



**Diocesan Policies
for the Protection of Children,
Youth, and Vulnerable Adults**

Revised August 2023

The Diocese of East Tennessee

814 Episcopal School Way

Knoxville, TN 37932

www.dioet.org

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I. Theological and Ethical Foundations

As people of faith, we believe God has entrusted us with many gifts and we are called to be good stewards of those gifts. Surely among the most precious gifts given to us are the human relationships we form in our parish churches and diocesan ministries. With that understanding, the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee takes seriously our responsibility for nurturing healthy relationships and good boundaries with all whom we welcome into our sacred spaces and ministry sites. The Safe Church, Safe Communities policies and procedures give us a comprehensive approach for creating and maintaining safe spaces and places in our Diocese. These materials were developed by church-wide leaders in the Episcopal Church, and then adapted by diocesan leaders with expertise in the numerous topics covered by Safe Church, Safe Communities.

Your cooperation and completion of these materials are vital for helping us all establish and maintain a community of mutual care, safety, and trust. Working together, may the true love of Christ be made known in the Diocese of East Tennessee and beyond.

Peace,

+ The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole

Statement of Policy. The purpose of these policies is to safeguard that the doctrine and teachings of the Episcopal Church are honored and that the welfare and safety of children and youth are maximized in the Diocese of East Tennessee. These policies apply to all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers, ministry leaders and search/congregational consultants serving the Diocese, any parish within the Diocese, or any other institution or organization of the Diocese. They also apply, subject to canonical limitations, to all postulants or seminarians sponsored by or working in the Diocese. The intent of this policy is to assure that the Diocese's response to an allegation of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or endangerment will be just and compassionate for all involved.

II. Expectations and Local Implementation

These policies set forth statements of general expectations and guidelines of behavior for ordained and lay people in the church when engaged in ministry with children and youth. These policies are mandated for all such activities sponsored by every congregation, institution, organization, school, and agency of the Diocese of East Tennessee. The purpose of these policies is to create a safe and welcoming space for all children and youth in our communities and those engaged in ministry with children and youth and to prevent abuse. These policies present best practices for creating such a safe space within the ministry of the Diocese of East Tennessee.

III. Definitions

NOTE: These definitions reflect our understanding of terms describing gender identity and sexuality, which are evolving.

Adult: Anyone who is 18 years or older and not in high school.

Adult Protective Services: A social services program provided by state and local governments serving vulnerable adults and their families who are in need of assistance. Adult Protective Services receives and investigates reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Bullying: Behavior that intimidates, humiliates, offends, degrades, or harms another person, whether verbal, psychological, social, physical, or otherwise.

Child: Anyone under the age of 12 years.

Child Protective Services: A social services program provided by state and local governments serving children and their families who are in need of assistance. Child Protective Services receives and investigates reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Cisgender: An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their gender or sex assigned at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Gender Non-Binary: An umbrella term for people who identify their gender as neither male nor female. These people might identify as both (“bigender”), neither (“agender”), or a mix between the two (“genderfluid”), or they can be unsure of their gender (“genderqueer”). This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expand and mature.

Intake Officer: The person(s) designated by the diocese to receive information regarding an offense for which a member of the clergy may be held accountable under Title IV of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, which sets out the disciplinary process for clergy. Anyone may contact an Intake Officer to report concerns.

LGBTQ+: An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others. It refers to people whose gender identities vary from their gender or sex assigned at birth, or whose sexual orientations differ from those of heterosexual majority. The “+” is an effort to include additional sexual and gender identities. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expand and mature.

Mandated Reporter: A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency. Everyone in the state of Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law.

Off-Site: Any location other than the sponsoring Episcopal church, institution, facility, or campus.

Organizations: All institutions for which the Diocese or congregations have legal or fiduciary responsibility (examples: diocesan departments, commissions, conference & retreat centers, adult day care centers, retirement communities, religious orders, congregations, schools, etc.).

Overnight: Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.

Pastoral Relationships: Any relationship (1) between a Member of the Clergy and any person to whom the Member of the Clergy provides or has provided counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction, or spiritual guidance, or from whom such Member of the Clergy has received information within the Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, or (2) between a lay minister and any person to whom the lay minister is offering prayer, ministry, and/or any person from whom the lay minister has received sensitive, personal, or confidential information in the course of offering ministry.

Programs: Official activities and programs sponsored by The Episcopal Church and its provinces, dioceses, and congregations (examples include the Episcopal Youth Event, Provincial Youth Events, Happening, Teens Encounter Christ, pilgrimages, mission experiences, New Beginnings, camp programs, Acolyte Festival, etc.).

Public Records Check: A search of documents and data available to the public, including criminal and civil court records, credit reports, and driving records from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Typically, such searches are conducted by a third party with expertise in this area.

Residential Facility: Any institutional or group home setting where a vulnerable adult resides on a permanent or temporary basis, such as a nursing home, rehabilitation center, assisted living facility, treatment center, or memory care facility.

Responsible Person: The person designated as being accountable for compliance with this policy for an event or program.

Sexual Misconduct: A broad term encompassing any behavior of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or capacity for consent or by force, intimidation, coercion, or manipulation. Sexual misconduct can be committed by a person of any gender, and it can occur between people of the same or different gender.

Supervisor: A person who has oversight responsibilities for a ministry program and/or leaders in a ministry program.

Title IV: A section of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church pertaining to clergy professional standards, accountability, and ecclesiastical discipline.

Transgender: An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with the gender or sex assigned to them at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expand and mature.

Vulnerable Adult:

- Any adult 65 years of age or older, as defined by T.C.A. § 45-2-1202;
- Any adult who is infirm or diminished in capacity due to age, illness, disability, or otherwise defined as a vulnerable adult in T.C.A. § 45-2-1202;
- Any adult who is ministered to in their home (by Eucharistic Visitors, Pastoral Care Visitors, Stephen Ministers, or others);
- Any adult who is wholly or partially dependent upon one or more other persons for emotional, psychological, or physical care or support; such dependency may be temporary as in the case of an accident, illness, or birth of a child; and
- Any adult who, by virtue of a crisis, experiences vulnerability leading to dependency on another or lacks agency in a pastoral relationship as in the wake of death of a family member or job loss.

Youth: 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, and still in high school.

IV. Application and Screening Requirements

Dioceses, congregations, and other organizations are required to screen clergy and all persons hired as employees or accepted as volunteers who regularly supervise children or youth activities (excluding unpaid Sunday School Teachers), including future clergy, postulants, those who have access or keys to church buildings, and all others listed in *Appendix A*. For some positions, screening consists only of a Public Records Check. For other positions there are additional screening requirements of a written application, interview, and reference verification.

A. Public Records Checks Requirements

- The Diocese requires that all Background Checks be conducted through the Diocesan Office using the request form at www.dioet.org/safe-church. Any exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the Bishop. Such checks must be completed before the employee or volunteer begins interacting with children, youth, and vulnerable adults;
- Criminal Public Records Checks shall include all available criminal records and sex offender registries;
- A Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records check is needed if transporting children, youth, and vulnerable adults as part of, or an extension of, ministry of the church or for a church-sponsored event;
- A credit check is required with check signing authority; and
- Public Records Checks must be updated at least every five years.

B. Additional Screening Requirements

- Written application, interview, and reference verification are required before serving in certain roles and ministries. Where required, these components are generally conducted in the following order:
- Submission of a completed written application to serve in a specified role with a clearly defined, written “job description.” The application includes verifiable personal information;
- Personal interview;
- Reference verification conducted by congregations and other organizations to verify personal information and check references listed in the application (people who know but are not related to the applicant), all schools attended by the individual within the past five (5) years, and all employers of the individual within the past five (5) years. If the individual has had one employer for over five years, these inquiries will be made of the two most recent employers; and
- Maintenance of these records as described below.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers or decision-making leaders who supervise children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required to have Public Records Checks and reference checks. Dioceses, congregations, and other organizations must keep and maintain all application and screening records secure and confidential in the Diocese, congregation’s, or organization’s office. This includes a signature by each applicant verifying receipt of a copy of this policy, including any local procedures or variations.

Please find the application and screening requirements in Appendix A.

V. Education and Training

Clergy, employees, and volunteers who regularly supervise children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall have training that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people and covers a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries.

Depending on role and responsibility, training should include the following:

For Children and Youth:

- Prevention of, identification of, and response to all forms of abuse and neglect;
- Vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
- An introduction to gender non-binary;
- The needs of LGBTQ+ children and youth;
- The ways that children and youth can engage in self-advocacy; and
- The needs of disabled children and youth.

For Vulnerable Adults:

- The prevention of, identification of, and response to all forms of abuse and neglect, including financial exploitation;
- Mandated and voluntary reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults;
- Vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
- An introduction to gender non-binary;
- The needs of aging LGBTQ+ individuals who often struggle to find care or residential facilities adequately equipped to meet their needs; and
- The ways that vulnerable adults can engage in self-advocacy.

Certification of training shall be renewed every three years.

The Diocese of East Tennessee, its congregations, and other organizations with responsibility for programs with services or ministries to children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall keep records sufficient to evidence compliance with this policy.

Please find the training requirements in Appendix A.

VI. Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

Supervision and Monitoring by a Responsible Person. A Responsible Person shall monitor and supervise the behavior of adults, children, and youth to ensure and maintain appropriate behavior and healthy boundaries.

Ongoing Supervision. All people who minister to children, youth, and vulnerable adults must have ongoing supervision. Ongoing supervision should consist of regular check-ins by the Supervisor who may be parish clergy or a team leader. Such supervision shall review the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry with the person engaged in the ministry. Each person engaged in such ministry should know who supervises their ministry and how to contact the Supervisor at all times.

Prior Training Required. The Diocese of East Tennessee requires congregations and organizations to provide training prior to working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to ensure that all people who minister to these groups understand the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry.

Recordkeeping Required. The Diocese of East Tennessee and its congregations and organizations are required to maintain an up-to-date list of persons with their contact information approved to minister to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This list shall be kept in the organization's office or other place where records are kept.

Activities Approval. New activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults should not be developed without approval from the rector or canonical equivalent.¹ Requests to develop new activities should be submitted in writing to the rector. The rector will ensure that the plan for a new activity includes adequate adult supervision.

A. Unrelated Adults

For Children and Youth. Required. There must be two unrelated adults present at ministry settings and events designed for children and youth. One adult must be at least 25 years old, and the other must be an adult at least two years older than the eldest youth participant.

For Vulnerable Adults. While not required, it is best practice for those ministering to vulnerable adults, or in the homes of others, to do so with another trained adult minister present. Those engaged in such ministries should minister in pairs.

Reporting Unanticipated Alone Time. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youth, that adult shall report those circumstances to the Supervisor, clergy in charge, senior warden, or Responsible Person. The Supervisor, clergy in charge, senior warden, or Responsible Person shall report those circumstances as soon as possible to the child's/youth's parent or guardian.

Circumstances with One Adult. Only one adult may be sufficient in well-monitored, visually accessible program space on the church grounds, such as a Sunday School classroom, provided that another adult can maintain visual contact with the adult program leader. This can be accomplished by designating an individual to conduct frequent random checks of classrooms and unlocked spaces throughout the building(s). These exceptional circumstances must be specifically described in a written document and approved by the governing body of the congregation. See also sections on Overnight Programs (Section VI, I) and Transportation (Section VI, J).

¹ Hereafter, any reference to a "rector" should also be read as "or canonical equivalent": Priest-in-Charge, Deacon-in-Charge, or Vicar (or Senior Warden in the absence of clergy).

B. Creating Safe Space for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Anticipating and Avoiding Impropriety. To create safe space, it is necessary to anticipate and avoid circumstances in which children, youth, and vulnerable adults are exposed to inappropriate consumables/materials, unmonitored adult contact, or unsupervised peer contact.

For example:

- **Alcoholic beverages.** Alcohol (sacramental or otherwise) shall not be stored in publicly accessible areas of the church buildings.
- **Computers and electronic devices.** Children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall have adequate supervision when using electronic devices belonging to the Diocese of East Tennessee, congregations, and other organizations. The level of adequate supervision for vulnerable adults shall be at the discretion of the Responsible Person. Devices shall have adequate password protection. Each user shall have their own account and password. See *Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications* (Appendix B).
- **Persons with keys and access to locked spaces.** Anyone with keys or electronic access to church buildings shall meet all the requirements for screening and training according to the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A).
- **Unused spaces.** Spaces not in use should not be readily accessible. Given the vast differences in facilities, each diocese, congregation, and other organization should determine how best to meet this standard.

C. One-on-One Conversations with Children or Youth

Second Adult Present or Capable of Visual Monitoring. When one-on-one conversations occur between an adult and a child or youth, another unrelated adult is either to be present or capable of visually monitoring the conversation.

Examples include the following:

- Planned or unplanned on-site conversations can take place in a public location, away from where others can hear but in view of other adults.
- Planned off-site conversations/meetings can take place in a public place (such as a coffee shop or restaurant) in view of other adults. A Responsible Person shall be informed about the appointment or plans in advance.

Mandatory Reporting Laws and Confidentiality. Confidentiality and privilege cannot be guaranteed if a child or youth discloses a situation pertaining to abuse, neglect, self-harm, or exploitation because of mandatory reporting laws.

High-Risk Situations.

- **Avoiding Certain Activities.** Impulsive, secluded, or secretive activity, online or in person with children or youth, may foster a high-risk situation and is therefore to be avoided.
- **Properly Assisting with Private Activities.** When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering, or diapering infants or children, adults must remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs. Given the nature of such private activities, parents/guardians should be informed of persons with permission to assist in such private activities, and such persons will be trained in accordance with Diocesan policy addressing appropriate behavior, monitoring, and reporting.
- **Children Under 6 Released Only to Parents.** Programs for infants and children under six (6) years old will have procedures so that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
- See *Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications* (Appendix B).

D. Basic Needs

Non-Deprivation. No one is to be deprived of the basic human needs of food, drinking water, shelter, sleep, access to restrooms, safety, and clothing at any event.

Exceptions with Written Permission. Exceptions may be made for programs intended to teach children or youth about poverty, need, and hunger, such as an intentional fasting program. In these cases, children, youth, and vulnerable adults must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by fasting or missing sleep.

Withdrawal and Inability to Complete. Participants who wish to withdraw or who are unable to complete the program must have their basic needs met immediately.

E. Inclusiveness

Nondential of Rights, Status, or Access. No one shall be denied rights, status, or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities, or socio-economic class. To the extent possible, all spaces and settings for programs, activities, and ministry shall be accessible.

Reasonable Alternative Arrangements for All. The Episcopal Church seeks to support all children, youth, and vulnerable adults by providing reasonable alternative arrangements regardless of state law to address safety and comfort.

Increased Privacy Requests. Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary children, youth, or vulnerable adults, and any other child, youth, or vulnerable adult who expresses the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall restroom. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the child, youth, or vulnerable adult's ability to keep their transgender status confidential. They should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity.

Bathroom and Shower Facilities. Safe bathroom/shower facilities will be provided by gender (or specific times will be assigned to the use of a single facility) as indicated by the participant's parent/guardian, or participant.

Adult Shower Facilities. Adults should either have separate shower facilities or shower at other times than the youth. Separate dressing facilities should also be provided. See section on *Overnight Programs* (Section VI, I).

F. Violence and Weapons

- **Physical Threats / Harm.** No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at any time.
- **Bullying.** Bullying of any kind by anyone is prohibited.
- **Weapons.** Children and youth shall not have weapons of any kind at any event or program for children or youth. Exceptions to this restriction may be made by the rector.
- **Immediate Reporting.** Report suspected violations immediately. See *Reporting Suspected Abuse of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults* (Section VII, B).

G. Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Modeling Healthy Relationships. Adults who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that children, youth, and vulnerable adults deserve in all settings.

Behavioral Standards for Ministry with Vulnerable Adults

All who work with vulnerable adults are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships. To this end, lay and ordained ministers working with vulnerable adults shall:

- Take care not to unduly influence a person to whom they minister;
- Accept only token gifts from those to whom they minister. Ministers given gifts shall report those gifts in writing to their Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person;
- Decline to accept loans of any kind from those to whom they minister;
- Decline to agree to be named as a beneficiary or to act as an administrator or executor in a will of anyone to whom they minister; and
- Inform Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person of anything that causes concern for the safety or well-being of those to whom they minister.

Interactions. Interactions should meet all requirements of this policy, and adults should be discouraged from initiating a private relationship with any unrelated child, youth, or vulnerable adult from the church away from sanctioned church activities.

DOs:

Adults are encouraged to engage in the following with children, youth, and vulnerable adults:

- **Spiritual Practices.** Have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship, and Bible study;
- **Minister.** Spend time with and listen to children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;
- **Appropriate Physical Expression.** Offer appropriate physical expressions of care, which may include
 - high fives and fist bumps;
 - hand-holding while walking with small children or in prayer;
 - brief touching of shoulders, hands, or arms;
 - “laying on of hands” under appropriate pastoral supervision;
 - brief hugs and arms around shoulders; and
- **Model Appropriate Affection.** Model appropriate affection with other adults and be accountable to the community for behavior.

DON'Ts:

Adults shall not under any circumstances engage in the following with children, youth, and vulnerable adults:

- **Improper Substances and Materials.** Provide children, youth, or vulnerable adults with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, drugs, cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;
- **Under the Influence.** Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misused legal drugs at any children, youth, or vulnerable adults’ event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- **Consumption of Substances.** Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children, youth, or vulnerable adults’ event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- **Illegality.** Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children, youth, or vulnerable adults to engage in illegal behavior;
- **Relationships or Conduct.** Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any children, youth, or vulnerable adults;
- **Improper Discussions.** Apart from planned pre-approved educational programs, discuss their own sexual activities, fantasies, or their own use or abuse of drugs or alcohol with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

- **Inappropriate Conduct.** The following forms of behavior are considered some examples of INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT with children, youth, and vulnerable adults:
 - 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;
 - 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 secretive gifts or money to individual children or youth;
 - Private meals with individual children or youth;
 - Sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms, or other rooms with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children or youth in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room, or other room. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children or youth participating in one open space such as a church basement or camp lodge;
 - Dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth;
 - Using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth, or others;
 - Using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management;
 - Participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children’s or youth ministry or camp activities.

Anyone who suspects a violation of these policies shall take steps as outlined in *Responding to Concerns* (Section VII).

H. Special Considerations for Off-Site Programming

Observe Safe Space Expectations Off-Site. Off-site programs, trips, and events are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional development of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. They also present additional challenges for maintaining best practices for safe and healthy ministry. The expectations for safe space, as described above, should be observed off-site.

Uncertainty. In the event of uncertainty about application of the policy, the Responsible Person should contact their Supervisor with the relevant queries.

Permissions and Documentation. Because of the unique risks that can't always be anticipated, it is important to obtain permissions and manage documentation as described below.

1. Prior Approvals

- **Approval Must be Reflected in the Minutes.** Prior approval by the governing body and the member of the clergy in charge is required, and that approval shall be reflected in the minutes of the governing body. Diocesan-sponsored programs, trips, or events shall receive prior diocesan approval.
- **Movies Rated PG-13 or Above.** Written parental approval is required for children and youth prior to viewing any movie, whether off-site or on-site, rated "PG-13" or above, or participating in any conversation or program containing sexually explicit or violent content. This is not required for vulnerable adults.
- **Prior Approval for Private Residences.** These same prior approvals are required when the site is a private residence, hosting such events as cookouts, pool parties, progressive dinners, etc., for children and youth. In the event of uncertainty, the Responsible Person should contact the Bishop's office with the relevant information.

2. Registration, Waiver-and-Release Forms

- **Forms Before Participation.** All children, youth, and adults shall complete and sign a registration form and a waiver-and-release form before participating in any programs. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms. Such forms can encompass a program year.
- **Parent / Guardian Signature.** There must be a parent/guardian's signature on all waiver-and-release forms for minors. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency, then the signature of that person's guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member is required. There must be a parent/guardian's signature on all waiver-and-release forms for minors.
- **Digital Signatures.** Digital signatures are permitted.
- **Maintaining Forms.** Completed waiver-and-release forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site or online. Forms may be saved electronically.
- **Signed Permission Slips.** Permission slips shall be provided for each off-site event and shall be signed by the parent/guardian, and as appropriate for vulnerable adults. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency, then the signature of that person's guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member is required.
- **Photo/Recording Consent for Off-Site Programming.** Prior permission for a minor to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required from a parent/guardian. For vulnerable adults, the need for written permission is at the discretion of the Responsible Person.

3. First Aid and Medications

- **Certification.** Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- **First Aid Availability.** A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.
- **Medication Record Provided by Parent/Guardian.** A record must be kept for all medication or first aid that should be given to a participant throughout the event, including directions for mental health related considerations and suggested coping methods and therapies known to the parent or guardian. This record shall include the date and time of medication service needed, description of the medication, dosage, and/or treatment given. In addition, if possible for insured children, youth, and vulnerable adults, health insurance information should be provided.
- **Holding Medication.** All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents and the Responsible Person. Exceptions to the requirement for providing medication to the Responsible Person or obtaining agreement between the parent/guardian and Responsible Person may include inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control pills.
- **Administering Medications and Record Maintained.** Except for medications self-administered based on an agreement with the parent/guardian and Responsible Person and except for medications for which no such agreement is required (inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control), only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications. During the event, a record shall be maintained addressing the individual providing medication or other treatments, and when they were provided. This record must include the date and time of when the medication was administered, who administered the medication, and the reason for the medication, if over the counter. Such record will not be required to include self-administered medication taken as agreed upon with the parent/guardian and Responsible Person, or based on the exception above (for inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control).

4. Supervision

The monitoring and supervision of programs and activities is important for protecting children, youth, and in some cases vulnerable adults. One aspect involves having structural guidelines or standards for the programs and activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. These guidelines and standards include such things as the identification of the person responsible for approving new programs, the number of adults who need to be present, and the like. In addition to setting structural guidelines and standards, church leaders must make sure the structural protections are followed. Programs and activities must be monitored and supervised to accomplish that goal.

Unrelated Adults, Ages, and Genders. At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two unrelated adults. One adult must be at least age 25 or older, and the other must be an adult at least two years older than the eldest youth participant present. The adults should preferably reflect the sex and gender identity of the participants.

Ratios. Minimum ratios of adult to child/youth shall be in accordance with American Camp Association (ACA) guidelines in effect as of the effective date of this policy, as follows:

- 5 years & younger — 1 adult for each 5 overnight-participants and 1 adult for each 6 day-participants
- 6–8 years — 1:6 for overnight and 1:8 for day
- 9–14 years — 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day
- 15–18 years — 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day

Additional Adults. Additional adults can provide skills, mentorship, support, encouragement, spiritual guidance, and joy.

Experienced Adults. When there are new leaders-in-training, the leadership teams should also have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to provide support.

Supervisory personnel and others monitor and supervise the behavior of adults, youth, and children with other children, youth, and vulnerable adults so that inappropriate behaviors and interactions can be detected and stopped. Some behaviors and interactions are potentially harmful to children or youth in and of themselves. Examples of potentially harmful behaviors and interactions include, but are not limited to, providing alcohol or drugs to children, youth, or vulnerable adults, or having sexual contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

5. Insurance

All trips to off-site destinations must have adequate insurance in case of emergency. For more information, contact the insurance broker for the parish or community.

I. Overnight Programs for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Additional Consideration, Accommodation, and Action. In overnight programming, particular attention will be given to historically excluded or unrecognized people, such as LGBTQ+ and disabled individuals. In a situation of unequal power and safety, preferences of these individuals merit additional consideration, accommodation, and action to ensure the following:

- Participant privacy;
- Maximization of social integration of all participants;
- Minimization of stigmatization of any participants;
- Equal opportunity to participate; and
- Safety of all participants.

In establishing sleeping accommodations for overnight programs, the parents or guardians of participants will be informed about Diocesan beliefs about inclusiveness for all participants and asked to identify a selected sleeping arrangement where multiple options are available.

Other Guidelines. Other guidelines for overnight programs include the following:

- **Restrooms and Showers.** The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires the diocese as well as each congregation and other organizations to consider numerous factors, including but not limited to age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy. Adults should have separate showers or separate times for showers. If any child or youth requests additional privacy in restrooms and showers, then the Supervising Adult should attempt to offer reasonable accommodations to address such request.
- **Sleeping Arrangements.** Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.
 - No bed, cot, or sleeping bag shall have more than one person sleeping in it.
 - Supervision by two unrelated adults is required in any space where one or more children or youth are sleeping.
 - It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.
- **Food and Water.** Participants shall have access to three substantial meals each full day and access to sufficient water.
- **Sleep.** Participants shall be given the opportunity for at least seven hours of sleep each 24-hour period, except for programs where parental/guardian permission is given to miss sleep. In these cases, children, youth, and vulnerable adults must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the child, youth, or vulnerable adult does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by missing sleep. For vulnerable adults, the need for written permission is at the discretion of the Responsible Person.
- **Rest or Free Time.** Participants shall have some time set aside each day for rest or free time.

Hotels. Best practice guidelines for hotel stays include the following:

- **Beds.** One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-a-beds, and rollaway beds;
- **Rooms.** At least two children or two youth in each room.
- **Adult Rooms.** Adult supervisors or chaperones have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevators;
- **Assignments.** Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants;
- **Vulnerable Adults.** Sleeping arrangements for vulnerable adults are at the discretion of the Responsible Person.

J. Transportation

Drivers. For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed:

- For events that originate and/or terminate at the diocesan, congregation, or organization's facility, all drivers must be at least 21 years of age and provide proof of insurance and a current driver's license, a completed volunteer driver information form, and have a satisfactory DMV records check.

Compliance. All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cell phone usage.

Parents. Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation and safety of their children and/or youth to and from the event. This responsibility includes the transportation of any other passengers in their vehicle.

K. Camps and Retreat Centers

All camps, camping programs, and retreat centers of the Diocese shall follow the guidelines for off-site programming established in this policy. In addition, camps should aim to follow American Camp Association standards to the best of the camp's ability.

L. Travel

Travel with children, youth, and vulnerable adults presents amazing opportunities for participants to experience the church and the world on a larger scale with vastly different perspectives of faith communities and their contexts. It also presents challenges to normal safety protocols and opportunities for creativity unless managed well. The following policies will help groups prepare for a variety of potential scenarios, as well as for domestic and international travel.

1. Adult Leaders and Chaperones

- **Ratios.** Minimum ratios of adult to youth need to be greater due to the possibility of leaving an adult behind with a participant in the event of a medical emergency.
 - 9–14 years — 1:5
 - 15–18 years — 1:7
- **3 Adult Chaperone Minimum.** Regardless of group size, no group should travel with fewer than three adult chaperones and adhere to the unrelated adults requirement.
- **Travel Administrator.** One adult, minimum age 25, should serve as the travel administrator who is responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all necessary documentation, contacts, and forms including:
 - medical releases;
 - community covenant;
 - emergency contacts;
 - itineraries; and
 - cash and/or credit card capacity to address emergencies.

- **Medical Certification.** It is a best practice that one adult, minimum age 25, should hold a current medical certification to manage administration of necessary and permissible medications, administer immediate and necessary first aid, and triage medical situations to determine if care of an individual needs to be taken to a higher level of care. When this is not possible, one person should be designated to supervise the administration of medications as instructed on medical release forms, and a clinic near the group's destination should be identified ahead of time in order to respond to health emergencies as rapidly as possible.
- **Certifications.** Acceptable medical certifications include the following:
 - Wilderness Medical Response
 - Outdoor Emergency Care
 - Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
 - Nurse — RN/LPN/Nurse Practitioner
 - Physician's Assistant
 - Medical Doctor
- **Back-Up.** Best practice is to designate an adult to serve as back-up to the travel administrator and as back-up for simple first aid and administration of prescriptions. These could be the same person.
- **Document Copies.** A copy of all documents should be left with an accountable person at the diocesan, congregation's, or organization's office. That person should also serve as the local emergency contact person for communications between the traveling group and families at home.

2. Insurance for Travel

- **Obtain Riders One Month Before Travel.** Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church's and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at least one month prior to travel.
- **Health Insurance Cards.** It is recommended that all travelers carry evidence of personal health insurance by virtue of a copy of the actual card provided to the insured person.
- **Adding Health Insurance to Trip Insurance.** Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

3. International Considerations

- **Check Requirements.** Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.
- **Passports.** Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six months beyond the group's return date.
- **Vaccines.** Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.
- **Cell Phones and Backup Plans.** Arrange to have at least two cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in the group's destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with the group's Responsible Person at home.
- **Additional Considerations.** A more thorough list of international travel considerations with links to U.S. and global organizations can be found in the Youth in Mission Manual here: https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/12/7-traveling_7.pdf

VII. Responding to Concerns

A. Responding to Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults

When adults involved in church activities observe or suspect any inappropriate behaviors or behaviors that are inconsistent with these policies, they must immediately report their observations. Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations include seeking private time with children or youth, taking children or youth on overnight trips without other adults, swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth, or selecting or using staff or volunteers without the required screening, or as these policies and procedures describe.

Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported by submission of a Confidential Notice of Concern, signed or unsigned, to the Bishop.

All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth are to be taken seriously.

B. Reporting Suspected Abuse of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

- Unless otherwise required by statute, all adults involved in church activities are required by this policy to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities.
- Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth may be a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. Simply stated, “in good faith” means that the person submitting the report believes the report to be true.
- In addition to reporting to the state authorities, adults involved in church activities are required to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by adults involved in church activities directly to the rector, clergy in charge, or senior warden of the parish so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
- Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve adults involved in church activities may be reported by the submission of a Confidential Notice of Concern, signed or unsigned, to the Bishop or by generally accepted methods of communication to any of the following persons:
 - The Bishop or the ecclesiastical authority (e.g., in the absence of the Bishop, this might be the Interim or Assisting Bishop, the Chair of the Standing Committee, the Chancellor, or the Canon to the Ordinary)
 - The Intake Officer(s) for the Diocese if the offender is clergy. Please see *Contacts for Reporting in the Diocese of East Tennessee* (Appendix D).
 - The rector or supervisor if the rector or supervisor is not the person being complained about
 - The senior warden
 - The Tennessee Department of Children’s Services
- The Diocese of East Tennessee and its parishes, worshipping communities, campus ministries, and other Diocesan Ministries or Partner Institutions will cooperate with any investigation by state authorities to the fullest extent appropriate and inform authorities that a concurrent internal investigation will be directed by the Diocese of East Tennessee in accordance with the current diocesan policies and procedures for dealing with sexual misconduct.

VIII. Tennessee Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Law

A. Mandatory Reporting

Children and Youth. Tennessee mandates the report of brutality, abuse, neglect, or child sexual abuse by ANY person “having knowledge of or called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition which is of such nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect” (T.C.A. §37-1-403). The report shall be made to the Department of Children’s Services, the juvenile judge, or law enforcement officials. Included in the report shall be the child’s name, address and age, the person responsible for the child, and the facts necessitating the report. If it appears to the person making the report that the “immediate safety and well-being of the child is endangered,” the child may be immediately taken into protective custody and not returned to the alleged perpetrator (T.C.A. § 37-1-404 and 37-1-608).

Call 877-237-0004 or visit the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services website, <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/dcs/program-areas/child-safety/reporting/child-abuse.html> to report abuse or neglect. Reports also can be made online at: <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/>

Vulnerable Adults. Tennessee law requires that reports of suspected abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of adults, who are unable to protect themselves, due to a physical or mental limitation, be made to the Adult Protective Services staff of the Tennessee Department of Human Services. See <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/adults/adult-protective-services.html>. The Tennessee Department of Human Services provides a toll-free telephone number for such reports. It is 1-888-APS-TENN (1-888-277-8366). A report of suspected abuse may be made online at <https://reportadultabuse.dhs.tn.gov/>

A description of the duty to report abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation or financial exploitation may be found at TCA §39-15-509 and TCA §71-6-103. The exploitation, neglect, and abuse of elderly or vulnerable adults are criminal offenses in Tennessee.

B. Definitions of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse

The statute specifies that certain acts that would constitute severe child abuse and child sexual abuse. Severe child abuse includes assault or aggravated assault, murder, manslaughter, kidnapping or aggravated kidnapping, and aggravated child abuse where serious bodily injury occurs (T.C.A. §37-1-406).

Child sexual abuse “means the commission of any act involving the unlawful sexual abuse, molestation, fondling or carnal knowledge of a child,” including rape, attempted rape, sexual battery, and sexual exploitation (T.C.A. §37-1-602(a)(3)(A) and (B)). Child sexual abuse also means any penetration, contact, intentional touching, or intentional exposure of the intimate parts, except that it shall not include those acts that “may reasonably be construed to be normal caretaker responsibilities, interactions with,” or affection for a child (T.C.A. §37-1-602(a)(3)(C)).

The statute also speaks to one other type of sexual abuse. Institutional sexual abuse occurs in “situations of known or suspected child sexual abuse in which the person allegedly perpetrating the child sexual abuse is an employee of a public or private child welfare agency, [of a] public or private school or [of] ANY OTHER person responsible for the child’s care” (T.C.A. §37-1-602(a)(6)).

C. Immunity for Making a Report

All persons making a report of child abuse or neglect or child sexual abuse are assumed under the statute to have made the report in good faith. They are immune from all damages, both civil and criminal, that otherwise might be imposed for such action. T.C.A. §37-1-410 and 37-1-613.

A similar protection is that the identity of the person making the report and the report itself are made confidential, except when the court finds that the testimony of the reporter is material to indictment or conviction. T.C.A. §37-1-409 and 37-1-612.

D. Liability for Failing to Report

Any person who knowingly and willfully fails to make a report required under the statute or who prevents another from reporting commits a Class A misdemeanor. T.C.A. §37-1-412 and 37-1-615.

E. Protection from Liability

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has established and maintains a registry to screen child care providers. The registry consists of any person alleged or adjudicated to have committed child sexual abuse and severe child abuse. The registry is searched for verifying the existence of the applicant's name for any person applying to work with children as a volunteer or as a paid employee for a child welfare agency or in any institutional or residential child care facility. T.C.A. §37-1-408 414. Although the registry only contains the names of those persons who have committed severe child abuse and sexual abuse, it is a source to verify the records of employees and volunteers who come into contact with children.

F. Background Check

The statute also authorizes religious organizations to require all persons applying to work with children as a volunteer or paid employee to submit to a background check. Included in the check, the employee or volunteer may be required to agree to the release of all investigative records or criminal records or supply a fingerprint sample. T.C.A. §37-1-414.

G. Observing Abuse

If you observe brutality, abuse, neglect, or child sexual abuse, or have reason to believe that this is occurring, in situations outside the church, its personnel or volunteers, you should report it as noted above. If you are not clear about what you are observing or sensing, or unclear about your duty to report, feel free to seek advice from your rector, the Canon to the Ordinary, or the Chancellor as needed.

IX. Georgia Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Law

Children and Youth. For our parish in North Georgia, Church of the Nativity Episcopal in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, the procedures for reporting, noted above, would also apply with the exception that reports of child abuse and/or neglect should be made to the Georgia Division of Family and Children's Services. Georgia law requires an oral report to be made immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time that there is reasonable cause.

Calls are taken 24 hours a day by calling 1-855-422-4453. For further information as to Georgia law and procedures, visit <https://dfcs.georgia.gov> and <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/services/child-abuse-neglect>.

Vulnerable Adults. The Georgia Department of Human Services has a Division of Aging Services. Its Adult Protective Services (APS) is the state entity charged with investigating all reports of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of older persons (65+) or an adult (18+) with a disability who does not reside in long-term facilities, pursuant to the Disabled Adults and Elder Persons Protection Act. See GA Code §30-5-4 (2022). Types of abuse include physical abuse; mental, emotional, or verbal abuse; sexual abuse; neglect; self-neglect; and financial exploitation.

Reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation is mandatory. See <https://aging.georgia.gov/report-elder-abuse/adult-protective-services-aps>. Reports may be made by phone call to 1-866-55AGING (1-866-552-4464) or online.

Neglect and/or deprivation of health care, shelter, or necessary sustenance for elderly and disabled adults are criminal violations. GA Code §16-5-101 (2022). Any person who knowingly and willfully exploits a disabled adult, elder person, or resident; willfully inflicts physical pain, physical injury, sexual abuse, mental anguish, or unreasonable confinement upon a disabled adult, elder person, or resident; or willfully deprives of essential services a disabled adult, elder person, or resident shall be guilty of a felony. GA Code §16-5-102 (2022).

X. Policy Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

Diocesan Adoption. The Diocese of East Tennessee has adopted this policy for the protection of children and youth as an amended version of the Safe Church: Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children, Youth and Adults, revised October 3, 2017, with contact information updated May 1, 2019 and January 19, 2022. The policy was updated in May 2023 to reflect the Episcopal Church's Model Policy for Children and Youth and Model Policy for Vulnerable Adults.

Policy Adoption. The policy includes site-specific variations to address the circumstances of this Diocese and its parishes and other endeavors. The policies are being provided to the congregations and other organizations. Each congregation or organization is required to adopt a policy in accordance with this one.

Policy Adoption for Congregations and Organizations. Congregations and organizations within the Diocese must adopt a policy for the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. It should be consistent with or exceed the requirements of the model policy of The Episcopal Church and the policy at this Diocese. Congregations or organizations may adopt site specific variations from Diocesan policies, where permitted by vestries or governing bodies, which shall be described in detail including the circumstances under which those variations are to be permitted and their rationale. This approval must be recorded in the minutes of the vestry or the governing body. The policy shall be posted in an area where activities take place. It shall be given to all adults, guardians and all paid and unpaid persons who minister to children or youth and those who assist in activities involving children and youth. The policies shall include the names and phone numbers of the member of the clergy in charge, the senior warden, and a contact person in the Bishop's office.

Diocesan Audit. The Diocese will conduct a Safe Church Self-Audit on or before July 1, 2024, and each three (3) years thereafter. The Audit will determine that the policy is consistent with or exceeds the requirements of the model policy, provided by The Episcopal Church. It will review the provision of accessible and appropriate training for all of those who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in accordance with adopted screening and training protocols. At a minimum, the training shall include the topics identified within the model policy of The Episcopal Church. The Audit will verify that each congregation and organization within the Diocese has adopted a policy that is consistent with or exceeds the policy of this Diocese. The Audit will confirm that each congregation and organization has a process to ensure members access training and conduct Public Records Checks.

Parish Audit. Each congregation and organization shall conduct a Safe Church Self-Audit annually to confirm compliance with Safe Church Policies and report such Audit to the office of the Bishop. The Audit shall confirm procedures for public records checks, application forms, records of screening and reference verification of paid and unpaid persons; records of compliance with screening and training protocols; and procedures for responding to concerns and incidents and evidence of compliance with policy in accordance therein.

General Provision. The policies set forth in this document are not intended to, and do not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by any person or entity against the Diocese of East Tennessee, its organizations (as defined in this document), parishes, congregations, officers, employees, agents, or any other person.

Appendix A: Screening and Training Protocols

| | Public Records Checks | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Application, Interview, or Reference | Criminal Background Check | Sexual Offender Registry Check | Credit Check | DMV Check |
| Churches | | | | | |
| Clergy | | | | | |
| Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Retired Clergy, Postulants, Seminarians | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Children's Ministry | | | | | |
| Children's Choir, Sunday School, Nursery Workers, Parent Helper, Youth Helper | ✓ | ✓* | ✓ | | ✓** |
| <p>* If Children's Ministry workers are serving fewer than three times a year, the only public record check required is the Sexual Offender Registry Check.</p> <p>** If Children's Ministry workers are not transporting children, a DMV Check is not required.</p> | | | | | |
| Youth Ministry | | | | | |
| Youth Minister, Youth Choir, Sunday School, Acolyte Leaders, Camp Staff, Camp Councilors, VBS Volunteers, Overnight Helpers | ✓ | ✓* | ✓ | | ✓** |
| <p>* If Youth Ministry workers are serving fewer than three times a year, the only public record check required is the Sexual Offender Registry Check.</p> <p>** If Youth Ministry workers are not transporting youth, a DMV Check is not required.</p> | | | | | |
| Elected Positions | | | | | |
| Vestry Members | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* | |
| Wardens | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* | |
| Treasurer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| * Vestry Members and Wardens do not need a Credit Check if they do not have check signing authority. | | | | | |
| Key Holders | | | | | |
| Altar Guild, Building Hosts, Renters | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Lay Leadership | | | | | |
| Eucharistic Visitors, Stephen Ministers, Small Group Leaders, Unpaid Staff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓* |
| * Any person transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults must have a completed DMV Check. | | | | | |
| Paid Staff | | | | | |
| All Paid Staff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓* |
| * Any person transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults must have a completed DMV Check. | | | | | |
| Schools Must follow state requirements for applications, interviews, references, and public records checks. | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |
| Diocesan Staff, Executive Board, Standing Committee, Disciplinary Board, Commission on Ministry | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓* |
| * Any person transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults must have a completed DMV Check. | | | | | |

| What should I take? | | | | | | | | | | | Total Time of Training | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Category | Role/Position | Diocesan Policies | Introduction & Theological Background | Organizational Rules and Policies | Healthy Boundaries | Inclusion of All God's People | Bullying | Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter | Abuse & Neglect | Pastoral Relationships | | Anti-Harassment * | Power & Relationships | |
| A | Clergy | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.5 Hours | |
| | Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Retired Clergy, Postulants, Seminarians | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| | Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | School Board | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| | Lay Leadership | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Eucharistic Visitors, Stephen Ministers, Small Group Leaders | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| | Other | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Diocesan Staff, Executive Board, Standing Committee, Disciplinary Board, Commission on Ministry | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| B | Elected Positions | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.4 Hours |
| | Vestry Members, Wardens, Treasurer, Convention Delegates, General Convention Deputies | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Paid Church Staff | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | All Paid Church Staff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

* (Safe Guarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Workers OR Safe Guarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Managers and Supervisors)

| Category | Role/Position | What should I take? | | | | | | | | | | Total Time of Training | | |
|----------|---|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | | Diocesan Policies | Introduction & Theological Background | Organizational Rules and Policies | Healthy Boundaries | Inclusion of All God's People | Bullying | Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter | Abuse & Neglect | Pastoral Relationships | Anti-Harassment * | | Power & Relationships | |
| C | Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 Hours |
| | Teachers, Assistants, Healthcare, Administrative, Counseling, Food Service, Security, Maintenance | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| D | Youth Ministry | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2.75 Hours |
| | Youth Minister, Youth Choir, Sunday School, Acolyte Leaders, Camp Staff, Camp Counselors, VBS Volunteers, Overnight Helpers | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| E | Children's Ministry | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2.25 Hours |
| | Children's Choir, Sunday School, Nursery Workers, Parent Helpers, Youth Helpers | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Before/After Care | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Volunteers | R | R | R | R | R | R | R | R | R | R | R | | |
| F | Key Holders | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 Hours |
| | Altar Guild, Building Hosts, Renters | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Lay Leadership | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Unpaid Staff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

✓: Required R: Recommended
 * (Safe Guarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Workers OR Safe Guarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment for Managers and Supervisors)

Appendix B: Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Social media shapes the lives of young people and has the potential to empower ministry. Behavior in the digital sphere is never private. Posted content may be used out of context and out of the control of the originating individuals and organizations, putting them at risk. In addition, these powerfully connective tools are subject to the same dynamic of unequal power and potential for abuse that present a risk in all ministry relationships. Churches face the challenge of identifying and proactively addressing areas of potential risk in social media use in the midst of rapidly evolving technology. The following recommended practices and guidelines are designed to be a flexible template for each congregation or organization to use in developing policies and covenants governing the safe use of social media and digital communication in ministry settings.

General Information about Digital Communications

- All communications sent digitally (email, social networking sites or platforms, notes, texts, or posts, etc.) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and can be shared or reposted to others.
- Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent; that is, occurring in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.
- In the virtual world, healthy boundaries and Safe Church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world.
- In the virtual world, “friend” can mean anyone with whom a person willing to communicate through that medium. In the physical world, “friend” can mean much more in terms of intimacy, self-disclosure, mutuality, and expectations for relationship.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world. Check your local applicable laws.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Churches and Organizations

- Establish a policy that outlines professional and institutional standards for profiles and interactions on social networking sites and platforms.
- Establish a policy of transparency regarding social media accounts. The best practice is to have the congregation or organization create and “own” the social media accounts representing the congregation or organization respectively and have multiple administrators and/or supervisors with access. If personal accounts are used, a system of monitoring should be established.
- Establish a policy regarding the identification or “tagging” of individuals in online photos or videos. For example, on Facebook, “tagging” someone in a photo or video creates a hyperlink to that person’s profile page, which can be clicked by anyone. The best practice is for the Diocese, congregation, or organization not to identify or “tag” individuals. The “tagging” of children, youth, and vulnerable adults should be prohibited. When written permission is provided by a parent/guardian, the captioning of photos or videos of minors may be permitted. The caption should not include the minor’s full name, nor should it create a clickable link to someone’s personal profile. A policy of whether or not an individual can “self-tag” in a congregation or organization’s online photo or video should also be established.
- A congregation or organization does not have a responsibility to review or monitor the personal pages or groups that are not sponsored by that congregation or organization, except as described above. The preceding statement should be included in the congregation or organization’s Social Media Policy.
- Email can be a good method of communication, and it also has the opportunity to be misunderstood. Having a clear understanding and procedure for responding to digital communication that raises concern is prudent for all. Best practices can include not responding immediately and sharing the communication with a supervisor before responding. Phone and face-to-face meetings are preferred when responding to emotionally driven communications or pastoral emergencies.

- When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, obtain a media release for each person and only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.
- Congregations or organizations need to inform participants when they are being videoed in the event that a church building is not considered a public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

- Prudent judgment should be used in the time of day a child or youth is contacted through social media. Under normal circumstances, refrain from contact or exchanging texts, chats, or emails before 8:00 am or after 10:00 pm, unless it's an emergency.
- Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented.
 - Create and use profiles on social networking sites that meet professional and institutional standards.
 - Do not submit connection requests (such as friend requests on Facebook or "Add Me" on Snapchat) to children or youth for personal interactions.
 - Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults. Youth may ask to be "friends," and adults should discern the nature of contact appropriate for healthy ministry.
- Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all children, youth, and vulnerable adults, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or appearing to play favorites.
- Establish a regular, ongoing, and consistent system of review that focuses on settings, accessible content, photos, and videos to ensure compliance with professional and institutional standards.
- Inform parents of children, youth, and vulnerable adults of social networking sites and platforms used within the ministry.
- When possible, send communication (1) to entire groups, (2) on an individual's "wall," or (3) in public areas, rather than in private messages. This includes photos, images and videos.
 - When sending emails to a child or youth that contain personal or private information regarding that child or youth, a copy should be sent to the parents or guardians as well. Examples of these types of emails include payment-due information, specific medical requests or questions, etc. Mass emails sent to an entire group are not required to be copied to parents or guardians.
 - Disclose ongoing digital pastoral communications (e.g. e-mails, Facebook messages, texting, etc.) with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to a parent and/or a supervisor to determine when a referral to a professional provider or resource is needed.
- Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include the following:
 - Appropriate and inappropriate behavior of members (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, illegal activities, sexual acts, etc.) and the consequence for inappropriate behavior;
 - Who may join and/or view group activity, when participants should leave the group, and when/if the group will be disbanded;
 - Description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page;
 - A prohibition of "tagging" photos and videos of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. However, the captioning of photos and videos is permissible with written permission from a parent or guardian;
 - Notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed; and
 - Consequences for breaking the covenant.
- Delete inappropriate material posted in digital groups, address the behavior, and report it, if necessary, in accordance with legal and institutional requirements.
- In video calls, follow the same criteria used in in-person communication/telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgement regarding attire and surroundings should be observed.

- Comply with the following best practices regarding “groups” on social networking sites:
 - Have at least two unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two youth administrators for groups that are designed for youth;
 - Use closed groups, but not “hidden” or “secret” groups, for youth;
 - Have only youth administrators invite other youth to join the online group, unless a youth previously asked an adult administrator to invite them to join;
 - Remove any content that shows or describes inappropriate behavior outside the bounds of the established behavioral covenant;
 - Open social networking groups for youth to parents of current members;
 - Remove adult leaders of youth groups and youth who are no longer members, due to departure, removal from position, or ineligibility because they “aged-out” of a program from social networking sites, list serves, etc.;
 - Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Appendix C: Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Renting Your Space

Definitions

Outside Agency: A group, company, or business who is renting a facility owned by the Diocese of East Tennessee

Event Host:

- a) a paid church employee;
- b) a parishioner who has AT LEAST the training and screening requirements of a Key Holder;
- b) the lead person for the Outside Agency.

Rental Requirements

The Diocese of East Tennessee recommends establishing an Event Host for each event hosted at a facility owned by the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee.

The Event Host must:

- Be present at the facility for the entirety of each event created by the Outside Agency;
- Supervise and monitor the group, including for compliance with Safe Church standard; and
- Be the last person in the building(s) following the event(s)

Rental Agreement. The Diocese of East Tennessee strongly encourages each parish and organization to establish a Rental Agreement with each Outside Agency prior to event date(s). This Rental Agreement should include the Event Host's name, contact information for the Outside Agency, and the purpose of the rental.

Appendix D: Contacts for Reporting in the Diocese of East Tennessee

For reporting issues within the church:

The Ecclesiastical Authority is the Bishop.

The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole
865-966-2110 (Diocesan House)
bcole@dioet.org

In the absence of the Bishop, the ecclesiastical authority is the President of the Standing Committee. Please contact the Diocesan Office for their information.

For reporting clergy misconduct:

By phone call:

The Rev. Canon Joseph R. Woodfin
865-346-4004

By email:

The Rev. Canon Joseph R. Woodfin, Knoxville, TN
intakeofficer@dioet.org or intakeofficerknoxville@dioet.org

The Rev. L. Gordon Brewer, Kingsport, TN
intakeofficerkingsport@dioet.org

The Rev. Dr. William McGee, Hixson, TN
intakeofficerhixson@dioet.org

Ms. Laura Beasley, Athens, TN
intakeofficerathens@dioet.org

Please note: While the Intake Officers are noted by location, you may submit a complaint to any of the officers. General regional information is provided in the event that a meeting in person may be preferred. All Intake Officers are equally trained and equipped, and Canon Bolt coordinates and may assign officers depending upon case load or other factors.

By writing:

Intake Officer (you may add a name from the above)
c/o The Diocese of East Tennessee
814 Episcopal School Way
Knoxville, TN 37932

Has the situation occurred previously? Attach additional sheets, if needed.

What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were the police called? Attach additional sheets, if needed.

What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss the situation? Attach additional sheets, if needed.

Submitted by (please print): _____

Phone Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Parish, City, State: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/_____

Please mail this document to:
Diocese of East Tennessee
c/o Intake Officer
814 Episcopal School Way
Knoxville, TN 37932

Reviewed By (For Office Use Only): _____



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EAST TENNESSEE

Reconciling All Things in Christ

Attestation of Receipt of Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

The following persons will receive a copy of this Policy and will sign the attached form indicating that they have received the Policy and understand its content. Such statements will be kept on file by the organization within the church served by such persons, with a copy kept by the Diocese: