

Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis

(Adopted by Executive Council 6/13/09)

Policies for the Protection of Children & Youth from Abuse

INTRODUCTION

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships which will always be experienced as caring and without allowing harm to occur.

Because sexual misconduct involves the misuse of power by those in positions of authority, young people under adult supervision are especially vulnerable. When the Church asks young people to place their trust in adult authorities, it has a responsibility to ensure that these adults are trustworthy.

Prevention is important because an organization which serves children and youth may attract individuals who seek inappropriate sexual gratification with young people. Accordingly, the Church has a responsibility to its younger members to distinguish between the many sincere and faithful adult servants, and the few who violate the trust placed in them by young people.

The Children's Charter for the Church, adopted by General Convention calls the Church to love, shelter, protect, and defend children within its own community and in the world, especially those who are abused, neglected or in danger. What follows are the official Policies for the Protection of Children & Youth from Abuse of the Diocese of Indianapolis. They set forth the standards expected for all who work with children and youth.

BASIC PREMISES

No one with a civil or criminal record of child sexual abuse or who has admitted prior sexual abuse or is known to have a paraphiliac diagnosis (e.g., pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism) as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, shall be allowed to have interaction with children or youth in this Diocese in church activities.

All adults should report suspected sexual abuse of minors, as well as any other kind of suspected child abuse or neglect. Youth workers, Christian educators and childcare givers serving church groups are often in a position to hear about or to observe behavior and other signs of abuse. Therefore, the church has a responsibility to train all persons who work with young people to recognize and report possible abuses which may be taking place in other settings as well as behavior which indicates the presence of an abuser in the ministry team or peer group.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

CHURCH PERSONNEL

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the diocese, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
- Those who contract their services to the diocese, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
- Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him or herself for a church related service, or who actually assists with or performs a service, whether or not they have been

selected or assigned to do so. Volunteers include members of advisory boards, vestries, Bishop's Committees, and boards of directors.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- A child is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years.
- A youth is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth includes an individual who is 18 years or older, but still in high school.

PERSONS WHO REGULARLY WORK WITH OR AROUND CHILDREN OR YOUTH

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- All paid or volunteer Church Personnel whose work regularly takes them throughout the facility or grounds or who have keys giving them access to the buildings on the grounds.
- All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth, other than church school teachers, in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.
- All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle more often than occasionally.
- Any paid personnel whose living quarters are on the grounds of the church, school or other related agency.
- All vestry members or other members of similar decision making groups who have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs or activities for children or youth.
- Examples of church personnel who regularly work with youth or children include but are not limited to: children's or youth choir directors; organists who work with children or youth; lay youth ministers; volunteer youth directors; all church personnel who work or assist in the nursery more than four times a year; all church personnel who work in the nursery if they are the only person over 21 present at any time; all staff, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps; adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth more than twice a year.

PERSONNEL WHO OCCASIONALLY WORK WITH OR AROUND CHILDREN OR YOUTH INCLUDE

- Church school teachers
- All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities infrequently, generally no more than three times a year or for one program or activity during a year that last less than a month (i.e. assisting with preparation for the Christmas pageant, or teaching one unit of church school for a month).
- All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle infrequently, generally no more than three times a year.
- All persons who work or assist in the nursery four or fewer times a year, whether on an emergency basis or otherwise.
- Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth once or twice a year.

TYPES OF ABUSE

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, child or youth.

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's or youth's belongings or money.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Regularly work with children

- Child abuse prevention education and training is required for all church personnel who **regularly work** with or around children or youth before they start their work with children or youth, or, if that is not possible, within three months of starting.
- Church Personnel may complete either *Safeguarding God's Children: For Parents and Congregation and For Ministries platform training* OR 4 modules of *Safeguarding On-line*.
- Church Personnel must refresh their training and recertify at least every three years.

Occasionally work with children

- Child abuse awareness education and training is required for all church personnel who **occasionally work** with or around children or youth before they start their work with children or youth.
- Church Personnel may complete either *Safeguarding God's Children: For Parents and Congregation* platform training OR 3 modules of *Safeguarding On-line*.
- Church Personnel must refresh their training and recertify at least every three years.

Church personnel who are responsible for screening, selection and supervision

- of others in programs for children and youth are required to complete all four modules of *Safeguarding On-line* which covers screening, selection and monitoring in greater detail than the Safeguarding God's Children platform training.

SCREENING AND SELECTION

All church personnel who **regularly work** with or around children or youth shall be screened and selected utilizing at the least the following:

- A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks. (See Supporting Documents)
- Criminal records check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past 7 years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
- Sexual offender registry check in any state the applicant has resided during the past 7 years.
- Individual interview with the applicant.
- Reference checks of persons outside the congregation who know the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant works with children.
- Driving or motor vehicle records check if the person may be transporting children or youth.

All church personnel who **occasionally work** with or around children or youth shall be screened and selected utilizing at least the following:

- A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an acknowledgment for the release of information to conduct background checks . (See Supporting Documents)
- Individual interview with the applicant.
- At least one reference check of a person or persons outside the congregation who know the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant interacts with children.
- Driving or motor vehicle records check if the person will be transporting children or youth.

All information gathered about an applicant will be carefully reviewed and evaluated to make a determination, in consultation with others as necessary, of whether or not the person is appropriate to work with children or youth.

Church personnel who work with or around children or youth must have a personnel file that is kept where other church records are kept.

To the extent possible, no person will be permitted to supervise an immediate family member when working with or around children or youth. For the purpose of this policy, immediate family member is defined as spouse, partner, child, parent, sister, brother, similar in-law relationship, stepchild, stepparent, stepsibling, grandparent, or co-habitant.

Church personnel who transfer within the Diocese of Indianapolis and apply for or are asked to or who do undertake a position working with or around children or youth are required to undergo the same screening and selection process. This requirement may be met through a transfer of a copy of their personnel file to the new congregation, school, agency, or program together with completion of a new application, individual interview and reference checks with the congregations, schools, agencies or other programs for which the applicant has worked with or around children or youth since the screening was last done as shown in the applicant's personnel file.

MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

The monitoring and supervision of programs and activities involving children or youth are important for safeguarding children and youth and involve several aspects.

Persons engaging in the regular supervision of youth and children's activities shall sign a statement that they have read, understand, and will follow the policies and procedures set forth in this manual.

Except in an emergency, persons supervising youth/children's activities will practice "two deep ministry," meaning that at least two adults will be present during all program activities. This policy specifically prohibits:

- Transportation any single person by a single adult or a single married couple.
- Home visitations in the absence of a parent or guardian.
- Any gathering of young people in the youth worker's home in the absence of other authorized adults.
- Secluded, one-on-one interactions with youth without another adult being present or at least aware of the place of consultation and who is being counseled. One-to-one counseling with children will be done in an open or public place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.

All overnight activities involving mixed groups of young people require the supervision of at least two authorized adults (one female and one male) not married or related to one another.

Adults will respect the privacy of young people in situations such as showering and changing clothes. Where possible adults and youth should utilize separate sleeping, changing and bathroom facilities.

Adults will not give personal gifts to individual young people, except in those instances where the gifts are presented in the name of the church, Sunday school or youth group.

Every program for children and youth must have established ratios for adults and children.

Church personnel over the age of 21 must directly supervise church personnel under the age of 18 and be physically present during all activities.

No person will be allowed to volunteer to regularly work with children or youth until the person has been known to the clergy and congregation for at least 6 months.

Programs for infants and children under 6 years old will have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.

Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the mis-use of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children or youth.

Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before church personnel transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis.

Church personnel are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with children or youth.

Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.

Church personnel are prohibited from using the internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth. Such use will be immediate cause for dismissal.

Church personnel are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the internet, with children or youth.

Church personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.

Church personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children or youth in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room or other room. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children or youth participating in one open space such as a church basement or camp lodge.

Church personnel are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.

Church personnel are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.

RESPONDING TO PROBLEMS

Reporting inappropriate behaviors or policy violations with children or youth.

- When church personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors that are inconsistent with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection or any provisions of these Policies and Procedures, they must immediately report their observations.
- Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported in one of the following ways:
 - o A telephone call or meeting with the immediate supervisor
 - o A telephone call or meeting with the rector or vicar, if the person is not the rector or vicar.
 - o A telephone call or meeting with a church warden if the person is the rector or vicar.
 - o A telephone call or meeting with the bishop.
 - o Submit a written Notice of Concern to the bishop. (see Supporting Documents)

Reporting suspected abuse of children or youth

- All church personnel are required by this policy to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities. (see Supporting Documents)
- Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth may be a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. Simply stated, "in good

faith” means that the person submitting the report believes that what he or she is reporting to be true.

- In addition to reporting to the state authorities, church personnel are required to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by church personnel director to the rector of the parish so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
- Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve church Personnel may be reported to the Diocese of Indianapolis by:
 - o A telephone call or meeting with the bishop.
 - o A telephone call or meeting with the rector or vicar, if the rector or vicar is not the person being complained about.
 - o Submit a written Notice of Concern (see Supporting Documents) to the bishop.
- The Diocese of Indianapolis will cooperate with any investigation by state authorities to the fullest extent appropriate and inform authorities that a concurrent internal investigation will be directed by the Diocese.

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GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AFFECTION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Diocese of Indianapolis is 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 Guidelines 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 guidelines 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. Some **positive and appropriate forms of affection** are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

The following forms of affection are **considered inappropriate with children and youth** in a 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.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. (For example: "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans.")
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth

REPORTING INFORMATION

According to the statutes of the State of Indiana "... an individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report ..." The state-wide toll-free reporting number is 1-800-800-5556.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Criminal background checks are required for all church employees. Arrangements for these checks can be made by contacting the diocesan office (317-926-5454 or 800-669-5786).

Screening is also required for all church school teachers and other volunteers who regularly supervise children and youth. The following websites provide free and easily accessible information.

Indiana Department of Corrections Offender Search

<http://www.ai.org/indcorrection/ofsearch/ODSdisc1aim.html>

FBI Sex Offender Registry

<http://www.fbi.gov/hg/cid/cac/states.htm>

Indiana Sheriffs' Sex Offender Registry - enter an address to find name, address, photo of registered sex offenders in the area.

<http://indianasheriffs.org/>

If any one of these sources indicate a criminal history, then a more complete check should be made through the diocesan office or the Indiana State Police. There is a charge for this service.

Indiana State Police, Central Repository

100 N. Senate Avenue, Room N302

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317-232-8266

www.in.gov/isp/lch