



ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.

PURPOSE: To provide a clear and firm commitment to the safety of all persons, especially children, by establishing clear policies and procedures for the well-being of all, and especially to insure that children and youth are safe from abuse and neglect.

1. FOR EMPLOYEES

There shall be a screening and selection process for all clergy and lay employees who regularly work with children or youth. This screening and selection process shall include:

- 1.1. A written application.
- 1.2. A public records check using the Diocesan-approved screening instrument.
- 1.3. An interview with the appropriate supervisor
- 1.4. Background check using the Diocesan-approved screening instrument.

2. FOR VOLUNTEERS

There shall be a screening and selection process for all lay volunteers who regularly work with children or youth. This screening and selection process shall include:

- 2.1. A written application.
- 2.2. Reference checks.
- 2.3. An interview prior to commencement of their duties with the appropriate supervisor

3. APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

The following guidelines are intended to assist Employees and Volunteers in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions with children and youth to identify and stop those that may be inherently harmful to children or youth, that are the type used by child molesters to groom children, youth and their parents, or that may create the conditions where abuse can occur more easily. These guidelines should also be used to make decisions about interactions with children and youth in church sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the supervisor of the person making the exception as soon as possible.

- 3.1. All Employees and Volunteers who work regularly with children or youth must agree to comply with St. Luke's Church Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
- 3.2. Nursery children will have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
- 3.3. Employees and Volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children or youth.
- 3.4. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Employees and Volunteers transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis.
- 3.5. Employees and Volunteers will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. Employees and Volunteers will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity.
- 3.6. One-to-one counseling with children or youth will be done in an open or public or other place where private conversations are possible but occur in view of others.
- 3.7. Employees and Volunteers are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
- 3.8. Employees and Volunteers are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
- 3.9. Employees and Volunteers 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.
- 3.10. Employees and Volunteers 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.
- 3.11. Employees and Volunteers 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.
- 3.12. Employees and Volunteers 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.
- 3.13. Employees and Volunteers are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.
- 3.14. Employees and Volunteers 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.

- 3.15. Employees and Volunteers are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment, or restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
- 3.16. Employees and Volunteers are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.

4. MONITORING OF PROGRAMS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- 4.1. There will be no development or initiation of new activities for children or youth without the prior approval of the Clergy.
- 4.2. In every activity the normative requirement is the presence of at least two unrelated adults.

5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 5.1. All Employees and Volunteers who work regularly with children will attend a child abuse prevention workshop, as required by the Diocese.

6. REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS OR POLICY VIOLATIONS

- 6.1. When Employees or Volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors, that may violate any provision of these *Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*, they must immediately report their observations to a member of the Clergy. Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations would be seeking private time with children or youth, taking children or youth on over-night trips without other adults, swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth.
- 6.2. Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported in **one** of the following ways:
 - 6.2.a. A telephone call or meeting with an immediate supervisor for the program.
 - 6.2.b. A telephone call or meeting with a member of the Clergy, if the person is not one of the clergy;
 - 6.2.c. A telephone call or meeting with a church warden, if the person is one of the clergy;
 - 6.2.d. A telephone call to the bishop;
 - 6.2.e. Submit a **Notice of Concern**, signed or unsigned, to the rector and/or the bishop.
- 6.3. All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth will be taken seriously.

7. REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OF CHILDREN OR YOUTH

- 7.1. All Employees are required by this policy to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities.
- 7.2. 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 what he or she is reporting to be true.
- 7.3. Employees and Volunteers are required to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by other Employees or Volunteers directly to the Clergy of St. Luke's Church so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
- 7.4. Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve Employees or Volunteers may be reported to the Diocese of Newark in the following ways:
 - 7.4.a. A telephone call, meeting or fax to the bishop;
 - 7.4.b. A telephone call or meeting with the rector, if the rector is not the person being complained about.
 - 7.4.c. Submit a **Notice of Concern**, signed or unsigned, to the bishop or the rector.
 - 7.4.d. The Diocese of Newark and St. Luke's Church 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 of Newark.