

# The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

## *Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth*

(Adopted by Diocesan Council, January 8, 2014)

The Diocese of Long Island (“The Diocese”) is committed to the prevention of child abuse in all forms. The aim of this policy is to make the Church a safe place, safe for those who worship, safe for those who minister, safe for those who come in need, safe for children and safe for all who seek or serve Christ. We believe that this policy helps us live out our Baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being.

All Church Personnel including members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for holy orders, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities, vestry members, all employees of this Diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other Diocesan Units, key holders to any church property, the lay leaders of any group with regular access to church property or facilities shall abide by the parameters set forth by this policy.

### **A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS**

Adults shall never, under any circumstances:

- provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs or pornography,
- consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children’s or youth event,
- be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or the misuse of legal drugs at any children’s or youth event,
- engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior,
- engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth,
- discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth.

### **B. REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OF CHILDREN OR YOUTH**

Anyone who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place, whether at church or away from church, shall report it to Child Protective Services (see Appendix G).

Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies in a parish environment shall immediately report the violation to the Rector or priest and the churchwardens. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies in a diocesan environment or by a clergy person shall immediately report the violation to the Bishop’s Office.

Suspected violations of this policy may formally or informally be forwarded to the above via any of the following:

- A telephone call
- A Letter
- An Email
- An In-person meeting

All reports of sexual exploitation, policy violations, or inappropriate behavior under this policy will be taken seriously and reviewed and investigated promptly and impartially.

## **C. SCREENING**

The Diocese will do background checks on all clergy who are deployed or licensed to officiate within the Diocese. The Diocese will also do background checks on any diocesan employees or volunteers Who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth.

Parishes are encouraged to do background checks on all Church Personnel Who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth. The more access an individual has to children and youth, the more detailed a background check should be.

Background checks should include the following:

- a. An Application form
- b. Criminal Records and Sexual Offender Registry Checks
- c. Individual Interview
- d. Reference Checks

## **D. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION**

Plans for all events and ministries for children and youth should include at least two, unrelated adults present at all times. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youths, that adult shall immediately report those circumstances to the Bishop's Office if it is a diocesan event or the Rector, or Warden, if it is a parish event. It may be appropriate for a Sunday School class to have only one teacher so long as at least one other adult can maintain visual contact with the teacher.

Any new programs, trips or events that involve children or youth should be given prior approval by the Rector.

No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the rector.

Adults who work with children or youth within a congregation should be discouraged from having a separate and private relationship with any unrelated child from the church away from sanctioned church, youth activities. The Vestry should regularly conduct a "safe church audit" to review practices and policies within the congregation.

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

## **E. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Three hours of child abuse prevention education and training is required for all Church Personnel Who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth before they start their work with children or youth and all those who fall under the scope of this policy. Each parish or diocesan institution shall maintain a record of those who have attended such trainings.

The Diocese will provide necessary training for these individuals through in-person and online courses through the Mercer School of Theology. Individuals should attend re-training every 5 years. Retraining requirements are outlined in the Mercer Safe Church catalogue.

Evidence that parishes and institutions are complying with Safe Church training will be presented to the bishop as part of all official Episcopal visitations.

## **F. GENERAL DEFINITIONS**

### **1. Church Personnel**

For the purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel when they are functioning in their respective roles for the church:

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- Seminarians, postulants, and candidates for holy orders.
- All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the diocese, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
- Those who contract their services to the diocese, its congregations, schools or agencies.
- Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him or herself for a church related service, or who actually assists with or performs a service, whether or not they have been selected or assigned to do so. Volunteers include members of advisory boards, vestries, Bishop's Committees, and boards of directors.

#### **Examples of Church Personnel include:**

- Church School Teachers
- Children's or youth choir directors
- Organists who work with children or youth
- Lay youth ministers
- Volunteer youth directors
- All Church Personnel who regularly work in the nursery.
- All Church Personnel who work in the nursery if they are the only person over 21 present at any time
- Volunteers licensed under Canon III.4 (such as Lay Eucharistic Visitors)
- All staff, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps
- Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth more than twice a year

### **2. Key Holders**

Anyone who has unencumbered access to the facilities

### **3. Children and youth**

- A child is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years.
- A youth is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older, but still in high school.

### **4. Types of abuse**

- *Physical abuse* is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth.

- *Sexual abuse* perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and an adult. This includes any activity, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult, child or youth.
- *Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth* is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.
- *Emotional abuse* is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.
- *Neglect* is the failure to provide for a child or youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.
- *Economic exploitation* is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's belongings or money.

## **G. IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

Episcopal Diocese of Long Island  
 Intake Officer  
 516-248-4800 x131  
[bishopsoffice@dioceseli.org](mailto:bishopsoffice@dioceseli.org)

Safe Church Trainings in the Diocese of Long Island  
 George Mercer School of Theology  
 516-248-4800 x 150

Sterling Infosystems, Inc.  
 Criminal background Screens  
 To set up a parish account, contact Nancy Signore/ 516-248-4800 x111 [nsignore@dioceseli.org](mailto:nsignore@dioceseli.org)  
 Sterling Rep. – Guy Andrews  
 (646)-536-5263  
[gandrews@sterlinginfosystems.com](mailto:gandrews@sterlinginfosystems.com)

New York State Office of Children and Family Services  
 Child Protective Services 24/hour hotline  
 1-800-342-3720

[Revised 01/17]

## **APPENDIX A – Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth**

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal inter-action in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships. Relationships in ministry should, ideally, always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur.

This Code of Conduct has been adopted by \_\_\_\_\_ [Parish] to help the church create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them. All Church Personnel are asked to carefully consider each statement in the Code and within the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse before agreeing to adhere to the statements and continue in service to the church.

### **Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth**

- Church Personnel agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- Church Personnel agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with children and youth as defined in these Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.
- All Church Personnel agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with children and youth.
- In the event that Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, church personnel agree to immediately report their observations.
- All Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.
- Church Personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

## APPENDIX B - Guidelines for Appropriate Affection

The Diocese of Long Island and \_\_\_\_\_ Parish are committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children's and youth ministries that protect our children and youth from abuse and our Church Personnel from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for children and youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate, otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Church Personnel to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth. These Guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church Personnel working around or with children or youth.

Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth.

1. Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

2. The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
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- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.

- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, “You sure are developing,” or “You look really hot in those jeans.”
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth.

## **APPENDIX C – CANONS OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND RESPECTING SAFE CHURCH TRAININGS**

### **Title IX, Canon 5: Requirement respecting the Clergy and Laity In The Diocese on the Subjects of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment and Anti-racism Training.**

SECTION I. Education Training on Child Sexual Abuse. Unless excused by the Bishop in writing, all Church Personnel including members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for holy orders, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities, vestry members, all employees of this Diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other Diocesan Units, key holders to any church property, the lay leaders of any group with regular access to church property or facilities shall participate in a minimum of three hours of initial training, as approved by the Bishop on issues of Child Sexual Abuse in Church settings.

SECTION II. Education Training on Sexual Harassment. Unless excused by the Bishop in writing, all Church Personnel including members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for holy orders, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities, vestry members, all employees of this Diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other Diocesan Units, key holders to any church property, the lay leaders of any group with regular access to church property or facilities shall participate in a minimum of three hours of initial training, as approved by the Bishop, on issues of sexual harassment in employment, mentor and colleague relationships, and sexual exploitation in pastoral relationships.

SECTION III. Education Training on Anti-Racism. All members of the clergy, and all seminarians, postulants, candidates for Holy Orders, and all employees and lay leadership of the diocese or of parishes, missions, chapels, or other diocesan units, shall attend training as approved by the Bishop, on issues of anti-racism in church and pastoral relationships.

SECTION IV. Time for Compliance. The time within which such training shall be attended following the adoption of Section I, Section II, and Section III of this Canon shall be as from time to time determined by the Bishop.