



Church of the Epiphany

Policy for the Protection of Children

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide instruction to the clergy, staff, vestry, and volunteers of the Church of the Epiphany Anglican with regard to requirements and standards for the protection of the church's children and youth.

Responsibility for this Policy

The Rector has overall responsibility for the administration of this policy and for providing all reports requested by the Diocese. In the absence of the Rector, the Associate Rector or the Senior Warden will be responsible.

The Virginia statewide toll-free child abuse hotline is **1-800-552-7096**.

Screening Procedures

Screening Staff

The screening of employees includes:

- Reviewing signed job applications
- National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal background checks (must be renewed no less than every two years)
- Personal and professional reference checks
- Face-to-face interviews
- Signature of potential employee to certify that he/she and other adult members of the household have not been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, nor had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism.

Screening Volunteers

The screening of volunteers in youth and children's ministries includes:

- Minimum of six months attendance at Church of the Epiphany.
- Reviewing signed volunteer applications
- National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks (must be renewed no less often than every two years)
- Personal reference checks
- Face-to-face interviews
- Signature of potential volunteer to certify that he/she and other adult members of the household have not been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, nor had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism.

Training Procedures

Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, as well as learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse. The following training is required.

Reading Requirements

All members of the clergy, vestry, and staff with direct supervision over youth or children must certify that they have read, understood and accepted the *Church of the Epiphany Policy for the Protection of Children*.

Workshop Attendance Requirements

Every two years, clergy, vestry, and those staff and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must complete either of the following:

- Attend a diocesan-approved training workshop on the prevention of child abuse, and submit a copy of the certificate of completion
- Complete the online Sexual Abuse Prevention Course and follow-up test provided by Ministry Safe.

Clergy are responsible to submit to the diocesan office evidence of completed training every two years. The Associate Rector is responsible to track and document the training/retraining of vestry, staff and volunteers.

Interacting Procedures

These procedures help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.

Communication

- Clergy, staff members and volunteers should avoid engaging in any sexually-oriented communications with children and should refrain from discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program.
- Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should report any sexually-oriented communication involving a child to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Use

- Clergy, staff members, volunteers and participants in youth and children's ministries should refrain from use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco products or alcohol while in church facilities, while traveling with or in the presence of children or their parents during church sponsored activities or while working with or supervising children.
- The use of illegal drugs is never permitted.

Sexually-Oriented Materials

- Staff members and volunteers may employ (subject to limitations imposed by the Rector or Rector's designee) age-appropriate materials when leading discussions dealing with human sexuality/sexual abuse prevention/sexual purity.
- Any prospective material will be made available for review for the parents of participants. Notice should be provided to parents in order to allow an opt-out should there be concerns or objections.

Social Media

- Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age established by each social media outlet (e.g., Facebook's minimum age is currently 13).

Photography

- Photos of children will not be used without parental permission.
- Any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications will not be posted without prior parental permission.

Physical Interaction

- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never based on the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children.
- Spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children is prohibited.
- Children are to be disciplined using time outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management.

- Controlled physical restraint of a child may be used to prevent self-injury by the child and/or harm to others or to property.
- Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be immediately reported to parents and the Associate Rector.
- The following standards of interaction with children shall be carefully followed at all times:
 - Appropriate physical affection includes: high-fives, handshakes, fist bumps, thumbs up, head pat, side hug, smiling, pats on the back.
 - Inappropriate physical affection includes: wrestling, tickling, sitting in laps (except nursery-aged children), kissing on the lips, full frontal hugs, commenting on children's bodies, forcing unwanted affection.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the Associate Rector and to the Rector or Senior Warden.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child.
- Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

Restroom Use

Diapering:

- Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent/legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children.
- Changing diapers should always be done in plain sight of other nursery workers; children should not be left unattended while being changed.
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

Toilet Training:

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent/legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
- When children are assisted in bathrooms the stall door will be left partially open.
- Preschool-aged children will never be left unattended in the bathrooms.

Elementary-Aged Children:

- Elementary-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities).
- Staff members and volunteers should take steps to avoid being alone with one child in the restroom. If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the bathroom stall.

First Aid and Medication

- Medication must be administered to a child by his/her parent/legal guardian only.
- In case of an emergency, a volunteer or staff member may administer medicine if no parent is immediately available.
- If medicine is administered in any form, written documentation must be given to the Associate Rector and a parent/legal guardian of the child must be notified.

The Release of Children

- Children are released to a parent/legal guardian only, unless a specific person is designated in advance by a parent/legal guardian.
- Children are not released to other children.

Transportation

- Adult volunteer drivers must provide the church copies of valid driver's license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of insurance.
- Drivers for church sponsored events must be at least 21 years old.
- Child safety seats that meet federal standards must be used for transporting young children.
- Drivers and passengers must follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines.
- Adults should not be in a car alone with a child (except in a familial situation). Middle and high school students may be given rides to and from events by a screened adult volunteer (even if this means an adult is alone in a car with a child) but the child's parent/legal guardian must approve of the ride.
- Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops should be avoided when possible. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be done as a group.

Monitoring Procedures

Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred. Clergy, staff, vestry, and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children's and youth activities in all settings at all times.

- All children and youth activities shall be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals.
- No child will be left unattended in the building or on the property during or following a church activity.
- Clergy, staff, and volunteers will conduct all meetings and interactions with children and youth in settings where they can be observed by others.
- Parents are welcome to visit children's and youth programs.

On-Site Supervisory Plan

Registration Process

Children in the nursery and preschool Sunday School classes are signed-in and signed-out each week by a parent/legal guardian at their appropriate room. Children in the elementary Sunday School class do not need to be signed-in and out.

Personnel

Only screened and trained staff and volunteers may work in the nursery, Sunday School classes, and youth programs. A minimum of two screened and trained staff/volunteers must provide supervision at all times.

Adult-Child Ratios

Infants and Toddlers: 2 adults for up to 8 children; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 4 children

Preschool: 2 adults for up to 16 children; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 8 children

School Age: 2 adults for up to 36 children; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 18 children

The Physical Environment:

- The nursery and all Sunday School classrooms shall have interior windows which will not be obstructed.
- Clergy, staff and volunteers will conduct all meetings and interactions with children and youth in settings in which they can be observed by others.

Supervision

On Sunday mornings, the Associate Rector or his designee will check to insure that the nursery and Sunday School classes are fully staffed.

Bathroom Procedures

Diapering:

- Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent/legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children.
- Changing diapers should always be done in plain sight of other nursery workers; children should not be left unattended while being changed.

Restroom Use:

- Only screened and trained staff/volunteers or the child's parent/legal guardian will accompany a child to the restroom.
- When children are assisted in the bathroom, the stall door will be left partially open.
- Preschool-aged children will never be left unattended in the bathroom.

Injury/Incident Reporting

Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report and advise the Associate Rector when a child is injured or hurt in any way.

First Aid and Medication

- Medication must be administered to a child by his/her parent/legal guardian only.
- In case of an emergency, a volunteer or staff member may administer medicine if no parent is immediately available.
- If medicine is administered in any form, written documentation must be given to the Associate Rector and a parent/legal guardian of the child must be notified.

Discipline

Discipline concerns will be shared directly with the parent/legal guardian as needed by the staff/volunteer who observed them. The Associate Rector will be informed of any disciplinary concerns by the staff/volunteer.

Release of Children

- Children are released to a parent/legal guardian only, unless a specific person is designated in advance by a parent/legal guardian.
- Children are not released to other children.

Off-Site Supervisory Plan

Registration Process

Written permission from a parent/legal guardian is required for all off-site activities. A registration form and details of the activity will be provided.

Personnel

- Only screened and trained staff and volunteers may supervise children and youth off-site activities.
- A minimum of two screened and trained staff/volunteers must provide supervision at all times.
- At least one adult staff/volunteer of the same sex as attendees must provide supervision for children/teens on an overnight trip.

Adult-Child Ratios

Preschool Age: 2 adults for up to 16 children; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 8 children.

School Age: 2 adults for up to 36 children; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 18 children.

Interactions Between Adults and Children/Youth

- Staff and volunteers will conduct all meetings and interactions with children and youth in settings in which they can be observed by another leader.
- Adults are not allowed to change clothes (i.e., be naked or in underwear) in the presence of children/youth.

Bathroom Use

- Only screened and trained staff/volunteers or the child's parent/legal guardian will accompany a child to the restroom if needed.
- When children are assisted in the bathroom, the stall door will be left partially open.
- Preschool-aged children will never be left unattended in the bathrooms.
- Any showering will be done in private showers. Adults will be appropriately clothed whenever in the presence of children/youth.

Injury/Incident Reporting

Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report and advise the Associate Rector when a child is injured or hurt in any way.

First Aid and Medication

- Any medication must have a parent or guardian-signed authorization stating exactly when and in what doses medications will be administered.
- Medication will be kept in the possession of a staff member/volunteer leader and not in the possession of the child/youth.
- Prescription medication must be in its original container and labeled by a physician or pharmacist. An over-the-counter medication must be in the original container with the name of the medication visible.
- In case of an emergency, a volunteer or staff member may administer medicine if no parent is immediately available.
- If medicine other than regular prescription medication is administered in any form, written documentation must be given to the Associate Rector and a parent/legal guardian of the child must be notified.

Discipline

Discipline concerns will be shared directly with the parent/guardian as needed by the staff/volunteer who observed them. The Associate Rector will be informed of any disciplinary concerns by the staff/volunteer.

Transportation

- Adult volunteer drivers must provide the church copies of valid driver's license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of insurance.
- Drivers for church sponsored events must be at least 21 years old.
- Child safety seats that meet federal standards must be used for transporting young children.
- Drivers and passengers must follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines.
- Adults should not be in a car alone with a child (except in a familial situation). Middle and high school students may be given rides to and from events by a screened adult volunteer (even if this means an adult is alone in a car with a child) but the child's parent/legal guardian must approve of the ride.
- Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops should be avoided when possible. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be done as a group.

Sleeping Arrangements

- Only children/youth of the same sex will sleep in the same room.
- Sleeping accommodations will be chaperoned by at least two staff members or volunteers of the same sex as the children.
- When it is necessary for leaders to sleep in the same room as students, at least two adults of the same sex as the children will be in the room.

Release of Children

- Children are released to a parent/legal guardian only, unless a specific person is designated in advance by a parent/legal guardian.
- Children are not released to other children.

Responding and Reporting Procedures

Responding to a Child Victim

One of several ways in which the clergy, staff member, or volunteer may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that a child himself or herself shares. If a child discloses abuse or neglect, the clergy, staff member, or volunteer receiving such a communication should attempt to:

- Respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk.
- If reasonably possible, ask a staff member, trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/youth's account.
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the child know that he/she is believed.
- Assure the child that any abuse was not his/her fault.
- If helpful, tell the child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse.
- Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure. Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint the child's recollection and account.
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child disclosed. This information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Child Abuse.
- Be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened. Discussion about the information should be limited to appropriate church and legal authorities.

Reporting to Church Authorities

The procedure for reporting to appropriate church leaders any incident or allegation of child abuse or neglect shall be as follows:

- Report the suspected abuse to the Rector and Senior Warden (or Associate Rector if Rector or Senior Warden is the subject of the allegation).
- Complete a Report of Suspected Child Abuse and give completed confidential form to the Rector or Associate Rector.
- Immediately suspend the person accused of abuse from all duties involving any further contact with children. The church leadership will determine whether the person accused of abuse will continue in ministry.
- Designated clergy should document any actions taken regarding the abuse reported and retain the documentation in confidential files.
- The Rector will notify the parents where appropriate.
- The Rector will notify the Bishop.
- The Rector will notify the church's legal counsel.
- Unless the church's legal counsel advises otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company.

The Virginia statewide toll-free child abuse hotline is **1-800-552-7096**.

Internal Church Communication and Reporting

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall promptly report to the Associate Rector or to the Rector whenever the clergy, staff member, or volunteer:

- Is involved in or becomes aware of any sexually-oriented communications involving a child connected with the church; or
- Is involved in or becomes aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a child by a clergy person, a staff member, or a volunteer; or
- Is arrested for or convicted of, becomes aware that a member of his/her household is arrested for or convicted of, or becomes aware that a person who is attending the church has been arrested for or convicted of any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; has been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; has committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism.

Home Group Procedures

The Diocese and its churches do not have, and therefore do not exercise, control over home groups¹. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child.

In keeping with diocesan recommendations, the following are suggested for home groups where children are present:

- Supervision of children is done by two screened and trained individuals. Supervision by a single individual is never a good idea.
- The physical environment is inspected and prepared for child safety for the developmental age of those being served.
- For any child who requires assistance, parents are responsible for diapering and meeting other restroom needs.

¹ "Home group" is defined for purposes of this policy as a small group meeting in a home for Bible study, worship, fellowship, etc.

Documentation Requirements

The church is responsible for obtaining and keeping the following documentation:

- Employee and volunteer applications for those working with youth and children's ministries
- National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks *renewed every two years*
- Personal and professional reference checks
- Certification that the employee or volunteer has read, understood, and accepted the *Church of the Epiphany Policy for the Protection of Children*
- Proof that each volunteer has completed the necessary Ministry Safe training (or a diocesan-approved alternative)
- Written supervisory plans
- Reports of suspected child abuse
- For drivers: copy of valid driver's license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of insurance



Report of Suspected Child Abuse

Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file

Information Regarding the Person Suspected of Child Abuse:

Name of suspected abuser: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Title/relationship to the church (if any): _____

Information Regarding Suspected Victim(s):

Name of suspected victim: _____

Age: _____ Male/Female: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

Name of any other suspected victim: _____

Age: _____ Male/Female: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

Information Regarding Incident(s) of Suspected Child Abuse:

How did you become suspicious of possible abuse?

Describe any physical evidence of the suspected abuse:

Describe each incidence of suspected sexual abuse, including the type of abuse, date(s), time(s), and location(s) of suspected abuse:

Name any eyewitness to each suspected abuse incident (additional information regarding witnesses is sought below), and describe how that witness viewed the event:

Information Regarding Witnesses to Suspected Child Abuse:

Name of witness: _____

Age of witness: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

Name of additional witness: _____

Age of witness: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

Information Regarding Person(s) to Whom Suspected Abuse was Reported:

Name and title of church official to whom the abuse initially was reported (for example, Sunday School teacher, Rector, etc.): _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Date that initial report was made: _____

Name and title of the person making the initial report to the church official: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church (if any) _____

Was the suspected abuse reported to Child Protective Services (“CPS”)?

If yes, state the date the report was made to CPS: _____
Name and title of person reporting to CPS: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (home/work/cell): _____
Name of CPS worker contacted: _____
CPS contact’s telephone number: _____

Was the suspected abuse reported to police?

If yes, state the date the report was made to police: _____
Name and title of person reporting to police: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (home/work/cell): _____
Police department and contact person: _____
Police contact’s telephone number: _____

Were the parents notified?

If yes, the date parents were notified: _____
Name and title of person notifying parents: _____
Parents’ telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Was suspected abuse reported to the Diocese via telephone?

If yes, the date report was made to the Diocese: _____
Name and title of person reporting to the Diocese: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (home/work/cell): _____
Diocese contact person: _____
Diocese contact’s telephone: _____

Is a copy of this completed report being sent to the Diocese?

If yes, state date when report is being sent: _____
Name and title of person sending report to the Diocese: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (home/work/cell): _____
Diocese contact person to whom report is being sent: _____

Information Regarding Person Completing this Form:

Name and title: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (home/work/cell): _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____



Policy for the Protection of Children Acknowledgement Form

I certify that I have read and understood the *Church of the Epiphany Policy for the Protection of Children*.
I further certify that I will abide by the provisions of this policy as long as I am an employee/volunteer of
the church.

Printed Name

Signature

Date