



ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

2025

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INTRODUCTION

DEFINITIONS

Adult: Anyone age 18 or older

Abuse: Interactions in which one person behaves in a cruel, violent, demeaning, or invasive manner toward another person which causes or is likely to cause harm or injury. The term encompasses physical, sexual, and emotional mistreatment. Abuse includes Child Abuse and Pastoral Abuse.

Certified Adult: an adult who has gone through the full screening and training process outlined in this policy. All clergy (including those seeking ordination or transfer), employees, and vestry members are required to be certified. All Child and Youth Workers are required to be certified prior to serving with children or youth.

Child Abuse: Any willful act, threatened act, or neglect act resulting in any physical, sexual, or emotional harm or injury to a Child. In addition, Child Abuse includes “child abuse”, “child neglect”, or similar terms as defined and prohibited by the state in which the activity occurred. (Corporal discipline of a Child by a parent or legal guardian for disciplinary purposes does not necessarily constitute Child Abuse when it does not result in harm to the Child.)

Vulnerable Adult: An adult with a disability or 65 years of age or older.

Pastoral Abuse: A pattern of control, intimidation, manipulation, coercion, isolation, elitism, censorship of decision making, exploitation, or the use of the name of God to persuade another to do something inconsistent with Scripture or the foundational documents of the Anglican Church in North America.

Bishop: The Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth. In the absence of the Bishop, the entity authorized to act in the absence of the Bishop, such as the Standing Committee.

Child or Youth: any unmarried person under the age of majority under state law-who has not been emancipated by order of the court. In most cases, child refers to infants through elementary school, and youth refers to middle/junior high through high school-aged minors.

Church Personnel: For the purposes of this manual, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel:

1. Priests and Deacons (Clergy)

- a. Clergy canonically resident in the Diocese of Fort Worth
- b. Clergy who are assigned to pastoral work in the Diocese or who are otherwise engaged in the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, and other works of the apostolate.
- c. Licensed clergy of other jurisdictions who are assigned to pastoral work in this Diocese, whether seeking canonical residency within the Diocese or not.
- d. Licensed clergy who are otherwise legitimately residing within the territory of the Diocese, including retired clerics and those engaged in part-time or supply ministry
- e. In addition to the provisions of these Policies, the above mentioned clergy are also bound by the Customary and Canons of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

- f. **Rector:** the clergyman in charge of a parish, including instances where the clergyman has a title other than Rector (such as vicar, priest-in-charge, deacon, or church planter).
- 2. Seminarians and Religious Orders
 - a. All seminarians including aspirants, postulants and candidates to the priesthood.
 - b. Those who are enrolled in the permanent diaconate formation program.
 - c. Any members of religious orders working within the Diocese.
- 3. The Laity
 - a. All paid non-ordained personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the Diocese, its parishes and missions
 - b. All volunteer non-ordained leadership. This includes heads of ministries, Vestry and Bishop's Committee.
 - c. **Child and Youth Worker:** adult volunteers and paid childcare workers who serve in children and youth activities in diocesan institutions, programs, and churches. This includes teachers in Sunday school classrooms or discipleship groups; it should also include anyone who has access to children in a supervisory capacity even if they are not the primary teacher.
- 4. Contractors
 - a. Any organization or individual under direct contract to the Diocese, its parishes, missions, schools or agencies. (Generally 1099 individuals)

Church: all fellowships, congregations, parishes, church plants, and any other worshiping entity affiliated or in association with the Diocese.

Diocesan Reports Receiver: ACNAWest Misconduct Reporting Office serves as the Diocesan Reports Receiver. <https://www.acnawest.org/about-8>

Rule of Three: One Adult and two unrelated Children age six or older must be present.

Rule of Two Adults: Two unrelated, non-dating Adults must be present.



Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth

2900 Alameda Street Fort Worth, Texas 76108

“But all things should be done decently and in order.” *1 Corinthians 14:40 (ESV)*

Ensuring that ministry within our Diocese is conducted with both good order and integrity is a responsibility that all of us share.

Everyone who serves in any facet of ministry within the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth, ordained and lay, paid or unpaid, must follow the Policies and Procedures Manual. While performing ministry within our Diocese and congregations, we must uphold the highest standards of ethical and moral behavior. Therefore, it is vital that everyone who performs any ministry within the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth be familiar with this Policies and Procedures Manual and follow its guidelines.

St. Paul instructs the faithful in Philippi, “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” (*Philippians 4:8-9*) This reminds all of us of the high calling we share as we minister within our Diocese and congregations. May God grant us the grace to answer this high calling and do what we do decently and in order as we look forward to hearing Christ’s words to us in the end, “Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master.” (*St. Matthew 25:23*)

The Rt. Rev. Ryan S. Reed, D.D., SSC
Fourth Bishop of Fort Worth

PURPOSE

The Policies and Procedures set forth have been prepared and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth effective May 1, 2025. These policies and procedures are intended to provide minimum standards of conduct and compliance for all individuals (both clergy and lay) participating in the ministry of the Diocese, and to be consistent with and governed by the Constitution and Canons and Customary of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth, and those of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). These Policies and Procedures are enforced by the standards as articulated in the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Rector, rather than the diocese or the ACNA, has overall responsibility for the administration of this policy within the parish, mission, or church plant he leads and for providing all reports requested by the diocese. In the absence of a Rector, the Senior Warden will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas specifically requiring action by the Rector.

Churches are responsible for all documentation regarding screening, training, and implementation for non-clergy Church Personnel. The Diocese is responsible for all documentation regarding screening, training, and implementation for clergy, in compliance with these policies.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All Church Personnel must acknowledge the policies and procedures annually.

Annually, Clergy, Seminarians, Diocesan Staff, and Board Members, and Diocesan Committee Members will acknowledge receipt and agreement to comply with the policies and procedures outlined. The Diocesan Staff will keep Clergy, Seminarians, Religious Orders, Diocesan Staff, Board Members and Diocesan Committee Members acknowledgements.

It is the Responsibility of the Rector, to ensure that The Laity acknowledges receipt and agreement to comply with the policies and procedures. These acknowledgements will be kept at each Church Office and provided to Diocesan Staff upon request.

SUMMARY CODE OF CONDUCT

It is expected that all Church Personnel will conduct themselves according to the expectations, policies and procedures as outlined below and throughout this Manual.

- Church Personnel shall exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- Church Personnel shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teachings of the Church.
- Church Personnel shall provide a professional environment that is free from harassment.
- Church Personnel shall not take advantage of a counseling, supervisory and/or authoritative relationship for their own benefit, personal, professional, or other.
- Church Personnel shall not abuse or neglect a child, youth or an adult.
- Church Personnel agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child, youth or an adult.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with children, youth and adults.
- Church Personnel will immediately report concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their Rector and the Diocesan Reports Receiver.
- Church Personnel shall adhere to the requirements of the law of the State of Texas (or Louisiana) regarding the reporting of any suspected abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult (https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/contact_us/report_abuse.asp) (<https://www.dcf.louisiana.gov>)
- Church Personnel agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children, youth and vulnerable adults involved in church activities and services.

Further, it is fundamental to the mission of the Diocese, that Church Personnel are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct.

- Immoral conduct.
- Actions that are disruptive to the ministry and public worship.
- Possession or distribution of pornographic material.
- Adultery, flagrant promiscuity or illicit cohabitation.
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs or gambling
- Stealing or any other form of theft, including misappropriation of Church funds.
- Sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse.
- Physical assault and fighting.
- Church Personnel should not harm the reputation of others by:

- i. Disclosing without legitimate cause the faults or failings of others to persons who have no cause to know them.
- ii. Making false allegations against another.

SAFEGUARDING POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

AWARENESS

SCREENING

One of the foundational steps to protecting our people from abuse is the careful screening of Church Personnel. Screening is designed to reveal any potential concerns regarding high-risk individuals before they become involved in one of our ministries. This should include background checks, reference checks, interviews, and minimum membership (see Membership below). These efforts are completed to do all we can to create a safe environment for our people.

Background checks

Background checks are required of all Church Personnel, in diocesan institutions, programs, and congregations. Background checks should be completed prior to serving, hire, ordination or transfer (as applicable), in compliance with these requirements.

- **The Laity and Contractors** will complete background checks by contacting the Diocese Office. The Bishop's Staff will assist in ensuring the background check is completed through the approved Diocesan vendor. The Diocesan Office will bill each Church for the background checks requested. The Laity should complete a background check prior to beginning service and every three years thereafter.
 - The Laity background check will include:
 1. Criminal History – going back at least 10 years
 2. Sex offender registry check
 3. As appropriate, DMV driving license check for Church Personnel who will be driving children and youth (the "Transportation" below)
 4. Additionally, DMV driving license check for Church Personnel who will drive on behalf of the Church.
 5. A Credit Bureau Record Check is also recommended for clergy, treasurers, bookkeepers, check signers, and those having access to any church financial accounts and/or credit cards
- Screening for **Clergy, Seminarians and Religious Orders** is the responsibility of the Diocesan office. Screening will be completed through Oxford Document Management (ODM).
 - Clergy seeking canonical residence or license must complete the screening process prior to the acceptance of Letters Dimissory or issuance of a License.
 - Clergy background checks will include:
 1. Inquiries of all Bishops having past or present canonical authority over the individual,
 2. all colleges and universities attended by the individual,
 3. and all employers of the individual during the past 5 years. If the individual has had more than one employer for over 5 years, then inquiries will be made of the

two most recent employers. In the case of clergy who have served as Rector, “employer” shall be the Senior Wardens of congregations served during the past 10 years.

4. Motor Vehicle record check
 5. Credit Bureau check.
 6. Local and Statewide 10-year criminal history records check through the appropriate law enforcement agencies to include sexual offender registries.
 7. References will be secured from immediate supervisors at the three (two if Clergy has had one employer for over 5 years) most recent places of employment and results documented.
 8. If applicable, a thorough social media search will be conducted.
- It is the responsibility of all clergy to cooperate fully in all aspects of the screening process and to submit in a timely manner all documents needed to complete such checks.
 - Each member of the clergy licensed in the Diocese will be required to update and pay for their ODM background check on a five-year rotating schedule to be administered by the Diocese. Their church may choose to pay this fee.

Membership

The Laity should complete a six-month minimum attendance prior to appointment, which includes active participation in the life of the church, including Sunday morning worship. On a case-by-case basis, by joint approval of the Rector and the supervisor Child and Youth Worker exceptions to the 6-month rule are permitted for instances such as church planting situations or college students who want to be Church Personnel.

Application

For Church Personnel, other than Clergy, it is the responsibility of the Rector (or his designee) to ensure the application includes:

1. Contact information
2. Prior church membership
3. Prior work serving with children or youth
4. Education
5. Residence history for the past 5 years.
6. Employment history for the past 5 years.
7. Has the applicant ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty or no contest to a criminal offense of any kind?
8. Has the applicant, or any immediate family member or person living in their household, ever participated in or been accused, convicted, had adjudication withheld for, pleaded guilty to, pleaded no contest to, or have an active arrest for any crime involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct, or had such a record expunged?
9. Is the applicant aware of any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults, including diagnosis with any paraphiliac psychological condition?
10. Two or more references. At least two references must be checked.
11. A signed release statement to allow a background check.
12. Validation of identity using a government issued photo ID.

It is also the responsibility of the Rector (or his designee) to ensure the application process documentation includes:

1. conducting the required background checks
2. securing and checking references from immediate supervisors at the three most recent places of employment and results documented;
3. conducting a face-to-face interview;
4. and when available, making a thorough social media search.

Screening Training

It is recommended that churches familiarize themselves with effective screening practices and recognizing high-risk applicants. Ministry Safe offers Skillful Screening Training for employees.

<https://ministrysafe.com/training-sst/>

Screening for Registered Sex Offenders and Policy and Protocol for their attendance at Church

Registered sex offenders sometimes make their background and legal history known directly to clergy or staff. They may also be known to members of the congregation, who in turn make this known to clergy or a member of staff. Church Personnel have an obligation to report the presence of known registered sex offenders at worship service or activities to the Rector. The Rector will investigate all such reports.

Each church will implement the following reasonable pre-emptive measures in order to determine if registered sex offenders may be regularly attending worship services and/or participating in church programs. To that end, the following will be implemented immediately:

1. The database secretary, church administrator or other delegated party will complete an online search of all those tagged in the database as “Local Active Body.” A field will be created in the database to mark that a search has been completed and to record the date on which the search was completed. Churches located in Texas will check the Texas State Offender Registry public site: sor.dps.texas.gov.
2. The database secretary, church administrator or other delegated party will also complete an online search of all who identify themselves as new to our congregation. Newcomers presently make themselves known via “Welcome” inserts in the bulletin, “Connect with Us” brochures in the pew holders, or more directly to a member of the clergy or to a staff person.

Once the Rector becomes aware of a registered sex offender who desires to participate in the worship or programs of the Church, he will meet with that person to begin implementation of a three-step process. A written record of each step of the process shall be securely kept.

The three steps will be completed in an expedient fashion. However, until all three steps have been completed, the registered sex offender will not be allowed to attend worship services or activities where children, youth, and/or the cognitively disabled are present. Attendance at other church programs during this interim time (e.g., adult house groups, weekday services, etc.) will be at the discretion of the Rector and may involve notification of participants of those activities of the background of the registered sex offender.

The three steps to be implemented are as follows:

STEP 1: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO ATTEND CHURCH

The registered sex offender will complete and sign *Form 1: Application for Permission to Attend Church* (Appendix A). The following information will be requested on that form:

1. Background information including contact information, marital status, previous addresses, present employment, Social Security number, date of birth, aliases (some of this information is needed to obtain a criminal record check).
2. The exact nature of the conviction and incarceration.
3. Additional charges made of which he/she may not have been convicted. (The possibility exists that someone may have been charged with additional sexual offense(s) but was not convicted of the alleged abuse. Churches reserve the right to assess these specific situations as relevant in a desire to be proactive and protective toward the congregation. Churches will proceed cautiously and will err on the side of caution.

4. Location of the victim(s), if known, and specifically whether they attend any activities at the Church the registered sex offender wishes to attend.
5. Contact information for parole or probation officer.
6. Conditions of parole/probation.
7. All therapeutic treatment during and since incarceration. Contact information for therapist(s) or counselor(s) must be provided.
8. Church or faith background, if any.
9. Church involvement during and since incarceration, if any. Contact information for previous pastor(s)/church(es) must be provided.
10. Signed permission and release to talk to any third parties named in the application.
11. Signed permission for a criminal record check.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATION

The Rector or his designee will thoroughly investigate the information gathered on Form 1. The Rector/designee will complete and sign *Form 2: Investigation* (Appendix A). The Rector/designee will gather information, which would ordinarily include the following steps as applicable:

1. Criminal Record Check – Confirm the nature of the conviction by running a criminal history record check.
2. Parole Officer – Speak with the parole or probation officer about the conditions of parole/probation, obtaining a copy of any agreement if possible. The following questions may be asked:
 - a. Is the registered sex offender still on parole?
 - b. Did he/she complete his/her full sentence in prison?
 - c. Is he/she allowed to attend church given the conditions of parole?
 - d. If the parole officer says that the offender is free to attend church, would the parole officer recommend any conditions for attendance?
 - e. Does the parole agreement contain the condition of congregational notification
 - f. Information from the parole officer is to be obtained in writing or, if that is not possible, a detailed written account of the officer's response should be provided.
3. Victims – Determine whether or not the registered sex offender's victim(s) has any connection to Church
4. Therapy – Talk to counselors or therapists, asking the following questions:
 - a. What therapy has the registered sex offender undergone?
 - b. What understanding does the therapist believe the offender has of his/her crime?
 - c. Is he/she in an ongoing recovery group?
 - d. Would the therapist recommend any conditions for church attendance?
 - e. Information from the therapist is to be obtained in writing or, if that is not possible, a detailed written account of the therapist's response should be provided.
5. Church Involvement - Speak to the rector/pastor of any church the registered sex offender has attended since being released from prison. Questions to be asked include the following:
 - a. What was the behavior/demeanor of the registered sex offender while in attendance?
 - b. What services/activities did he/she attend?

- c. What, if any, conditions for attendance were put in place? Did the offender adhere to any such conditions?
- d. What pastoral care did he/she receive?
- e. Why did he/she leave the church?
- f. Would the rector/pastor recommend the registered sex offender be allowed to attend Church? If so, what conditions, if any, would he recommend?
- g. This information from the rector/pastor is to be obtained in writing or, if that is not possible, a detailed written account of the pastor's response should be provided.

STEP 3: ATTENDANCE AND SPIRITUAL CARE COVENANT

Examining all of the information gathered, the Rector will create an *Attendance and Spiritual Care Covenant* (Appendix A). Assistance may be provided by the Rector's designee (the person who completed the investigation), or the Senior Warden, or a member of Church's Vestry; Diocesan Chancellor; and a Diocesan recommended psychologist, counselor, or social worker.

The *Attendance and Spiritual Care Covenant* will have two purposes. First, it will ensure the ongoing safety of the Church's vulnerable populations. Second, it will address the needs of the registered sex offender for spiritual care.

Regarding the first purpose, to ensure the ongoing safety of the Church's vulnerable populations, the *Attendance and Spiritual Care Covenant* will examine the following possibilities regarding church attendance:

Full Exclusion

Is full exclusion necessary for any of the following reasons?

- 1. Conditional attendance is not feasible or enforceable;
- 2. The offender's crimes have been so frequent or heinous that exclusion is the only appropriate action;
- 3. One or more of the offender's victims attends the church.

If full exclusion is necessary, the Spiritual Care Covenant can include the Rector and/or Church Personnel providing communion and pastoral care at the individual's home.

Full Inclusion

Given the nature of the offense and subsequent treatment, will the registered sex offender be allowed to attend Sunday services and/or other activities without conditions or limitations?

Conditional Attendance

Will the registered sex offender be offered a conditional attendance agreement? Conditions might include:

- Limitations for certain services and/or program activities (i.e. Sunday services are not allowed, but the Wednesday morning service is allowed; the Lenten Dinner Course held on church property is not allowed, but participation in an "adults only" or same-gender small group is allowed).

- Limited access to certain parts of the building when the sex offender is on church property (i.e. youth wing, education wing) – in this model more extensive notification of staff, security personnel, and perhaps others might be necessary as this is more difficult to monitor. Bathrooms are particularly difficult to monitor.
- Chaperone requirement - the sex offender must always be in the presence of a designated chaperone while on church property.
- Combination approach – chaperoned attendance for certain events (Sunday morning worship) but unchaperoned attendance at other events (weekday worship, small groups).

Chaperone Agreement

If the registered sex offender is allowed to attend [Church Name] with a chaperone who is with him/her 100% of the time, the conditional attendance agreement must specify the following:

- Who is the Chaperone(s)? Does the proposed Chaperone have sufficient objectivity?
- When and where will the Chaperone and Registered Sex Offender meet prior to church activities and part following church activities?
- What happens if either party must cancel?
- What is the expectation regarding restroom visits?
- What reports must the Chaperone provide to church leadership?
- What are the responsibilities of the Chaperone beyond accompanying the Registered Sex Offender each week?

Violations of Agreement

If the registered sex offender is allowed to attend Church only under certain conditions, what are the consequences for violation of the agreement? A process might include a meeting of the offender with the Rector, review of his/her participation, permanent dismissal from worship, or the signing of a renewed agreement.

Notification

It is the responsibility of the Rector to immediately provide the Diocesan Reporting Officer with a copy of all three forms related to this Policy.

The Rector will determine if notification about the presence of the registered sex offender at worship or church activities need to be given to the Church membership, and if so, to whom? Communicate the notification plan to the sex offender and verify whether any further permission is required from the registered sex offender regarding the notification to be given.

Periodic Review

When should the *Attendance and Spiritual Care Covenant* be reviewed? A specific date will be included in the Covenant.

Regarding the second purpose, the *Attendance and Spiritual Care Covenant* will outline a spiritual care plan for the registered sex offender. The plan will be specific about ways in which the registered sex offender will be enabled to:

1. **Worship:** Those establishing the Covenant will examine alternatives for participation in regular corporate worship, if attendance at Sunday morning worship is not an option at all. This may include worship on Wednesday mornings.
2. **Grow:** Those establishing the Covenant will examine ways in which discipleship can be encouraged, perhaps using Church's small group system, individual mentoring, Christian recovery groups, etc.
3. **Give:** Those establishing the Covenant will examine ways in which the grace experienced in Christ can be expressed through service and the use of the individual's gifts.

The Rector will make the final decision about the *Attendance and Spiritual Care Covenant* and produce a written record of the action plan. The Rector and registered sex offender must sign the Covenant. If chaperones are part of the Covenant, they should sign the agreement, as well as indicate that they are fully informed of the nature of the agreement.

On the appointment of a new Rector, that rector will be given the files relating to any and all existing Covenants. During the time of an interregnum, the Senior Warden, if not already aware of existing Covenants, will be given the files relating to any and all Covenants.

TRAINING

TRAINING

Church Personnel must be properly trained to care for those they serve in ministry. This training includes job functions and also training on recommended practices outlined in this policy to ensure the environment is safe for our people.

Sexual abuse awareness training by *Ministry Safe* is mandatory and must be completed online. This training must be renewed every three years.

- Each Church should appoint a Ministry Safe Coordinator.
- The Diocesan Office will assist each church in assigning an administrator role for each Ministry Safe Coordinator within the Ministry Safe system.
- Each Ministry Safe Coordinator:
 1. will maintain a list of those that are required to complete the training.
 2. be given an administrator role within the Ministry Safe system by the Diocesan Office
 3. ensure that Church Personnel identified as required to complete the training are entered into the Ministry Safe system, and
 4. monitor that all identified Church Personnel complete initial and renewal training.

The Diocese offers Bishop's Leadership Workshops periodically as a supplemental means of training and reviewing policies and procedures for Church Personnel, further this training will cover important safeguarding policies.

It is the responsibility of each Rector to ensure its Church Personnel are informed and have access to all Policies and Procedures included.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

INTERACTION

Christian ministry relies not only on right belief but also on right behavior, including interacting with those in the church and in the community. All allegations of misconduct or abuse will likely result from personal interactions and therefore it is important to establish communities of health that reinforce appropriate boundaries, build trust, demonstrate care and respect, and seek justice for those who abuse these.

One Adult Never Alone with a Child

Our most important safeguard with respect to Children is to ensure that one Adult is never alone with one Child. When with Children aged five or younger, The **Rule of Two Adults** must be followed.*: When working with Children aged six or older, either the Rule of Two Adults or the **Rule of Three** must be followed. Very limited exceptions to the Rule of Three may be allowed for one-on-one discipleship between Church Personnel and a Youth. Such exceptions are allowed only following guidelines from the Rector.

*A teenager aged 14-17 may serve alongside an unrelated Certified Adult to meet the Rule of Two, provided they have met the Certified Adult requirements.

It is not harassment or a hostile environment when a leader communicates verbally or nonverbally, or takes action, including appropriate discipline, to uphold the biblical, orthodox, and historic Christian faith as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, the ACNA Constitution and Canons, and the Anglican formularies, unless such verbal or nonverbal communication, or action is unreasonable and inconsistent with the standards of conduct set forth in the same authorities.

- **Verbal and Nonverbal Interactions** amongst Church Personnel should be edifying, respectful, and should refrain from inappropriate topics. Specifically, the following are inappropriate:
 - **Intimidation:** behavior directed toward an individual with the intention of causing fear, including forcing someone to do something they do not want to do out of fear.
 - **Nonverbal Harassment:** includes distribution, display or use of any written or graphic material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles or shows hostility toward an individual or group because of nationality, national origin, race, color, religion, age, biological sex, pregnancy, appearance, mental or physical disability, marital or other legally protected status. This also includes graphic gestures and making sexual gestures through hand or body movements.
 - **Verbal Harassment:** includes unreasonable statements or comments that are offensive regarding a person's nationality, national origin, race, color, religion, age, biological sex, pregnancy, appearance, mental or physical disability, marital status, or any other status protected by applicable federal or state law.
 - **Inappropriate Use of Technology** - sending sexually explicit or offensive communications (e.g., text messages, emails, social media messages or posts) is included in the definition of abuse and will not be tolerated. Use personal interactions on social media avenues to model appropriate behavior and language, both on and off social media. Church leaders should be aware that their behavior reflects Christ and the Church. (See Social Media Policy)

Relating well in addressing Sexuality and Identity

Every effort should be made to treat all people as individuals made in the image of God. It is essential that we strive to build an environment that does not harass, discriminate, intimidate, or devalue God's creation. We recognize that same-sex sexual relationships are sinful, but so also is pornography, fornication and adultery, as well as non-sexual sins such as greed, disregard for the poor, and self-righteousness.

- The call to pastoral ministry includes the charge to lead with gentleness, scriptural clarity, and a desire to seek the lost. To hold to, proclaim, and act in accordance with the biblical, orthodox, and historic Christian faith is not in and of itself abuse or harassment.
- In order to provide pastoral ministry to those facing same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria, therefore, the following are recommended whenever necessary:
 1. For overnight events, it is recommended that the church's leadership team, and the parent/guardian of the student, outline an agreed upon Supervisory Plan designed to safeguard all participants.
 2. Churches, Child and Youth Workers, and Child and Youth Leaders should endeavor to make sure all students do not feel isolated, but rather included, welcomed, valued, and respected. This is essential, especially at meals, morning and evening scheduled events, and spontaneous moments. Ongoing and open communication with parents who have child-specific concerns is encouraged.
 3. For those churches that are able, consider offering a family (non-gendered) bathroom as an option.

Pornography creation, viewing, or distribution

Printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings. All clergy are required to avoid creating, viewing, or distributing pornography at all times, not just while working or in church facilities. Any clergy struggling in this area should reach out to the Canon to the Ordinary for an assessment and help with recovery. This is offered without the involvement of the Bishop unless clergy fail to follow through with a recovery plan. It is never appropriate to view pornography. When this includes a person under the age of legal majority 18, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

Additional considerations for communication with children

Verbal interactions between leaders and children should be encouraging, constructive, and mindful of the mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children. To this end, Church Personnel should avoid talking to children or parents in a way that is, or could be, construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, Church Personnel are expected to refrain from using vulgar language in the presence of children. Concerns about children should be directed to parents, legal guardians, the appropriate ministry leader, or the clergy, or when necessary, the Diocesan Reports Receiver.

Church Personnel should avoid engaging in any sexually-oriented communications with children, and should refrain from discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program. Church Personnel should report any sexually-oriented communications involving a child to the appropriate ministry leader or the clergy who should contact the Diocesan Reports Receiver.

Technology and Youth

Social media avenues are important ways for youth ministry staff and volunteer leaders to connect with students. Their world is often constructed around social media, for better or worse. Having personal interactions in this venue allows adults to model appropriate behavior in social media, and it forms valuable connections with students. Church Personnel should refer to the Social Media Policy.

- Church Personnel shall refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (usually 13).
- Virtual spaces are to be treated the same as in-person spaces. This means two Certified Adults must be online with one youth (known as the two-adult rule, preferably unrelated), participants must be appropriately clothed, and conversation must be within “public” view. For online conference calls, this means calls are not completed in the bedroom, and the parents are aware that the student is in conversation with the leaders. Use group apps rather than private messages. If a situation arises where only one Certified Adult is present, a minimum of two students must also be present. In text and email exchanges with youth, Youth Workers should copy another Youth Worker in messages they send.
- For those students under 13 (this is the usual minimum age for social media platforms by the platforms themselves), get parent permission for any communication and welcome the parents into that environment.
- Photography: Photos of children will not be used contrary to parental wishes and must not contain any personally identifying information about children either online or in print publications without prior parental permission. This is easily handled by including a consent statement on programming registrations that are signed by the parent/guardian.

Creating an Environment of Awareness

Church Personnel are asked consistently to raise awareness about these issues by normalizing the following principles:

- Transparency: it can be difficult clearly to state what you think, feel, or see happening, but it is a sign of emotional health to speak up when something is wrong. No one can improve or eradicate inappropriate behavior without exposing the issue. Avoid triangulation and protection of individuals who are acting inappropriately. Whether it is porn addiction, gossip, an affair, bullying, sexual jokes or comments, flirting, etc., bringing the issue into the light is always the path toward healing, accountability, sanctification, and emotional health.
- See Something, Say Something: if something is a concern to you, bring it to the appropriate leaders detailed within this document; including more than one leader in the discussion encourages accountability, transparency, and appropriate resolution.

Additionally, all Church Personnel should maintain a physical environment that minimizes any appearance of potentially inappropriate behavior at all times, including when traveling or participating in events held at the church after business hours. It is wise to remain in public view when possible. It is strongly recommended that the doors to rooms used for ministry contain windows. It is generally not recommended that employees share a hotel room when traveling.

PHYSICAL INTERACTION WITH MINORS

Church Personnel often have a powerful relationship of trust with the people to whom they minister. Betrayal of that trust through violation of sexual boundaries causes great emotional and spiritual harm. Such behavior is a denial of our calling as Christians and may be a violation of the law. We must take every step to prevent it, and to respond with swift justice should misconduct or abuse occur. **Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of clergy, employees, vestry, or Child and Youth Workers.**

It is the Diocesan policy that all Church Personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In some circumstances, physical restraint may be used to prevent self-injury by the child and/or harm to others or to property. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents, the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Director, and/or clergy.

Appropriate physical affection between Child and Youth Workers and children is important for children's development and is generally suitable in the church setting.

Here is an example summary table of appropriate and inappropriate physical affection:

Appropriate physical affection may include:	Inappropriate physical affection may include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-fives • Handshakes • Fist bumps • Thumbs up • Side hugs • Smiling • Pats on the back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrestling • Tickling • Sitting in laps (except nursery-aged children) • Kissing in any form • Initiating frontal hugs • Commenting on children's bodies • Forcing unwanted affection

Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate behavior by anyone must be reported immediately to (1) the Rector and/or clergy in charge, **and** (2) the Diocesan Reports Receiver. If the allegation is against the Rector, notify the Diocesan Reports Receiver

immediately. Any suspected abuse should be reported to law enforcement as well as the Diocesan Reports Receiver.

Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of Child and Youth Workers in youth and children's ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be 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.

PASTORAL ABUSE

Pastoral abuse occurs when a spiritual leader in a position of authority relative to the receiving party utilizes their position (or perceived position) of authority to justify misconduct or other forms of abuse. This includes, but is not limited to, patterns of abuse such as manipulation and exploitation, intimidation, censorship, requirements for secrecy and silence, coercion, control through the use of sacred texts or teaching, requirements of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a "divine" position in order to maintain power or control, isolation as a means of punishment, superiority and elitism, and patterns of behavior such as blaming, shaming, or shunning. It is unacceptable for any Diocesan clergy to pastorally abuse their parishioners as it is considered conduct unbecoming to the sacred calling of one in holy orders.

Regarding discipline, clergy are subject to disciplinary action upon committing offenses listed in the Anglican Church in North America's Constitution and Canons, and the Diocesan Constitution and Canons.

People sometimes may find they disagree with clergy, or find themselves subject to accountability or church discipline (which, in and of itself, can be a healthy part of discipleship). This does not equate to pastoral abuse. It is expected that clergy will teach and uphold the doctrine of the church. Please consult the following for more information regarding the expectations of clergy:

- The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.
- The Book of Common Prayer (2019): The ordination vows (found under Episcopal Services) outline the expectation for faithful diligence in upholding the doctrine and discipline of Christ.
- To Be a Christian (2020): The ACNA Catechism outlines confession, absolution, and forgiveness, as well as describes the Church's authority.
- The 39 Articles of Religion: The ACNA upholds the 39 Articles of 1571 and their amendments which explain our views on the Sacraments as well as the expectation of clergy. In particular, the recognition that clergy are imperfect and should be examined carefully and removed if necessary.
- The Jerusalem Declaration: This 2008 declaration outlines our beliefs and expectations regarding Christian living, Sacraments, the authoritative standard of clerical orders, stewardship, unity, and our fidelity to orthodoxy.
- The ACNA's Constitution and Canons, and the Diocesan Constitution and Canons.

COUNSELING

One of the expectations of all clergy and other pastoral caregivers serving in the Diocese is that they offer pastoral counseling to members of the congregation if/when necessary and appropriate. Pastoral counseling occurs when clergy offer spiritual direction or advice concerning moral or spiritual matters. This counseling is recommended to be offered for a small number of sessions (6) per person. Pastoral counseling typically covers singular issues or questions, conflict management, confession, crisis counseling, premarital counseling and marriage counseling. If those crises continue beyond a few sessions, or if there is a need for ongoing counseling, members should be referred to a certified or licensed professional. Fees or donations to an individual for pastoral counseling are prohibited.

Any clergy or staff member charging fees for counseling must possess appropriate professional credentials and proof of separate professional liability insurance, including coverage for sexual misconduct, at all times. Such proof of insurance will be placed on file with the Diocesan Office. Such persons offering paid spiritual direction or professional counseling shall submit that ministry for approval by the Bishop and then submit to on-going peer or supervisory review with a spiritual advisor approved by the Bishop.

During any pastoral counseling sessions, clergy and pastoral caregivers are expected to maintain an environment that minimizes any existence, or appearance, of potentially inappropriate behavior or exploitation. Exploitation occurs when church personnel take advantage of the pastoral counseling relationship for the benefit of the pastoral counselor. Sexual exploitation includes sexual contact between church personnel and the recipient of the pastoral counseling services, regardless of who initiates the contact. Under certain circumstances, it is advisable to bring another pastor or staff member into a conversation or session - for example, if a counseling session raises the possibility of possible illegal activity or abuse, or if someone is making allegations or disclosing abuse or illegal activity.

Pastoral counseling should always be respectful and consistent with the intent to provide a safe and comfortable environment. Pastoral counseling should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times and should not be held at places or times that would cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person being counseled. It is strongly recommended that the doors to rooms used for pastoral care contain windows. No one-on-one pastoral counseling should be conducted in private living quarters.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION, SPIRITUAL DIRECTION, & DISCIPLESHIP

As Christians, we are encouraged to seek discipleship opportunities. This frequently manifests in 1:1, 1:2, or 1:3 relationships where participants meet regularly for a long-term partnership. This is not the same situation as pastoral counseling, which is intended for a singular focus and therefore is limited in scope. If a partnership of spiritual formation, spiritual direction-or discipleship is entered into long-term, consider these safeguards:

- Ensure this relationship is brought into the light among the leadership team of the church by informing multiple people of this partnership;
- If there are multiple people offering long-term spiritual direction or discipleship in your church, consider meeting every quarter to discuss the process and its benefits to the church, as well as accountability;

- If one clergy person is offering long-term spiritual direction or discipleship to another clergy person, bring the arrangement into the light by informing the Bishop of the relationship;
- Meet in a public place, not alone in one another's private living quarters;
- It is recommended that it be conducted by same biological sex participants in groups of at least 3 people total whenever possible;
- Follow guidelines regarding interaction and physical contact;
- Define the parameters of the relationship at the first meeting, articulating how one might discontinue the relationship without further explanation at any time; consider utilizing a signed waiver that outlines expectations, specifically protecting clarity regarding confession, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting;
- Communicate to the Diocesan Reports Receiver any concerns.
- Include prayer and the study of Scripture in your regular time together.

In order to protect the emotional and spiritual health of all clergy, it is recommended that clergy also seek regular spiritual direction to ensure accountability and a strong support system.

Spiritual Formation, Spiritual Direction & Discipleship with Youth: If spiritual formation, discipleship or spiritual direction with a youth is entered into long-term, consider these safeguards in addition to those above:

- Gain the parent/guardian's consent;
- Meet in a predictable location at a predictable time (same time/place each occurrence);
- Guidelines outlined in this policy for interaction with youth (regarding awareness, screening, interaction, and reporting) must be followed.

In order to protect the emotional and spiritual health of everyone involved, it is recommended that Youth Directors and Children's Ministry Directors also seek regular spiritual direction to ensure accountability and a strong support system.

SUPERVISORY PLANS FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH EVENTS

The purpose of the supervisory plan for any given activity is to give direction to Church Personnel to ensure appropriate measures are in place to meet the diocesan standard for supervision. All Child and Youth Workers for the activity need to be informed of the contents of the supervisory plan. It is recommended that a copy of the plan be provided for leaders (and parents, depending on the activity), and that the plan be posted in a visible location. Samples of Supervisory Plans are available on the Diocesan intranet under *Church Administration Resources*

Onsite Supervisory Plans should include the following:

- 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 following is the recommended ratio of Certified Adults to children
 1. Infants: 2 adults for up to 8
 2. Young toddlers: 2 adults for up to 12
 3. 2 and 3 years: 2 adults for up to 16
 4. 4 years: 2 adults for up to 20

5. School age: 2 adults for up to 40
 6. Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group
- The physical environment
 - Bathroom procedures, including showering procedures if applicable
 - First aid and medication procedures
 - The contact information for the Diocesan Reports Receiver to report concerns.
 - The release of children

Offsite Supervisory Plans should include all of the items listed above in the onsite Supervisory Plan, plus the following, which are described in more detail on the pages following:

- Offsite transportation plan
- Dining arrangements
- Sleeping arrangements
- Showering procedures

Monitoring Procedures

Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred. Research confirms that offsite activities increase the risk of abuse. Church Personnel must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children's and youth activities in all settings at all times.

Monitoring procedures should include, but are not limited to:

- All children and youth activities shall be designed to be supervised by two or more Certified Adult leaders, preferably not related to each other (known as the two-adult rule).
- No child will ever be left unattended in the building or on the property before, during, or following a church activity;
- Clergy, employees, vestry, and Child and Youth Workers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children. In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, the interactions should take place in a public place or where other persons are present;
- Watching for policy violations;
- An open invitation for parents to visit at any time unannounced;
- A careful review of new programs and/or significant changes to a program structure;
- Keeping interaction with children in full view of others at all times, and keeping unused rooms locked whenever possible;
- Keeping children and youth in supervised areas within the church building;
- An onsite or offsite written Supervisory Plan shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children.

Restroom Use

Because preschool, nursery, and special needs children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all Church Personnel will 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 biological sex.
- Changing diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers; children should not be left unattended while being changed.
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

Toilet Training

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- Only Certified Adult nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
- When children are assisted in bathrooms the stall door will be left partially open.
- Preschool-aged children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- Children may be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children, if necessary.
- Accidents should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

Elementary Aged Children

- Elementary-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Triads of the same-aged/biological sex-buddy system may also be used.
- Child and Youth Workers should take steps to avoid being alone with one child in the restroom. If a Child and Youth Worker must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another Child and Youth Worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the Child and Youth Worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

First Aid and Medication

If possible, medication should be administered by the child's parent or guardian. Medication may be given to a child by a Child and Youth Worker as authorized by the parent. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over-the-counter medication.

When medically necessary, medication or first aid may be given to a child by a Child and Youth Worker consistent with the Supervisory Plan. Parents should be notified whenever medication or first aid has been administered.

The Release of Children

Any time that a child has been entrusted to a Child and Youth Worker, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child, including the release of the child back to the parent/guardian. Child and Youth Workers are responsible for releasing children in their 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. In the event that Child and Youth Workers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately contact their supervisor before releasing the child.

Transportation

Church Personnel may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be observed during the transportation of children whenever practicable:

- Church Personnel responsible for driving minors to a sponsored activity must provide to the church copies of valid driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.
- It is understood that the Child and Youth Worker driving the child must have undergone an insurance approved background check including a DMV record check, as indicated under the "Screening" section above. Use of child safety seats that meet federal standards is required. Under no circumstances should anyone under the age of 18 be allowed to drive children or youth as part of an event.
- Traveling with minors in a vehicle should follow the two-adult rule (two Certified Adults, preferably unrelated) or rule-of-three at minimum (except in a parent/child or other familial situation). Seatbelts are ALWAYS required. If there is an extenuating circumstance causing only one adult and one child to travel together in an automobile, permission must be obtained by a parent or legal guardian of the child. This permission should be written, should include details regarding when/where, and should be signed by the parent/guardian or documented by the Child and Youth Worker if only verbal consent is obtainable. The child or youth should be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in such circumstances.
- In extraordinary circumstances these may be altered for emergencies. In these cases, the Youth Director or Children's Ministry Director (or supervisor) should be notified immediately.
- Cell Phone use while driving is prohibited.
- Children and youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops at a non-public place should be avoided. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be done as a group. Those organizing the event should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Adults should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- No one under age 25 may drive vehicles rented by a church.
- No drivers under age 25 may drive church-owned vehicles.
- If a family situation necessitates a special circumstance, the family may sign a waiver stating the deviance from the Diocesan policy; this waiver should note the family's acceptance of responsibility.

Home Group Procedures

The Diocese and its churches do not exercise control or responsibility over home groups (defined as a small group meeting in a home for discipleship such as Bible study, worship, fellowship, etc.). The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parents/guardians of each child. Leaders of home groups organized by churches should be encouraged to read this policy, take the child abuse training provided, and consider supervisory plans for their events, including:

- Supervision by two screened and trained (preferably unrelated) Certified Adults;
- The safety of the environment;
- Restroom procedures specific to the environment and needs of children.

Overnight Events (including lock-ins, mission trips, retreats and camps)

- The leader from any church offering overnight events, trips, and camps, as well as Diocesan sponsored Camp Directors, should complete additional relevant training (such as Ministry Safe's Camp Leadership Training every two years).
- The Two-Adult Rule (two Certified Adults, preferably unrelated) should be followed; a single student should not be alone with one adult. If a situation arises where only one adult is present, a minimum of two students must also be present (known as the Rule of Three).
- All leaders and volunteers must be Certified Adults (must have previously completed the church's screening and training process).
- Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Youth Director prior to the activity.
- As long as any students are awake for a prolonged amount of time, two trip leaders should be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
- Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies.-R-rated movies require Rector and parental approval.
- Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn; both tops and bottoms.
- In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by student leaders of the same biological sex.
- Leaders will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, leaders should never physically touch a student.
- Whenever possible, leaders will sleep in the same room, or in an adjoining room with the door between the rooms kept open.
- In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each leader and student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

Addictive substances

While in church facilities, while traveling with or in the presence of children or their parents, during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children, Child and Youth Workers should not use tobacco products, possess or use any illegal or mind-altering drugs, be under the influence of alcohol, share or view pornographic material.

REPORTING

Anyone who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused, abandoned, neglected, or exploited in violation of the law should immediately contact the appropriate state abuse hotline located here: https://www.dfps.texas.gov/contact_us/report_abuse.asp or <https://www.dcfs.louisiana.gov>

Following a report to civil and law enforcement authorities, it is required to immediately inform the Diocesan Reports Receiver. Misconduct may include, but not limited to: (a) questionable or improper accounting or auditing practices, (b) suspected unlawful conduct, (c) violations or suspected violations of Church or Diocesan policies or Canons (d) any observed or suspected verbal or emotional abuse, and (e) any suspected sexual misconduct (collectively referred to as “Concerns” from this point forward).

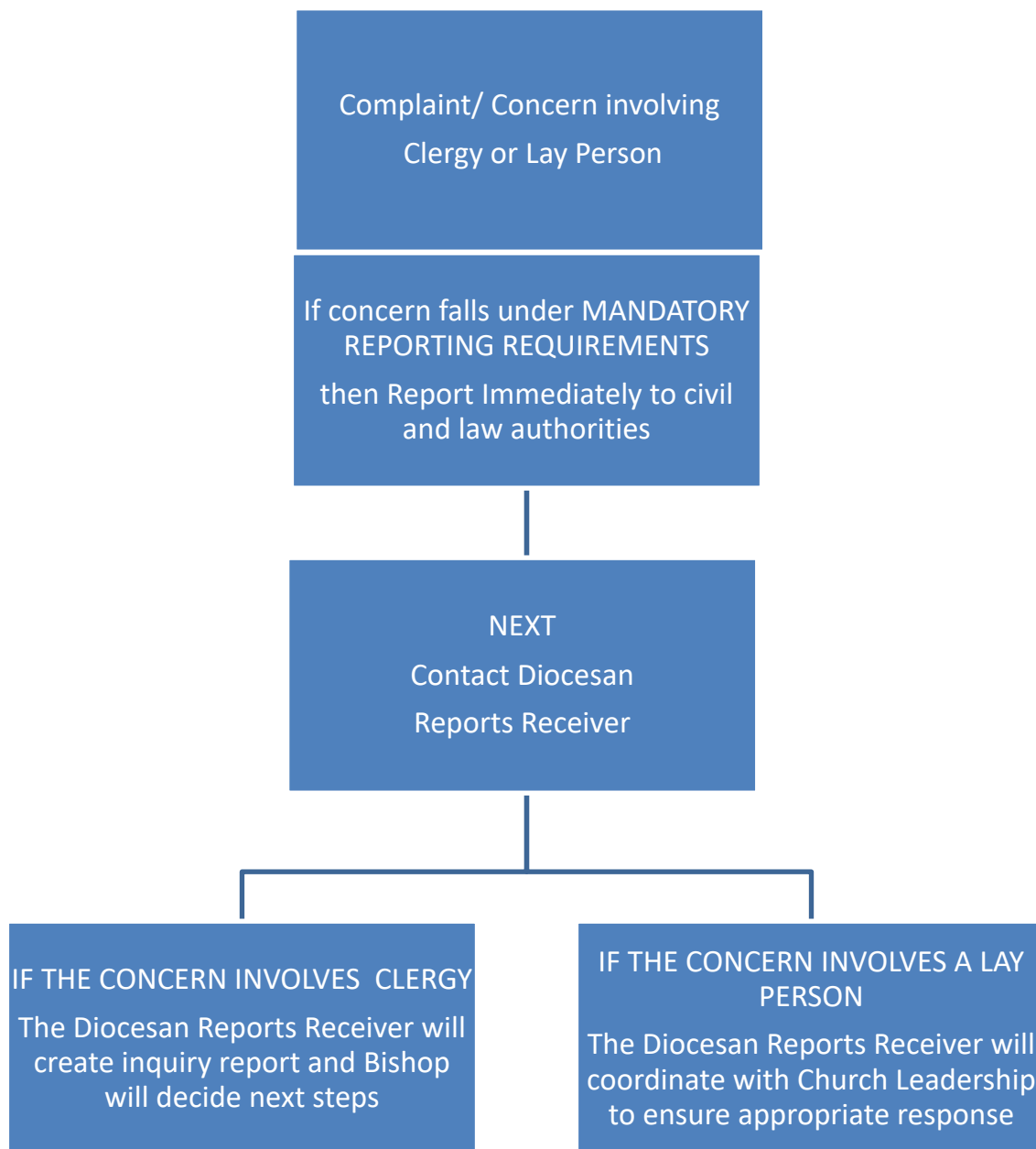
The Misconduct Reporting Office desires to encourage and enable individuals to report Concerns for prompt internal inquiry and appropriate action. The Misconduct Reporting Office is staffed by a Diocesan Misconduct Receiver.

There are three ways to report a Concern.

- Call the ACNAWest Misconduct Reporting Office: 817-988-1941
- Email the ACNAWest Misconduct Reporting Office: Concerns@acnawest.org
- Complete the Report a Concern Form can be found on [acnawest.org/misconduct reporting office](http://acnawest.org/misconduct-reporting-office) and the Diocesan Reports Receiver will contact you.

DECISION TREE

Minor conflict should be handled within the church. For potential issues of misconduct or abuse, the following reporting procedures are recommended:



ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING THE BISHOP

Any person believing that the Bishop has engaged in any misconduct/abuse should contact the Diocesan Reports Receiver immediately who will assist the complainant in submitting an allegation in writing to the Province via email at misconduct@anglicanchurch.net.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST LAY LEADERS

If someone discloses abuse, it is not the responsibility of the recipient of that information to investigate or verify; he or she should report to the proper civil and law enforcement authorities who will investigate.

In all cases of abuse disclosure, the complainant will be assured that the church is concerned and that the complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The initial verbal response should not convey doubt.

The Bishop, clergy, or anyone who may subsequently be involved in the investigative process will not at any time following the first receipt of the complaint, hear the sacramental confession of any person(s) involved.

The clergy will notify the Diocesan Reports Receiver immediately.

When the complainant is a minor/vulnerable adult:

1. All reports of abuse of children or vulnerable adults must be reported to civil and law enforcement and the Diocesan Reports Receiver immediately.
2. The Diocesan Reports Receiver will assure the complainant that the Diocese is concerned and that the complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
3. If a person accused of abuse is not the child's parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the household, the Diocesan Reports Receiver in coordination with Rector will contact the child's parents/guardians and offer support from the church.
4. The Rector and Senior Warden shall be informed.
5. Because there are legal implications, the person reporting should then contact a Diocesan Reports Receiver, who will deploy notification procedures including the Bishop, Chancellor, Chair of the Standing Committee. The Diocesan Reports Receiver will assist with the expansion of an inquiry report.

When the complainant is an adult:

1. Allegations of adult misconduct /abuse against a non-clergy leader will be reported to the Diocesan Reports Receiver.
2. The Diocesan Reports Receiver will inform the Rector and the Sr. Warden.
3. The Diocesan Reports Receiver will determine an inquiry or investigation protocol and coordinate the implementation led by the Rector and Vestry.
4. All decisions and documentation of the Rector and Vestry will be approved by the Diocesan Reports Receiver and maintained in the Diocese files.

Suspension of employment or volunteer activities:

1. The alleged offender's church-related employment or volunteer activity may be suspended by the Rector, after consultation with the Bishop, until such time as the allegations of misconduct or abuse are resolved.
2. This leave of absence is without prejudice (i.e., it does not imply guilt or innocence of the person under investigation). Payment of salary and benefits to the employee may be discontinued, only after consultation with the Bishop.

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING CLERGY

Any member of the clergy who believes himself or herself to be accused of misconduct/abuse may request the Bishop to begin formal inquiry.

1. All reports of abuse of children or vulnerable adults must be reported to civil and law enforcement and the Diocesan Reports Receiver immediately.
2. The Diocesan Reports Receiver will assure the complainant that the Diocese is concerned and that the complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
3. Upon receiving a complaint of misconduct/abuse against clergy, the Diocesan Reports Receiver will notify the Bishop.
4. If the complaint is against a member of the clergy, the Diocesan Reports Receivers will conduct an inquiry to evaluate the report in a timely manner and provide an Initial Inquiry Report to the Bishop.
5. The Bishop will utilize the Initial Inquiry Report to determine whether the report discloses reasonable grounds to believe an offense under Title IV has been committed. With the advice of the Standing Committee the Bishop shall determine whether a report of misconduct should move to an investigation stage.
6. If there is a decision to investigate: the Diocesan Investigation Team will investigate the complaint and provide a written report to the Bishop, Chancellor, and Chair of the Standing Committee.
7. Prior to a decision regarding whether to move forward with a Title IV investigation, all parties involved may be invited to provide non-adversarial responses to the inquiry report (including complainant, guardian, and/or respondent). This invitation may be declined.
8. Upon completion of the inquiry, the Bishop can take whatever action he, the Chancellor, and Chair of the Standing Committee deem appropriate, including removal, mediation, and/or reconciliation, or the use of a Godly Admonition..
9. The Diocese shall facilitate provision of pastoral care for those making reports that are not dismissed, as well as for the clergy who are subject of such reports.
10. If enough evidence is found that a canonical offense has been committed, a third-party investigation may be warranted.
11. Canonical procedures will be employed according to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and the ACNA.

Suspension of employment or leadership:

1. The alleged clergy offender may be inhibited by the Bishop under ACNA Canons until such time as the allegations of misconduct/abuse are resolved.
2. This inhibition is without prejudice (i.e. does not imply guilt or innocence of the person under investigation). Payment of salary and benefits to the clergy may be discontinued at the discretion of the Bishop.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

It is the policy of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth that Church Personnel will not use their influence or position to benefit their own private interests to the potential detriment of the Diocese and its Churches.

Church Personnel will disclose the presence of a conflict of interest prior to entering into any transaction or agreement with the church.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists where:

- The person has a direct or indirect substantive interest in the matter at hand or the party(ies) involved. The interest could include, but not be limited to, a financial or business interest or a relational interest with friends or family that will influence decision-making;
- The person is either a director, officer, or employee of the other party(ies) involved, or
- The person(s)'s spouse, children, parent, or siblings are in substantive relationships with the party(ies) involved
- The appropriate Committees (e.g. Risk Management, Standing), after reviewing the circumstances, deems the appearance of a conflict warrant it be treated as if an actual conflict exists.

Financial Interest

- A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly through business or family:
- An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement.
- A compensation arrangement with the Church or with any entity or individual with which the Church has a transaction or arrangement, or
- A potential ownership or investment interest in or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
- Compensation includes direct or indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
- A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Procedures for Addressing a Conflict

In those situations where a conflict of interest does exist or has the potential to exist, or has the appearance of a conflict, the person has a duty to disclose and must notify the appropriate authority by submitting a written description of the material facts comprising the conflict.

For conflicts at the parish level, the person should report the conflict to the Rector, or his designee, who will inform the Vestry. For conflicts affecting Diocesan Committees and Ministries, the person should report the conflict to the Bishop, or his designee.

- The person disclosing the conflict may make a presentation to the appropriate Committee, but after the presentation he or she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- The Chairperson of the appropriate Committee shall, if appropriate appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- After exercising due diligence, the Committee shall determine whether the Church can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested members whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Church's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

In all cases, it is expected the person with the conflict will abstain in the decision –making process including:

- participating in discussions or deliberations with respect to the subject of the conflict (other than to present factual information or to answer questions),
- using his or her personal influence to affect deliberations,
- making motions,
- voting,
- executing agreements, or
- taking similar actions on behalf of the Diocese or ministry.

While it is expected that parish level conflicts can be resolved at the parish level, in accordance with this policy, if additional guidance is required, the Rector should report the conflict to the Bishop.

Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy

If the Committee has reasonable cause to believe a person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the individual of the basis for such belief and afford them an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If after hearing the individual's response and after making further investigations as warranted by the circumstances the Committee determines that the individual has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Records

The minutes from the Committee's shall contain:

- The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest or conflict, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

- The name of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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This Policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by Church Personnel of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth. For the purposes of this policy, "social media" means any platform for online publication or comment, including blogs, wikis, social networking sites including (but not limited to) Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Whatsapp, Tiktok, Flickr, Instagram, and YouTube.

With the privilege of being a diocesan leader comes the obligation of mature self-censorship and self-control. It is the policy of the Diocese to require all social media posts by Church Personnel to adhere to the highest standard of Christian decorum. This includes (but is not limited to) the requirements and expectations outlined below.

This policy applies to social media accounts associated with a particular church or ministry as well as the personal social media accounts of Church Personnel.

No unauthorized persons may speak for the Diocese, its churches or ministries. When engaging in social media Church Personnel should take care not to speak for anyone but themselves or the ministry, complying at all times with this Policy.

Violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause. Clergy will be disciplined by the Bishop under the Diocesan Constitution and Canons. Lay employees will be disciplined by their employers, in compliance with local labor law. Violations by volunteers will be reviewed by the parish or ministry leadership and appropriate action will be taken. Diocesan officials may be consulted during any such review. Suspected criminal activity will be reported to the proper authorities.

Requirements and Expectations

- Social Media should be used to build up others and equip them for ministry; offer praise, encouragement, and examples of Godly living. When recommending outside resources, these should do the same.
- Slow down. Think about the consequences and how your message may be received before you post. Review your message before you share it. Perhaps you should trim it... or just delete it without posting.
- Use a ministry account to promote events, share good news, or make other commentary for the good of all concerned.
- A post that potentially damages the reputation of the Diocese of Fort Worth, its churches or its ministries is prohibited.
- Follow the same rules of courtesy and mature behavior you would observe on the phone or in a letter. Observe all laws and regulations governing operations of your congregation or ministry.
- Check all facts. Proof read for mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Try to make your message error-free.

- Do not endanger minors. Avoid revealing names or other personal information that might allow a predator to target or stalk a child either online or in person. Do not give the impression that children are without adult protection. Always protect the innocent and vulnerable, no matter the age.
- Don't infringe copyrights. For example, publish a link to a great blog post rather than copying it to your own page. Never offer someone else's work as if it were your own. If you extract a quote, acknowledge the author and source. Don't use graphics obtained without permission. Remember that this can be a cause of litigation.
- Stay away from controversies, including potentially divisive topics such as politics. Correct mistakes (especially your own) and make apologies when appropriate. Offer clarifications when these are helpful.
- Don't heat up an argument. Disagreements involving Christians should be handled according to New Testament standards of humility and gentleness.
- Don't use your position to settle a score or to promote your own interests or those of a group of insiders.
- Do not speak with malice or contempt.
- Do not engage in libel, slander, gossip, or belittling or degrading language or post images (such as memes) that put down or degrade anyone. Do not be obscene.
- Do not stalk others. Don't "hang out" on Internet pages simply in order to disagree.
- Do not reveal private information or knowledge you may possess. Don't publish embarrassing, immodest, inappropriate, or unflattering photos or commentary. Even if you have the permission of the person in the photo/comment, consider whether it is appropriate for your audience and consistent with your congregation or ministry's overall mission and message

PROTOCOL & POLICY FOR PERMISSION TO ATTEND CHURCH

This protocol has been adopted by the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth to accommodate the request of a person who is a registered sex offender to worship at services and/or participate in church-related programs, while protecting those who are vulnerable in the congregation, particularly children, youth and/or the cognitively disabled.

The protocol has three steps. First, a registered sex offender who desires to worship must complete an *Application for Permission to Attend*. Second, the information provided on the application form will be investigated by the Rector or his designee. Third, the Rector will draft an *Attendance and Spiritual Care Covenant* that both the Rector and registered sex offender will sign. The purpose of the *Covenant* is twofold:

1. to ensure the ongoing safety of the Church's vulnerable populations; and
2. to address the needs of the registered sex offender for spiritual care.

These three steps should be completed in an expedient fashion. However, until all three steps have been completed, the registered sex offender will not be allowed to attend worship services or activities where children, youth, and/or the cognitively disabled are present. Attendance at other church programs during this interim time (i.e. house groups, weekday services, etc.) will be at the discretion of the Rector and is likely to involve notification of participants of those activities of the background of the registered sex offender. In the event that a notification will be given, written authorization from the sex offender should be secured with respect to such notification.

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO ATTEND CHURCH

Full name: _____

Date: _____

Present address: _____

Address(es) since incarceration: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Date of birth: _____

Other names (maiden, alias, nickname): _____

Social Security number: _____

Marital status: _____

Present occupation and employer: _____

All criminal charges, even if some allegations were unproven (what/when/where):

Exact nature of conviction (what/when/where):

Date and place of incarceration: _____

Do any victims (whether from unproven allegations or criminal convictions) attend _____ Church or participate in any church programs? Circle: **YES or NO**

Name and contact information of probation or parole officer: _____

What were the conditions of probation or parole (provide a copy of official documentation):

Name(s) and contact information of therapist(s) or counselor(s):

Specify the nature of any therapy/counseling undergone during or since incarceration:

Name(s) of church(es) and pastor(s) where there has been involvement since incarceration, if any:

Are you part of an ongoing discipleship small group? Circle: **YES or NO**

If yes, provide leader's name and contact information.

Provide a brief statement of Christian faith and experience (conversion, spiritual growth), if any:

PERMISSION AND RELEASE

The above information in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false information may lead to denial of my application for attendance at _____ Church

I hereby authorize the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth and _____ Church to verify all information contained on this application with any of the third parties who are listed. I further authorize that any person listed above may disclose any and all personal knowledge of me. This includes all criminal, pastoral, legal, medical or psychological records, or any other area or record of importance to this application. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by those identified on this application.

Furthermore, I waive the right to sue the aforementioned persons for releasing such requested information.

I understand the purpose of this application and agree to the release and verification of the aforementioned information.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

I authorize the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth to complete a Criminal Record Check and to use information provided in this application for that purpose.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

INVESTIGATION FORM

Name of person completing investigation: _____ Date: _____

Name of registered sex offender: _____

The investigation is to address the following categories detailed in the policy document.

1. Criminal Record Check

Attach the criminal record check to this document.

3. Parole Officer

The information from the parole officer is to be obtained in writing or, if that is not possible, a detailed written account of the officer's response should be provided. Attach a copy of the parole agreement with this document.

4. Victims

Do any of the victims have any connection to [Church Name]? If yes, describe and attach to this document.

5. Therapy

Attach any documentation provided by therapist(s). The information from the therapist is to be obtained in writing or, if that is not possible, a detailed written account of the therapist's response should be provided and attach to this document.

6. Church Involvement

Attach any documentation provided by pastor(s). The information from the pastor is to be obtained in writing or, if that is not possible, a detailed written account of the pastor's response should be provided and attached to this document.

7. Other Pertinent Information

Was any additional information gathered? If yes, attach to this document.

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

ATTENDANCE AND SPIRITUAL CARE COVENANT

Names of all those completing action plan:

Rector: _____

Rector's designee, senior warden, or member of vestry: _____

Chancellor: _____

Trained psychologist, counselor, or social worker: _____

PART 1: ATTENDANCE PLAN TO ENSURE SAFETY OF CHURCH'S VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Outline a specific plan that addresses all of the categories detailed in the policy document.

1. Full Exclusion
2. Full Inclusion
3. Conditional Attendance
4. Chaperone Agreement
5. Violation of Agreement
6. Notification
7. Date when Attendance Plan will be reviewed

PART 2: PLAN TO ENSURE SPIRITUAL CARE OF REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER

Outline a specific plan that addresses all of the categories detailed in the policy document:

1. Worship
2. Grow
3. Give

The Rector and registered sex offender must sign this document. Designated chaperones may be requested to sign the agreement as well.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FORM 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

I have received a copy of the most recent Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth Policies & Procedures.

I understand these policies contain important required standards of conduct, including safeguarding children and adults, social media and conflict of interest disclosure.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood these policies and I agree to comply with all requirements outlined therein.

Print Name_____

Signature_____

Date_____

FORM 2



Diocese of Fort Worth

Form for Release of Liability

This Release Form relates to the use of facilities operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth used for baptisms, weddings, and other church events, allowing the release of liability by the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth and its member churches ("Church"), as well as all clergy, laity, and all other personnel working with the Church during events when participants or observers might capture media and images, or be otherwise injured in any way during such services.

Event: _____ Event Date: _____

Person to be photographed: _____

Residence: _____

City/State: _____ D.O.B: _____

If the above person is a minor, this release is provided by the following legal guardian:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Relationship: _____

The persons named above, for valuable consideration, including the use of facilities owned or operated by the Church, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, hereby absolutely and irrevocably release the Church and all those working with the Church and their successors, from all claims regarding collected images or video concerning the above-named individuals, and all other claim and injuries which may occur during the event, whether such claims result from image collection or more physical injuries:

The parties agree that this release shall be interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas and if any provision of this release is found invalid, the parties agree to reform this release to result in a full release to the extent legally possible of all liability to the Church and its agents.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____