

Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse

St. Paul's Episcopal Church ~ Maumee, Ohio

Passed by Vestry 5/18/10

Healthy and positive relationships among people in the Name of Jesus Christ are the foundation of Christian ministry and the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, more clearly defining behaviors and practices allows the church to demonstrate more fully its love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.

Relationships in ministry should, ideally, be experienced always as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. The following Code of Conduct has been adopted by St. Paul's Episcopal Church to help the parish create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister with them. All people involved with children's ministry at St. Paul's are asked to carefully consider each statement in the Code and in the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse before agreeing to adhere to the statements and continue in service to the church. Those who regularly work with or around children and youth, in any capacity, must sign a statement that they will comply with this Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth

- Church Personnel agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- Church Personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.
- Church Personnel agree never to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with children and youth as defined in these Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.
- All Church Personnel agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with children and youth.
- All Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations, as well as known or suspected abuse of children or youth, to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.

General Definitions

A. Parish institutions, activities, and events

1. Parish institutions include locations owned and operated by St. Paul's Episcopal Church or activities and events that have been sponsored by, planned by, directed by, staffed by, or supported by the parish, whether the activity or event takes place at St. Paul's, in another parish of the Diocese, or outside the Diocese.

B. Church Personnel

For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel when they are functioning in their respective roles for the parish, whether in a diocesan or a parish setting:

1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All paid staff whose primary job function involves children's ministry to include youth leaders, nursery attendants or Christian Education coordinator.
3. Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him- or herself for a church-related service, or who actually assists with or performs a service, whether or not they have been selected or assigned to do so.

C. Children and Youth

1. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years.
2. A youth is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years of age, but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years or older, but is still in high school, or a person under 21 years of age who is mentally or physically challenged.

D. "Regularly" Work With or Around Children or Youth

For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel who "Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth" **if they teach or supervise an activity such as Sunday School six or more times per year.**

1. All parish staff persons, whether clergy or lay, engaged in the operation of the institution or the conduct of the event or activity.
2. All lay leaders selected by the rector who are directly engaged in the "program" of the event.
3. For the purpose of this policy, all persons who direct, staff, or assist in ministry with youth within the parish, its events, or activities, are considered to be Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth, as described in this section.
4. Parish events and activities include but are not limited to all Church Personnel (paid or volunteer, clergy or lay) who staff nursery, children's chapel, Sunday School, Youth Confirmation classes, Vacation Bible School, and other youth activities.

E. Types of abuse

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

Safeguards for Children and Youth Policies and Procedures

A. Policies for General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

The following guidelines are intended to assist Church Personnel in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions with children and youth to identify and stop:

- those that may be inherently harmful to children or youth
- those that are the type used by child molesters to groom children, youth and their parents;
- those that may create the conditions where abuse can occur more easily.

These guidelines should also be used to make decisions about interactions with children and youth in church-sponsored and -affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the supervisor of the volunteer or staff member making the exception as soon as possible. These policies will govern all ministry with children and youth at St. Paul's Episcopal Church effective 1 September 2009.

1. All Church Personnel who work with children or youth must agree to comply with the Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
2. No lay person will be allowed to volunteer to Regularly Work With Children or Youth until the person has been known to the congregation and the rector for at least six months.
3. Programs for infants and children under six (6) years old will ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
4. Church Personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.
5. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Church Personnel transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose not an emergency.
6. Church Personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socioeconomic status. Church Personnel will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They will avoid even the appearance of favoritism.
7. One-to-one counseling with children or youth will be done only with the prior consent of the child or youth's parent and with the prior knowledge of the rector, both on an incident by incident basis.
8. Church Personnel are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
9. Church Personnel are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
10. Church Personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
11. Church Personnel are prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.

12. Church Personnel are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos, or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.
13. Church Personnel are prohibited from 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.
14. Church Personnel are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.
15. Church Personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. 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.
16. Church Personnel are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
17. Church Personnel are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.
18. Church Personnel are prohibited from being alone with a child or multiple children unless in a place where other adults can easily observe them.

B. Policies for Screening and Selection in Diocesan and Parish Settings

These policies will be followed in screening and selecting Church Personnel to work with children and youth in parish activities and events, effective 1 September 2009.

1. Any and all Church Personnel who **Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth** (more than six times per year) shall be screened and ultimately approved by the rector using at least the following:
 - A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct reference checks, and a statement accepting the Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
 - Individual interview with the applicant.
 - Reference checks of persons outside the congregation who know the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant works with children if the individual is not well-known to the rector
 - Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person may be transporting children or youth. Those who transport children no more often than once per year shall be required only to sign a statement of compliance with the Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
2. The Rector, with the support of the Personnel or Christian Education committee as appropriate, is responsible for seeing that the appropriate applications are submitted, and interviews and checks conducted. Results of these screening procedures will be kept on file in the parish office.

3. All information gathered about an applicant will be carefully reviewed and evaluated to make a determination, in consultation with others as necessary, of whether or not the person is appropriate to work with children or youth.
4. Criminal records checks and sexual offender registry checks will be conducted every five (5) years for paid Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth.

C. Policies for Education and Training Requirements

1. At least three hours of child abuse prevention education and training is required for all Church Personnel Who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth before they start their work with children or youth. A record of the training will be kept on file in the parish office for parish volunteers and staff; individual training records will be kept in the person's personnel or volunteer file.
2. These training requirements may be satisfied if Church Personnel Who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth are able to demonstrate, by certificate of completion or letter from employer (such as a school) or volunteer agency (such as the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, or Big Brothers/Big Sisters) that they have received training equivalent to the three-hour training required by the Diocese of Ohio, or more extensive training than that required by these guidelines, within the past three years. A copy of the letter or certificate should be placed in the person's personnel or volunteer file, and updated as necessary.
3. All Church Personnel subject to these training policies must have their training refreshed every three years.

Policies for Responding to Problems

A. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors or Possible Policy Violations with Children or Youth

1. When Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection, or which may violate any provision of these Policies for Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse, they must immediately report their observations.
2. Inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions of Church Personnel with children or youth should be reported in one of the following ways:
 - a. A telephone call or meeting with the rector
 - b. Submission of a Notice of Concern to the rector.
3. All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth will be taken seriously by the parish.

B. Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Youth

1. Certain Church Personnel may be required by law to report known or suspected abuse or neglect of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect of children or youth may be a crime, and failure or delay in reporting suspected abuse or neglect may result in criminal charges or civil liability to individuals. 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 what he or she is reporting to be true.
2. In addition to reporting to the state authorities, Church Personnel are required to report any suspected or known abuse or neglect of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by Church Personnel directly to the rector, so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
3. Reports of suspected or known abuse or neglect that involve Church Personnel may be reported to the Diocese of Ohio in the following ways:
 - a. A telephone call to or meeting with the rector;
 - b. Submission a Notice of Concern to the rector.
4. The parish will cooperate with any investigation by state authorities to the fullest extent appropriate and will immediately inform the Diocese of Ohio.

Guidelines for Appropriate Affection

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

The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church Personnel working around or with children or youth.

1. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth. Some **positive** and **appropriate** forms of affection are listed below:
 - a. Brief hugs
 - b. Pats on the shoulder or back
 - c. Handshakes
 - d. "High-fives" and hand slapping
 - e. Verbal praise
 - f. Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth
 - g. Arms around shoulders
 - h. Holding hands while walking with small children
 - i. Sitting beside small children
 - j. Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
 - k. Holding hands during prayer
 - l. Pats on the head when culturally appropriate.
2. The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.
 - a. Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
 - b. Kisses on the mouth
 - c. Holding children over three years old on the lap
 - d. Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
 - e. Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms
 - f. Occupying a bed with a child or youth
 - g. Touching knees or legs of children or youth
 - h. Wrestling with children or youth
 - i. Tickling children or youth
 - j. Piggyback rides

- k. Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult
- l. Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth
- m. Any form of unwanted affection
- n. 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."
- o. Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing
- p. Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth
- q. Private meals with individual children or youth

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Confidential Notice of Concern

Individual(s) of Concern: _____

Date of occurrence: _____

Time of occurrence: _____

Type of Concern:

Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth _____

Policy violation with a child or youth _____

Possible risk of abuse _____

Other concern: _____

Describe the situation: What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, who was notified? If reported to the State, what was their recommendation about investigating? Attach additional sheets if needed.

Has this situation ever occurred previously? Attach additional sheets if needed.

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



Confidential Notice of Concern

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 this situation? Attach additional sheets if needed.

Submitted by (Please print): _____

Telephone number: _____

Location and address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Once completed, please e-mail to the Rector at paul@stpaulsmaumee.org.

This form may also be mailed to:

The Rev. Dr. J. Paul Board III

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

310 Elizabeth Street

Maumee, Ohio 43537

Please mark the envelope "PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL"

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

Read and initial each item to signify your agreement to comply with the statement.

I agree to do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services. _____

I agree that I will not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth. _____

I agree to comply with the policies for General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth defined in the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse. _____

I agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with children and youth. _____

In the event that I observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, I agree to immediately report my observations. _____

I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse. _____

I understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and I agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position. _____

Acknowledgment, Release and Signature

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for choosing me for a volunteer position or for my discharge if I have already been chosen. I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my previous background or other qualifications for my volunteering. I also authorize the parish to request and receive such information.

If chosen, I agree to be bound by the policies and procedures of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, including but not limited to its Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse and Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth. I understand that these may be changed, withdrawn, added to or interpreted at any time at the sole discretion of the parish and without prior notice to me.

I also acknowledge that I have read understand the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection and agree to follow its provisions.

(signature)

(date)