

(Church Name)

Abuse Prevention
and Sexual Acts
Policies & Procedures

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I. Purpose

Jesus' instructions were to *"let the little ones come to Me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."* Matthew 19:14. In following the Lord's command, it is the purpose of the members, staff and volunteers at **CHURCH NAME** to assure that the children, youth, persons with disabilities and all members of the parish family are in a safe environment.

This policy is for the protection of the minors as well as our adult congregation members, volunteers, and employees. **CHURCH NAME** is required to hold employees and volunteers accountable for their actions when supervising, teaching and leading children, youth, vulnerable adults, and members of the parish family. All employees of **CHURCH NAME** are responsible for ensuring that the workplace and interaction with parishioners is free from harassment and misconduct.

The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers, and the entire church family at **CHURCH NAME**.

II. Scope

This policy shall apply to all activities of **CHURCH NAME** and includes current and future staff/workers, compensated and/or volunteers who will have the responsibility of being with children, youth, persons with disabilities, fellow employees and parishioners.

III. Definitions

The following definitions shall apply to these policy and procedures: [\(MAY VARY PER STATE\)](#)

- "Child", "children" and "minor" - any individual under the age of eighteen (18) or one whose mental capacity is that of a minor.
- "Adult" - any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age (except those whose mental capacity is considered that of a minor.)
- "Teen" or "youth" – an individual at least thirteen (13) years old or older but under the age of eighteen (18).
- "Worker" – any person who serves in the capacity of a volunteer and/or an employee who is responsible for caring for, assisting with, or working with minors or vulnerable adults.
- "Child Abuse" – verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a child or minor.
- "Vulnerable" - capable of being physically or emotionally wounded, open to attack or damage.
- "Criminal Background Check" – procedure used to determine if a potential adult worker has a record of inappropriate activity. [Add the level as recommended by your Insurance carrier.](#)

- “Mandated Reporter” (Pick your State) **Michigan:** Child Protection Law requires certain professionals to report their suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Centralized Intake (CI) at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) **Ohio:** The Ohio Revised Code section 2151.421 mandates that certain people are required to make a report to child protective services or law enforcement if they suspect that abuse is taking place. **Indiana:** Indiana is a mandatory reporting state; anyone who suspects a child has been neglected or abused must by state law make a report. **Kentucky:** The law requires reporting when “any person knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused...” **Indiana** “An individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report.”
- “Member” as defined in the **CHURCH NAME** Bylaws.
- Sexual Misconduct – sexual abuse or molestation, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, or pastoral sexual abuse as defined below:
 - Sexual abuse or molestation – any sexual involvement or sexual contact by any person with another person who is a minor, legally incompetent or unwanted sexual contact between adults.
 - Child sexual abuse – any sexual abuse or molestation as defined above with a minor.
 - Sexual harassment – unwelcome written, spoken, or physical sexual advancement or conduct, a direct or indirect request for a sexual favor or suggestion that one might be granted, sending of emails or texts with sexual or suggestive content.
 - Sexual exploitation – the attempted development of a sexual relationship between clergy or a layperson and/or another person with whom a leadership relationship exists, whether or not there is consent.
 - Pastoral sexual abuse - The initiation, continuation, or pursuit of a sexual relationship by clergy with a person with whom he or she has a pastoral relationship, even if the relationship is considered consensual. The use or exploitation of one’s position in connection with his or her sexual or emotional needs or desires.

IV. Employee and Volunteer Screening Process

1. All clergy and paid employees are required to complete a Children’s/Youth Work Application including references and permission for **CHURCH NAME** to run a criminal background check.
2. A Children’s/Youth Work Application will need to be updated (annually or three years) and any subtenant changes will need to be addressed by the Church. (Annually with Brotherhood Insurance)
3. All adult volunteers who desire to work with minors or vulnerable adults will complete a volunteer application including references and permission for **CHURCH NAME** to

process a criminal background check and to contact the references. Volunteers under the age of 18 will be asked to provide 3 names of adults that would be qualified to provide a character reference. (i.e., coaches, teachers, employers, etc.)

4. Background checks will be performed on all volunteers and employees working with minors or vulnerable adults once every three years (Check with your insurance carrier what is required in the background check and how often they are to be performed (receive a response in writing from the underwriter not the agent). If your insurance policy or questionnaire includes the wording “**Best Practice**” than a background check will be required, every year. An annual background check is recommended by all Insurance Companies and may lower your premium.
5. Any prospective employee or volunteer who is found to have prior occurrences of sexual misconduct or child abuse will not be allowed to serve in an area where he or she would have contact with minors or vulnerable adults.
6. Any person who may pose a threat to children, youth, vulnerable adults, employees, or church parishioners will be prohibited from working in any ministry where their presence could be considered a risk.
7. No employee or volunteer will be approved to work with minors until
 - a. Six months of membership at **CHURCH NAME** has been observed.
 - b. An Employment Application or Children’s/Youth Work Application has been completed and submitted.
 - c. A Criminal Background check has been returned with satisfactory results.
 - d. At least two references have been contacted and positive responses received.
 - e. The Employee or Volunteer has satisfactorily completed the Ministry Safe training provided by the Diocese. (Training should be repeated every three years). Check with your Insurance Company as they may require training more often.
 - f. The employee or volunteer has been interviewed by the Sr. Pastor or their designee.

V. Worker’s Training

Once approved, each new employee or volunteer who will be working with minors or vulnerable adults will be required to take the Ministry Safe training and complete and pass the test. Upon completion of the video training, the individual will receive a certificate of completion and will be responsible to provide a copy of the certificate to the Church. They will also be asked to review this document and sign the form to state that they have read the information and agree to the policies and procedures.

VI. Volunteer Application and Privacy

The Children's/Youth Work Application to work with children and vulnerable adults contains and requests permission to obtain personal and confidential information. This may appear to be an invasion into the privacy of our lives; however, CHURCH NAME is convinced that the security of the children, employees and parishioners far outweighs the personal invasion that such an investigation may create. All personal information, applications, criminal background check results, reference checks, or the refusal of any person to participate in these procedures will be kept in confidence.

VII. Disqualifications for Volunteers and Employees

CHURCH NAME reserves the right to disqualify any prospective employee or volunteer as a result of any adverse findings from a criminal background check or any other source. Results from all background checks will be reviewed by a committee (2 or more persons designated by the Senior Pastor) from CHURCH NAME. Any information obtained through the background checks will be kept in confidence.

VIII. Other Policy Violations

While the Criminal Background Check will alert CHURCH NAME to crimes that are documented, CHURCH NAME also reserves the right to remove a volunteer or employee from their position if unacceptable behavior is observed during any sanctioned program or activity. If these behaviors are observed, they are to be immediately reported to the Church's Senior Pastor or the most senior staff or volunteer available who is not directly involved in the allegation, once the safety of the victim has been assured. Examples of unacceptable behavior may consist of the following:

- Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of an adult or minor.
- Sexual advances, innuendos, or sexual activity of any kind between any person and an adult or minor. Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to an adult or minor.
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision during an activity.
- Mental, verbal, or emotional abuse, or bullying caused by, encouraged by, or overlooked by a volunteer or employee directed at a child, fellow employee or parishioner.
- The possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of the Church whether on or off the property.
- The presence, possession, consumption, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol during any activity involving minors on or off the church property.

IX. Specific Policies

1. Any volunteer who holds a leadership position must be a practicing believer in Jesus Christ and be a member of **CHURCH NAME** for a period of 6 months.
2. "Two Adult Rule": Is a requirement of two unrelated adults when supervising children. On church property or at any church sponsored event, no adult shall be left alone with a child unless in the case of an emergency. A qualified, responsible teenager not related to the adult volunteer may be substituted for one adult if necessary.
3. Only approved nursery workers will be allowed in the nursery. (except the parents assisting with their child) It is the policy of **CHURCH NAME** that the workers do not change diapers. If the need arises, the parents will be alerted and asked to come and change the diaper.
4. A designated person will make random checks on all classrooms on a predetermined basis. (Remove number 4 if this is not feasible at your Church)
5. Children will only be released to approved parents or guardians. If a child is to be released to a non-custodial parent or guardian, written permission is required, and identification will be required before the child is released.
6. There should be a window in all doors in the church where minors are meeting. If there is not a window in the door, the door should remain open.
7. Off-site activities (not on Church Property) involving minors will require the written permission of a parent or guardian. There will be at least two adults for every 10 children. If an adult employee or volunteer is transporting unrelated minor(s) their background check must include a motor vehicle record search.
8. All volunteers and employees are required to report themselves to the Priest in Charge and the Senior Warden if they are or have been accused of abuse or charged with a felony.
9. In the case of pastoral counseling of a minor, parental permission will be obtained before any ordained pastoral staff may meet privately with a minor. The door must remain open during the counseling with another adult person on the premises.
10. If a known registered sexual offender participates in worship or other ministry related activities, a designated mentor, sponsor, or chaperone will be assigned and responsible for monitoring the offender's activities while on the premises or while participating in a ministry sponsored activity. (Check with your Insurance coverage some policies may not allow known sexual offenders on site.).
11. This Policy will be reviewed by the Vestry every ??? Years. Check with your insurance carrier usually 1 or 3 years.

X. Abuse Reporting

All instances or reports of abuse will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken as stated below.

1. Any person having cause to believe that someone has been a victim of mental, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse is required to report their belief to the **CHURCH NAME** Senior Pastor or their designee. Employees and volunteers are strongly encouraged to report any suspicions or allegations to a designated ministry leader.
2. In an instance where there is an accusation of abuse and an employee or volunteer is the alleged perpetrator, his or her immediate supervisor and the Senior Pastor will be contacted, and the employee or volunteer will be suspended or placed on administrative leave while inquiries are made.
3. Every allegation of physical or sexual abuse of a minor will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. If the allegation proves to be factual, the employment or volunteer relationship will be terminated. The problem will not be remedied by relying on the promise of the employee or volunteer to reform.
4. The senior pastor or their designee, will log the conversations (contact the ministry's legal counsel and obtain a written opinion from the attorney within 24 hours of any allegation or suspicion of abuse/neglect that was reported to the leaders. If the legal opinion advises to report the allegations to law enforcement, it must be done immediately.
5. Ministry leaders will obtain written opinion from the attorney prior to terminating any employee's employment, especially if the termination is the result of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.
6. Reports must be made by the Church to the proper law enforcement authority on a timely basis as required by local, state, or federal statute. After reviewing the facts as reported by the victim and the accused. The Senior Pastor and an appointed Church leader or leaders will determine what course of action needs to be taken. Response may include any or all the following:
 - a. Report the incident to the insurance company
 - b. Report the incident to the proper law enforcement authority (**All mandatory reporters are required to contact Law Enforcement immediately**).
 - c. Church disciplinary action of the accused, if guilty, ranging from removal of that person from serving in their former capacity to possible dismissal from the congregation.

XI. Insurance

CHURCH NAME maintains a sufficient level of liability insurance coverage (A minimum of \$1 million) that covers child abuse, counseling, and sexual misconduct claims. (Some Insurance Companies have multiple riders)

XII. Conclusion

CHURCH NAME has implemented the above policy for the purpose of caring for and protecting the **CHURCH NAME** family. Adopting and implementing these policies helps to provide a safe

and secure environment for everyone. All employees and volunteers will be instructed to read and follow this policy. A signed statement of agreement will be kept on file for each employee and volunteer who is in a position to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

It is **CHURCH NAME** intent that all employees and volunteers should be held to a higher standard of excellence with regards to morality. Staff members and volunteers should be recognized by the positive response to the call of God on their lives. Staff members and volunteers should not take lightly the responsibility of being a representative of **CHURCH NAME** in all encounters within the church, the community, and the world.

After thoroughly reading the information in this policy, please sign and return the last page to the Senior Pastor or their designee to be placed in your file. Please keep a copy of this policy on file for future reference.

(Please send your Church policy and Church Volunteer Application to Your Insurance Company for approval and/or for recommended changes. Please let me know of recommended changes so I can update this template jeffsmead@hotmail.com). (Remove all non-**BLACK** colors in your final document.)

I _____ have read **CHURCH NAME** Abuse Prevention and Sexual Acts Policies and Procedures and agree to follow the above guidelines.

Signature _____ Date _____

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APPROVED AS WRITTEN