



THE DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND

SAFE CHURCH TRAINING  
THROUGH GEORGE MERCER JR.  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Long Island intends that every parish congregation and every ministry be always places of community, learning, grace, insight, and caring. This begins by assuring that they are safe places. By that we mean, places where the vulnerable are protected from harm, and where all live and work with respect for one another. This beginning point aims toward an end point at which our gathering places for worship, community, and service are experienced as anticipations of the Kingdom of God.

Mercer School of Theology is deputed by the Bishop as the place where trainings take place in the service of these goals. We term these Safe Church Training. A portion of the Mercer School website is set aside to provide clergy, lay leaders, and all interested persons with the information needed to:

- Access through the Diocese's website <http://www.dioceselongisland.org/safechurch/index.html> and become familiar with the policy statements of the diocese on these matters; which include:
  - Policy on Sexual Harassment
  - Policy on Sexual Exploitation
  - Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth
  - As well as attendant appendices and definitions;
- Learn who is required to participate in Safe Church Training, and how often;
- Learn the kinds of Safe Church Training available in the diocese, how to register, and for whom they are intended:
  - In-person training
  - Online training;
- Arrange Safe Church Training in a local parish or ministry, under the auspices of the diocese, whether in-person or online;
- Access fresh information on the calendar of presently scheduled Safe Church Training sessions;
- Raise questions regarding the policies of the diocese or Safe Church Training options.

## WHAT ARE THE CONTENTS OF IN-PERSON SAFE CHURCH TRAINING SESSIONS?

In-person Safe Church training sessions take place in a daylong workshop. They are generally divided into two sections, which have been known as SHE-CAP.

SHE refers to training in recognizing and reporting sexual harassment and exploitation. Harassment refers to the definitions in law of what constitutes unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favors, whether verbal or visual/non-verbal; whether physical or otherwise. Sexual exploitation refers to a

variety of behaviors related to the demand of sexual favors with the threat of denying assistance, withholding work support, or any other negative repercussions in the work place or community. The Diocese of Long Island's "Policy on Sexual Harassment," and "Policy on Sexual Exploitation" provide further elucidation of what is intended by the terms 'harassment' and 'exploitation.'

CAP refers to training for the prevention, the recognition where present, and the reporting of instances of abuse of children. The Diocese of Long Island's "Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth" provide explanation of prohibited behaviors, reporting suspected abuse, background screening for hiring by parishes or other ministries, as well as monitoring and supervision of activities in parishes involving children and youth.

In-person Safe Church training in the Diocese of Long Island includes Sexual Harassment and Exploitation and Child Abuse Prevention instruction.

## **WHO PARTICIPATES IN SAFE CHURCH TRAINING, HOW, AND HOW OFTEN?**

### **I. In-Person Safe Church Training**

All Church Personnel are required to participate in Safe Church Training as provided by Mercer School of Theology. For most categories of persons, the initial Safe Church training takes place by an in-person daylong workshop. Those categories of persons who may undertake their initial Safe Church training online are noted below in section V.

As noted in the diocese's *Policy on Sexual Exploitation*, "all Church Personnel, Supervisors, Decision-Makers, Persons who have pastoral relationships, including members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for holy orders, volunteers, volunteers licensed under Canon III.4 (such as Lay Eucharistic Visitors), all employees of this Diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other Diocesan Units and any persons who are key-holders with unencumbered access to church facilities shall abide by the terms set forth in this policy." Those terms include Safe Church Training.

The *Policy* quoted above is founded on Title X, Canon 5 of the Canons of the Diocese of Long Island, Sections I and II. Section I and II name those who are required to participate in education training on child sexual abuse (Section I) and on sexual harassment (Section II).

The term *Church Personnel* is defined in the appendices of Diocese of Long Island policies to include the following: all clergy; 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 dioceses, 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, and volunteers licensed under Canon III.4 (such as Lay Eucharistic Visitors). Volunteers include members of advisory boards, vestries, Bishop's Committees, and boards of directors.

Examples of Church Personnel include:

- Church School Teachers
- Children's or youth choir directors
- Organists who work with children or youth
- Lay youth ministers

- Volunteer youth directors
- All Church Personnel who regularly work in the nursery
- 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
- Lay Eucharistic Visitors and other volunteers as in Canon III.4).

As is evident, the intent of the policy and definition is to encourage and mandate the training of all defined as *Church Personnel*. If there is doubt as to whether a particular individual or class or persons should participate in Safe Church Training, the bias should be toward requiring training.

To reiterate, all Church Personnel, if they have not previously participated in Safe Church Training, are required to participate in Safe Church Training as provided by Mercer School of Theology.

## **II. Renewal of Training**

All those who have participated in an initial session of Safe Church Training are required to renew their training at intervals of every five (5) years. Safe Church Training renewal is accomplished by participation in Safe Church online training for all.

## **III. Online Safe Church Training – Safeguarding Online**

Those who have once been trained in Safe Church are required to renew that training after each 5-year period. This renewal takes place by online training. It should be noted, however, that individuals are welcome to renew their Safe Church Training at an in-person session as well. Safeguarding Online provides training in short, focused courses that can normally be completed in 30 – 45 minutes, and may be taken from any location where a high-speed Internet connection is available. Several of the modules are available in Spanish and French languages.

Each parish congregation, school, or other ministry must have a designated Safeguarding Online Administrator. The local administrator will assist members of the congregation or ministry who are renewing their training after a 5-year period to sign-in and access Safeguarding Online training. (The process of establishing a parish/ministry Safeguarding Online Administrator is described in section VI below).

## **IV. Online Safe Church Training Modules Required for Renewal**

The following lists the modules of Safeguarding Online training that are required for various groups of persons to renew their training every five (5) years. In cases of overlap, the best course is to take all the modules that may be expected as well as any listed which pertain to a particular ministry. There are a total of sixteen modules in the program. Exceptions to these requirements are not foreseen:

For Clergy –

- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith – for ministries
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Managers and Supervisors

- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher

All Church Personnel (*as defined above in I*) –

- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me
- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith – for ministries
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers
- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher

Eucharistic Visitors –

- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith – for Congregations
- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher

Nursery Workers (*both paid and volunteer*) –

- It Happened to Me
- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Workers
- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher

Parochial School Teachers and Staff

- Keeping Your School Safe
- Meet Sam
- It Happened to me
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers
- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher

Sunday School (Church School) Teachers (*both paid and volunteer*) –

- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers
- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher

Youth Group/Ministry Leaders –

- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me

- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher
- [Keeping Your Camp Safe (*if applicable to your youth ministry*)]

#### Vestry Members/Wardens

- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith – for Congregations
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Workers
- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Your Policies
- Abuse Prevention Refresher

#### Occasional Volunteers –

- Abuse Risk Management for Occasional Volunteers
- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me
- Your Policies

### **V. Groups for Whom Initial (First-time) Online Training is Permitted**

Four (4) categories of persons may elect to take initial Safe Church training online *or* in person. These are: (a) Nursery Workers (paid or volunteer), (b) Parochial School Teachers and Staff, (c) Sunday School or Church School Teachers (paid or volunteer), and (d) Keyholders (that is, anyone who has unencumbered access to parish facilities, as in the case of leaders of an organization renting or provided space from a parish, and as defined in Diocese of Long Island Policies on Sexual Harassment and Exploitation and on the protection of children). If initial training is taken online, the individual registers through the parish Safeguarding Online Administrator and completes all the modules listed for their particular work or ministry. All other persons should complete their initial training at an in-person session scheduled by Mercer School.

Required modules for initial online training for the four groups named above:

#### Nursery Workers (both paid and volunteer) –

- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me
- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Workers
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith – for ministries
- Your Policies

#### Parochial School Teachers and Staff

- Keeping Your School Safe
- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers

- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith – for ministries
- Your Policies

Sunday School (Church School) Teachers (*both paid and volunteer*) –

- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith – for ministries
- Your Policies

Keyholders –

- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me
- Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers
- Your Policies
- In addition, if a person or organization remains a keyholder five years after initial Safe Church training, the module Abuse Prevention Refresher is also required to renew and update training.

## **VI. Establishing a Local Safeguarding Online Administrator**

All parishes in the diocese are eligible to participate in the Safeguarding Online program. Participation in the Safeguarding Online program will become necessary everywhere as parish members reach the 5-year anniversary of their first Safe Church Training and require renewal online at continuing 5-year intervals, or as those groups named in section V above request initial training online.

First, a local Online Administrator must be appointed who will access the system and maintain the records at the parish or school level. This Administrator will be the primary point-of-contact for employees and volunteers. The Administrator must have experience using a computer, Microsoft Office, and the Internet. Often the Administrator is the Sunday School Superintendent or a Vestry member, a deacon, or even the Rector or Priest in Charge. The Administrator contacts the Office at the Mercer School [merceroffice@dioceseli.org] to be assigned a personal user name and password so that the system can be activated for the parish. A name and password is specific for each user.

The system can generate reports and email communications to users and administrators. The parish is required to keep records of compliance which are requested to be shown during the Bishop’s visits to the parish. It is advisable to produce regular communications in the parish to remind members to participate. An Online How-To Guide for the Administrator is available through the program.

Instructions for the choice and training of a parish Online Administrator for Safeguarding Online will be provided on the George Mercer Jr. School of Theology website and are available by contacting the Mercer School office.

## **VII. Arranging In-Person Safe Church Training at Your Parish**

All parishes can request in-person Safe Church Training at their church location. Clergy or administrators should phone the Mercer School Safe Church Coordinator (516.248.4800, ext. 150) to request a local training. A qualified trainer will be put in touch with parish leaders to arrange a date, time, and location. Only trainers qualified and recommended from Mercer School should provide sessions in the Diocese of Long Island.

Registration of persons for the training session takes place in the parish. The date and location of the training are to be communicated back to the Mercer Office. The names of all those who participated in the training are also communicated to the Mercer Office in a timely manner following the training session, in order that a certificate of training may be created and returned to the parish.

It is requested that parishes doing local Safe Church Training sessions should inform parishes in the local area if there will be space in the session allowing for the participation of persons from surrounding parishes. The names and parish names of such persons are to be communicated to Mercer School after the training session.

When local Safe Church Training sessions are arranged, the local parish or sponsoring group of parishes are responsible to provide the trainer's stipend.

**VIII. Information on upcoming in-person Safe Church Training** session dates and locations will be noted on the Mercer website area entitled "Safe Church" in the Programs tab and in the events calendar on the Mercer homepage at [www.mercerschool.org](http://www.mercerschool.org).

Persons are always welcome to phone the Mercer Office with questions relating to Safe Church training in the Diocese of Long Island at 516.248.4800, extension 150.



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