

# The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

*Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth*  
(Adopted by Diocesan Council, April, 2022)

The Diocese of Long Island (“The Diocese”) is committed to the prevention of child abuse in all forms. The aim of this policy is to make the Church a safe place, safe for those who worship, safe for those who minister, safe for those who come in need, safe for children and safe for all who seek or serve Christ. We believe that this policy helps us live out our Baptismal Covenant to respect the dignity of every human being.

All Church Personnel including members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for holy orders, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities, vestry members, all employees of The Diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other Diocesan Units, key holders to any church property, the lay leaders of any group with regular access to church property or facilities shall abide by the parameters set forth by this policy. Parishes are urged to signify their acknowledgement of this policy by adopting the Code of Conduct annexed at **Appendix A**.<sup>1</sup>

## **BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS FOR ADULTS IN MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH**

Adults who work with children and youth<sup>2</sup> are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that children and youth deserve in all settings. Interactions should meet all requirements outlined herein, and adults should be discouraged from initiating a private relationship with any unrelated child or youth from the church away from sanctioned church activities.

### **DOs**

Adults are encouraged to:

- Have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include: daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship, and Bible study;
- Spend time with and listen to children and youth, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;
- Offer appropriate physical expressions of care, which may include:
  - high fives and fist bumps;
  - hand-holding while walking with small children or in prayer;
  - brief touching of shoulders, hands, or arms;
  - “laying on of hands” under appropriate pastoral supervision;
  - brief hugs and arms around shoulders; and
- Model appropriate affection with other adults and be accountable to the community for behavior.

### **DON'Ts – PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS**

Adults shall not under any circumstances:

- Provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, drugs, cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;

---

<sup>1</sup> The Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, which support this policy, are annexed as **Appendix B**.

<sup>2</sup> A “child” is anyone less than 12 years of age, while a “youth” is anyone at least 12 years old, but not yet 18..

- Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misused legal drugs at any children’s or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children’s or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior;
- Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; or
- Apart from planned pre-approved educational programs, discuss their own sexual activities, fantasies, or their own use, or abuse of drugs or alcohol with children or youth.
- **Appendix C** – Guidelines for Appropriate Affection, contains a more exhaustive list of appropriate and inappropriate affection

Anyone who suspects and/or witnesses a violation of these policies shall take steps as outlined in **Reporting Suspected Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation of Children or Youth**, below.

## CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

To create a safe space, it is necessary to anticipate and avoid circumstances in which children and youth are exposed to inappropriate consumables, materials, unmonitored adult contact, or unsupervised peer contact.

For example:

- **Alcoholic beverages.** Alcohol (sacramental or otherwise) shall not be stored in publicly accessible areas of the church buildings.<sup>3</sup>
- **Computers and electronic devices.** Children and youth shall have adequate supervision when using electronic devices belonging to the Diocese, congregations, and other organizations. Devices shall have adequate password protection. Each user shall have their own account and password. Parishes should have clear guidelines and adequate supervision (by parish staff or authorized person) of anyone using a parish computer to access the Internet. Such guidelines should make clear that any activity on a parish computer is not considered private and may be accessed by authorized persons. See **Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications (Appendix D)**.
- **Persons with keys and access to locked spaces.** *Anyone with keys or electronic access* to church buildings shall meet all the requirements for screening and training according to the **Screening and Training Protocols (Appendix E)**(Reference should also be made to the Diocese “Safe Church Policies” which lists the Safe Church training modules required for various groups of Church Personnel) .
- **Unused spaces.** Spaces not in use should not be readily accessible.

## MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

Plans for all events and ministries for children and youth should include at least two, unrelated adults present at all times. One-to-one conversations with children or youth should be avoided. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youths, that adult shall immediately report those

---

<sup>3</sup> Reference should also be made to the Diocese “Guidelines for the Use of Alcoholic Beverages on Church Property”, which can be found on the resources page of the Diocese website, under the tab for “Church Governance.”

circumstances to the Bishop's Office if it is a diocesan event or the Rector, Priest-In-Charge, or Warden, if it is a parish event. It may be appropriate for a Sunday School class to have only one teacher so long as at least one other adult can maintain visual contact with the teacher.

Any new programs, trips or events that involve children or youth should be given prior approval by the Rector or Priest-In-Charge.

No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the Rector or Priest-In-Charge.

Adults who work with children or youth within a congregation should be discouraged from having a separate and private relationship with any unrelated child from the church away from sanctioned church child or youth activities.

The Vestry should regularly conduct a "safe church audit" to review practices and policies within the congregation.

Impulsive, secluded or secretive activity, online or in person with children or youth, may foster a high-risk situation, and is therefore to be avoided.

## **BASIC NEEDS**

No one is to be deprived of the basic human needs of food, drinking water, shelter, sleep, access to restrooms, safety, and clothing at any event.

Exceptions may be made for programs intended to teach children or youth about poverty, need, and hunger, such as an intentional fasting program. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by fasting or missing sleep. Participants who wish to withdraw or who are unable to complete the program must have their basic needs met immediately.

## **INCLUSIVENESS**

No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities, or socio-economic class. To the extent possible, all spaces and settings for programs, activities, and ministry shall be accessible.

The Episcopal Church seeks to support all children and youth by providing reasonable alternative arrangements to address safety and comfort.

Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary children or youth who express the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall restroom. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the child or youth's ability to keep their transgender status confidential. They should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity.

Safe bathroom/shower facilities will be provided by gender (or specific times will be assigned to the use of a single facility).

Adults should either have separate shower facilities or shower at other times than the youth. Separate dressing facilities should also be provided.

## **VIOLENCE AND WEAPONS**

- No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at any time.
- Bullying of any kind by anyone is prohibited.
- Children and youth shall not have weapons of any kind at any event or program for children or youth. Exceptions to this restriction may be made for camp programs or other specific programs with prior approval.
- Report suspected violations immediately. See ***Reporting suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of children or youth***, below.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFF SITE PROGRAMMING, OVERNIGHT PROGRAMMING, TRANSPORTATION, CAMPS AND TRAVEL**

**See Appendix F**

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN OR YOUTH**

Any adult who witnesses or has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth has taken place, whether at church or away from church, shall report it to Child Protective Services. See ***Important Contact Information***, below.

In addition, anyone who witnesses or has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth has taken place within a facility or program of The Diocese, congregation, or other organization, should immediately inform one or more of the following:

- The Bishop or the Bishop's Office in the case of The Diocese;
- Member of the clergy in charge or the senior warden in the case of a congregation;
- The director, head, or other governing officer in the case of other organizations or events ("Responsible Person"); and/or
- The Diocese Intake Officer in case a member of the clergy is suspected of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

Suspected violations of this policy should be forwarded to the above via any of the following:

- A telephone call
- A letter
- An email
- An in-person meeting

All reports of sexual exploitation, policy violations, or inappropriate behavior under this policy will be taken seriously and reviewed and investigated promptly and impartially.

Clergy in charge receiving reports of violations of this policy shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or unpaid ministry with the church. If the Responsible Person is a lay person, they are responsible for ensuring that appropriate pastoral care is provided for all.

Anyone who suspects a violation of these policies by a member of the clergy shall immediately report the violation to the Bishop's Office and/or the Intake Officer. Anyone can make a report to an Intake Officer.

The Bishop, hearing reports of violations by clergy, or by laity at diocesan events, shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/ or disciplinary action, up to and including canonical disciplinary action, as provided by Title IV of the Constitutions and Canons and/or termination of employment or unpaid ministry with the Diocese.

## **SCREENING**

The Diocese will do background checks on all clergy who are deployed or licensed to officiate within the Diocese. The Diocese will also do background checks on any diocesan employees or volunteers who regularly work with or around children or youth.

Parishes are encouraged to do background checks on all Church Personnel who regularly work with or around children or youth. The more access an individual has to children and youth, the more detailed a background check should be.

Background checks should include the following:

- a. An Application form
- b. Criminal Records and Sexual Offender Registry Checks
- c. Individual Interview
- d. Reference Checks

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Three hours of 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 and all those who fall under the scope of this policy. Each parish or diocesan institution shall maintain a record of those who have attended such trainings.

The Diocese will provide necessary training for these individuals through in-person and online courses through the Mercer School of Theology. Individuals should attend re-training every 3 years. Retraining requirements are outlined in the Mercer Safe Church, Safe Communities catalogue.

Evidence that parishes and institutions are complying with Safe Church, Safe Communities training will be presented to the Bishop as part of all official Episcopal visitations.

## **GENERAL DEFINITIONS**

### **1. Church Personnel**

For the purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel when they are functioning in their respective roles for the church:

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- Seminarians, postulants, and candidates for holy orders.
- 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 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.

**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
- Volunteers licensed under Canon III.4 (such as Lay Eucharistic Visitors)
- All staff, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps
- Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth more than twice a year

**2. Key Holders**

Anyone who has unencumbered access to the facilities

**3. 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 may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older, but still in high school.

**4. 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.
- *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.

## **IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

Episcopal Diocese of Long Island Intake Officer  
The Rev. Canon Patricia S. Mitchell  
Canon for Pastoral Care  
[pmitchell@dioceseli.org](mailto:pmitchell@dioceseli.org) 516-248-  
4800 x 166

Safe Church, Safe Communities Trainings in the Diocese of Long Island  
George Mercer School of Theology 516-248-4800  
x 150

Sterling Infosystems, Inc.  
Criminal Background Screens  
To set up a parish account, contact Nancy Signore/ 516-248-4800 x111 [nsignore@dioceseli.org](mailto:nsignore@dioceseli.org)

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

Child Protective Services 24/hour hotline

1-800-342-3720

## **APPENDIX A – Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth**

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 inter-action 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. Relationships in ministry should, ideally, always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur.

This Code of Conduct has been adopted by \_\_\_\_\_ [Parish] to help the church create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them. All Church Personnel are asked to carefully consider each statement in the Code and within the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse before agreeing to adhere to the statements and continue in service to the church.

### **Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth**

- Church Personnel agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- Church Personnel agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with children and youth as defined in these Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.
- All Church Personnel agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with children and youth.
- In the event that Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, church personnel agree to immediately report their observations.
- All Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.
- Church Personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

## **APPENDIX B – CANONS OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND RESPECTING SAFE CHURCH, SAFE COMMUNITIES' TRAININGS**

### **Title IX, Canon 5: Requirement respecting the Clergy and Laity In The Diocese on the Subjects of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment and Anti-racism Training.**

SECTION I. Education Training on Child Sexual Abuse. Unless excused by the Bishop in writing, all Church Personnel including members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for holy orders,



volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities, vestry members, all employees of this Diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other Diocesan Units, key holders to any church property, the lay leaders of any group with regular access to church property or facilities shall participate in a minimum of three hours of initial training, as approved by the Bishop on issues of Child Sexual Abuse in Church settings.

SECTION II. Education Training on Sexual Harassment. Unless excused by the Bishop in writing, all Church Personnel including members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for holy orders, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities, vestry members, all employees of this Diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other Diocesan Units, key holders to any church property, the lay leaders of any group with regular access to church property or facilities shall participate in a minimum of three hours of initial training, as approved by the Bishop, on issues of sexual harassment in employment, mentor and colleague relationships, and sexual exploitation in pastoral relationships.

SECTION III. Education Training on Anti-Racism. All members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for Holy Orders, and all employees and lay leadership of the diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other diocesan units, shall attend training as approved by the Bishop, on issues of antiracism in church and pastoral relationships.

SECTION IV. Time for Compliance. The time within which such training shall be attended following the adoption of Section I, Section II, and Section III of this Canon shall be as from time to time determined by the Bishop.

## **APPENDIX C - Guidelines for Appropriate Affection**

The Diocese of Long Island and \_\_\_\_\_ Parish 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 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.

1. 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).

2. 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.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- 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
- 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. Examples would be, “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.

## **APPENDIX D - Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children and Youth**

Social media shapes the lives of young people and has the potential to empower ministry. Behavior in the digital sphere is never private. Posted content may be used out of context and out of the control of the originating individuals and organizations, putting them at risk. In addition, these powerfully connective tools are subject to the same dynamic of unequal power and potential for abuse and therefore present a risk in all ministry relationships. Churches face the challenge of identifying and proactively addressing areas of potential risk in social media use in the midst of rapidly evolving technology. The following recommended practices and guidelines are designed to be a flexible template for developing policies and covenants governing the safe use of social media and digital communication in ministry settings.

### General Information about Digital Communications

- All communications sent digitally (email, social networking sites or platforms, notes, texts, or posts, etc.) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and can be shared or reposted to others.
- Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent; that is, occurring in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.

- In the virtual world, healthy boundaries and safe church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world.
- In the virtual world, “friend” can mean anyone with whom you are willing to communicate through that medium. In the physical world, friend can mean much more in terms of intimacy, self-disclosure, mutuality, and expectations for relationship.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world. Check your local applicable laws.

### **Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Churches and Organizations:**

- Establish a policy that outlines professional and institutional standards for profiles and interactions on social networking sites and platforms.
- Establish a policy of transparency regarding social media accounts. The best practice is to have the Diocese, congregation, or organization create and “own” the social media accounts representing the diocese, congregation, or organization respectively and have multiple administrators and/or supervisors with access. If personal accounts are used, a system of monitoring should be established.
- Establish a policy regarding the identification or “tagging” of individuals in online photos or videos. For example, on Facebook, “tagging” someone in a photo or video creates a hyperlink to that person’s profile page that can be clicked by anyone. The best practice is for the Diocese, congregation, or organization not to identify or “tag” individuals. The “tagging” of children and youth should be prohibited. When written permission is provided by a parent/guardian, the captioning of photos or videos of minors may be permitted. The caption should not include the minor’s full name, nor should it create a clickable link to someone’s personal profile. A policy of whether or not an individual can “self-tag” in a diocese, congregation, or organization’s online photo or video should also be established.
- The Diocese, congregation, or organization does not have a responsibility to review or monitor the personal pages or groups that are not sponsored by that Diocese, congregation, or organization, except as described in bullet #2 above. The preceding statement should be included in the Diocese, congregation, or organization’s Social Media Policy.
- Email can be a good method of communication, and it also has the opportunity to be misunderstood. Having a clear understanding and procedure for responding to digital communication that raises concern is prudent for all. Best practices can include not responding immediately and sharing the communication with a supervisor before responding. Phone and face-to-face meetings are preferred when responding to emotionally driven communications or pastoral emergencies.
- When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, obtain a media release for each person and only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.
- Dioceses, congregations, or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

### **Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Children and Youth:**

- Prudent judgement should be used in the time of day a child or youth is contacted through social media. Under normal circumstances, refrain from contact or exchanging texts, chats, or emails before 8:00 am or after 10:00 pm, unless it’s an emergency.

- Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented.
  - Create and use profiles on social networking sites that meet professional and institutional standards.
  - Do not submit connection requests (such as friend requests on Facebook or “Add Me” on Snapchat) to children or youth for personal interactions. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults. Youth may ask to be “friends,” and adults should discern the nature of contact appropriate for healthy ministry.
  - Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all children and youth, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or the appearance of playing favorites.
  - Establish a regular ongoing and consistent system of review that focuses on settings, accessible content, photos, and videos to ensure compliance with professional and institutional standards.
  - Inform parents of children and youth of social networking sites and platforms used within the ministry.
  - When possible, send communication (1) to entire groups, (2) on an individual’s “wall,” or (3) in public areas, rather than in private messages. This includes photos, images and videos.
  - When sending emails to a child or youth that contain personal or private information regarding that child or youth, a copy should be sent to the parents or guardians as well. Examples of these types of emails include: payment due information, specific medical requests or questions, etc. Mass emails sent to an entire group are not required to be copied to parents or guardians.
  - Disclose **ongoing** digital pastoral communications (i.e.: e-mails, Facebook messages, texting, etc.) with children and youth to a parent and/or a supervisor to determine when a referral to a professional provider or resource is needed.
- Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include:
  - Appropriate and inappropriate behavior of members (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, illegal activities, sexual acts, etc.) and the consequence for inappropriate behavior;
  - Who may join and/or view group activity, when participants should leave the group and when/if the group will be disbanded;
  - Description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page;
  - A prohibition of “tagging” photos and videos of children and youth. However, the captioning of photos and videos is permissible with written permission from a parent or guardian;
  - Notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed; and
  - Consequences for breaking the covenant.
- Delete inappropriate material posted in digital groups, address the behavior and report it, if necessary, in accordance with legal and institutional requirements.

- In video calls, follow the same criteria used in telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgement regarding attire and surroundings should be observed.
- Comply with the following best practices regarding “groups” on social networking sites:
  - Have at least two unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two youth administrators for groups that are designed for youth;
  - Use closed groups, but not “hidden” or “secret” groups, for youth;
  - Have only youth administrators invite other youth to join the online group, unless a youth previously asked an adult administrator to invite them to join;
  - Remove any content that shows or describes inappropriate behavior outside the bounds of the established behavioral covenant;
  - Open social networking groups for youth to parents of current members;
  - Remove adult leaders of youth groups and youth who are no longer members, due to departure, removal from position, or are ineligible because they “aged-out” of a program from social networking sites, list serves, etc.;
  - Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

## APPENDIX E - Screening and Training Protocols

Screening and Training Chart	Ministry Function	Public Records	*App/Inter/Ref	*Universal Training
<b>Staff &amp; Contracted Ministers</b> (not covered below)	Church Employees	X	X	X
	Diocesan contractors (1099)	Depends		X
	Clergy	X	X	X
	Church contractors (1099)	Depends		X
	Diocesan Employees	X	X	X
	Diocesan Staff - unpaid	X	X	X
<b>Program Supervisors</b>				
	Child/Youth Choir Director	X	X	X
	Choir Director	X	X	X
	Commissioned Ministry Teams	X	X	X
	Director of Religious Education	X	X	X
	Camp Director	X	X	X
	Youth Minister	X	X	X

<b>Program Participants (non-supervisory)</b>				
	Acolyte Mentor	X		X
	Choir parents			X
	Church School Teacher	X		X
	Counselor in Training	X- 18 and over	X	X
	Nursery Worker - unpaid	X		X
	Parish Nurse	X	X	X
	Teenage assistants			X
	Musicians who work with youth	X	X	X
*Off-site	Camp Counselor	X	X	X
	Confirmation mentors	X	X	X
	Lay Chaplains	X	X	X
	Pastoral Care Teams	X	X	X
*Overnight	Youth Group Leaders	X	X	X
<b>Drivers</b>				
	Drivers	DMV		X
<b>Governance</b>				
	Church Elected			X
	Treasurer	Criminal & Credit		X
	Vestry			X
	Wardens	Criminal & Credit		X
<b>Key Access</b>				
	Altar Guild	Recommended		X
	Building Hosts	Recommended		X
<b>Home Visitors</b>				
	Eucharistic Visitors	X	X	X
	Home Visitors	X	X	X
	Stephen Ministers	X	X	X
	Church Staff- unpaid	X	X	X

* <b>Off-site:</b> Any location other than the sponsoring Episcopal church, institution, facility, or campus.		
* <b>Overnight:</b> Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.		
** <b>App/Inter/Ref</b> ** refers to “application,” “interview” and “reference,” respectively.		
** <b>Universal Training</b> ** refers to all available safe church training modules related to or concerning protection for children and youth. Reference should also be made to the Diocese “Safe Church Policies” which lists the Safe Church training modules required for various groups of Church Personnel		

## **APPENDIX F - Special Considerations for Off-Site Programming, Overnight Programming, Transportation, Camps and Travel**

### **1. Offsite Programs**

Off-site programs, trips, and events are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional development of children and youth. They also present additional challenges for maintaining best practices for safe and healthy ministry. The expectations for safe space, as described above, should be observed off-site.

In the event of uncertainty about application of the policy, the Responsible Person should contact their supervisor with the relevant queries or the Office for Youth & Young Adult Ministries. It is important for all Adult Chaperones and Adult Trip Organizers to review Safe Church, Safe Communities Policies and scenarios in-person prior to traveling.

Because of the unique risks that can’t always be anticipated, it is important to obtain permissions and manage documentation as described below.

#### **A. Prior Approvals**

- Prior approval by the governing body and the member of the clergy in charge is required, and that approval shall be reflected in the minutes of the governing body. Diocesan sponsored programs, trips, or events shall receive prior diocesan approval.
- Written parental approval is required prior to viewing any movie, whether offsite or on-site, rated “PG-13” or above, or participating in any conversation or program containing sexually explicit or violent content.
- These same prior approvals are required when the site is a private residence, hosting such events as cook outs, pool parties, progressive dinners, etc.

#### **B. Registration, Waiver, and Release Forms**

- All children, youth, and adults shall complete and sign a registration form and a waiver and release form before participating in any programs. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms. Such forms can encompass a program year.
  - There must be a parent/guardian’s signature on all release and waiver forms for minors.
  - Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site or online.

- Permission slips shall be provided for each off-site event and shall be signed by the parent/guardian.
- Prior permission for a minor to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required from a parent/guardian.

### C. First Aid and Medications

- Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with children and youth.
- A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.
- A record must be kept for all medication or first aid given to a participant. This record shall include the participant's name, the date and time of service, the name of the person administering medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage, and/or treatment given.
- All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents and the Responsible Person. Exceptions may include inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control pills.
- Only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications.

### D. Supervision

- At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two unrelated adults with one being age 25 or older, preferably reflecting the sex and gender identity of the participants.
- Minimum ratios of adult to child/youth shall be in accordance with American Camp Association (ACA) guidelines as follows:
  - 5 years & younger — 1 adult for each 5 overnight-participants and 1 adult for each 6 day-participants
  - 6–8 years — 1:6 for overnight, and 1:8 for day
  - 9–14 years — 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day
  - 15–18 years — 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day
- Additional adults can provide skills, mentorship, support, encouragement, spiritual guidance, and joy.
- When you have new leaders-in-training, the leadership teams should also have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to provide support.

### E. Insurance

- All trips to off-site destinations must have adequate insurance in case of emergency. For more information, contact your insurance broker.



## 2. Overnight programs

In overnight programing, particular attention will be given to historically excluded or unrecognized people, such as LGBTQ+ and differently-abled individuals. In a situation of unequal power and safety, preferences of these individuals merit additional consideration, accommodation, and action to ensure:

- Participant privacy;
- Maximization of social integration of all participants;
- Minimization of stigmatization of any participants;
- Equal opportunity to participate; and the Safety of all participants.

Other guidelines for overnight programs:

- The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires dioceses, congregations and other organizations to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to: age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy. Adults should have separate showers or separate times for showers.
- Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.
  - No bed, cot, or sleeping bag shall have more than one person sleeping in it.
  - Supervision by two unrelated adults is required in any space where one or more youth are sleeping.
  - It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.
- Participants shall have access to three substantial meals each full day and access to sufficient water.
- Participants shall be given the opportunity for at least seven hours of sleep each 24-hour period, except for programs where parental/guardian permission is given to miss sleep. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by missing sleep.
- Participants shall have some time set aside each day for rest or free time.

Best practice guidelines for hotel stays:

- One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-a-beds, and rollaway beds;
- At least 2 children or 2 youth in each room.
- Adult supervisors or chaperones have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevators;
- Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants;

## 3. Transportation

- For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed: For events that originate and/or terminate at the diocesan, congregation, or organization's facility, all drivers must be at least 21 years of age and provide proof of insurance and a current driver's license, a completed volunteer driver information form, and have a satisfactory DMV records check.
- All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cell phone usage.

- Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation and safety of their children and/or youth to and from the event. This responsibility includes the transportation of any other passengers in their vehicle.

#### 4. Camps and Retreat Centers

All camps, camping programs, and retreat centers of The Diocese shall follow the guidelines for off-site programming established in this policy. In addition, camps should aim to follow American Camp Association standards to the best of the camp's ability.

#### 5. Travel

Travel with children and youth presents amazing opportunities for participants to experience the church and the world on a larger scale with vastly different perspectives of faith communities and their contexts. It also presents challenges to normal safety protocols and opportunities for creativity if managed well. The following policies will help groups prepare for a variety of potential scenarios, as well as for domestic and international travel.

##### Adult Leaders and Chaperones

- Minimum ratios of adult to youth need to be greater due to the possibility of leaving an adult behind with a participant in the event of a medical emergency.
  - 9–14 years — 1:5
  - 15–18 years — 1:7
- Regardless of group size, no group should travel with fewer than three adult chaperones.
- One adult, minimum age 25, should serve as the travel administrator who is responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all necessary documentation, contacts, and forms including:
  - medical releases;
  - community covenant;
  - emergency contacts;
  - itineraries; and
  - cash and/or credit card capacity to address emergencies.
- It is a best practice that, one adult, minimum age 25, should hold a current medical certification to manage administration of necessary and permissible medications, administer immediate and necessary first aid, and triage medical situations to determine if care of an individual needs to be taken to a higher level of care. When this is not possible, one person should be designated to supervise the administration of medications as instructed on medical release forms, and a clinic near your destination should be identified ahead of time in order to respond to health emergencies as rapidly as possible.
- Acceptable medical certifications include:
  - Wilderness Medical Response
  - Outdoor Emergency Care
  - Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
  - Nurse — RN/LPN/Nurse Practitioner

- Physician's Assistant
- Medical Doctor
- Best practice is to designate an adult to serve as back-up to the travel administrator, and as back-up for simple first aid and administration of prescriptions. These could be the same person.
- A copy of all documents should be left with an accountable person at the diocesan, congregation, or organization's office. That person should also serve as the local emergency contact person for communications between the traveling group and families at home.

#### Insurance for Travel

- Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at-least one month prior to travel.
- It is recommended that all travelers carry evidence of personal health insurance by virtue of a copy of the actual card provided to the insured person.
- Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

#### International Considerations

- Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas. Traveling with children or youth under the age of 16 outside of the U.S. may require signed permission from parent/guardian validated by a notary. ([https://help.cbp.gov/s/article/Article-3643?language=en\\_US](https://help.cbp.gov/s/article/Article-3643?language=en_US))
- Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date.
- Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.
- Arrange to have at least two cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your Responsible Person at home.
- A more thorough list of international travel considerations with links to U.S. and global organizations can be found in the **Youth in Mission Manual** here: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/youth-ministries/mission-manual/>