

Child and Youth Protection

Policy Manual



Anglican Diocese
of South Carolina

**IF YOU ARE CONSULTING THIS POLICY MANUAL IN A CRISIS SITUATION,
CONTACT YOUR RECTOR OR THE CANON FOR SAFE CHURCHES.**

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS FOR THE DIOCESAN OFFICE, PLEASE EMAIL THE
CANON FOR SAFE CHURCHES (CANON LAURA BOWMAN) AT
LBOWMAN@ADOSC.ORG OR CALL HER DIRECT LINE AT (843) 241-1429.**

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ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF SOUTH CAROLINA CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY (THE “POLICY”)

It is the policy of the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina (the “ADOSC” or “the Diocese”) that the Diocese will not tolerate any form of abuse of children or youth involving clergy, lay staff members, volunteers or other persons. Everyone who serves the church through educational, pastoral, recreational or other activities is expected to maintain the highest biblical standards in relationships with those to whom they minister, avoiding any form of misconduct. That commitment extends to sexual, physical and emotional behavior. Compliance with the Policy is mandatory for all ADOSC churches.¹ The Diocese will proactively implement procedures to train, communicate and respond to incidents of abuse.

In order to implement the Policy, the ADOSC has also promulgated important compliance requirements and deadlines for ADOSC churches found in this ADOSC Child and Youth Protection Policy Manual (this “Policy Manual”). Please carefully review this Policy Manual and the compliance deadlines contained herein, knowing that even though policies cannot provide protection, our combined training, education and compliance can. Together, compliance with the requirements found in this Policy Manual can keep us accountable, aware and ready to serve a world where some people cause harm within the Church.

In addition, because the safety of children and youth is of the highest importance, those who have a civil or criminal record of child abuse and/or domestic violence are not allowed to serve in a children’s ministry or youth program.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE²

Child abuse, in practical terms, refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child’s physical, emotional, mental health or welfare. South Carolina Code of Laws § 63-7-20 defines the crime of child abuse or neglect. Under this section, parents, guardians, or some other person responsible for the child’s welfare commits child abuse or neglect if they:

1. Inflict physical or mental injury to a child, allow such harm to be inflicted, or do (or fail to do) something that presents a substantial risk of such harm to a child. Corporal punishment may be excluded from this in some cases;
2. Commit sexual offenses against a child, allow sexual offenses to be committed, or do (or fail to do) something that presents a substantial risk of sexual offenses against a child;
3. Fail to supply a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, supervision, or health care, where such failure results in physical or mental injury to a child or a substantial risk of that happening;
4. Abandon a child;

¹ As used in the Policy and this Policy Manual, the term “church” or “churches” refers to all parishes and missions of the ADOSC.

² While this Policy Manual distinguishes between policies for children and youth, South Carolina law does not distinguish between children and youth and applies to all children under the age of 18. The Diocese recognizes that there may be victims over the age of 18; please confer with the Canon for Safe Churches for guidance on such cases.

5. Condone, encourage, or approve the commission of delinquent acts by a child;
6. Inflict female genital mutilation or do (or fail to do) something that presents a substantial risk of female genital mutilation; or
7. Commit any of the above six offenses that cause any children that subsequently enter their care to be at substantial risk.

ADOSC REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In the State of South Carolina, clergy are considered mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect. Although South Carolina law recognizes an exception to the duty to report where an ordained clergy member receives a confidential communication properly entrusted to him or her, it is the policy and requirement of the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina that a member of the clergy who hears a penitent confess to child abuse and/or neglect *must report such child abuse and/or neglect promptly to the civil authorities*. See Bishop's Pastoral Directive included herein as Appendix XI. Clergy and their churches that fail to perform this duty may be subject to discipline. For churches, this may mean loss of diocesan resources and privileges. In cases of serious neglect of duty, clergy may find themselves subject to discipline, including suspension or inhibition.

BISHOP EDGAR'S INTRODUCTION



Thank you for your willingness to serve the children and/or youth at your church. To ensure you are equipped to serve the children and/or youth in your care, please carefully review this Policy Manual, which describes best practices and requirements for protecting children and youth in the churches and ministries of the ADOSC. These guidelines are intended to foster a healthy and nurturing environment in which children and youth can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sadly, the reasons for protection policies are numerous (See Appendix I). The harmful effects of sexual abuse are consistent with what one would expect with such a destructive act and often persist into adulthood. Abused youth often become adults who suffer from low self-esteem, are unable to form and keep healthy relationships, and who struggle to maintain healthy boundaries.

The protection of children and youth is not a packaged program that takes place during defined hours. As you participate in this process, you join with the many who are committed to protecting and serving those most vulnerable. We're grateful for the many ways you offer your time and gifts to the service of God's people. It is through the efforts and collaboration of those like you - volunteers, clergy, staff members, and lay leaders - that the Church is able to serve those who are entrusted to us and to lead them in the ways of faith.

If you have any questions about the Policy or this Policy Manual, please email the [Canon for Safe Churches](#).

In His Service,

Bishop Chip Edgar

COLLECT FOR THE CARE OF CHILDREN

Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom so to train them, that they may love all that is true, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, following the example of their Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

(2019 BCP, p. 666)

GUIDING VALUES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Love, understood as willing the good of the other, is our overall highest value. Cherishing and treasuring children and youth automatically rules out unkindness and abuse of all kinds. In serving our children and youth, we seek to be the kinds of people who could and would follow the teaching of Jesus to love our neighbor as our self. We don't ever want to use children or youth to satisfy something in us. We want to serve them, unto growth: in Christ, in the Spirit, in the Kingdom of God, and in love and service to others.

Respect, admiration and reverence are close seconds to love. As leaders in children's and youth ministry you do not merely serve the next generation; you, working with the Spirit, shepherd into being the glorious purposes of God for humanity—helping children and youth live out the precious potential for doing good that God created within them. Such a view of your work will eliminate all manner of damaging God's creation and will spark in you a strong desire to protect youth from any predator.

USER GUIDE

This Policy Manual is intended to be a resource and reference for Rectors, Congregation Coordinators, Ministry Supervisors, Vestries, church staff members and volunteers. The appendices to this Policy Manual include important checklists and requirements that each church's Congregation Coordinator and Rector must carefully review and work together to comply with.

DEFINITIONS

Child/Children:

For purposes of this Policy Manual, references to a "child" or "children" are intended to refer to one or more persons under the age of 12 years (unless the context clearly indicates otherwise).

Youth:

For purposes of this policy, references to "youth" are intended to refer to any one or more persons who are at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. The term "youth" also includes persons who are 18 years old or older, but still in high school. The term "student," for purposes of this policy, means any child or youth served by the church in any capacity.

Regularly Work with Children or Youth:

For purposes of this Policy Manual, the following personnel are included in the definition of church staff members and volunteers who *Regularly Work with Children or Youth*:

1. All clergy, whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise, who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All staff members or volunteers who are regularly present in areas of the church facility or on the church's grounds where children or youth are present.
3. All persons who supervise (or assist with supervising) children or youth in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.
4. All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle more often than occasionally.
5. Any paid personnel whose living quarters are on the grounds of the church, school or other related agency.
6. All Vestry members or other members of similar decision-making groups who have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs or activities for children or youth.

Examples of church staff members who *Regularly Work with Children or Youth* include, but are not limited to:

1. Children or youth choir directors;
2. Organists who work with children or youth;
3. Lay children's or youth ministers;
4. Volunteer children's or youth directors;
5. All staff members or volunteers who work or assist in the nursery more than four times a year;
6. All staff members or volunteers who work in the nursery if they are the only person over 21 who is present at any time;
7. All persons, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps; and
8. Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth more than twice a year.

The Canon for Safe Churches:

Has overall responsibility, in consultation with the Bishop and the Standing Committee, for the administration and implementation of the Policy and this Policy Manual on behalf of the ADOSC. The [Canon for Safe Churches](#) provides guidance and training on the implementation of the Policy and this Policy Manual to Rectors and Congregation Coordinators. The [Canon for Safe Churches](#) may also directly receive reports of abuse.

The Congregation Coordinator:

Oversees local implementation of child and youth protection in the local church in accordance with this Policy Manual. The Congregation Coordinator should be someone other than the Rector.

The Ministry Supervisor:

Supervises youth or children, such as a Children's Minister or a Youth Minister. The Ministry Supervisor, whether a volunteer or a staff member, is responsible to partner with the Rector and the Congregation Coordinator to implement this Policy Manual in his or her area of ministry.

The Rector:

Has overall responsibility for the administration of the Policy and this Policy Manual within the church he/she leads and for providing all reports requested by the Diocese. For purposes of this Policy Manual, references to the “Rector” are intended to refer to the ecclesiastical authority in the church. In the absence of a Rector, the Vicar, Priest-in-Charge, Lay Leader, or Senior Warden (as applicable) is responsible for the administration of the Policy and this Policy Manual. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas specifically requiring action by the Rector.

The Volunteer/Staff Member:

Is responsible for complying with and acting upon the policies for the protection of children and youth contained in this Policy Manual. In all matters concerning children and youth, volunteers and staff members are responsible to the Rector and the Congregation Coordinator (if not the same person). If you are ever in doubt about who is in charge of overseeing child protection in your volunteer or staff environment, ask your Rector.

Youth: (See pg. 4)

FIVE-STEP PROTECTION PROCESS

The Diocese and your congregation are committed to creating a positive and healthy environment for children and youth through a five-step approach:

1. Screening
2. Training
3. Interacting
4. Monitoring
5. Responding and Reporting

Please read carefully for practical guidelines and best practices. Your knowledge, commitment and participation are invaluable to this process—we can’t do it without you!

STEP 1: SCREENING

Congregations use screening tools like background checks and reference checks to have the greatest assurance that the staff members and volunteers they are assembling and monitoring are properly suited and adequately trained for the outlined responsibilities. These screening procedures apply to everyone who serves at your church or volunteers with children and/or youth, even for special events and day camps. Your church is expected to know and comply with applicable state laws and insurance terms/conditions. Thank you for your cooperation. *(For more information about screening see pg. 29 of the Congregation Coordinator Guide.)*

STEP 2: TRAINING

Training is an important deterrent to abuse and focuses on recognizing inappropriate behaviors and the warning signs of potential abuse.

In-person training at the parish is an important part of learning how to respond to the challenges of protecting children and youth. But it is not the only part of training. Reading and understanding this Policy Manual is key in your training.

Your training also includes Praesidium Academy, the sexual abuse awareness training program endorsed by the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina. If you have received sexual abuse awareness training through a different program, including training required and provided by local school districts, you may ask your Congregation Coordinator if that sexual abuse awareness training meets the requirements of the Diocese as outlined in this Policy Manual.

Every twenty-four months, all clergy, lay ministers, staff members and volunteers who Regularly Work with Children or Youth must complete Praesidium Sexual Abuse Awareness Training refresher courses or a Diocese-approved equivalent. Your church will provide materials and instructions. Praesidium Sexual Abuse Awareness training must be successfully completed before clergy, lay ministers, staff members and volunteers who Regularly Work with Children or Youth begin to work with children and/or youth. If you have any questions about whether you have completed your training or if it has expired, ask your Congregation Coordinator.

(For more information about training see pg. 31 of the Congregation Coordinator Guide.)

STEP 3: INTERACTING PROCEDURES

Organized into categories you may encounter in your work with children and youth, the following best practices help children, youth and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse. Your church is committed to protecting students in its care through promoting a positive, nurturing environment.

Care should be taken to ensure that an appropriate staff/volunteer to student ratio is implemented for any particular youth or children's program.

YOUTH PROCEDURES

PHYSICAL INTERACTING

This is a vital time and place to model Christ-like relationships and encourage students to grow spiritually through developing healthy, trusting relationships. God, through Jesus, has made our bodies sacred places

where God has chosen to dwell. Our faith in the resurrection of the body, therefore, calls us to care for our own and one another's bodies with love.

The following guidelines are to be followed by those working in youth programs:

- Appropriate physical contact between staff members or volunteers and students can be important for students' development and is generally suitable in the church setting.

• **Appropriate physical affection may include:**

- holding hands when praying;
- high-fives;
- handshakes;
- fist bumps;
- thumbs up;
- head pat;
- side hug;
- smiling; and
- pats on the back.

• **Inappropriate physical affection includes:**

- wrestling;
- tickling;
- sitting on laps (except in nursery aged children);
- kissing on the lips;
- full frontal hugs;
- commenting on children's bodies; and
- forcing unwanted affection.

It's worth noting that while the above "appropriate" behaviors (in the box above left) are considered "acceptable," not all children and youth will be comfortable with the above. When such behaviors are discovered to be unwelcome by the child or youth, it is inappropriate for these behaviors to continue.

- Inappropriate physical contact and/or displays of affection are forbidden. These include any physical contact listed (in the box above right), as well as any physical contact or other display of affection that could be perceived by the other person as unwelcome, sexual, or more intimate than warranted (given the nature of the relationship). These also include any physical contact or other display of affection which may be offensive to an observer. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to your Ministry Supervisor, Congregation Coordinator and/or Rector. This includes inappropriate touching and displays of affection between students. Students who may be dating other persons who are present at a church event should be advised that church events are not times when they may engage in public displays of affection for one another.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the student, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other students or staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.

- Physical contact in any form should not give an appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in youth ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant student. A student's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Additionally, staff members and volunteers should not make comments about other people's bodies.
- Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.
- Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others. This includes being aware of student-to-student affection. Church events are not functions for dating couples to display their affections for one another. These events are also not meant to foster flirtatious behavior that results in inappropriate touching, comments, or the like. Staff members and volunteers should be cognizant of these types of interactions and inform students it is unacceptable behavior that is not allowed.
- Report inappropriate behavior immediately to your Ministry Supervisor, Congregation Coordinator and/or Rector.
- Report suspected abuse immediately to your Rector.
- Contact sports necessarily involve physical touch, and they have long been a part of youth social activities. Many of these activities should be considered as appropriate for youth programs. However, discretion and wisdom should always be used in planning and supervising the types of activities promoted at events to minimize physical contact that could be perceived as inappropriate.

PHYSICAL PRIVACY

Staff members and volunteers in youth ministry should never be nude in the presence of students in their care. In any situation that might include the possibility or necessity of nudity (*i.e.*, changing clothes during a pool party, showering, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), everyone is to change privately. This includes staff members, volunteers and youth.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS

Your church recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff members and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Ordinarily, staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are

present and where interactions can be easily observed and interruptible. What we want to establish is transparency; what we want to avoid is secrecy.

Leaders are expected to model emotionally healthy relationships. For example, they do not show clear favoritism. As you spend time with students, an attraction may develop. If you suspect that a student has developed an attraction to you, or is flirting with you, or if you find yourself developing an attraction to a student, you should immediately disclose that to the Ministry Supervisor, Congregation Coordinator and/or Rector. Further discussions will follow to determine the best path forward. Reporting these kinds of feelings or actions quickly is important to handling the situation well and ensures appropriate protections for students, staff members and volunteers.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain youth ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for youth, staff members and volunteers (*i.e.*, lock-ins, mission trips, ski trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will observe the following rules:

- Ordinarily, an individual student should not be housed alone with only one other student. An individual student should not be housed alone with only one adult under any circumstances (unless the adult is a family member). All adult staff members and volunteers must have completed their church's screening and training process.
- Overnight sleeping arrangements are expected to be documented in writing. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be approved by the Ministry Supervisor, Congregation Coordinator and/or Rector prior to the activity.
- Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn by both boys and girls; both tops and bottoms.
- In the event of a sleepover that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep separately, properly supervised by adult volunteers and/or staff members of the same gender.
- Staff members and/or volunteers will monitor sleeping arrangements. Staff members and volunteers shall not physically touch a sleeping student, except in an emergency.
- Staff members and volunteers shall refrain from sitting on the beds of the students except in an emergency.
- Taking into consideration the various settings of ministry, the Ministry Supervisor is expected to exercise sound judgment based upon the circumstances and/or context (*i.e.*, wilderness camping, mission trips, etc.)
- We encourage proactivity in changing or modifying any housing accommodation that makes anyone uncomfortable with real or potential sexual dynamics or that otherwise presents a potential threat to one's safety or security. This includes being aware of students who may be dating or flirting to ensure those students are not put in positions where they could be in compromising situations while under the church's supervision.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS.

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and students should be positive and uplifting. In serving youth, we are to follow the teaching of Jesus to love our neighbor as our self. Your church's staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions edifying, constructive, and mindful of their mission to encourage youth in their potential for doing good that God created within them. To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to students in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, harassing, intimidating, shaming, bullying, derogatory, demeaning, sexual, or humiliating.

Inappropriate verbal interactions could occur through any form of communication (speech, email, social media, texts, etc.) and include any comments of a sexual nature, including sexual innuendo and coarse joking. No commentary on sexual qualities/features (whether negative or positive) of any student is ever appropriate, nor is any communication with any student about the sexual qualities/features of any other person. Any such commentary is strictly prohibited. Any verbal interaction intimating, encouraging, requesting, soliciting or otherwise condoning any sexual behavior of any student is strictly prohibited. These prohibitions apply even if such communication is initiated by students. Any such initiation should be reported to the Ministry Supervisor immediately.

Inappropriate verbal interactions include unwanted sexual advances (including but not limited to advances via social media, texting, etc.), requests for sexual favors, and/or verbal conduct of a sexual nature where:

1. submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of service or employment or as a basis for decisions; or
2. such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's well-being by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive environment.

Refrain from discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about your own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

You may use (subject to limitations imposed by the Rector and/or Rector's designee) age-appropriate materials when leading discussions dealing with human sexuality/sexual abuse prevention/sexual purity. We anticipate these conversations and presentations will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Guiding Values described earlier in this Policy Manual. Make any prospective program material available to the parents of participants for review, and give parents sufficient notice to opt out, should they have concerns or objections.

You may overhear or students may tell you directly about themselves or other students sending nude pictures/sexting. This should be immediately reported to the Ministry Supervisor and the Rector. The students you are working with are still considered minors and nude pictures of themselves constitute child

pornography. Sending and receiving nude or sexually provocative photographs of minors may subject those involved to criminal liability. Students should be informed of the severe harm they could experience if they send or receive such photos. Students should understand that nude photos may not be kept between the sender and original recipient, which can lead to students being severely harmed.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Contemporary gender issues and sexual ethics are complex. The evolution of culturally normative behaviors and practices is changing the types of conversations and questions that youth may introduce in a ministry setting. We anticipate that youth ministry will include discussions and lessons about dating, relationships, sex and human sexuality. We expect ministry interactions and discussions to reflect the values and biblical virtues present in healthy, Godly relationships. There is no tolerance for staff members or volunteers to make sexual jokes or enter into conversations with youth about sexual activity unless it is to promote biblical values and/or counsel about the topic.

We also recognize that contemporary cultural trends and attitudes about gender and sexual ethics are complex and rapidly changing. You may find students wrestling with issues around gender fluidity, gender dysphoria, same-sex attraction or other situations which may challenge the existing policies. These situations may require specific knowledge or understanding so we can care for individual students in a loving and caring community setting. In consultation with the Bishop, the Rector is responsible for local adaptation around specific ministry situations and with regards to suitable protection practices within the parameters of the ADOCS's Constitution and Canons, including Standing Resolution 12, which provides that "God wonderfully creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen. 1:26-27)."

PARENTAL CONTACT AND INVOLVEMENT

Parents with youth participating in ministry activities and programs must be contacted if their child becomes severely ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in church programs.

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with youth programs must complete their church's volunteer application and screening process.

CHILDREN PROCEDURES

PHYSICAL INTERACTION

The following guidelines are to be followed by those working in children's programs:

- Make sure that any physical contact is for the benefit of the child, and never based on your own emotional needs.

- In accordance with ADOSC policy, do not use physical discipline in any form for the behavioral management of children. Any necessary discipline of children should be through use of non-physical methods of behavior management.
- In exigent circumstances, you may use physical restraint to prevent self-injury by the child and/or harm to others or to property. Any such use of physical restraint should be immediately reported to the Rector.
- Immediately report significant new or unusual behavior to the child’s parents, as well as the Ministry Supervisor or the Rector.
- Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children’s development and is generally suitable in the church setting.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate physical affection may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ holding hands when praying; ➤ high-fives; ➤ handshakes; ➤ fist bumps; ➤ thumbs up; ➤ head pat; ➤ side hug; ➤ smiling; and ➤ pats on the back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate physical affection includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ wrestling; ➤ tickling; ➤ sitting on laps (except in nursery aged children); ➤ kissing on the lips; ➤ full frontal hugs; ➤ commenting on children’s bodies; and ➤ forcing unwanted affection.
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- Inappropriate touching and displays of affection are forbidden. Report any inappropriate behavior by a staff member or volunteer to the Ministry Supervisor, Congregation Coordinator and/or Rector.
- Immediately report suspected abuse to the Rector. Suspected abuse may also be reported directly to the [Canon for Safe Churches](#).
- Only give physical contact and appropriate affection in observable places. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Avoid even the appearance of wrongdoing in the area of physical contact. Your personal behavior must foster trust at all times. Make your personal conduct above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child’s preference not to be touched must be respected at all times.
- You are responsible for protecting children under your supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

RESTROOM USE

NURSERY-AGED AND SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Because nursery-aged and special needs children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, please observe the following policies:

DIAPERING

- Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child’s parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Change diapers in plain sight of other nursery workers; do not leave children unattended while they are being changed.
- As soon as you change the soiled diaper, re-clothe and re-diaper the child immediately.

TOILET TRAINING AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Do not force any child to toilet train.
- Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child’s parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
- Ensure that the bathroom or stall is empty before a child enters.
- Leave the stall door partially open when you are assisting a child in the bathroom.
- One suggested practice is to stand in the doorway of the bathroom so that the nursery worker is readily observable, able to provide assistance to the child as needed, and positioned to prevent other adults from entering the restroom.
- Do not leave preschool-aged children unattended in bathrooms.
- Assist children with straightening their clothing before they return to the room with other children.
- Handle “accidents” by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

ELEMENTARY-AGED CHILDREN

- You may accompany elementary-aged children to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. You may also use a same-aged-peer buddy system.
- Take steps to avoid being alone with one child in the restroom. If you have to go into the restroom to check on an individual child, seek out another worker to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try verbally to assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

- You are responsible for releasing children in your care at the close of services or activities only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. It is presumed that a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child. If possible, get written instructions from the parents giving the name(s) of any individual authorized to pick up the child. If the parent has not done so, offer to write down the instructions and have the parent sign their approval.
- If you are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, contact your immediate supervisor before releasing the child.

COMMUNICATION

- As a volunteer, strive to keep verbal interactions with children, parents and other staff members encouraging and constructive. Always be mindful of your mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children.
- Make sure that no reasonable observer could construe any of your conversations or language as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Always refrain from swearing in the presence of children.
- Don't engage in any sexually oriented communications with children (except as noted in the educational or abuse-reporting contexts addressed in this policy). Refrain from discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about your own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities.
- Report any sexually oriented communications involving a child to the Ministry Supervisor and the Rector.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

- You may use (subject to limitations imposed by the Rector) age-appropriate materials when leading discussions dealing with human sexuality, sexual abuse prevention, and/or sexual purity.
- Make any prospective material available to the parents of participants for review in advance of any discussions with children dealing with human sexuality, sexual abuse prevention, and/or sexual purity.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROCEDURES

MEDIA

Ministry supervisors should inform parents in advance and use good judgment regarding the selection of movies. Movies with sexual themes and/or partial or complete nudity are forbidden. Discretion should be shown concerning movies with inappropriate language or violence. The Rector and/or Ministry Supervisor should consider the overall redemptive value in selecting movies, T.V. shows, and other forms of media.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUGS

All staff members and volunteers must refrain from the use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs (or abuse of any other drugs or substances) while working with or supervising Children or Youth. This policy does not prevent the appropriate use of tobacco or alcohol in social settings, and where such use is in accordance with policies of the parish, policies of the Diocese (in the case of Diocesan events), and state law.

PHOTOGRAPHY

It is recommended that churches request parental permission before using photos of children/youth in their promotional materials. We recommend that churches obtain signed parental consent release forms annually, respecting the parents who are non-consenting. We have provided an example of such a form in Appendix III of this Policy Manual, which churches should tailor appropriately with the advice of their legal counsel.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The term “social media” refers to social networking services, blogs, short-message services, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image- and video-sharing sites, and other methods for real-time information sharing among users. Because this is a constantly evolving area, these principles below apply to all new social media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned here.

- Ask parents for permission before connecting with their children on social media.
- Do not connect with youth on social media when they are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (for example, Facebook and Instagram’s minimum age is currently 13).
- With parental consent, engage in healthy interactions with youth on social media.
- Use personal interactions on social media to model appropriate behavior both on and off social media.
- Report any concerns about social media to your Ministry Supervisor, Congregation Coordinator and/or Rector.

- In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for social-media questions, staff members and volunteers should use their best judgment and take the most thoughtful and prudent action possible applying the **following values**:
 - Be responsible – social media posts are individual interactions, not official church communications. Members of your church community are personally responsible for the content they publish. Official statements of church policy may only be made by the Rector or her/his designee.
 - Be smart – a blog or community post is often visible to the entire world and can be shared by others in ways that you cannot control. Remember that what you write is public and will remain public for a very long time. If a student ever attempts to engage in any sort of inappropriate conversation, you should discontinue the conversation, document the conversation, and report the incident to the Ministry Supervisor, Congregation Coordinator and/or Rector.
 - Respect the privacy of others – do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of students under 13, written permission of their parents. Personal information includes that information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify, contact, or locate a person.
 - Be respectful – your church is a thoughtful and prayerful community that encourages free expression and values civil debate. If you disagree with others, do so with civility. Respect your audience, express your views with appropriate language, and be respectful of the church and its teachings.
 - Be trustworthy – Students may confide in you about personal matters. While you should never repeat their personal matters as gossip, you cannot promise confidentiality. There may be occasions when it is necessary to share personal information a student disclosed to you due to potential harm to the student.
 - Be selective – there are a variety of communication methods available, and not all communications are well-suited to social media platforms. Consider whether your communication is better suited to face-to-face conversation, a phone call, email, or other method.

TRANSPORTATION

- From time to time, you may be in a position to provide transportation for children and/or youth. If you are an adult volunteer driver, provide copies of your valid driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance to the church.
- Use child safety seats that meet federal standards. You and your passengers must also follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines.
- Never travel alone with a single child in a vehicle (except in a parent/child or other familial situation). Otherwise, you may transport as many children as the seat belt limitations of the vehicle allow; seatbelts are ALWAYS required. If an extenuating circumstance causes you to travel alone with one

child in an automobile, obtain permission from a parent or legal guardian of the child. This permission should be written and signed by the parent/guardian; if only verbal consent is obtainable, make sure you document it. Transport the child in the back seat of the vehicle in such circumstances.

- Do not use cell phones, including hands-free devices, while driving on church business or church-related activities—unless in an emergency in which phone contact is critical to the safety of a passenger.
- Transport children directly to their destination. Avoid unauthorized stops to a non-public place. Make group stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks. Avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child or youth in transport.
- Avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.

VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS

We understand that engaging children and youth may include not only in-person but also virtual gatherings. The following are guidelines for virtual events:

- All participants, adults, children, and youth should be fully clothed, including portions of the body that may be “off camera.”
- Adults should not be in their bedrooms, on their beds, or have a bed in the background of their camera.
- Adults must not have suggestive, political, or demeaning materials or images on their screens or in their backgrounds. Children and youth should be requested to follow the same standards.
- Children and youth should not be on their bed or have their bed in the background.
- An adult must host a virtual event to monitor the virtual space for hackers or inappropriate use.
- Virtual gatherings require a registration, and links should be provided only to those who are registered (and not be included on any social media or on other public sites).
- Should a “Zoom bomb” or other disturbance take place, parents must be contacted immediately.
- If a child or a student is sharing inappropriate, graphic, or other harmful material, they must be removed from the virtual environment and parents must be contacted. Virtual environments (Zoom, Facetime, Teams, etc.) are not generally suitable or safe for one-on-one conversations and should follow the same standards as meeting in a physical room or transportation in a vehicle.

STEP 4: MONITORING

- Maintaining an ongoing child-safe environment ideally includes having two approved and trained adults present wherever there are children.
- Don’t conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children or youth. Conduct all meetings and interactions with children or youth in a room with an internal window that allows for constant

observation of activities in the room at all times. If such a room isn't available, keep the door to the room open at all times so that all activities inside the room are visible from the hallway outside the room and are interruptible.

- Be diligent in monitoring and supervising children's and youth activities in all settings at all times. Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred.
- Design all children's and youth activities to be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals. Never leave children or students unattended in the church building or on the property following a church activity.
- When discipling, counseling and/or mentoring children or youth, conduct your interactions in a public place or where other persons are present.
- Extend an open invitation for parents to visit at any time unannounced. Keep parents informed of the general nature of any one-on-one conversations with children or youth.
- Carefully review new programs and/or significant changes to a program structure.
- Keep unused rooms locked where possible.
- Keep children in supervised areas within the church building.

STEP 5: RESPONDING AND REPORTING

As a volunteer or staff member, you are in an influential relationship of authority and trust with those to whom you minister and their families. It is up to adults to be the primary protectors. Knowing this, you're expected to respond at the earliest opportunity if misconduct occurs, or you have reason to believe it is occurring, following the appropriate reporting protocols.

If you are concerned that a report of abuse or neglect to the Rector, Congregation Coordinator, or other church leader might not result in adequate investigation being conducted (whether by reason of abuse by the Rector or otherwise), please contact the [Canon for Safe Churches](#).

There are two immediate concerns when you suspect abuse has taken place. First, immediately report to the Ministry Supervisor and the Rector. Second, follow the guidance below.

RESPONDING TO THE VICTIM

If you have a reasonable suspicion that a student or child is experiencing abuse or neglect, you should not attempt to gain further information from the victim. Instead, you should immediately report the information to the Rector.

If, by their own disclosure, you obtain knowledge that a student or child is experiencing or has experienced child abuse or neglect, you need to take the appropriate steps outlined below and immediately report the information to the Rector to assure the best response for the victim.

If a student or child initiates such a conversation with you, you should:

- Respect the student’s or child’s privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk that is still observable by others. If possible, ask a staff member, another trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the student’s or child’s account.
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the student or child know that he/she is believed.
- Assure the student or child that any abuse was not his/her fault.
- If helpful, tell the student or child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse.
- Avoid questions that could make the student or child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint the student’s or child’s recollection and account.
- Write down as accurately as possible what the student or child disclosed.

Do not discuss the information with, or in the presence of, other people who do not need to know what happened. Limit discussion about the information to parents and appropriate church and legal authorities as detailed in this Policy Manual on pg. 36.

INTERNAL CHURCH COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING

Promptly report to your Ministry Supervisor and Rector whenever you:

- Are involved in or become aware of any sexually inappropriate communications involving a child or student and an adult; or
- Are involved in or become aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a student or child by a clergy person, a staff member, or a volunteer; or
- Are arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, are charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; commit an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) are diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
- Become aware that a member of your household or a person who is attending the church is arrested, charged and/or diagnosed as per above.

REPORTING TO LEGAL AUTHORITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS³

When there is reason to believe child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, **act immediately. Do not ignore or fail to take seriously any suspected incident.**

³ See Appendix X for complete information on making a report.

- Reporting requirements for suspected child abuse and neglect include two separate authorities with different requirements: reporting within the church (addressed above) and reporting to state authorities. As an initial matter, report every suspected incident of child abuse or neglect to your Rector. The Rector shall notify the [Canon for Safe Churches](#). This helps both you and the church to determine whether a report to the State is appropriate.
- In South Carolina, clergy are considered mandatory reporters and by law must report instances of suspected abuse or neglect directly to a State authority although, pursuant to the Bishop's Pastoral Direction Regarding Mandatory Reporting By Clergy of Child Abuse or Neglect, the secrecy of the confession may be maintained in certain circumstances when a priest is administering the Reconciliation of Penitents in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer.
- Clergy should then report internally to the Rector or to the [Canon for Safe Churches](#). Non-ordained church staff members and volunteers should immediately notify their Rector and then follow up to make sure appropriate action was taken. If in doubt about who to contact and whether appropriate action has been taken, please contact the [Canon for Safe Churches](#).
- If an incident occurs, the church should appoint a single spokesperson to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise). Volunteers and staff members should direct all questions to this church spokesperson. Those with knowledge of the incident, whether staff members or volunteers, must maintain confidentiality.

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Through the Spirit you are shepherding into being the glorious purposes of God for humanity. We thank God for your ministry. You are Christ's ambassadors in sharing His love, respect, admiration and reverence for His children. You are engaging with Christian disciples in an especially formative time of life. While this is a lot of information to absorb, the application of these sound practices provides protection for those most vulnerable in your congregation. Thank you.

APPENDIX I - RAINN STATISTICS ON THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND TEENS

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE, online.rainn.org and rainn.org/es) in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country and operates the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

In FY 2016 alone, Child Protective Services agencies substantiated, or found strong evidence to indicate that, 57,329 children were victims of sexual abuse.¹

Of all sexual abuse victims under 18, two out of three are ages 12-17.²

Child victims know their perpetrator: Of the cases reported to law enforcement, the victims knew the perpetrator 93% of the time.⁴

- 34% of perpetrators were a family member
- 59% were acquaintances
- 7% were strangers
- Of the cases reported in 2013, the alleged perpetrators 90% of the time were men and women 10%.⁶

Child Sexual Abuse Is a Widespread Problem

- One in nine girls and one in 20 boys under the age of 18 experience sexual abuse or assault at the hands of an adult.³
- 82% of all victims under 18 are female.⁴
- Females ages 16-19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.²

The effects of child sexual abuse can be long-lasting and affect the victim's mental health. Victims are more likely than non-victims to experience the following mental health challenges:⁵

- About four times more likely to develop symptoms of drug abuse
- About four times more likely to experience PTSD as adults
- About three times more likely to experience a major depressive episode as adults

SOURCES:

1. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. Child Maltreatment Survey, 2016 (2018).

2. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sex Offenses and Offenders (1997).
3. David Finkelhor, Anne Shattuck, Heather A. Turner, & Sherry L. Hamby, The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Assessed in Late Adolescence, 55 *Journal of Adolescent Health* 329, 329-333 (2014).
4. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement (2000).
5. H.M Zinzow, H.S. Resnick, J.L. McCauley, A.B. Amstadter, K.J. Ruggiero, & D.G. Kilpatrick, Prevalence and risk of psychiatric disorders as a function of variant rape histories: results from a national survey of women. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 47(6), 893- 902 (2012).
6. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. Child Maltreatment Survey, 2013 (2014).

APPENDIX II – ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE POLICY

Clergy, Staff Members, Lay Ministers, Vestries, Wardens, Volunteers and Ordinands*

Name of Church: _____

1. I have received, read and understand the Policy, as implemented by this Policy Manual. I agree to follow and abide by the guidelines in this Policy Manual as I serve in ministry to children and/or youth in my church.
2. I understand how the Policy and this Policy Manual are implemented in my church, as well as my specific role.
3. I have completed the required Diocese-approved Sexual Abuse Awareness Training (through Praesidium or equivalent). I understand that the Policy and this Policy Manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by the ADOSC. I am responsible for reading any amendments or revisions and complying with them.

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

*This form must be signed and returned by ALL:

- Clergy canonically resident, licensed or serving in the Diocese
- Lay ministers licensed by the Diocese
- Staff members who Regularly Work with Children or Youth (full and part-time)
- Vestries and Wardens
- Volunteers who work with youth or children
- Ordinands for Holy Orders

**Ministry Supervisor or Rector: Collect, retain and file originals. Congregations are responsible for retaining these forms indefinitely.

APPENDIX III – PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR USE OF VIDEOS AND PHOTOS OF MINORS

[Church name] recognizes the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people taking part in any activity associated with our organization. In accordance with our child and youth protection policy, we will not permit photographs, video or other images of children or youth to be taken without the consent of a parent. As your child will be taking part in [Insert name of specific event, or reference continuing child and youth classes or programs], we would like to ask for your consent to take photographs/videos of the event or activity that may contain images of your child.

It is likely that these images may be used as:

- a record of the activity or the event which may be presented on the church website or social media;
- in a written evaluation report of the activity or event that will be viewed by the church;
- publicity material for further activities or events on leaflets/websites/brochures; and/or
- illustrations of the activities or events in published articles.

The church will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform the Ministry Supervisor and/or Rector immediately. We would be grateful if you would return this form to the congregation coordinator by [Date].

I, [Parent], consent to / do not consent to [circle one] [Church] photographing or videoing [name of minor].

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

***This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing or modifying this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.*

APPENDIX IV – COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS (FOR RECTORS & CONGREGATION COORDINATORS)

In order to ensure that ADOSC churches comply with the requirements found in this Policy Manual, the ADOSC has also established important compliance deadlines for ADOSC churches. Please carefully review the compliance deadlines in this Appendix IV, knowing that even though policies cannot provide protection, our combined training, education and compliance can. Together, compliance with this Policy Manual can keep us accountable, aware and ready to serve a world where some people cause harm within the Church.

Compliance with the Policy, as implemented by this Policy Manual, is mandatory for all ADOSC churches. So, in a spirit of love and service for the sake of the vulnerable, the ADOSC has established the following annual compliance deadlines to safeguard the physical, emotional and spiritual health of everyone in our care:

All ADOSC churches must:

1. **Submit an annual acknowledgment of their compliance during the prior year with the Policy, as implemented by this Policy Manual.**
2. **The annual acknowledgment must:**
 - a. **Be signed by the church’s Rector;**
 - b. **Contain the name and contact information for the church’s Congregation Coordinator;**
 - c. **State whether or not the church has had any reports of child abuse or neglect in the past year;**
 - d. **Confirm that all persons covered by this Policy Manual have completed the required training;**
 - e. **Confirm that the church has procured insurance coverage for sexual abuse and molestation;**
 - f. **Confirm that the church received the valid driver’s license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance for all drivers before transporting children or youth during the prior year; and**
 - g. **Be submitted to the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) annually by September 30th.**

Because compliance with the Policy (as implemented by this Policy Manual) is of utmost importance to the life of the ADOSC, the following steps will be taken if a church fails to meet the September 30th annual compliance deadline:

1. If a church has not complied with the compliance requirements [by October 15th,] the Bishop will send a letter and an email to the church’s clergy, staff, Senior Warden, Junior Warden and all Vestry members, letting them know that their church is out of compliance with the Policy. The Bishop will alert these parties that the church has been moved to probationary status. While on probationary status, the church shall not be eligible for ADOSC grants, ADOSC staff support, or ecclesiastical work, save for the support necessary to help bring them into compliance with the Policy.
2. If a church has not complied with the annual compliance requirements [by October 31st,] the Bishop will instruct the church’s Rector and Vestry to send a letter and an email from the Bishop to all the members and attendees of the church alerting them to the church’s non-compliant status.

3. If a church has not complied with the annual compliance requirements by [November 15th,] action in compliance with Section 7 of Canon XXXV will take place at that time.

The ADOSC's goal is not to be punitive, but to cultivate a diocesan culture that is safe and healthy for everyone. We must hold one another accountable to care for one another and the people in our charge. If there are unforeseen circumstances that prevent or delay your church from meeting one or more of these deadlines, please contact the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) immediately to see if you qualify for an extension.

However, please know that this is a weighty matter and extensions will not be given for failure to plan, failure to execute, or failure of any individual staff, volunteer, or clergy participation. Please prepare for these deadlines.

Thank you for reading this, complying with the Policy and the annual compliance requirements, and helping to make ADOSC churches safe.

APPENDIX V – CONGREGATION COORDINATOR GUIDE

Thank you for your leadership in implementing this important aspect of ministry within your congregations. Serving children and youth helps disciple whole families and plays a vital role in intellectual, social, spiritual and physical development.

This Congregation Coordinator Guide is the cumulative result of the wisdom of experts in this field, including legal counsel and children and youth ministry directors. To ensure you are equipped to implement the policies contained in this Policy Manual, please carefully review the Policy Manual and this Appendix V, which include best practices and requirements for protecting children and youth in the churches and ministries of the ADOSC. These guidelines are intended to foster a healthy and nurturing environment in which students can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

As explained in Appendix I to this Policy Manual, the reasons for protection policies are, unfortunately, numerous. Child abuse is consistently one of the primary reasons for litigation against churches. Since it is impossible to identify a potential abuser by sight, the church must intentionally provide our children and youth with boundaries that will protect and nurture them. As you implement these policies in your churches, you are on the front lines of defense in protecting children.

Please read this Congregation Coordinator Guide carefully. In addition to the compliance with South Carolina law and the terms and conditions set forth by your church's insurance carrier regarding sexual misconduct, you must follow the requirements stated herein. In the event of a conflict between state law and the ADOSC guidelines, state law will control. Please alert the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) in the event of such a conflict.

The Bishop may grant variances to specific provisions of this Policy Manual, with the advice and counsel of the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) and the Chancellor of the Diocese. To apply for a variance, please contact the [Canon for Safe Churches](#).

We are so grateful for your ministry. While this is a lot of information to absorb, the application of these sound practices provides protection for those most vulnerable in your congregation. Thank you.

The Congregation Coordinator has five primary responsibilities:

- (1) coordinating the screening of their church's staff members, volunteers, and clergy;
- (2) coordinating the training of their church's staff members, volunteers and clergy on the Policy and the Policy Manual;
- (3) ensuring church facilities and events are safe and secure for children and youth ministries; (
- 4) serving as a resource for their church's staff members and volunteers on compliance and reporting under the Policy and this Policy Manual; and (
- 5) making all necessary and appropriate reports to the Rector. Additional information on each of those areas follows.

SCREENING

One effective way to reduce the incidence of child abuse is to carefully screen all clergy, licensed ministers, staff members and volunteers working in youth and children's ministries. The Diocesan Office and the church conduct screening for different categories of people, as described below.

DIOCESAN OFFICE

The Diocesan office oversees the screening of clergy and licensed ministers and is responsible for maintaining clergy and licensed minister files indefinitely. When congregations hire clergy, the Diocese is responsible for ordering and receiving full background checks. Any results causing concern will be shared with the church's Vestry and/or search committee in a confidential and timely manner. The Diocesan office complies with any applicable insurance carrier terms and conditions.

Your church is responsible for the cost of background checks for your respective clergy and licensed ministers.

The Diocese uses the following tools for screening of clergy and licensed ministers:

- Appropriate Application (Ordination, License, or Transfer)
- 10-year Reference Check*
- Screening Questionnaire*
- Background check* (includes: National Criminal and Sex Offender Check, Credit Check and Motor Vehicle Search)
- Completion of Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Training*
- For transfers: ADOSC requires clergy files from sending diocese

*Documents may be sent to the Diocese if they are dated within the past two years.

To ensure consistency of standards and attention, every five years the Diocese will order an additional background check and require the completion of the ADOSC five-year screening questionnaire from clergy and licensed ministers in active ministry within the Diocese.

CHURCHES

Churches are responsible for appropriate screening and background checks for all staff members and those volunteers who Regularly Work with Children or Youth in their respective congregations. Churches should understand and comply with screening terms and conditions established by their insurance carriers in addition to any state law requirements.

SCREENING STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Churches are responsible for screening their respective staff members (including, but not limited to, paid or unpaid interns, fellows, and day camp staff) and volunteers who Regularly Work with Children or Youth. At the discretion of the Congregation Coordinator and Rector, churches may also screen staff members and volunteers who occasionally work with children or youth, as appropriate. The screening records are to be stored indefinitely in a secured and restricted location. Churches may use the background check provider of their choice. Staff members and volunteers in youth and children's ministries who Regularly Work with Children or Youth should also be rescreened every five years.

Screening employment and volunteer candidates for work in youth and children's ministries includes:

- Reviewing signed job applications for staff members working in youth and children's ministries;
- Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks (churches may use the background check provider of their choice) on potential staff members and volunteers;
- Conducting personal and professional reference checks. Churches should seek a wide variety of references, including public social media accounts and work references, for potential staff members and volunteers. Individuals with a background as sex offenders often know others with the same history who will give deceptively good references. Therefore, seek references that go beyond personal friends. Every reference must be checked and documented;
- Conducting face-to-face interviews with potential staff members and volunteers; and
- Requiring completion of a screening form. Among other questions, each staff member/volunteer must state in writing whether he or she or other members of his or her household have:
 - been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged;
 - been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding;
 - committed an act of child sexual abuse; or
 - been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such an inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations).

A sample form of the "Screening Statement for Staff Members/Volunteers" is included with this Policy Manual. (See pg. 43)

Volunteers who Regularly Work with Children or Youth (or who are regularly present in areas of the church facility or on the church's grounds where children or youth are present) must regularly attend their local church for at least six months prior to serving as a volunteer, except where the Bishop has granted a variance. Regular attendance means attendance of approximately two-thirds of the weekly church services during the six-month period. The minimum attendance rule is crucial in getting to know the volunteer before placing them in a position to minister to children or youth. Do not let your guard down simply

because a volunteer meets this requirement. For a person with a sex crime history, a six-month wait is not a discouragement.

Where the Rector believes a variance is warranted, the Rector must provide supporting reasons for the variance to the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) to allow the Bishop (in consultation with the [Canon for Safe Churches](#)) to evaluate the request.

TRAINING

Child Protection Training for clergy, lay ministers, staff members, Vestries, Wardens and volunteers is an essential part of deterring child abuse. The Diocese provides sexual abuse awareness training through Praesidium (www.praesidiuminc.com) at no cost to ADOSC churches or trainees. It is an extensive safety system designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in your congregation. Praesidium is comprised of video training with a follow-up quiz. Those from your church who need to receive training can complete Praesidium training online at their convenience around their own schedules.

All clergy, staff members and volunteers who have regular contact with children and youth must complete this training before they begin ministry in the congregation. Clergy, church staff and those volunteers working with children must renew their training every two years. Vestry members and Wardens must also complete the training as part of locally-driven child protection requirements within the first year of their term.

The Congregation Coordinator is responsible for managing the training status for their congregation's clergy, licensed lay ministers, staff members and volunteers who Regularly Work with Children or Youth, as well as Vestry members and Wardens. The Congregation Coordinator is most familiar with local training needs.

If a church or one or more individual volunteers wish to use a different program than Praesidium (*e.g.*, school district training, abbreviated training for Vacation Bible School volunteers, age-appropriate training for youth assisting with nurseries or other children's ministries, or other special circumstances), the church's Rector and Congregation Coordinator (if not the Rector), must request a variance from this policy from the [Canon for Safe Churches](#). If a variance is permitted, the Congregation Coordinator is responsible for verifying completion, tracking status and providing documentation of same to the [Canon for Safe Churches](#).

NOTE: Please be aware that sexual abuse awareness training can be traumatic and/or open old wounds for those who have experienced abuse. Please have someone present who can give counsel and refer those needing help for further counseling, if needed.

FACILITIES & MEETINGS AWAY FROM THE CHURCH

Church clergy and staff members must also monitor the church's facilities. The facility should be made safe before children, students or volunteers arrive. Do not place volunteers in situations that are impossible to manage. In order to monitor what is happening in each room, make sure the door is open, or that the activities taking place inside are visible from outside the room. While this is easy to arrange in a dedicated church facility, it can be a challenge in shared facilities.

Maintaining an ongoing child-safe environment includes always having two approved and trained adults present wherever there are children or youth. Clergy and Ministry Supervisors must continually evaluate those who work with children and/or youth. It's often helpful to have casual conversations with volunteers on how they would handle difficult situations, checking to see if they are internalizing the church's commitment to safety. Where weaknesses are observed, address the problems promptly.

MEETINGS IN HOMES

Meetings in homes can create a complex environment for assuring the safety of children and youth. There are two primary types of activities involving church members in homes:

1. Private events take place when members of the congregation meet in the home of a church member or regular attendee with no sponsorship by the congregation's leadership. In the community life of the church, individuals often develop friendships that lead to social or spiritual gatherings in homes, generally without the knowledge of the church. This is normal and expected. The congregation's leadership does not have a role in oversight of activities of this type. Congregational leadership may become aware of these events and even be invited to them. However, gatherings initiated by congregation members themselves are not church events and it would be intrusive for the church to attempt to institute controls. But if church leaders are aware of risks in these situations (such as a sex-offender participating in a social setting where children and/or youth are playing in another room), that matter should be discussed with the Rector to see if informal advice should be given to the host.
2. General events in homes take place when the congregation conducts its activities in the homes of its members. These are very typical of smaller churches and obviously, house churches. In those instances where a congregational event takes place in a home, the same principles of protection apply as to any event that is held in a dedicated church space. That is, if a church event takes place in the home and children and/or youth are present, the requirements of screening, training, interacting, monitoring, and responding as described in this manual should be applied as practicable. Such events should have appropriate childcare for all functions.

Care should be given in church announcements to communicate which events are private and which events are church-sponsored. Depending on the function and the size of the church and their children and youth ministry staffing, it may be appropriate for the church to provide properly staffed childcare at the church during the event.

Even in gatherings in the homes of parents, church leadership should be sensitized to risks and take active steps for child and youth protection when they see risk-inducing situations. Meetings should never take place in homes where the hosts are sex-offenders or behave inappropriately, even if they are parents.

SUPERVISORY PLANS FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY

For those working with children and youth, a written Supervisory Plan is a helpful tool to give clear direction to staff and volunteers and provide objective criteria to monitor an onsite or offsite event or activity. When all staff for an onsite or off-site event or activity are informed about the Supervisory Plan, it helps maintain Diocesan standards in the area of child protection and may prevent inadvertent missteps. We recommend posting Supervisory Plans in a visible location at the event or activity. Congregation Coordinators must keep these Supervisory Plans on file.

SAMPLE ONSITE SUPERVISORY PLAN:

- A description of the nature of the activity
- The details of the registration process and registration form
- The personnel responsible for running the activity
- The recommended ratio of adults to children:
 - Infants: Two (2) adults for up to eight (8); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to four (4) infants
 - Young toddlers: Two (2) adults for up to ten (10); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to five (5) toddlers
 - 2 and 3 years: Two (2) adults for up to sixteen (16); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to eight (8) 2-to-3-year-olds
 - 4 years: Two (2) adults for up to twenty (20); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to ten (10) 4-year-olds
 - School age: Two (2) adults for up to thirty-six (36); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to eighteen (18) school-age child
 - Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group
- The physical environment
- Bathroom procedures
- First aid and medication procedures
- The reporting of discipline concerns
- The release of children and youth after the event/activity
- Offsite transportation plan
- Dining arrangements
- Sleeping arrangements
- Showering arrangements

In the event there is a situation that may call for changing clothes or an overnight change into pajamas, the Rector, Congregation Coordinator, and Ministry Supervisor must detail procedures for showering or changing clothes in a Supervisory Plan prior to the event and make the Supervisory Plan available to parents.

REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

CREATE A REPORTING PLAN

No volunteer should ever be in doubt about who to go to when a reportable incident arises. Consistent with this Policy Manual, churches must create internal procedures and mechanisms for reporting to appropriate church leaders any suspected child abuse or neglect, any other suspected mistreatment or injury, and any suspicious information involving children or youth. Such internal reporting allows church leaders to determine whether a legal reporting obligation has been triggered, whether further information is needed, and/or whether pastoral or other care for children and others should be offered.

Your reporting plan should include the following steps:

- Report to the Rector (and/or appropriate individual). The individual(s) suspecting abuse or neglect should immediately notify the Rector and the Congregation Coordinator of the suspected child abuse. At times, when the person receiving such reports puts together the separate pieces of information provided by different workers, he or she may discern a pattern or recognize information that triggers further investigation and/or a report to state authorities. The church should also identify the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) as a person who may receive such a report if the Rector is the person who is the subject of the allegations or is otherwise suspected of having committed abuse or neglect.
- Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties. If the person accused of a reportable offense of abuse or neglect is employed by or volunteering with the church, the Rector (or the Rector's designee) should, in consultation with the church's legal counsel, immediately remove the person accused of abuse from the situation in which the accusation arose and from any duties where he/she will have any further contact with children and/or youth. This can be done quietly and discreetly but should be done quickly and without exception. The suspension should remain in place while the reportable offense is under investigation. An interim transfer to a position that has no contact with children and/or youth is one possibility; a leave of absence (with pay if the person is an employee) may be another solution.
- Notify Parents Where Appropriate. If the person accused of abuse is not the parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the applicable child or youth's household, the Rector or his designee should contact the parents or appropriate guardians and offer support from the church.
- Notify the [Canon for Safe Churches](#). The Rector must notify the [Canon for Safe Churches](#). The [Canon for Safe Churches](#) will notify the Bishop and the Diocesan Chancellor. The [Canon for Safe Churches](#) may request periodic updates of the investigation being conducted and subsequent actions taken at the local church level and/or may initiate a separate investigation into the allegations of abuse.
- Notify the Church Legal Counsel. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the Rector should immediately notify the church's legal counsel upon receiving a report of child abuse or neglect. Obtaining competent legal advice at the very outset of the matter will help protect the church from failing to comply with legal duties and/or being exposed to additional legal liability. In addition, if the investigation into the reported abuse is conducted by legal counsel, the information gathered and conveyed to the attorney may be privileged from disclosure as a confidential attorney/client communication under certain state laws.

NOTE: **COMPLIANCE WITH STATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS IS MANDATORY.** Internal church reporting procedures **DO NOT** supersede any applicable legal reporting requirements. Refer to your church's legal counsel, the [Canon for Safe Churches](#), the Diocesan Chancellor and/or Appendices VIII & X for assistance in complying with State reporting requirements. Churches must also comply with their insurance carrier's terms and conditions in relation to sexual misconduct.

REPORTING TO LEGAL AUTHORITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE LAWS

Every church must be aware of and comply with state laws when it comes to reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Even when reports are not legally required, voluntary reports of suspected abuse or neglect should always be considered with the assistance of legal counsel.

If your church determines that a report is legally required or decides that it should make a permissive report even though one is not legally required, consult with your church's legal counsel, the [Canon for Safe Churches](#), and/or the Diocesan Chancellor to ensure the report is made to the appropriate legal authorities.

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Cooperate with Investigating Legal Authorities. Subject to the advice of your church's legal counsel, always cooperate in the investigation conducted by the governmental agency to which the report has been made, as well as any other law enforcement agencies involved with the investigation.
- Notify Insurance Providers. Unless your church's legal counsel and/or insurance carrier policy directs otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company. This is important for four reasons: (1) the insurance policy may require immediate notification for coverage to be effective; (2) the policy may pay for counseling or legal advice; (3) the policy may not provide coverage for lawsuits involving acts of sexual abuse; and (4) the insurance carrier, having dealt with similar cases, may be a source of helpful advice. Unfortunately, most insurance policies do not generally cover sexual misconduct or negligent hiring/supervision in sexual abuse situations, which is why the Congregation Coordinator must verify that the church is covered for sexual misconduct.
- Appropriately Document Actions. The church, in consultation with the [Canon for Safe Churches](#), must designate a clergyperson to document any actions taken regarding the complaint and retain that documentation in confidential files. The church's legal counsel may have specific instructions for how such documentation should be prepared and maintained. The investigation of suspected child abuse is the legal responsibility of the police or child protective authorities. It is not the responsibility of church leaders to prove that such an incident did or did not take place.

RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

CAREFULLY CONSIDER ANY RELEASE OF INFORMATION.

Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries on the church's behalf (media or otherwise) and instruct all other workers politely to direct all inquiries to that person. Use an approved, prepared statement to answer media inquiries and to convey news to members of the church. Such a statement should normally be reviewed by the church's legal counsel. Do not release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content.

MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANY ALLEGATIONS AND OF THE INVESTIGATION AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

Emphasize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed and instruct them not to disclose any information regarding the allegations or your investigation to anyone other than law enforcement or child protective authorities. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality will: (1) protect the privacy and reputations of those actually or allegedly involved in the incident; (2) reduce the risk that defamation may occur; and (3) help preserve the attorney-client privilege, where applicable.

REACH OUT TO AND CARE FOR ANY VICTIMS.

One of your church's primary missions is sharing the love of God with children. Offer whatever pastoral care and other help is appropriate and available to the alleged victim and his/her family.

TREAT THE ACCUSED WITH DIGNITY AND SUPPORT.

Since the accused has not been formally charged or convicted, he/she should be treated as innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Be supportive but objective. However, out of an abundance of caution, the person accused should be immediately suspended from their duties.

BRING CLOSURE TO THE INVESTIGATION.

If the accused is eventually convicted, then counseling, discipline and/or dismissal is appropriate. If charges are unsubstantiated, the decision about whether to restore the accused to full employment or volunteer service may depend on a number of circumstantial factors. Consult the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) and the church's legal counsel for guidance. Of course, all personnel actions should be well documented in writing and kept in confidential files. Attorney-client privileged material should never be disclosed without first consulting your attorney.

APPENDIX VI – RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES DEALING WITH KNOWN SEXUAL OFFENDERS OR RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

PASTORAL RESPONSE TO KNOWN SEXUAL OFFENDERS

The church must make every reasonable effort to protect those in its care. Special care must be taken when a church interacts with a person who is registered as a sexual offender, or self-discloses a history of sexual misconduct towards children/youth, or self-discloses a struggle with sexual attraction toward children/youth.

When such a person is known to be a participant in the church or its activities, the clergy must inhibit that person from any contact with children and/or youth and require (except as otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel) the offender to sign a contract/covenant that details expectations, defines boundaries and off-limits locations (*e.g.*, children's and youth areas, acolyte vesting areas, etc.) and establishes appropriate supervision (*e.g.*, a bathroom escort) for the offender while on church premises and/or at church activities. The church must have in place a plan to deal with any violation of the contract/covenant. Please contact the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) for recommended policies for a pastoral response to sex offenders in ADOSC congregations.

If the perpetrator is observed acting in an inappropriate manner with children/youth or their families, the Rector or Wardens of the church must inform the family/families of a potential danger to their child/children (unless otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel). Where appropriate, the Rector or Senior Warden must consult the offender's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been met.

THE CHURCH'S UNDERSTANDING OF AND RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE

CARING FOR THE CONGREGATION

Incidents of child abuse and the secrecy that often surrounds them can cause devastating harm to the church as well as to the victims. Therefore, where current or past child abuse has been perpetrated by clergy, staff members, or volunteers of the church, the church must encourage discussion of the incident and provide a means to facilitate healing within the church. At the end of this manual (Appendix VII, p. 43), we've provided one model of how this may be done: The Church Information, Trauma and Healing Debriefing Meeting. A trauma debriefing allows participants to integrate the reality of the event with their own responses to that event. It is an effective means to communicate, process and accept facts, allow feelings to surface and then, through God's healing grace, head into the future unhindered by the past.

Traumatic events have well-documented effects, both immediate and delayed. When a congregation experiences a trauma, the impact is likely to be expressed through symptoms such as:

- Loss of energy or feeling of paralysis;
- Distrust of leadership (often projected onto future leadership);
- Divisions within the congregation;
- Some group members feeling isolated and withdrawing from the group;
- Anger being displaced onto unrelated issues, or blown out of proportion;
- A conspiracy of silence about the traumatic event;
- Despair about the congregation's future;
- Distorting responsibility for the event;
- Seeking a "quick fix" without thoughtful reflection; and/or
- Difficulty making normal and necessary decisions.

All of these symptoms could be carried into subsequent years unless the trauma is processed, integrated into the life of the congregation and healed. A useful model for addressing and integrating a trauma is the "debriefing" model drawn from disciplines that do crisis counseling, such as emergency medicine, law enforcement, military science, crisis chaplaincy and disaster agencies.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR HEALING IN THE CHURCH

The following steps may help to promote healing in the congregation:

1. Contact the family. Before the process for healing begins, the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) should maintain regular contact with the victim and the victim's family, sharing the procedures to be used for promoting congregational healing.

2. Balance privacy and openness. Balance the privacy of both the victim and offender against the need for openness with the local church. As much as possible, keep the identities confidential.
3. Provide facts. Church members usually know when “something is going on,” and, in the absence of facts, rumor and speculation will grow.
4. Notify Vestry and Wardens. The Vestry and Wardens should be advised promptly of the issues, since that group’s participation is vital in planning and implementing the processes for church healing.
5. Conduct trauma debriefing. The possibility of healing and unity in a congregation grows when there is an open meeting, called a Church Information, Trauma and Healing Debriefing (“Debriefing”), at which the Bishop or the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) presents as much factual information as possible. After the meeting, ask a person trained in crisis ministry to be available on a small group or one-to-one basis. Make available local mental health resources (including sliding scale fee agencies) so that people know how to find these services. (Note: Many communities have publicly-funded survivor services, which offer a variety of specialized resources.)
6. Your debriefing message should be “The Church is a place for truth. We follow Jesus, who described himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life.”
7. Appoint a church spokesperson. The Vestry, in consultation with the clergy, should appoint a church spokesperson. The congregation, including church members and staff members, then refers all media inquiries to the church spokesperson.
8. Find an interim priest, if needed. If the circumstances require that an interim priest be engaged, make sure the priest has special training in trauma debriefing and is approved by the Bishop. Arrange for the interim priest to have regular opportunities to report and consult with the Bishop, the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) and counselors.
9. Encourage consulting of legal authorities. Neither the clergy nor any other church worker should attempt to impede anyone who wishes to consult with legal authorities.
10. Offer continuing pastoral care. The clergy and/or Vestry should consult with the Bishop and the [Canon for Safe Churches](#) about additional resources for the healing and care of the congregation.

A MODEL FOR AN INFORMATION AND TRAUMA DEBRIEFING MEETING

The following procedures are recommended for the Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting, but the church and the Bishop (or his designee) should consult in advance with their respective legal counsel (and, if counsel recommends, insurance provider(s)) before conducting such a meeting or undertaking any such actions.

A. STEPS PRIOR TO MEETING

1. **Select Leaders.** Carefully choose a Congregational Trauma Debriefing Team and a leader or co-leaders who have had experience with a debriefing or trauma-related process. It is important that the Rector or his representative be a visible participant in the debriefing, but not in the role of leadership.
2. **Schedule and Notify.** Schedule the debriefing as soon as possible after the complaint becomes public knowledge. Ensure that all members of the congregation and church staff are notified of the debriefing by telephone, e-mail, overnight mail, or other fast and reliable method of notification. It is important to get a wide participation, so that all who experience the trauma also share the debriefing experience.
3. **Choose Meeting Place.** Hold the debriefing in an appropriate place, preferably on the church's property. Although an opening prayer is appropriate, this should not be a liturgical event.
4. **Address the News Media.** While the debriefing should not be confidential, it is important that no one be placed in jeopardy because of any disclosures made during that meeting. Therefore, it is preferable that the news media not be present for the debriefing but meet afterwards with the church spokesperson and the Bishop.

B. AGENDA FOR THE MEETING

1. **Open the Meeting.** The Bishop or his representative should welcome attendees, as should one of the lay leaders. The lay leader then should introduce himself/herself, explain the debriefing process and outline the guidelines for the debriefing. It is important to keep the debriefing to the specified procedures. Leaders should be prepared for a lengthy meeting.
2. **Present the Facts.** Subject to the advice of counsel, the general facts and approximate chronology of the trauma should be presented verbally, supplemented by written notations such as a summary handout. The goal is to ensure that all those present have a common record of the traumatic event. Note: This is not a time for feelings to be expressed and the group may need some direction to withhold those feelings until the next phase of the debriefing.
3. **Solicit Reactions.** Once an appropriate record has been presented, the lay leader should invite church members to express their reactions to the facts. (Some church members may need to be directed to express their own feelings and not those of others.) No feelings, however trivial, intense, or unusual, should be discounted and no effort should be made to fix, soothe, or smooth them over. The responses simply are to be collected and heard.
4. **Examine Repercussions.** Once reactions have been expressed fully, the leader should ask those present to turn their attention to the repercussions of the event and consider the congregation's future. This step bridges the trauma with the ongoing life of those involved in the trauma. It may be a time to explore some of the issues the congregation will face in the near future. As with the presentation of facts, the issues raised may be noted both verbally and in writing.

5. Seek Context and Perspective. Members of the congregation also should be invited to place the event within a context or perspective. There may be expressions of confusion, helplessness, or curiosity about how other groups have resolved an issue of this type. In this phase, people may have an awareness of paradox and pose some hard questions such as the following:
 - a. Why do bad things happen?
 - b. How can it be that such a talented priest/leader could be involved in misconduct?
 - c. Why do things like this happen in a church?
 - d. Where does the responsibility lie?
 - e. What about the resources of our faith?
6. Leaders have discretion whether to respond, or to simply allow others to speak.

C. ACTIONS AFTER THE MEETING

1. Plan for the Future. This could include a) scheduling a follow-up session one or two months into the future; b) discussing the ways in which the pastoral and sacramental needs of the congregation will be met; or c) describing the resources available to people who may need counseling or other specialized attention.
2. Provide Trained Counselors. For the immediate needs of those present, it is important that trained crisis professionals be available in the church building so that individuals or groups may process their feelings further. These professionals are present simply to listen and support people in integrating the trauma.
3. Debrief the Debriefing. After the debriefing, members of the Congregational Trauma Debriefing Team should meet to discuss their own experiences with the debriefing meeting, in order to do the following:
 - a. Plan the follow-up monitoring of the congregation in the future;
 - b. Determine whether there are issues that will need further clarification;
 - c. Determine whether there are complicating factors, or factors that require special, ongoing attention; and
 - d. Decide what the lay leadership of the congregation requires to address the issue further; and evaluate the debriefing meeting itself (or agree to do so at a later date).

D. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MEETINGS

1. If new information comes to light after the first debriefing, further meetings may be held. Additionally, regular follow-up sessions with the congregation should be held during the first year after disclosure of the incident(s).

E. ADDITIONAL CHURCH RESPONSES

1. Additional appropriate church responses may include:
 - a. Regular prayer for the victim, the offender, and the congregation;
 - b. Preaching on the subject of violation of trust and liturgical acts of corporate penance;
 - c. Securing a safe place for the victim and the victim's family in community life; and
 - d. In the event that incarceration or other punitive action follows legal proceedings, developing a means for the congregation to communicate with the person who may be imprisoned.

F. CONGREGATIONAL FOLLOW-UP:

1. The First Year: Even with the best of care, a congregation that has experienced sexual misconduct will likely need an ongoing program of support and assistance, especially in the first year. This year will be devoted to a healing process, in which the congregation slowly will integrate the reality of its experience into its future. If such integration does not take place, the congregation may suffer from prolonged loss of energy, despair about the future, loss and/or isolation of some members, distrust of lay and/or ordained leadership or of the Bishop and difficulty making decisions or taking risks.

G. SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Meeting with Bishop or his appointed representative and the Vestry in order to assess the healing process of the congregation
2. Staff Input. Obtaining input from church staff (including an interim priest where present) about their observations regarding the incident and the debriefing process
3. Study Groups. Establishing study groups to consider the issue of healing from sexual abuse, perhaps by reading a selected book for discussion
4. Self-evaluation. Conducting a congregational self-evaluation, through the use of a questionnaire or survey instrument
5. Focus Groups. Creating congregational focus groups to address the issue of where the congregation stands in its process of moving ahead
6. Committee on Congregational Life. Forming a Committee on Congregational Life charged with assessing the needs and planning programs for continued healing
7. Professional Consultant. Appointing a professional consultant experienced with issues of child abuse to work with the Vestry and affected congregation on the components of the healing process

H. USING THE TRAUMA TO HELP OTHERS

1. Some churches, having worked through an incident of child abuse, take up a special vocation in a related area. Such steps signify that the congregation has moved into the redemptive activity of letting its own pain be a gift for others. Among possible actions:
 - a. Helping Other Churches. Offering help to other churches confronted with the same issues
 - b. Sponsoring Programs. Sponsoring seminars or programs on ethics and sexuality
 - c. Church Building. Offering the church building for use by community groups to address issues of child abuse
 - d. Developing programs for children and youth about protecting themselves from abuse

APPENDIX VII – ADDITIONAL FORMS

Sample Screening Statement for Staff Members/Volunteers

Congregation Name: _____

Congregation Coordinator Name & Preferred Contact Method: _____

The subject of abuse and neglect can trigger powerful feelings and sensitivities. The statistics indicate that our parish includes people who have been abused, and some who have abused others. Like you, we are saddened by its prevalence and long-term impact, often felt well into adulthood. As His children, we are called to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2)

We are respectfully requesting information to discern whether you may need special care and/or considerations as a result of your personal history.

Personal History Statement for Staff Members/Volunteers

A positive response won’t automatically disqualify you from being employed or volunteering. Our purpose in asking is to initiate the conversation, make informed decisions and care for our church family.

Have you ever:

- Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged? Yes _____ No _____
- Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding? Yes _____ No _____
- Been charged with child neglect in a civil proceeding? Yes _____ No _____
- Committed an act of child sexual abuse? Yes _____ No _____
- Committed an act of child neglect or physical abuse? Yes _____ No _____
- Been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)?

Yes ___ No ___

- Have you or someone close to you been a victim of or affected by these behaviors? If you are uncomfortable discussing this in writing, you may make an appointment with your parish clergy, or the Canon for Church Safety, where your information will be handled with sensitivity and held in confidence.

Yes ___ No ___

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, please give a brief description below or discuss with the Congregation Coordinator or the Rector:

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

***This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing or modifying this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.*

SAMPLE ON-SITE SUPERVISORY PLAN**

The following provides an example of a Supervisory Plan for an on-site nursery at a local church. Each church will devise specific supervisory plans for all onsite and offsite programming that involves youth and children. This plan is offered for information only. It is a sample of what a supervisory plan may look like. Each congregation will need to personalize such a plan to its own specific policies and procedures.

Personnel: Only screened staff and volunteers may work in the nurseries. No one under the age of 18 may be hired to work in the nurseries and no one under the age of 16 may volunteer in the nurseries.

A minimum of two screened and trained staff/volunteers must provide supervision at all times.

Nursery staff and volunteers are not permitted to allow unscreened persons to help with related responsibilities in the nursery, unless these persons have direct caretaking responsibilities for the child outside of the church (i.e. parents, grandparents, foster parents, etc.)

Supervision: On Sunday mornings, _____ will check to ensure that the nurseries are fully staffed at each of the service/Sunday School times.

_____ will conduct random visits to the nurseries during all programming times or appoint someone else to take on a supervisory role to observe staff/volunteer/child interactions.

_____ will meet with staff to provide training and solve problems.

Ratio: No less than one staff/volunteer per five children at any time. Minimum of two staff/ volunteers at all times.

Physical Environment: Windows on nursery doors will not be obstructed. Toys, books and furniture and apparatus will be cleaned on a weekly basis. Rugs and other moveable items that could pose danger will be secured.

Bathroom Procedure: Children will be escorted to the bathroom in the toddler nursery by female staff and volunteers with one person assisting and another in close proximity. Diapering will be conducted by female staff/volunteers in the observable diapering areas only.

Injury/Incident Reporting: Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report and advise _____ when a child is injured or hurt in any way.

Incidents of conflict with parents should also be reported in the same manner.

Reporting Concerns: Concerns about the nurseries should be reported to _____,

Release of Children: Staff or volunteers will release children only to those adults who have corresponding wristband identification with the child.

***This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing or modifying this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.*

APPENDIX VIII – EXCERPTS, SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS

SECTION 63-7-20. Definitions.

(6) "Child abuse or neglect" or "harm" occurs when:

(a) the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare:

(i) inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical or mental injury or engages in acts or omissions which present a substantial risk of physical or mental injury to the child, including injuries sustained as a result of excessive corporal punishment, but excluding corporal punishment or physical discipline which:

(A) is administered by a parent or person in loco parentis;

(B) is perpetrated for the sole purpose of restraining or correcting the child;

(C) is reasonable in manner and moderate in degree;

(D) has not brought about permanent or lasting damage to the child; and

(E) is not reckless or grossly negligent behavior by the parents;

(ii) commits or allows to be committed against the child a sexual offense as defined by the laws of this State or engages in acts or omissions that present a substantial risk that a sexual offense as defined in the laws of this State would be committed against the child;

(iii) fails to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or education as required under Article 1 of Chapter 65 of Title 59, supervision appropriate to the child's age and development, or health care though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so and the failure to do so has caused or presents a substantial risk of causing physical or mental injury. However, a child's absences from school may not be considered abuse or neglect unless the school has made efforts to bring about the child's attendance, and those efforts were unsuccessful because of the parents' refusal to cooperate. For the purpose of this chapter "adequate health care" includes any medical or nonmedical remedial health care permitted or authorized under state law;

(iv) abandons the child;

(v) encourages, condones, or approves the commission of delinquent acts by the child including, but not limited to, sexual trafficking or exploitation, and the commission of the acts are shown to be the result of the encouragement, condonation, or approval;

(vi) commits or allows to be committed against the child female genital mutilation as defined in Section 16-3-2210 or engages in acts or omissions that present a substantial risk that the crime of female genital mutilation would be committed against the child; or

(vii) has committed abuse or neglect as described in subsubitems (i) through (vi) such that a child who subsequently becomes part of the person's household is at substantial risk of one of those forms of abuse or neglect; or

(b) a child is a victim of trafficking in persons as defined in Section 16-3-2010, including sex trafficking, regardless of whether the perpetrator is a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare. Identifying a child as a victim of trafficking in persons does not create a presumption that the parent, guardian, or other individual responsible for the child's welfare abused, neglected, or harmed the child.

SECTION 63-7-310. Persons required to report.

(A) The following persons must report in accordance with this section when, in such person's professional capacity, he has received information that gives him reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected as defined in Section 63-7--20: a physician, nurse, dentist, optometrist, medical examiner, or coroner, or an employee of a county medical examiner's or coroner's office, or any other medical, emergency medical services, mental health, or allied health professional, member of the clergy including a Christian Science Practitioner or religious healer, clerical or nonclerical religious counselor who charges for services, school teacher, counselor, principal, assistant principal, school attendance officer, social or public assistance worker, substance abuse treatment staff, or childcare worker in a childcare center or foster care facility, foster parent, police or law enforcement officer, juvenile justice worker, undertaker, funeral home director or employee of a funeral home, persons responsible for processing films, computer technician, judge, and a volunteer -nonattorney- guardian ad litem serving on behalf of the South Carolina Guardian Ad Litem Program or on behalf of Richland County CASA.

(B) If a person required to report pursuant to subsection (A) has received information in the person's professional capacity which gives the person reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by acts or omissions that would be child abuse or neglect if committed by a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, but the reporter believes that the act or omission was committed by a person other than the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, the reporter must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

(C) A person, as provided in subsections (A) and (B), who reports child abuse or neglect to a supervisor or person in charge of an institution, school, facility, or agency is not relieved of his individual duty to report in accordance with this section. The duty to report is not superseded by an internal investigation within the institution, school, facility, or agency.

(D) Except as provided in subsection (A), a person who has reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect may report, and is encouraged to report, in accordance with this section. A person, as provided in subsection (A) or (B), who reports child abuse or neglect to a supervisor or person in charge of an institution, school, facility, or agency is not relieved of his individual duty to report in accordance with this section. The duty to report is not superseded by an internal investigation within the institution, school, facility, or agency.

(E) Reports of child abuse or neglect may be made orally by telephone or otherwise to the county department of social services or to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or is found.

(F) Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring a person under the age of eighteen to be a mandated reporter pursuant to subsection (A).

APPENDIX IX – POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

[Excerpt: [Mandated Reporter Guide](#), Children’s Law Center, University of South Carolina School of Law]

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize possible signs of maltreatment. The law does not specify injuries or circumstances that require a report. Rather, mandated reporters must be familiar with indicators and exercise judgment in deciding whether a report is appropriate. Indicators of child maltreatment can be obvious, but are sometimes subtle and difficult to recognize. The presence of indicators does not necessarily mean abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring; however, when indicators appear repeatedly or in combination, professionals should take a closer look at the situation and consider the need to report. Although child maltreatment can be divided into various types (physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental injury/abuse, neglect), these various types often occur in combination. The following is primarily taken from *Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms* (2003), a fact sheet published by the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect.

GENERAL INDICATORS OF MALTREATMENT / CHILD:

Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents’ attention
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, or does not want to go home

Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child
- Treats one child differently from siblings
- Denies the existence of – or blames the child for – the child’s problems
- Asks teachers or other caretakers to use harsh physical discipline if child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE / CHILD:

Child:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has injuries that mirror the shape of an object
- Has bruises in various stages of healing, or on different body planes
- Has bruises on the fleshy parts of the body
- Has fading injuries after an absence from school
- Attempts to hide injuries
- Seems frightened of the parents and does not want to go home

- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or guardian

Parent:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child’s injuries
- Does not seek medical care when needed for the child’s injuries
- Describes the child in a very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

SIGNS OF NEGLECT / CHILD:

Child:

- Is frequently absent from or late to school
- Is always hungry; begs or steals food or money
- Is consistently tired
- Has slow physical development or is underweight
- Lacks needed routine or urgent medical or dental care
- Has poor hygiene; is consistently dirty and has a body odor

- Lacks appropriate clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care or supervision

Parent:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or drugs

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE / CHILD:

Child:

- Reports sexual abuse
- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Refuses to change for P.E. or participate in activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite or weight
- Has a sudden change in grades
- Appears withdrawn or depressed

- Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted disease, particularly if under 14
- Runs away from home

Parent:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex

SIGNS OF MENTAL INJURY / CHILD:

Child:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Is either inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., rocking or head-banging)
- Has attempted suicide or engaged in self-harm
- Exhibits a lack of attachment to parents

Parent:

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems
- Overtly rejects the c

APPENDIX X – WHEN & HOW TO MAKE A REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

[Excerpt: [Mandated Reporter Guide](#), Children’s Law Center, University of South Carolina School of Law]

CLERGY REPORTING

In South Carolina, members of the clergy who are at least 18 years old are mandated reporters and are required by S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310 to report suspected child abuse or neglect. As mandated reporters, **clergy members must report when in their professional capacity they have received information which gives them reason to believe a child has been or may be abused or neglected as defined in S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-20** (excerpted in Appendix VIII).

The mandate to report child abuse or neglect does not require the reporter to know for certain that a child has been abused or neglected. **The duty to report is triggered when the mandated reporter has the reasonable belief that a child has been or may be abused or neglected.**

Reporting to a supervisor or person in charge of an institution **does not** relieve a mandated reporter of his or her individual duty to report, and the duty to report is not superseded by an internal investigation within an institution. S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310(C).

Because the law allows and also encourages all persons to report, mandated reporters have the option of making a report based on information they receive outside of their professional capacity, and they are encouraged to do so.

WHERE TO REPORT

South Carolina law allows mandated reporters to report to either DSS or law enforcement in the county where the child resides or is found. If the alleged perpetrator is the child’s parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child, DSS is responsible for investigating the report. If a law enforcement agency receives a report of this nature, the information will be forwarded to DSS.

When the alleged perpetrator is someone other than the child’s parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child’s welfare, law enforcement has primary responsibility for investigation as these cases do not fall under the authority of DSS. In these situations, mandated reporters are required to report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

If the alleged perpetrator’s identity or relationship to the child is unclear or unknown, the report should be made to DSS.

In the event of an emergency, reporters may choose to contact law enforcement. If a child is in imminent and substantial danger, law enforcement officers are authorized to take the child into emergency protective custody. Officers are not limited to their county or municipality, but can take emergency protective custody of a child when appropriate anywhere in the state.

If there is reason to believe that a child has died as a result of child abuse or neglect, a report must be made to the county medical examiner or coroner's office. If there are other children remaining in the home, a report should also be made to DSS.

PROTECTIONS FOR MANDATORY REPORTERS

CONFIDENTIALITY

South Carolina law requires DSS and law enforcement to keep the identity of the reporter confidential. The law provides only limited instances when the identity of the reporter may be revealed. If the report is received by DSS and is later referred to law enforcement, DSS will reveal the name of the reporter to law enforcement to allow for a criminal investigation. Likewise, if the report is received by law enforcement and is later referred to DSS, law enforcement will reveal the name of the reporter to DSS to allow DSS to investigate the allegations.

On some occasions, a person who is a mandated reporter may be subpoenaed to testify in court regarding the alleged abuse or neglect. Even then, the fact that the witness is the person who reported the suspected abuse or neglect cannot be disclosed.

Under extremely limited circumstances, a court may order DSS to release the name of the reporter to the subjects of the report. The alleged perpetrator in an unfounded case may file an action requesting that the court order the release of the reporter's name. The court will review the case records and may review written arguments or hear oral arguments. If the court finds probable cause to believe the reporter acted in bad faith or maliciously made the report, it may order DSS to disclose the reporter's identity.

IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY

Persons mandated or permitted to report suspected abuse or neglect, or who participate in an investigation or court proceeding as a result of a report, are immune from civil and criminal liability, provided that such persons have acted in good faith. Immunity covers full disclosure of all the facts that led the person to reasonably believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected. The law creates a rebuttable presumption that mandated reporters have acted in good faith in reporting suspected abuse or neglect.

PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION BY EMPLOYER

Employers may not dismiss, demote, discipline, or discriminate against an employee for making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. If this does occur, the employee may bring a civil action for reinstatement and back pay against the employer, including state government entities.

POSSIBLE PENALTIES

FAILURE TO REPORT

A mandated reporter who knowingly fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than \$500.00, or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

FALSE OR MALICIOUS REPORTS

It is unlawful to knowingly make a false or malicious report. False or malicious reporting is a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, is punishable by a fine of up to \$5000 or imprisonment up to 90 days, or both. Holy Scripture itself contains dire warnings against the sin of giving false testimony. *See e.g.*, Deut. 19:21, Prov. 6:16-19, Mark 14:56.

ADULTS ABUSED AS CHILDREN

Mandated reporters may be told by an adult that he or she was abused as a child. The South Carolina Attorney General's Office has concluded that, under current law, a report is not required in this situation provided that: the adult is not incompetent, there is no reason to believe that another child still under the age of 18 has been or may be abused, and there is no other requirement to report. An adult who was abused as a child may choose to report to law enforcement, as there is no statute of limitations on criminal actions in South Carolina.

For additional resources on reporting incidents of abuse or neglect, please consult your church's legal counsel, the [Canon for Safe Churches](#), applicable State law, and/or the full [Mandated Reporter Guide](#).

APPENDIX XI - PASTORAL DIRECTION REGARDING MANDATORY REPORTING BY CLERGY OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

South Carolina law requires certain persons to report to county authorities “when in such person’s professional capacity, he has received information that gives him reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected” as defined under state law.^[1] Clergy are included among such persons who are required to make such reports. For purposes of this law and this Pastoral Directive, a “child” is a person under 18 years of age.

South Carolina law does recognize an exception to this duty to report where an ordained clergy member receives information from an alleged perpetrator of child abuse or neglect as “confidential communication properly entrusted to him in his professional capacity and necessary and proper to enable him to discharge the functions of his office according to the usual course of practice or discipline of his church or religious body.”^[2]

One of the pastoral Rites of Healing recognized in the Anglican tradition is the Reconciliation of Penitents.^[3] Under this Rite, a priest may hear the confidential confession of a penitent who intends amendment of life and begs forgiveness of God and his church, and asks the priest for counsel, direction, and absolution.^[4] After hearing a confession, the priest may offer counsel, direction, and comfort, and may then declare absolution for those who truly repent and believe in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Ordinarily, the “secrecy of a confession is morally binding for the confessor and is not to be broken.”^[5] However, the Anglican tradition has recognized an exception to the rule of non-disclosure where disclosure, in the reasonable judgment of the priest, would prevent grave harm.

It is the practice and discipline of The Anglican Diocese of South Carolina that **a priest who is not administering** the Reconciliation of Penitents in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer and who hears a person admit or confess to apparent child abuse or neglect during pastoral conversations, shall have an obligation to report such information to civil authorities in accordance with the Diocese’s CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY MANUAL. To the extent practicable, the priest should inform the person of the potential for the priest’s requirement to report apparent child abuse or neglect to civil authorities before the priest actually hears any such admission or confession during pastoral conversations. This same practice and discipline should be followed if a priest gains actual knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited.^[6]

It is also the practice and discipline of The Anglican Diocese of South Carolina that **a priest who is administering** the Reconciliation of Penitents in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer and who hears a penitent confess to apparent child abuse or neglect, or the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult, shall maintain the secrecy of the confession as a morally binding obligation. However, a priest in such circumstances shall counsel and direct the penitent that true repentance will require the penitent to immediately cease the abuse, neglect, or exploitation and to take steps toward amendment of life, including appropriate reporting to civil authorities. Furthermore, if the priest believes, in the exercise of reasonable judgment, that secrecy will result in grave harm to a child or vulnerable adult, the priest shall be released from the moral obligation of secrecy and shall report such information to civil

authorities in accordance with South Carolina law and the Diocese’s CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY.

Other than as applied to the reporting requirements under South Carolina law as expressly set forth above, nothing in this Pastoral Directive shall abrogate or diminish the priest-penitent privilege set forth in South Carolina Law.^[1]

^[1] South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 63-7-310 (A).

^[2] South Carolina Code of Laws Sections 63-7-420, 19-11-90.

^[3] 2019 BCP, 222-224.

^[4] BCP, 223.

^[5] BCP, 222.

^[6] Section 43-35-25 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires any person who has actual knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited must report the incident in accordance with state law. “Vulnerable adult means a person eighteen years of age or older who has a physical or mental condition which substantially impairs the person from adequately providing for his or her own care or protection. This includes a person who is impaired in the ability to adequately provide for the person's own care or protection because of the infirmities of aging including, but not limited to, organic brain damage, advanced age, and physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction. A resident of a facility is a vulnerable adult.” Section 43-35-10 (11) of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

^[7] South Carolina Code of Laws Section 19-11-90 (Priest-penitent privilege) provides that: “In any legal or quasi-legal trial, hearing or proceeding before any court, commission or committee no regular or duly ordained minister, priest or rabbi shall be required, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication properly entrusted to him in his professional capacity and necessary and proper to enable him to discharge the functions of his office according to the usual course of practice or discipline of his church or religious body. This prohibition shall not apply to cases where the party in whose favor it is made waives the rights conferred.”