

**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CONNECTICUT
POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH
ADOPTED BY THE BISHOP AND DIOCESAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 26, 2005, revised JUNE 7, 2006 and DECEMBER 6, 2006**

PREAMBLE

This policy is adopted in compliance with 2003 General Convention resolution BOO8. The aim of this policy is to make our Church a safe place, safe for those who worship, safe for those who minister, safe for those who come in need, safe for children and safe for all who seek or serve Christ. We believe that this policy helps us live out our Baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being.

SCREENING AND SELECTION FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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 children or youth. Parishes are required to conduct public records checks on ALL existing and future employees and all existing and future volunteers who regularly work with children or youth. Parishes shall use a company designated by the diocese to conduct public records checks and shall be conducting such checks by January 31, 2007.

For all NEW employees and volunteers who begin to regularly work with children or youth after

December 1, 2006, parishes are required to conduct the following components of a background check in addition to the public records check:

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

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

BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH

Adults shall not:

- a. Provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs or pornography,
- b. Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse of legal drugs at any children's or youth event,
- c. Be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or the misuse of legal drugs at any children's or youth event,
- d. Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior,
- e. Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth,
- f. Discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth.

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

MONITORING PROGRAMS AND INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

At all events and ministries for children and youth there shall be at least two, unrelated adults present. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youths, that adult shall immediately report those circumstances to the Rector or senior warden. 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 and the Vestry. No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the Vestry.

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 youth activities.

Each parish is encouraged to conduct a "safe church audit" annually to review practices and policies within the congregation. Parishes should adopt safe church policies, consistent with the requirements in this policy. Parish policies should be clear, should be posted in areas where activities for children and youth take place and should be given to all adults who regularly work with children or youth and to parents. Parish policies should include the names and phone numbers of the Rector or priest, senior warden, and contact person in the Bishop's office.

Parish computers should have adequate password protection.

Parishes should have clear guidelines and adequate supervision (by parish staff or authorized persons) of anyone using a parish computer to access the Internet. Be advised that any activity on a parish computer is not considered private and may be accessed by authorized persons.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Parishes are strongly encouraged to send parish employees and volunteers who work with children or youth to training on how to prevent child abuse and promote healthy boundaries in church settings. Each parish should maintain a record of those who have attended such training.

The Diocese shall require all clergy and employees and volunteers who work with children or youth at diocesan event to attend training on how to prevent child abuse and promote healthy boundaries in church settings. The Diocese will maintain records of those who have attended the training.

The Diocese will offer the requisite training. Individuals should be re-trained every three to four years. The Bishop's office will approve curriculum and trainers for the requisite training. Current training should be available for those who screen, train or supervise those who regularly work with children or youth.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies shall immediately report the violation to the Rector and senior warden. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies by a clergy person shall immediately report the violation to the Bishop's office.

Anyone who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place at church or in another setting, is strongly encouraged to tell their parish priest or another member of ordained clergy.

Any mandated reporter who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place shall report it to the appropriate civil authority.

Rectors hearing 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 volunteer ministry with the church. The Bishop, hearing reports of violations by clergy, or by adults at diocesan events, shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and /or disciplinary action, up to and including canonical disciplinary action.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Diocesan Office of Pastoral Response can be reached by calling 860-233-4481 or 1-800-842-0126.

The Abuse and Neglect Hotline for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families is
1-800-842-2288.