers.** Unless the church's legal counsel advises otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company. This is important for at least four reasons:
  - (a) the insurance policy may require immediate notification for coverage to be effective;
  - (b) the policy may pay for counseling or legal advice;
  - (c) the policy may not provide coverage for lawsuits involving acts of sexual abuse; and
  - (d) the insurance carrier, having dealt with similar cases, may be a source of helpful advice.

If the church determines that a report is legally required or decides that it should make a permissive report even though one is not legally required, the contact information in the box may be helpful in reaching appropriate legal authorities.

## Releasing Information

Maintain appropriate confidentiality of any allegations and of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed and instruct them not to disclose any information regarding the allegations or your investigation to anyone other than law enforcement or child protective authorities. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality will: (a) protect the privacy and reputations of those actually or allegedly involved in the incident; (b) reduce the risk that defamation may occur; and (c) help preserve the attorney-client privilege, where otherwise applicable.

## Reporting Internally

In addition to the reporting obligations discussed above, clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall also promptly internally report to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy, an immediate supervisor, and/or to the Rector (or his/her designee) whenever the clergy, staff member, or volunteer:

1. Is involved in or becomes aware of any sexually-oriented communications involving a child connected with the church; **or**
2. Is involved in or becomes aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a child by a clergy person, a staff member, or a volunteer; **or**

3. Is arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, is charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; commits an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) is diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; **or**
4. Becomes aware that a member of his/her household has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; **or**
5. Becomes aware that a person who is attending the church has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; has been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; has committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism.

**HELP**



## **Resources**

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# Federal Definition of Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual exploitation of children is defined is defined in the United State Code as:

## **18 U.S.C. 2251 - SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN**

It is forbidden for any person to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, or coerce any minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in, or to transport any minor in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent that the minor engage in, any sexually explicit conduct if such person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

It is forbidden for any parent, legal guardian, or person having custody or control of a minor to knowingly permit such minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct if the parent, legal guardian, or person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction will be transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed, if that visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

# State Reporting Laws and Forms of Child Abuse

## General Considerations

Child abuse, in practical terms, refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.

Each state and the District of Columbia has its own definition of what constitutes "child abuse" under civil and criminal laws, and each parish, mission, and church plant in the International Diocese of ACNA should be familiar with the relevant laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. Each parish should be familiar with the laws in its own state, as well as those of any state to which it may take children on trips or for other church-related events.

In general, the definitions of "child abuse" and "child neglect" in all states in our Diocese include the following elements (among others):

Definitions below are used courtesy of the Diocese of Ft. Worth, Anglican Church in North America:

**Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth.

**Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult** is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and an adult. This includes any activity, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult,

**Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth** is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.

**Emotional abuse** is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child or youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.

**Economic exploitation** is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's belongings or money.

In addition, substantial information about child abuse and neglect prevention, response, and reporting can be found at the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which is online at:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov>

A service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this site provides access to print and electronic publications, websites, databases, and online learning tools for improving child welfare practice, including resources that can be shared with families.

To access information about a particular state, visit this page on the site:

[www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state)

NOTE: Although the information on the [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov) site is updated periodically, it is not always completely up-to-date. It is always important to check (or to have legal counsel check) the most recent laws and regulations in your state.

# How to Report Abuse to Child Protective Services

For states, or when the reporting party resides in a different state than the child, please call Childhelp, 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453), or your local child protective agency.

Although the name of the person reporting the suspected abuse may be requested for follow-up purposes, the person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is generally NOT required to give his/her name. If the person reporting does provide his name and requests anonymity, there are legal mechanisms in place in each state to protect the reporter from having his/her name given to the alleged abuser, unless otherwise ordered by a court.

## Information to Provide to Child Protective Services When Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

It is helpful for the person reporting suspected abuse to provide the following:

1. The name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care.
2. The names of other persons, especially children, living in the suspected victim's home.
3. Address of the child's home.
4. The child's age, sex, and race.
5. The name of the school the child attends.
6. The name and address of the alleged abuser, if known.
7. A description of the alleged abuse and or neglect, including how long it may have been happening.
8. The relationship between the person reporting the abuse and the child.

Please refer to **Appendix A** for a sample Report of Suspected Child Abuse form to be used when reporting allegations of child abuse to Child Protective Services and other authorities.

Once completed, that form should be kept in a confidential file with the church.

# The Church's Understanding of and Response to an Incident of Abuse

It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse or misconduct in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender, and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing within the congregation generally.

## Responding to the Victim

The first and foremost rule when responding to a victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse is to ensure the immediate safety of the person who has been harmed. He or she should be protected from the abuser, non-offending care givers should be contacted and informed of the situation, medical personnel should be contacted if the victim is in need of immediate medical care, and the authorities should be contacted by witnesses to the abuse in accordance with applicable state laws.

When a child or youth discloses that he or she has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, or when a congregant, staff member, or volunteer witnesses such abuse, it can be a lot for a volunteer or staff person to handle. A supportive reaction can make all the difference to the survivor of the abuse, but that doesn't mean that such a reaction comes easily. Encouraging words and phrases can avoid judgment and show support for the survivor. We have included specific information on "Responding to the Victim" in [Appendix G](#).

## Caring for the Congregation

Incidents of child abuse, and the secrecy that often surrounds them, can cause devastating harm to the church as well as to the victims. Therefore, where current or past child abuse has been perpetrated by clergy, staff, or volunteers of the church, the church shall provide consultation to encourage the discussion of such incidents and to provide a means to facilitate healing within the church. One suggested model of how this may be done is a congregational trauma debriefing model, as described below.

It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse or misconduct in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing within the congregation generally.

Traumatic events have well-documented effects, both immediate and delayed. When a congregation experiences a trauma, the impact is likely to be expressed through symptoms such as:

1. Loss of energy or feeling of paralysis
2. Distrust of leadership (often projected onto future leadership)
3. Divisions within the congregation
4. Some group members feeling isolated and withdrawing from the group
5. Anger being displaced onto unrelated issues, or blown out of proportion
6. A conspiracy of silence about the traumatic event
7. Despair about the congregation's future
8. Distorting responsibility for the event
9. Seeking a "quick fix" without thoughtful reflection
10. Difficulty making normal and necessary decisions.

All of these symptoms could be carried into subsequent years unless the trauma is processed, integrated into the life of the congregation, and healed. A useful model for addressing and integrating a trauma is the "debriefing" model drawn from disciplines that do crisis counseling, such as emergency medicine, law enforcement, military science, crisis chaplaincy, and disaster agencies.

A trauma debriefing allows participants to integrate the reality of the event with their own responses to that event. The Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing Model set forth below is an effective means to communicate, process, and accept facts, allow feelings to surface, and then, through God's healing grace, head into the future unhindered by the past.

## Guiding Principles for Healing in the Church

The following guidelines outline steps that can be taken to promote healing in the congregation:

### **a. Contact with the family**

Before the process for healing begins, the Bishop or his representative should maintain regular contact with the Complainant(s) and describe to Complainant(s) the procedures to be used for promoting congregational healing.

### **b. Privacy Concerns**

The privacy of the Complainant(s) must be balanced against the need for openness with the local church. Insofar as possible, the identity of the Complainant(s) and any details which may identify him/her should be kept confidential.

### **c. Providing Facts**

The procedures shall take into account that church members usually know when "something is going on, and, in the absence of facts, rumor and speculation will grow.

### **d. Notifying Lay Leadership**

The lay leadership should be advised promptly of the issues, since that group's participation is vital in planning and implementing the processes for church healing.

### **e. Trauma Debriefing**

The healing and unity of a congregation are fostered when there is an open meeting, called a Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing ("Debriefing"), at which the Bishop or his representative presents as much factual information as possible.

Because the local church likely will include people who have experienced abuse or misconduct themselves, appropriate personnel trained in crisis ministry should be present and available on a small group or one-to-one basis immediately after the formal presentation. Also, local mental health resources (including sliding scale fee agencies) should be publicized so that members of the congregation know how to find these services. (Note that many communities have publicly-funded survivor services, which offer a variety of specialized resources.)

The debriefing generally should follow the process set forth herein. The message should be, "The Church is a place for truth. We follow Jesus, who described himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

### **f. Church Spokesperson**

The vestry, in consultation with the clergy, is encouraged to appoint a church spokesperson. The congregation, including church members and staff members, is urged to refer all media inquiries to the church spokesperson.

### **g. Interim Priest**

If the circumstances require that an interim priest be engaged, that priest should have special training in trauma debriefing. The interim priest should have regular opportunities to report and consult with the Bishop, his designated staff person, and counselors.

### **h. Consulting Legal Authorities**

Neither the clergy nor any other church worker should attempt to impede persons who wish to consult with legal authorities.

### **i. Continuing Pastoral Care**

The clergy and/or vestry should consult with the Bishop about additional resources for the healing and care of the congregation. Pastoral care includes, when appropriate, professional counseling, healthcare, and therapy.

# A Model for Information & Trauma Debriefing Meeting

Consult with the Bishop. The following procedures are recommended for the Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting, but the church and the Bishop should consult in advance with their respective legal counsel (and, if counsel recommends, insurance provider(s)) before conducting such a meeting or undertaking any such actions:

## Steps to Take Prior to Meeting

- 1. Select Leaders.** Carefully choose a Congregational Trauma Debriefing team and a leader or co-leaders who have had experience with a debriefing or trauma-related process. It is important that the Rector or his representative be a visible participant in the debriefing, but not in the role of leadership.
- 2. Schedule and Notify.** Schedule the debriefing as soon as possible after the complaint becomes public knowledge. Ensure that all members of the congregation and church staff are notified of the debriefing by telephone, e-mail, overnight mail, or other fast and reliable method of notification. It is important to get a wide participation, so that all who experience the trauma also share the debriefing experience.
- 3. Choose Meeting Place.** Hold the debriefing in an appropriate place, preferably on the church's property, if there is such. Although an opening prayer is appropriate, this should not be a liturgical event.
- 4. Address the News Media.** While the debriefing should not be confidential, it is important that no one be placed in jeopardy because of any disclosures made during that meeting. Therefore, it is preferable that the news media not be present for the debriefing, but meet after the debriefing with the church spokesperson and the Bishop.



## Agenda for the Meeting

- **Open the Meeting.** The Bishop or his representative should welcome the attendees, as should one of the lay leaders. The lay leader then should introduce himself/herself, explain the debriefing process, and outline the guidelines for the debriefing. It is important to keep the debriefing to the specified procedures. Leaders should be prepared for a lengthy meeting.
- **Present the Facts.** The goal is to ensure that all those present have a common record of the traumatic event. Subject to the advice of counsel, the general facts, and approximate chronology of the trauma should be presented verbally, while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of the victim, supplemented by written notations. Note that this is not a time for feelings to be expressed, and the group may need some direction to withhold those feelings until the next phase of the debriefing.
- **Solicit Reactions.** Once an appropriate record has been presented, the lay leader should invite church members to express their reactions to the facts. (Some church members may need to be directed to express their own feelings and not those of others.) No feelings, however trivial, intense, or unusual, should be discounted, and no effort should be made to fix, soothe, or smooth them over. The responses simply are to be collected and heard.
- **Examine Repercussions.** Once reactions have been expressed fully, the leader should ask those present to turn their attention to the repercussions of the event, and consider the congregation's future. This step bridges the trauma with the ongoing life of those involved in the trauma. It may be a time to explore some of the issues the congregation will face in the near future. As with the presentation of facts, the issues raised may be noted both verbally and with writings.
- **Seek Context and Perspective.** Members of the congregation also should be invited to place the event within a context or perspective. There may be expressions of confusion, helplessness, or curiosity about how other groups have resolved an issue of this type. In this phase, people may have an awareness of paradox and pose some hard questions such as the following:
  - Why do bad things happen?
  - How can it be that such a talented priest/leader could be involved in misconduct?
  - Why do things like this happen in a church?
  - Where does the responsibility lie?
  - What about the resources of our faith?

Leaders have discretion whether to respond, or to simply allow others to speak.

## Actions to Take After the Meeting

- **Plan for the Future.** The final step is planning. This could include a) scheduling a follow-up session one or two months into the future; b) discussing the ways in which the pastoral and sacramental needs of the congregation will be met; or c) describing the resources available to people who may need counseling or other specialized attention.
- **Provide Trained Counselors.** For the immediate needs of those present, it is important that trained crisis professionals be available in the church building so that individuals or groups may process their feelings further. These professionals are present simply to listen and support people in integrating the trauma.
- **Debrief the Debriefing.** After the debriefing, members of the Congregational Trauma Debriefing Team should meet to discuss their own experiences with the debriefing meeting, in order to do the following:
  - Plan the follow-up monitoring of the congregation in the future
  - Determine whether there are issues that will need further clarification
  - Determine whether there are complicating factors, or factors that require special continuing attention
  - Decide what the lay leadership of the congregation requires to address the issue further; and evaluate the debriefing meeting itself (or agree to do so at a later date).

## Additional Information and Meetings

If new information comes to light after the first debriefing, further meetings may be held. Additionally, regular follow-up sessions with the congregation should be held during the first year after disclosure of the incident(s).

## Additional Church Responses

Additional appropriate church responses may include:

- Regular prayer for the Complainant(s), the Respondent(s), and the congregation
- Preaching on the subject of violation of trust and liturgical acts of corporate penance
- Securing a safe place for the Complainant(s) and the Complainant's family in community life

- In the event that incarceration or other punitive action follows legal proceedings, developing a means for the congregation to deal appropriately with the person who may be imprisoned.

## Congregational Follow-up: The First Year

Even with the best of care, a congregation that has experienced sexual misconduct will likely need an ongoing program of support and assistance, especially in the first year. This year will be devoted to a healing process, in which the congregation slowly will integrate the reality of its experience into its future. If such integration does not take place, the congregation may suffer from prolonged loss of energy, despair about the future, loss and/or isolation of some members, distrust of lay and/or ordained leadership or of the Bishop, and difficulty making decisions or taking risks.

## Suggested Follow-up Activities

Follow-up with the congregation may take any of several forms:

1. **Meeting With Bishop.** A meeting between the Bishop or the Bishop's representative and the vestry in order to assess the healing process of the congregation
2. **Staff Input.** Obtaining input from church staff (including an interim priest where present) about their observations regarding the incident and the Debriefing process
3. **Study Groups.** Establishing study groups to consider the issue of healing from sexual abuse, perhaps by reading a selected book for discussion
4. **Self-evaluation.** Conducting a congregational self-evaluation, through the use of a questionnaire or survey instrument
5. **Focus Groups.** Creating congregational focus groups to address the issue of where the congregation stands in its process of moving ahead
6. **Committee on Congregational Life.** Forming a Committee on Congregational Life charged with assessing the needs and planning programs for continued healing
7. **Professional Consultant.** Appointing a professional consultant experienced with issues of child abuse to work with the vestry and affected congregation on the components of the healing process

## Using the Trauma to Help Others

Some churches, having worked through a history of child abuse, take up a special vocation in a related area. Such steps signify that the congregation has moved into the redemptive activity of letting its own pain be a gift for others. Among possible actions:

1. **Helping Other Churches:** offering help to other churches confronted with the same issues
2. **Sponsoring Programs:** sponsoring seminars or programs on ethics and sexuality
3. **Church Building:** offering the church building for use by community groups to address issues of child abuse
4. **Youth Programs:** developing programs for young people about protecting themselves from abuse

# Pastoral Response to Known Sexual Offenders

The church must make every reasonable effort to protect children. Special care must be taken when a church interacts with a person who is registered as a sexual offender, or self-discloses a history of sexual misconduct towards children, or self-discloses a struggle with sexual attraction toward children.

When such a person is known to be a participant in the church or its activities, 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 offender to sign a contract/covenant that details expectations, defines boundaries and off-limits locations (e.g. children's areas, acolyte vesting areas), and establishes appropriate supervision (such as, for example, a bathroom escort) for the offender while on church premises and/or at church activities. The church shall have in place a plan to deal with any violation of the contract/covenant.

If the perpetrator is observed acting in an inappropriate manner with children or their families, the Rector or wardens shall inform the family /families of a potential danger to their child/children (unless otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel). Where appropriate, the Rector or Senior Warden shall consult the offender's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been met.

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# Appendix A

## Sample Form for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

### *Information Regarding the Person Suspected of Committing Child Abuse:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

### *Information Regarding Suspected Victim:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male / Female \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

If more than one suspected victim, fill out a separate report for other victim(s).

### *Information Regarding Witness(es) to Suspected Child Abuse:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

*(continued; page 1 of 7)*

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person(s) Making Initial Reported to Church Official(s):***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Church Official(s) to Whom Suspected Abuse was Reported:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

*(continued; page 2 of 7)*



*Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file*

**Explain how / why you became suspicious of possible abuse:**

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**Describe any physical evidence of the suspected abuse:**

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**Describe each incidence of suspected sexual abuse, including the date(s), time(s), location(s) and type(s) of abuse of suspected abuse:**

Date	Time	Location	Type of Abuse

*(continued; page 3 of 7)*

*Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file*

**OUTSIDE REPORTING**

**Was the suspected abuse reported to Child Protective Services ("CPS")?      Yes No**  
**IF NO, explain why not:**

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---

**IF YES:**

Date Reported: \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person Reporting to CPS:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person at CPS:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Was the suspected abuse reported to Police?      Yes No**  
**IF NO, explain why not:**

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**IF YES:**

Date Reported: \_\_\_\_\_

*(continued; page 4 of 7)*

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

***Information Regarding Person Reporting to Police:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Police Contact:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Were the Parents notified?**

**Yes No**

**IF NO, explain why not:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IF YES:**

Date Parents notified \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person Notifying the Parents:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

*(continued; page 5 of 7)*

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

***Information Regarding the Parents:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

***Other Pertinent Information Regarding the Parents:***

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Was suspected abuse reported to the Diocese via telephone? Yes No**  
**IF NO, explain why not:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IF YES:**

Date Diocese was notified via phone: \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person Notifying the Diocese via Phone:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

*(continued; page 6 of 7)*

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

***Information Regarding Diocese:***

Diocesan Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person's Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person Sending Written Report to the Diocese:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

***Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation***

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person Completing this Form***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/mobile; indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(page 7 of 7)*

# Appendix B

## Sample Screening Statement

*This statement is to be completed annually by all clergy, staff and volunteers*

**Have you ever (circle correct answer):**

1. Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged? Yes No
2. Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding? Yes No
3. Committed an act of child sexual abuse? Yes No
4. Been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)? Yes No

**Has any other member of your household:**

5. Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged? Yes No
6. Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding? Yes No
7. Committed an act of child sexual abuse? Yes No
8. Been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)? Yes No

**By signing this document I attest to the truth and validity of the answers above.**

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix C

## MinistrySafe

**MinistrySafe** is an extensive 5-part safety system designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in your congregation. MinistrySafe provides on-line child sexual abuse awareness training, has sample policies and procedures that can be tailored to your particular situation, and provides training in skillful screening and guidelines for monitoring and oversight of the program. This program has been endorsed by the Anglican Church in North America and is its **minimum** standard.

Cost Involved: **\$250**/year membership

Prices for training vary, depending on single user or MinistrySafe Membership

Cost per Awareness Training	\$10 single user	\$5 Member
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Cost per Skillful Screening Training	\$100 single user	\$50 Member
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Prices Background Checks vary and are available only with a Membership.

For information on the services that each cost includes, visit the website at <http://ministrysafecom.com/pricing/>

## How MinistrySafe Works

- Members have access to an online control panel for their particular congregation. This enables you to monitor all your staff and volunteers who should take the training.
- The email of each person who is to take the training is entered. A link is automatically sent to that person. This link never expires. A person can view the training video as often as she likes; however, one can take the test and pass only once.
- Once a person has passed the test, a certificate of completion is automatically sent to the individual and the administrator. The Control panel is automatically updated.
- Members also have access to resources, including:
  1. A policy and procedure manual
  2. Sample application forms for volunteers and staff
  3. Sample Screening form
  4. Interview instructions
  5. Description of high- and low-risk responses
  6. Cover letter asking for references
  7. Reference forms for use by mail and for use by telephone

## Signing up with MinistrySafe

1. Administrator should go to [www.ministrysafe.com](http://www.ministrysafe.com).
2. Click on “Purchase Options” at the top of the page and follow the instructions. A credit card is needed to join. (\$1.00 will be charged and then credited to make sure the information is valid. The \$250 membership fee will be charged when the first test is successfully completed.)
3. You will be asked to pick a user name and password.
4. Note: If your church is sponsoring a church plant, they can take the training and use the resources through your account. Simply enter them as a separate department

## Suggestions on How to Implement MinistrySafe

1. Each congregation should appoint an administrator who will manage users.
2. A committee should also be formed to review the policy and procedure manual and adapt it for your congregation. Check with an attorney to make sure that guidelines and reporting procedures conform to your state.
3. We strongly recommend that churches hold a training session where the group watches the video together before entering their names with MinistrySafe. Please be aware that this video could be traumatic or open old wounds for someone who has experienced abuse and there should be someone present who can give counsel and refer that person for further counseling if needed.
4. The second part of the training session should include going over the policy and procedure manual and discussing how this will be implemented in your church. Everyone should understand these procedures and how they are to be implemented and sign an agreement to that effect.
5. Each individual would then be entered into the Ministry Safe System and receive his own link to the video and test. They may choose to re-watch the video or just go ahead and take the test. The link should be saved as it is always available should the person wish to review it. The test consists of 25 multiple-choice questions.



# Appendix D

## Sample Photography Consent/Release

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant permission to \_\_\_\_\_, to take and use: photographs and/or digital images of me for use in news releases and/or educational materials. These materials might include printed or electronic publications, Web sites or other electronic communications.

I further agree that my name and identity may be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s). I authorize the use of these images without compensation to me. All negatives, prints, digital reproductions shall be the property of the International Diocese of ACNA.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of adult subject)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Address)

\_\_\_\_\_ (City, State, Zip)

### RELEASE FOR MINOR CHILDREN (Under 18)

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, parent or official guardian of (child's name) \_\_\_\_\_ hereby grant permission to \_\_\_\_\_, to take and use: photographs and/or digital images of **my child** for use in news releases and/or educational materials as follows: printed publications or materials, electronic publications, or Web sites.

I agree that my child's name and identity: may be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s). I authorize the use of these images without compensation to me. All negatives, prints, digital reproductions and shall be the property of Science Education Foundation of Indiana.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Parent or Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Address)

\_\_\_\_\_ (City, State, Zip)

# Appendix E

## Standards for Appropriate Affection

Used courtesy of Diocese of Ft. Worth, Anglican Church in North America

The International Diocese of ACNA and its Parishes are committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children's and youth ministries that protect our children and youth from abuse and our Church Personnel from misunderstandings.

When creating safe boundaries for children and youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate, otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Church Personnel to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth.

These Standards are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following Standards are to be carefully followed by all Church Personnel working around or with children or youth.

Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth.

### Appropriate Forms

Some **positive and appropriate forms** of affection are listed below:

1. Asking permission before touching
2. Giving pats on the shoulder or back
3. Handshakes
4. "High-fives" and hand slapping
5. Verbal praise
6. Touching hands, faces, shoulders, and arms of children or youth
7. Arms around shoulders
8. Holding hands while walking with small children
9. Sitting beside small children
10. Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
11. Holding hands during prayer
12. Giving pats on the head when culturally appropriate (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities)

## Inappropriate Forms

The following forms of affection **are considered inappropriate with children and youth in ministry** setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

1. Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
2. Kisses on the mouth
3. Holding children over three years old on the lap
4. Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
5. Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas, or other private rooms
6. Occupying a bed with a child or youth
7. Touching knees or legs of children or youth
8. Wrestling with children or youth
9. Tickling children or youth
10. Piggyback rides
11. Any type of massage
12. Any form of unwanted affection
13. Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
14. Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing
15. Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth
16. Private meals with individual children or youth
17. Touching or hugging from behind
18. Games involved in inappropriate touching

## Behavior Standards

1. Any verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior with any child, youth or vulnerable adult is inappropriate and forbidden.
2. Never allow children, youth or vulnerable adults to become sexual with one another during ministry activities.
3. Sexual gestures or overtures a child, youth or vulnerable adult makes to a minister should be reported to the supervisor and the parent/guardian so that discussion can be held with the child, youth or vulnerable adults
4. Dating, going out with, or becoming romantically involved with any child, youth, or vulnerable adult is forbidden.
5. Discretion must be used in dealing with all, especially regarding physical contact. Any overt display of affection should be made in a public setting in front of other group members and should respect wishes of the other person.
6. Buddy systems” must be used by Church Personnel whenever possible, but especially when children, youth or vulnerable adults are involved.
7. *Never* be alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where others cannot easily observe the program or activity.
8. One-to-one counseling with a child, youth or vulnerable adult should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place.
9. Never invite or host children, youth or vulnerable adults in your home unless another unrelated adult is present.
10. Parents/Guardians must complete written permission forms before children or youth are transported for a church-sponsored activity.
  - a. Driving *alone* with a child, youth or vulnerable adult should be avoided at all times.
  - b. However, if riding or driving alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult cannot be avoided, special care should be taken:
  - c. Don’t sit close to one another in the car.
  - d. Do not come into physical contact with each other.
  - e. Do not stop the car to talk.
  - f. If you must stop, turn on the inside light of the car.
  - g. Avoid physical contact (hugs and kisses) when saying goodbye.
  - h. Be aware of the time you depart and arrive. Mark those times in your diary or record.

11. Never swear or use foul or abusive language in the presence of those you serve in ministry.
12. Never use your role to degrade, ridicule, threaten or humiliate another person.
13. Never speak graphically about sexual activities, including your own and do not allow others to do so. This includes dreams and fantasies or the use of sexually oriented materials such as pornography, videos, or materials on or from the Internet.
14. Never show sexually oriented or pornographic materials to those you serve in ministry. (such as magazines, cards, videos, films, DVD's, clothing etc.).
15. Never use the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children and youth.
16. Never spank, shake, slap or physically punish children, youth or vulnerable adults.
17. Never wrestle with or tickle a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
18. Never give tobacco, alcohol or unauthorized drugs to children, youth or vulnerable adults.
19. Never use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while ministering to children, youth or vulnerable adults.
20. Never use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
21. Never use tobacco products while in the presence of children or youth.
22. When Church Personnel experiences romantic or sexual attraction for a child, youth or vulnerable adult, the minister is required to discuss the situation with the supervisor or spiritual director for guidance
23. All suspicions of child sexual abuse must be reported as required by state law and diocesan policies. Any knowledge or suspicion of any minister having an inappropriate relationship with a child, youth or vulnerable adult must be reported promptly to that person's supervisor.
24. Standards for communication or conduct of relationships apply to electronic media including Internet access, email, chat rooms, phone conversations, photos and pictures.

## **Behaviors to Avoid**

1. Meeting alone in isolated places
2. Showing favoritism
3. Having physical contact that can be misinterpreted
4. Wearing provocative or revealing attire

5. Meeting in homes and in bedrooms without others present
6. Being nude in front of children, youth or vulnerable adults
7. Sleeping in bed with children, youth, or vulnerable adults
8. Special gift giving
9. Discussing your own dating activities, sexual activities, or encouraging others to do so
10. Keeping “secrets” about relationships
11. Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection
12. Showing affection when no one else is around
13. Staring while others are dressing
14. Commenting on others’ bodies
15. Taking pictures while others are dressing or showering
16. Shaming or belittling an individual

# Appendix F

## Sample On-Site Supervisory Plan

The following is an example of a Supervisory Plan for an on-site nursery at a local church. Each church will devise specific supervisory plans for all onsite and offsite programming that involves youth and children. This plan is offered for information only. It is a sample of what a supervisory plan may look like. Each congregation will need to personalize such a plan to its own specific policies and procedures. The parish should consult with its legal counsel before implementing this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.

**Personnel:** Only screened staff and volunteers may work in the nurseries. No one under the age of 18 may be hired to work in the nurseries and no one under the age of 16 may volunteer in the nurseries.

A minimum of two screened and trained staff/volunteers must provide supervision at all times.

Nursery staff and volunteers are not permitted to allow unscreened friends or family members to assist in the nursery.

**Supervision:** On Sunday mornings, \_\_\_\_\_ will check to insure that the nurseries are fully staffed at each of the service/Sunday School times. \_\_\_\_\_ will conduct random visits to the nurseries during all programming times or appoint someone else to take on a supervisory role to observe staff/volunteer/child interactions. \_\_\_\_\_ will meet with staff to provide training and solve problems.

**Ratio:** No less than one staff/volunteer per five children at any time. Minimum of two staff/volunteers at all times.

**Physical Environment:** Windows on nursery doors will not be obstructed. Toys, books, and furniture and apparatus will be cleaned on a weekly basis. Rugs and other moveable items that could pose danger will be secured.

**Bathroom Procedure:** Children will be escorted to the bathroom in the toddler nursery by female staff and volunteers with one person assisting and another in close proximity.

Diapering will be conducted by female staff/volunteers in the observable diapering areas only.

**Injury/Incident Reporting:** Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report and advise \_\_\_\_\_ when a child is injured or hurt in any way. Incidents of conflict with parents should also be reported in the same manner.

**Reporting Concerns:** Concerns about the nurseries should be reported to \_\_\_\_\_

**Release of Children:** Staff or volunteers will release children only to those adults who have corresponding tags of identification with the child.



# Appendix G

## Responding to a Survivor

The following information is adapted from the article “How to Respond to a Survivor” on the [Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) website, and provides excellent suggestions of how to respond to survivors of abuse:<sup>1</sup>

### Consider Using These Phrases:

#### *“I’m sorry this happened.”*

Acknowledge that the experience has affected the survivor’s life. Phrases like “I’m so glad you are sharing this with me,” help to communicate empathy.

#### *“It’s not your fault.”*

Survivors may blame themselves, especially if they know the perpetrator personally. Remind the survivor, maybe even more than once, that he or she is not to blame.

#### *“I believe you.”*

It can be extremely difficult for survivors to come forward and share their story, especially as children. They may feel ashamed, concerned that they won’t be believed, worried they’ll be blamed, or even worried that the one who hurt them will punish them or the ones they love. Leave any “why” questions or investigations to the experts – your job is to support this person. Be careful not to interpret calmness as a sign that the event did not occur – everyone responds differently. The best thing you can do is to believe them.

#### *“You are not alone.”*

Remind the survivor that you are there for him or her and willing to listen to his or her story. Remind the survivor that there are other people in his or her life who care and that there are service providers who will be able to support him or her as he or she recovers from the experience.

#### *“Are you open to seeking medical attention?”*

The survivor might need medical attention, even if the event happened a while ago. You can support the survivor by offering to accompany him or her in his or her search for this aid or even by helping him or her to find more information about aid that might be available to him or her. It’s okay to ask directly, “Are you open to seeking medical care?”

With children, this is more difficult, as they are not able to make such decisions on their own. Non-offending caregivers should be informed and consulted whenever possible. If it is

suspected that a caregiver is also an offender, the appropriate authorities should be contacted as outlined in the reporting procedures of this document – they will be able to help meet the immediate medical needs of the child after first aid had been offered.

*“You can trust me.”*

If a survivor opens up to you, it means he or she trusts you. Reassure survivors that you can be trusted and that you will respect their privacy. Always ask survivors before you share their story with others. If a minor discloses a situation of sexual abuse, you are required in most situations to report the crime. Let the minor know that you must tell another adult, and ask him or her if he or she would like to be involved.

*“This doesn’t change how I think of you.”*

Some survivors are concerned that sharing what happened will change the way other people see them. Reassure the survivor that surviving physical, emotional, or sexual violence doesn’t change the way you think or feel about him or her.

## **Providing Continued Support**

There’s no timetable when it comes to recovering from sexual violence. If someone trusted you enough to disclose the event to you, consider the following ways to show your continued support.

### **1. Avoid judgment.**

It can be difficult to watch a survivor struggle with the effects of sexual assault for an extended period of time. Avoid phrases that suggest he or she is taking too long to recover such as, “You’ve been acting like this for a while now,” or “How much longer will you feel this way?”

### **2. Check in periodically.**

The event may have happened a long time ago, but that doesn’t mean the pain is gone. Check in with the survivor to remind him or her that you still care about his or her well-being.

### **3. Know your resources.**

Church staff, volunteers, and congregants can form a strong support system around survivors of abuse, but that does not mean that you are equipped to manage someone else’s health. Become familiar with resources you can recommend to a survivor and his or her loved ones, resources like the National Sexual Assault Hotline 800.656.HOPE (4673), professional counseling services, and other helps.

### **4. Remember that the healing process is fluid.**

Everyone has bad days. Don’t interpret flashbacks, bad days, or silent spells as “setbacks.” It’s all part of the process.

# Policy Acknowledgement Form

I certify that I have read (check all that apply):

the \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of church)

Prevention of Child Abuse Policy and/or

the International Diocese Policy Manual on the Protection of Children

I further certify that I will abide by the provisions of this policy as long as I am an employee/volunteer of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date