



# **Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis**

## **Safe Church, Safe Communities Policy**

**Updated September 2025**

(Please see <https://indydio.org/safechurch/>  
for updates to this policy.)

# **Safe Church, Safe Communities Policy**

## **(previously known as “Safeguarding”)**

**This policy includes the following sections embodying both the Model Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Model Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults that were approved by The Episcopal Church in 2017.**

<b>I. THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. EXPECTATIONS AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>III. DEFINITIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IV. APPLICATION AND SCREENING</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A. PUBLIC RECORDS CHECKS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. COMPONENTS OF A PUBLIC RECORDS CHECK.</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. PROCESS FOR WHEN A PUBLIC RECORDS CHECK REVEALS A PAST OFFENSE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL.</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>B. ADDITIONAL SCREENING REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>V. EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>A. UNIVERSAL TRAINING</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>B. SPECIALIZED TRAINING</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>C. TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR YOUTH VOLUNTEERS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>VI. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A. UNRELATED ADULTS REQUIRED (“TWO DEEP”)</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>B. CREATING SAFE SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>C. ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>D. BASIC NEEDS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>E. INCLUSIVENESS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>F. VIOLENCE AND WEAPONS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>G. BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS FOR ADULTS IN MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>H. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFF-SITE PROGRAMMING</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1. PRIOR APPROVALS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. REGISTRATION, WAIVER, AND RELEASE FORMS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3. FIRST AID AND MEDICATIONS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4. SUPERVISION</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. INSURANCE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>I. OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS</b>	<b>18</b>

J.	TRANSPORTATION	19
K.	CAMPS AND RETREAT CENTERS	20
L.	TRAVEL	20
1.	ADULT LEADERS AND CHAPERONES	20
2.	INSURANCE FOR TRAVEL	21
3.	INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	21
M.	SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS	22
1.	GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS	22
2.	SOCIAL MEDIA PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS	22
3.	SOCIAL MEDIA PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS WITH YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS	23
<b>VII.</b>	<b><u>MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF PROGRAMS INVOLVING VULNERABLE ADULTS</u></b>	<b>26</b>
A.	PRESENCE OF UNRELATED ADULTS SUGGESTED	27
B.	CREATING SAFE SPACE FOR PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS AND/OR MINISTRY WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS	27
C.	INCLUSIVENESS	28
D.	VIOLENCE	28
E.	BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS FOR MINISTRY WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS	28
F.	VISITS TO PRIVATE RESIDENCES	30
G.	VISITS TO RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES	30
H.	OFF-SITE VISITS, EVENTS, AND PROGRAMS	30
1.	PRIOR APPROVALS	31
2.	REGISTRATION, WAIVERS, AND RELEASE FORMS	31
3.	FIRST AID AND MEDICATIONS	31
I.	TRANSPORTATION	32
J.	INSURANCE FOR OVERSEAS PILGRIMAGES AND MISSION TRIPS	32
K.	INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	33
L.	CONFERENCE AND RETREAT CENTERS	33
<b>VIII.</b>	<b><u>RESPONDING TO CONCERNS</u></b>	<b>33</b>
A.	SUSPECTED ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR EXPLOITATION	33
B.	SUSPECTED VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY	34
C.	LOCAL RESOURCES FOR RESPONSE	34
<b>IX.</b>	<b><u>POLICY ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND AUDIT</u></b>	<b>35</b>
A.	THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION	35
B.	DIOCESAN ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND AUDIT	35
C.	CONGREGATION AND ORGANIZATION ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND AUDIT	35
	<b><u>APPENDIX A: SAFE CHURCH, SAFE COMMUNITIES SCREENING &amp; TRAINING PROTOCOLS</u></b>	<b>37</b>

**(ALL SCREENINGS AND TRAININGS TO BE DONE THROUGH [WWW.PRAESIDIUMACADEMY.COM](http://WWW.PRAESIDIUMACADEMY.COM) -**

***CONSULT YOUR PARISH SAFE CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR FOR MORE DETAILS)*** **37**

---

**APPENDIX B: ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SAFE CHURCH, SAFE COMMUNITIES POLICY AND  
CERTIFICATION OF SCREENING AND TRAINING** **39**

---

## I. THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld the Word’s glory, glory as of the only Child from God.”

— John 1:14 (*An Inclusive Language  
Lectionary*)

God expressed the fullness of humanity in Jesus of Nazareth, whom we worship as the Word made flesh. To be human is to live with God and the whole of creation in the fullness of freedom and the challenge of responsibility. The pattern of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection resonates unreservedly with God’s call to perfect freedom and responsibility.

In baptism, God, speaking through the Church, claims us in Christ. We become, in Christ, the community of God’s final purpose: justice and peace, love and plenty for the whole creation. This new community lives in Eucharistic fellowship with God and Creation, as a sign and instrument of God’s reconciling purpose in the world.

The Church is called to embody and advance God’s mission. Ministry is the vocation of the whole community: laypersons, deacons, priests, and bishops who together represent Christ and the Church in the world. As stated in the Mission Statement for the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, we are called to stand with the vulnerable and marginalized.

The obligation to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being is binding for all the baptized. The authority with which **leaders** — ordained persons and adults who minister with minors (**children and youth**), and youth in leadership roles — are entrusted, creates an inherent **power imbalance** in the **pastoral relationship**. This power imbalance derives from the leadership role and, in the case of clergy, the symbolic authority of an ordained person. Christian leadership is intended to provide occasions for guidance and grace, and its abuse is always and unequivocally wrong.

Ministry involves a necessary tension between a Gospel-based integrity and a Gospel-based intimacy as modeled by the life of Christ. A rigid adherence to a system of rules leads to an unproductive legalism. Yet, without the framework of the law, the intimate relationships into which Christ calls us risk distortion and harm. All the people of God are called to minister attentively within this tension. These model policies are intended to provide a pattern for attentive practice of ministry.

This document is a statement for the Episcopal Church, setting forth expectations for its leaders in their relationships with children and youth and with vulnerable people.

The purpose these policies is to foster the highest standards of behavior in ministry settings. The document includes:

- ***Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth***
- ***Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults***
- ***Screening and Training Protocols*** ([Appendix A](#)), which explains the level of screening and training required before engaging in ministry with children and youth and with vulnerable adults;
- A description of requisite training that is specialized and tailored to ministry role and function;
- Behavioral standards designed to ensure that children, youth, and vulnerable adults and all who engage in ministry with them are treated with dignity and respect in all settings; and
- ***Social Media Practices and Guidelines*** (Section VI.M)

## II. EXPECTATIONS AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

This model policy sets 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. This policy is mandated for all such activities sponsored by every congregation, institution, organization, school, and agency of the Diocese of Indianapolis. The purpose of these policies is to create safe and welcoming space for all children and youth in our communities and those engaged in ministry with children and youth and to prevent sexual abuse.

Circumstances in particular congregations, schools, agencies, and institutions may make some of these best practices difficult to implement or even unworkable. As a result, local entities may make additions or revisions in developing local policy so long as they meet or exceed the requirements of these policies. This requires that local leadership understand this policy thoroughly enough to make appropriate judgments about local circumstances. Any such additions or revisions must be submitted in writing for the approval of the bishop by sending them to the Safe Church coordinator for the Diocese.<sup>1</sup> No provisions may be omitted from a local policy.

Church governing bodies and all leaders should understand these policies and all local requirements thoroughly enough to make appropriate judgments and should consult with the Office of the Bishop when unanticipated situations arise.

*No policy can foresee every possible circumstance to which it may be applied. Whenever applicable, questions of civil, criminal, and/or ecclesiastical discipline and employment*

---

<sup>1</sup> As of the date of publication of this policy, revisions should be sent to [Canon](mailto:brendan@indydio.org) Brendan O'Sullivan-Hale at [brendan@indydio.org](mailto:brendan@indydio.org).

*offenses should be addressed with the relevant authorities immediately. Please contact the Office of the Bishop for consultation and resources if assistance is needed.*

### III. DEFINITIONS

*NOTE: These definitions reflect our understanding of terms describing gender identity and sexuality, which are evolving as these model policies are being written.*

**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 receive and investigate reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

**Building Host:** Leader from an outside organization that is using church property, but is not a keyholder.

**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.

**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.

**Congregation:** A parish or organized mission admitted into the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis under Article IX of the Canons.

**Department of Child Services (DCS):** A social services program provided by the Indiana state government serving children and their families who are in need of assistance. DCS receive and investigate reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

**Endangered Adult:** Under Indiana state law, an endangered adult is an individual who is: (1) at least 18 years of age; and incapacitated by any of the following: (2) mental illness, developmental/intellectual disability, dementia, or other physical or mental incapacity preventing the person from managing or directing the management of the individual's property or providing or directing the provision of self-care. See also **Vulnerable Adult**.

**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"), 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 expands and matures.

**Intake Officer:** The person(s) designated by each 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.

**Keyholder:** Person with keys (or electronic keypad codes) and access to church buildings and/or locked spaces. Keyholder may be a member of an outside organization (e.g., Scouts or a recovery group).

**Leader:** An adult who engages in leadership in a ministry, activity, or program without supervisory responsibility. Examples include Sunday school teachers, camp counselors, chaperones, and program team.

**LGBTQIA+:** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual and others. It refers to people whose gender identities vary from their gender or sex assigned at birth, or whose sexual orientations differ from the heterosexual majority. The "+" is an effort to include additional gender identities. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

**Mandated Reporter:** A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of children and vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency.

**Indiana is a mandatory reporting state for both children and endangered adults. Anyone who suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation must report immediately.**

**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, camps, 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 Relationship:** Any relationship (1) between clergy and any person to whom the clergy provides or has provided counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction or spiritual guidance, or from whom such 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. The Diocese manages these searches with 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 aged 25 or older designated as being accountable for compliance with this policy for an event or program. This person may also be the Supervisor for a ministry program or event.

**Sacramental Use:** Consecrated or unconsecrated wine used in the setting of Eucharist.

**Safe Church Administrator:** Person identified by each congregation or other organization to track Public Records Checks and other screenings, as well as required trainings.

**Safe Church Policy:** Collective term for the policies to protect children and youth and vulnerable adults. The Safe Church Policy was formerly known as “Safeguarding.”

**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 expands and matures.

**Training:** Organized activity designed to provide information and/or instructions to strengthen and enhance the recipient's understanding, capacity, and exercise of ministry.

- **Universal Training:** A standard of training that will foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people that includes a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. This training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant.
- **Specialized Training:** A standard of additional training that equips people who participate in or have oversight responsibility for ministries. In addition to Universal Training, a person will have access to training that is specialized and tailored to their role and ministry function.

**Visiting Entity(ies):** An external organization whose employees, volunteers, or otherwise associated individuals are granted temporary access to premises of the Diocese or congregations for an authorized purpose (e.g., volunteering at a specific parish).

**Vulnerable Adult:**

- Any adult at or older than the age designated as an elder by applicable state law;
- Any adult who is infirm or diminished in capacity due to age, illness, or disability;
- 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;
- 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.
- Any person who qualifies as an **Endangered Adult** under Indiana state law.

**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

The Diocese, congregations, Visiting Entities, and other organizations are required to screen all persons according to the standards in the *Screening and Training Protocols* ([Appendix A](#)) with limited exceptions. (See Section IV.D Screening for Certain Keyholders). 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.

At the congregation or other organizations level, the Safe Church Administrator oversees the Public Records Check and other screening. The Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis oversees Public Records Checks and other screening for all clergy.

### A. Public Records Checks

#### 1. Components of a Public Records Check.

Congregations and other organizations shall conduct public records checks through the Diocese using its approved provider. Such checks must be completed before the employee or volunteer begins employment or volunteering. Information about the background check packages offered by our provider can be found in [this infographic](#).

- Criminal public records checks shall include available criminal records, sex offender registries, and child abuse and neglect central registries;
- A Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) records check is needed if transporting children and youth 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 three years.

Congregations may encounter situations in which alternate screening policies are desired. Any alternate screening plan must be brought to the attention of the Diocese and approved by staff.

Public records checks conducted by Visiting Entities may satisfy Public Records Check requirements of the Diocese as long as such checks meet or exceed the requirements set forth in this policy. In this case, the Safe Church Administrator should obtain a signed copy of the **Acknowledgment of Safe Church, Safe Communities Policy and Certification of Screening and Training** from an authorized representative of the Visiting Entity ([Appendix B](#)).

#### 2. Process for when a public records check reveals a past offense for an individual.

- The background check company notifies the adjudicator for the Diocese.

- The adjudicator sends required privacy notices to the individual for whom the public records search revealed past offense(s) and provides the individual with an opportunity to correct the record.
- The adjudicator reviews the records that resulted in the red flag and then engages in an iterative process with the priest or senior warden of the parish, or the director of the organization that requested the background check to understand more about the individual's role and how that relates to the offense.
- The adjudicator will then make a recommendation to the priest/warden/director, the bishop, and the canons to: (A) allow the individual to participate fully in the life of the parish or organization; (B) prohibit the individual from serving in staff or leadership positions; or (C) allow the person to participate under certain parameters. The group will come to a consensus, although the bishop has final authority to prevent the individual from participating in the parish or organization.
- Once a decision is made, the adjudicator will update the final status of the background check with the background check provider and provide follow up notice to the individual if required.

The Diocese complies with applicable law with respect to prior convictions, including disqualifying crimes under state law.

## **B. Additional Screening Requirements**

Written application, interview, and reference verification are required before serving in certain roles and ministries as specified in the ***Screening and Training Protocols*** ([Appendix A](#)). 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); and
- Maintenance of these records as described below.

Potential Leaders or Supervisors should be known and active in the congregation for at least six months before engaging in ministry with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

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. Signatures may be obtained on paper or digitally through Praesidium's Diocesan Policy module or via an online form created by the administrator.

### **C. Screening for Youth Volunteers**

Written application, written parental/guardian permission, interview, and reference verification are required for youth volunteers.

### **D. Screening for Certain Keyholders**

Keyholders with limited-access key fobs (i.e., key fobs with restricted entry locations and/or times) who have not successfully completed all required screening are permitted to enter a premises of the Diocese or congregations where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are being served *only* outside of the hours when those populations are being served. Such individuals may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for misuse of their limited-access key fob.

## **V. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Training shall be appropriate to each person's function according to the ***Screening and Training Protocols*** ([Appendix A](#)) with limited exceptions. (See Section V.D Training and Education for Certain Keyholders). At the congregation or other organizations level, the Safe Church Administrator oversees training. The Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis oversees training for all clergy.

Certification of training shall be renewed every three years.

The Diocese, congregations, Visiting Entities, and other organizations with responsibility for programs with services or ministries to children and youth shall keep records sufficient to evidence compliance with this policy.

### **A. Universal Training**

All Leaders shall have Universal 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. Universal Training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant. All members of the Episcopal Church shall have access to this training.

## **B. Specialized Training**

In addition to Universal Training, all Supervisors and those with oversight responsibilities for ministry programs and/or other adults who engage in ministry with children and youth or with vulnerable adults shall have Specialized Training that is tailored to their role and ministry function.

Depending on role and responsibility, Specialized Training for those who engage in ministry with children and youth may include:

- Prevention, identification, and response to all forms of harassment, abuse, neglect, and bullying;
- Mandated and voluntary reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and youth;
- Vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
- Awareness of real and perceived power dynamics in formed relationships
- An introduction to gender non-binary and other terms related to gender expression and identity; an available resource is the [LGBTQ+ glossary on the PFLAG website](#);
- The needs of LGBTQ+ children and youth: [one available resource is the 'Our Children' publication available online through PFLAG](#);
- The ways that children and youth can engage in self-advocacy; and
- The needs of differently-abled children and youth.

Likewise, Specialized Training for those who engage in ministry with vulnerable adults may include:

- The prevention, identification, and response to all forms of harassment, abuse, and neglect, including financial exploitation;
- Mandated and voluntary reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults;
- Vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
- Awareness of real and perceived power dynamics in formed relationships
- An introduction to gender non-binary and other terms related to gender expression and identity; an available resource is the [LGBTQ+ glossary on the PFLAG website](#);;
- 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.

Alternatively, training conducted by Visiting Entities may satisfy training requirements of the Diocese as long as such training meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in this policy. In this case, the Safe Church Administrator should obtain a signed copy of the ***Acknowledgment of Safe Church, Safe Communities Policy and Certification of Screening and Training*** from an authorized representative of the Visiting Entity ([Appendix B](#)).

### **C. Training and Education for Youth Volunteers**

We encourage Youth to serve in their churches and children's ministries. However, Youth do not count towards ratios for adult Leaders.

The recommended training for Youth is set forth in ([Appendix A](#)).

### **D. Training and Education for Certain Keyholders**

Keyholders with limited-access key fobs (i.e., key fobs with restricted entry locations and/or times) who have not successfully completed all required screening are permitted to enter a premises of the Diocese or congregations where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are being served *only* outside of the hours when those populations are being served. Such individuals may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for misuse of their limited-access key fob.

## **VI. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS**

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

All people who minister to children and youth 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.

Dioceses, congregations, and organizations shall ensure that all people who minister to children and youth receive prior training as to the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry.

Dioceses, congregations, and organizations shall maintain an up-to-date list of persons with their contact information approved to minister to children and youth. This list shall be kept in the organization's office or other place where records are kept.

### **A. Unrelated Adults Required (“Two Deep”)**

There shall be at least two unrelated adult Leaders (at least two years older than the eldest participant) present at ministry settings and events designed for children and youth. 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 as soon as possible.

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, non-private 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).

### **B. Creating Safe Space for Children and Youth**

To create a safe space, it is necessary to anticipate and avoid circumstances in which children and youth 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 and youth shall have adequate supervision when using electronic devices belonging to dioceses, congregations, and other organizations. Devices shall have adequate password protection. Each user shall have their own account and password. See *Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications* (Section IV. M)
- **Persons with keys and access to locked spaces.** *Keyholders – including anyone with 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-to-One Conversations with Children or Youth**

When one-to-one conversations occur between an adult and a child or youth, another unrelated adult must either be present or capable of visually monitoring the conversation.

Examples include:

- 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.
- Planned virtual conversations/meetings can take place in the presence of at least two unrelated adults.

Situations described by a child or youth that may pertain to abuse, neglect, self-harm, or exploitation must be reported immediately to the appropriate state agency per mandatory reporting laws.

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. (See ***Section VI, M: Media and Electronic Communications***)

#### **D. Basic Needs**

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

#### **E. Inclusiveness**

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, spaces and settings for programs, activities, and ministry shall be accessible.

The Episcopal Church seeks to support all children and youth by providing reasonable alternative arrangements to address safety and comfort in accordance with applicable law.

Any child or youth, including but not limited to those who identify as transgender, gender queer, or gender non-binary, who express 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 or youth's ability to keep their transgender status or other private information about themselves confidential. They should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity.

Safe bathroom/shower facilities will be provided by gender (or specific times will be assigned to the use of a single facility).

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

#### **F. Violence and Weapons**

- No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at anytime.
- Bullying of any kind by anyone is prohibited.
- 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 for camp programs or other specific programs with prior approval.
- Report suspected violations immediately. See ***Suspected Violations of this Policy*** (Section VII, B).

#### **G. Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children or Youth**

Adults who work with children and youth are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that children and youth deserve in all settings. Interactions should meet all requirements outlined above, and adults are generally prohibited from initiating a private relationship with any unrelated child or youth from the church away from sanctioned church activities.

## **Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children or Youth**

### **DOs: Adults are encouraged to:**

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

## **Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children or Youth (Cont)**

### **DON'Ts: Adults shall not under any circumstances:**

- Provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, drugs, cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;
- Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misused legal drugs at any children’s or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children’s or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior;
- Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; or
- 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 or youth.

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

## **H. Special Considerations for Off-Site Programming**

Off-site programs, trips, and events are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional development of children and youth. 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.

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

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**

- 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.
- Written parental approval is required 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.
- These same prior approvals are required when the site is a private residence, hosting such events as cook outs, pool parties, progressive dinners, etc.

### **2. Registration, Waiver, and Release Forms**

- All children, youth, and adults shall complete and sign a registration form and a waiver and release form before participating in any programs. Links to Youth and Adult Waiver and Medical Forms can be found on the [Diocesan Youth Ministry page](#) under Resources. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms. Such forms can encompass a program year.
  - There must be a parent/guardian's signature on all release and waiver forms for minors. Digital signatures through a program such as DocuSign or Dropbox Sign that create legally binding signatures are acceptable.

- Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site or online.
- Permission slips shall be provided for each off-site event and shall be signed by the parent/guardian.
- Prior permission for a minor to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required from a parent/guardian.

### **3. First Aid and Medications**

- Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator(AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with children and youth.
- A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.
- A record must be kept for all medication or first aid given to a participant. This record shall include the participant's name, the date and time of service, the name of the person administering medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage, and/or treatment given.
- 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 may include inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control pills.
- Only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications unless otherwise agreed to by the parents and the Responsible Person.
- If the child or youth has special or extraordinary needs, a candid discussion between the Responsible Adult and parent should be had well in advance of the event to determine whether the congregation or other organization is equipped to safely meet those needs.

### **4. Supervision**

- At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two unrelated adults with one being age 25 or older, preferably reflecting the sex and gender identity of the participants.
- Minimum ratios of adult to child/youth shall be in accordance with American Camp Association (ACA) guidelines 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 can provide skills, mentorship, support, encouragement, spiritual guidance, and joy.
- When you have new leaders-in-training, the leadership teams should also have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to provide support.

## **5. Insurance**

All trips to off-site destinations must have adequate insurance in case of emergency. For more information, contact your insurance broker.

### **I. Overnight Programs**

In overnight programming, particular attention will be given to historically excluded or unrecognized people, such as LGBTQ+ and differently-abled individuals. In a situation of unequal power and safety, preferences of these individuals merit additional consideration, accommodation, and action to ensure:

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

Other guidelines for overnight programs:

- The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires dioceses, congregations and other organizations to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to: age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy. Adults must have separate showers or separate times for showers.
- Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.
  - No bed, cot, or sleeping bag shall have more than one person sleeping in it.
  - Except as discussed below for hotel and dormitory stays, supervision by two unrelated adults is required in any space where one or more youth are sleeping.

- It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.
- Best practice guidelines for hotel or dormitory stays where it is not feasible to include beds for two unrelated adults in the same sleeping space:
  - One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-a-beds, and rollaway beds;
  - At least 2 children or 2 youth in each room.
  - 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; and
  - Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants
- Participants shall have access to three substantial meals each full day and access to sufficient water.
- 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 and youth 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 missing sleep.
- Participants shall have some time set aside each day for rest or free time.

## **J. Transportation**

- 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.
- All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cellphone usage.
- 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 and youth 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 if 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**

- 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.
  - Under 14 years — 1 adult for every 5 youth
  - 15–18 years — 1 adult for every 7 youth
- Regardless of group size, no group should travel with fewer than three adult chaperones.
- 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 (see Section VI.M);
  - emergency contacts;
  - itineraries; and
  - cash and/or credit card capacity to address emergencies.
- It is a best practice that, one adult, minimum age 25, should hold a current medical certification (see list below) 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 your destination should be identified ahead of time to respond to health emergencies as rapidly as possible.

- Acceptable medical certifications include:
  - Wilderness Medical Response
  - Outdoor Emergency Care
  - Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
  - Nurse (RN/LPN/Nurse Practitioner)
  - Physician's Assistant
  - Medical Doctor
- 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.
- A copy of all documents should be left with an accountable person at the diocesan, congregation, 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**

- Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at least one month prior to travel.
- 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.
- 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 in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.
- Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date.
- Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.
- Arrange to have at least two cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your Responsible Person at home.
- 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: [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/7-traveling\\_7.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/7-traveling_7.pdf)

## **M. Social Media and Electronic Communications**

Social media shapes the lives of young people and adults 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 developing policies and covenants governing the safe use of social media and digital communication in ministry settings.

### **1. 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 you are 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. All adults in Indiana are mandatory reporters.

**Indiana is a mandatory reporting state for both children and endangered adults. Anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation has taken place must contact the State of Indiana Department of Health and Human Services [Child](#) or [Adult](#) Protective Services, or other appropriate state agency.**

### **2. Social Media 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 diocese, congregation, or organization create and “own” the social media accounts representing the diocese, 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 that 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 and youth 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 diocese, congregation, or organization’s online photo or video should also be established.
- A diocese, congregation, or organization does not have a responsibility to review or monitor the personal pages or groups that are not sponsored by that diocese, congregation, or organization, except as described in the second bullet point above. The preceding statement should be included in the diocese, 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.
- Dioceses, congregations, or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered 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.

### **3. Social Media Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Youth and Vulnerable Adults**

- Prudent judgment should be used in the time of day a child or youth or vulnerable adult 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 and youth or with all vulnerable adults, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or the appearance of playing 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 and youth 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 and youth to a parent and/or a supervisor to determine when a referral to a professional provider or resource is needed. In the case of ongoing digital pastoral communications with vulnerable adults, disclose to a supervisor to make the same determination.
- Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include:
  - 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 and youth. 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 telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgment 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 or vulnerable adults;
    - 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 are ineligible because they “aged-out” of a program from social networking sites, list serves, etc.;
    - Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

#### **N. Use of Security Camera Monitoring**

Security cameras monitoring spaces that host programming for children, youth, or vulnerable adults do NOT count toward the ‘two deep’ supervision policy. The presence of a second person allows for immediate intervention and prevention that a security camera does not.

Wherever a camera is installed, there should be clear signage nearby to indicate to those within that space they are being recorded or monitored on camera.

It must be ensured that video positioning and angles capture only public areas and that no private area, including any diapering area or bathroom, is captured in the footage. Advance notice should be provided to parents/guardians of the minors who are being video monitored.

Recorded video footage is stored on the Diocese or member church servers for a period of no less than 90 days, unless (1) the Diocese receives notice of an incident at a Diocesan location sufficient to warrant implementation of a legal hold, including, but not limited to, a suspected crime committed against a child, in which case all footage shall be retained until the legal hold is released; or (2) receives a request from an authorized individual, including, but not limited to, a parent or legal guardian, to view video footage captured during a specific period, in which case all footage shall be retained until the request is fully evaluated, processed, and complete. Note that requests to review video footage should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable law and principles of risk management, particularly where minors or are included in the footage.

Diocese and member churches treat information obtained through video surveillance as confidential and strictly limits access to video recordings to appropriate Diocese and church personnel on a need-to-know basis.

Individuals are required to immediately report suspected child abuse and neglect witnessed by the individual on the Diocese's or member church's video footage according to applicable child abuse reporting laws. In addition to making the mandatory state reports, anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth or vulnerable adults has taken place within a facility or program of the diocese, congregation, or other organization, should immediately inform one of more or the following:

- The bishop or the bishop's office in the case of a diocese;
- Member of the clergy in charge or the senior warden in the case of a congregation;
- The director, head, or other governing officer in the case of other organizations; and/or
- The Intake Officer in case a member of the clergy is suspected of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

## **VII. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF PROGRAMS INVOLVING VULNERABLE ADULTS**

All people who minister to vulnerable adults and/or have pastoral relationships with others 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.

Dioceses, congregations, Visiting Entities, and other organizations shall ensure that all people who minister to vulnerable adults receive prior training as to the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry.

Dioceses, congregations, Visiting Entities, and other organizations shall maintain an up-to-date list of persons with their contact information approved to minister to vulnerable adults and/or engage in pastoral relationships with others. This list shall be kept in the organization's office or other place where records are kept.

It is best practice for those ministering to vulnerable adults to document their visits, including time, place, and any observations or concerns. Such documentation is reviewed by the Supervisor. Confidentiality among clergy and lay ministers is required and all documentation is kept confidential. This documentation promotes continuity of care and transparency in ministry.

All new activities that include pastoral relationships and/or ministry to vulnerable adults shall have a Responsible Person to monitor and supervise all events to ensure appropriate behavior and healthy boundaries.

#### **A. Presence of Unrelated Adults Suggested**

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.

If a diocese, congregation, or organization's policy requires that there be two unrelated adults present, and if circumstances result in a minister being alone with a vulnerable adult, that minister shall report this to the Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person as soon as possible.

#### **B. Creating Safe Space for Pastoral Relationships and/or Ministry with Vulnerable Adults**

To create a safe space, it is necessary to anticipate and avoid circumstances that could result in exposure of vulnerable adults to undue influence or exploitation. On-site and off-site settings for ministry with vulnerable adults and pastoral relationships and conversations should:

- Be in places where casual monitoring by others is convenient; and
- Convey safety and comfort.

### **C. Inclusiveness**

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, socio-economic class, or age. To the extent possible, all spaces and settings for programs, activities and ministry shall be accessible.

The Episcopal Church seeks to support all persons by providing reasonable alternative arrangements in accordance with applicable law to address safety and comfort.

Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary adults who express 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 adult's ability to keep their transgender status confidential, if they so desire.

Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary adults should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity. Safe bathroom/shower facilities will be provided by gender (or specific times will be assigned for the use of a single facility).

### **D. Violence**

- No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at anytime.
- No one is to control or attempt to control another by bullying, intimidation, threats, verbal/emotional abuse, or isolation from others. Bullying of any kind by anyone is prohibited.
- Report suspected violations immediately. See *Suspected Violations of this Policy* (Section VII, B).

### **E. 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 wellbeing of those to whom they minister.

***DO's: All who minister to vulnerable adults are encouraged to:***

- Have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship, and Bible study;
- Spend time with and listen to vulnerable adults, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;
- Offer appropriate physical expressions of affection, as long as they are welcomed by the recipient. These may include:
  - pats on the shoulder or back;
  - handshakes;
  - holding hands during prayer; and
- Maintain healthy boundaries when sharing personal information.

***DON'Ts: Adults shall not under any circumstances:***

- Provide vulnerable adults with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;
- Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misuse of legal drugs when they are responsible for, or ministering to, a vulnerable adult;
- Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs when they are responsible for, or ministering to, a vulnerable adult;
- Engage in illegal behavior or permit others to engage in illegal behavior; or
- Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any vulnerable adult.

## **F. Visits to Private Residences**

The safety of all persons and healthy boundaries are essential when visiting a vulnerable adult in a private home.

- Avoid situations that might compromise privacy; common examples include:
  - Visiting behind closed bedroom doors;
  - Sitting on the bed of the person being visited; or
  - Visiting a person while they are not fully clothed.
- The best practice is to visit in teams of two or more. If it is not possible for another adult minister to be present, a member of the vulnerable adult's household should be present. If neither is possible, documentation of the time, duration of visit, general matters discussed, and any pastoral concerns shall be provided to the Supervisor as soon as possible after the visit.

## **G. Visits to Residential Facilities**

The safety of all persons and healthy boundaries are also essential when visiting a vulnerable adult in a Residential Facility. Best practices include:

- Facility staff should be informed of the visitor's presence;
- If a visit takes place out of sight of staff, they should be notified in advance and informed when such meeting is concluded;
- The door to a resident's private room must remain open during visits;
- Visitors should be mindful that LGBTQ+ residents may not be safe to express their sexual identity or orientation, as staff members may not yet have been trained; and
- In the event of uncertainty about application of this policy, the visitor is encouraged to contact their supervisor with the relevant queries.

## **H. Off-Site Visits, Events, and Programs**

Off-site programs, trips, and events are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional wellbeing of 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.

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

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**

- 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.
- These same prior approvals are required when the site is a private residence, hosting such events as cook outs, progressive dinners, etc.

In the event of uncertainty, the Responsible Person should contact the bishop's office with the relevant information.

## **2. Registration, Waivers, and Release Forms**

Due to the unique risks of off-site visits, events, and programs that cannot always be anticipated, it is important to obtain permissions and manage documentation as described below:

- All participants shall complete and sign a registration, waiver, and release before participating in any program. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical information.
  - There must be a signature on all release and waiver forms. 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. Applicable state law determines whether digital signatures are acceptable.
  - Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site. Check with the bishop's office regarding whether such forms may be saved electronically and how long they must be retained.
- Permission slips shall be provided for each event and shall be signed by the vulnerable adult, guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member.
- Prior permission for an individual to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required.

## **3. First Aid and Medications**

Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with vulnerable adults.

- A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.
- If a vulnerable adult requires assistance with medications of any type, then a record must be kept for all medications or first aid given to a participant. This record shall include the participant's name, the date and

time of service, the name of the person administering medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage and/or treatment given.

- All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to vulnerable adults requiring assistance with medications shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications.

### **I. Transportation**

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;
- A list of those approved to provide transportation to vulnerable adults shall be maintained in the office of the organization;
- Anyone being transported must consent to such transportation beforehand. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency, then prior approval by that person's guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member is required; and
- All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cellphone usage.

### **J. Insurance for Overseas Pilgrimages and Mission Trips**

- Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at-least one month prior to travel.
- 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.
- Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

## **K. International Considerations**

- Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.
- Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date.
- Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.
- Arrange to have at least two cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your Responsible Person at home.

## **L. Conference and Retreat Centers**

All conference and retreat centers of the diocese, congregations, and organizations shall follow the guidelines for off-site Programming established in this policy.

# **VIII. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS**

## **A. Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation**

**Indiana is a mandatory reporting state for both children and endangered adults. Anyone who suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation must immediately report to the appropriate state agency.**

- **Children and Youth:** Anyone who suspects a child has been neglected or abused must by state law make a report by calling the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-800-5556. For more information, see <https://www.in.gov/dcs/contact-us/child-abuse-and-neglect-hotline/>.
- **Vulnerable Adults:** Anyone who believes or has reason to believe an endangered adult is the victim of battery, neglect or exploitation is required to report the facts to Adult Protective Services or a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the endangered adult. A report to Adult Protective Services may be made by calling the state hotline number 1-800-992-6978 or by contacting the appropriate APS Investigative Unit directly. <https://www.in.gov/ipac/adult-protective-services/>
- Under Indiana law, a person who makes a report in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability.

In addition to making the mandatory state reports, anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth or vulnerable adults has taken place within a facility or program of the diocese, congregation, or other organization, should immediately inform one of more or the following:

- The bishop or the bishop’s office in the case of a diocese;
- Member of the clergy in charge or the senior warden in the case of a congregation;
- The director, head, or other governing officer in the case of other organizations;and/or
- [The Intake Officer](#) in case a member of the clergy is suspected of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

## **B. Suspected Violations of this Policy**

Anyone who suspects a violation of these policies shall immediately report the violation to the Responsible Person, member of the clergy in charge, and senior warden.

Clergy in charge receiving reports of violations of this policy shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or unpaid ministry with the church. If the Responsible Person is a lay person, they are responsible to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is provided for all.

Anyone who suspects a violation of these policies by a member of the clergy shall immediately report the violation to the bishop’s office and/or the Intake Officer. Anyone may make a report to an Intake Officer.

The bishop, hearing reports of violations by clergy, or by laity at diocesan events, shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action, up to and including canonical disciplinary action, as provided by Title IV of the Constitutions and Canons and/or termination of employment or unpaid ministry with the diocese.

## **C. Local Resources for Response**

Each diocese, congregation, or organization shall provide a list of local resources that can give information and assistance to anyone concerned about circumstances that may violate this policy. Such resources with contact information shall include:

- Responsible Person(s) for programs and ministries with children and youth;
- Clergy in charge of a congregation;
- Wardens;
- [Bishop](#);
- [Intake Officer\(s\)](#); and
- Department of Child Services (DCS)

## **IX. POLICY ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND AUDIT**

### **A. The Episcopal Church Adoption and Implementation**

The Episcopal Church shall ensure that all programs and events of the Episcopal Church involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults comply with the standards set out in this model policy.

The Episcopal Church shall also ensure that each diocese adopts a ***Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth and a Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults*** in accordance with its model policy by January 1, 2019.

### **B. Diocesan Adoption, Implementation, and Audit**

The Executive Council, as the governing body of the Diocese of Indianapolis, oversees the adoption of this policy.

The Bishop of Indianapolis, as its diocesan ecclesiastical authority, will inform congregations and other organizations within the Diocese of the contents of this policy, and the requirement that each congregation or organization adopt a site-specific policy in accordance with this policy.

The Diocese is required to conduct a ***Safe Church Self-Audit*** every three years to confirm compliance with diocesan safe church policies.

#### **Procedures to be confirmed by audit include (but are not limited to):**

- Existence of diocesan policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements of the model policy published by The Episcopal Church (TEC Model Policy);
- Provision of accessible and appropriate training for all those who work with children and youth in accordance with ***Screening and Training Protocols*** ([Appendix A](#)). Such training shall include, at a minimum, topics identified in the TEC Model Policy;
- Verification that each congregation and/or organization within the diocese has adopted a policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the diocesan policy; and
- Verification that each congregation and/or organization has a process to ensure members access training and conduct public record checks.

### **C. Congregation and Organization Adoption, Implementation, and Audit**

Congregations and organizations must adopt a ***Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth*** and a ***Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults*** that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements in this diocesan policy. It is permissible for congregations and organizations to adopt this policy as its own policy.

Congregations and 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 shall be recorded in the minutes of the vestry or governing body.

The ***Diocesan Safe Church/Safe Communities Policy*** shall be posted on the diocesan Safe Church website ([www.indydio.org/safechurch](http://www.indydio.org/safechurch)) and available to all paid and unpaid persons who minister to children or youth and vulnerable adults. These policies shall include the name and phone number of a contact person in the bishop's office.

Each congregation and organization are required to conduct an online ***Safe Church Self-Audit*** annually to confirm compliance with safe church policies, and to report such audit to the bishop's office. Additional audit information and online forms can be accessed on the diocesan [Safe Church webpage](#).

**Procedures to be confirmed by audit will include (but are not limited to):**

- Public records checks, application forms, records of screening and reference verification of paid and unpaid persons;
- Records of compliance with ***Screening and Training Protocols (Appendix A)***, including but not limited to, verification that each Visiting Entity—whose employees, volunteers, and individuals otherwise associated with the Visiting Entity that are not independently screened and trained by the Diocese—has submitted a signed copy of the ***Acknowledgment of Safe Church, Safe Communities Policy and Certification of Screening and Training (Appendix B)***.
- Procedures for responding to concerns and incidents; and
- Evidence of compliance with “safe space” requirements.

# Appendix A: Safe Church, Safe Communities Screening & Training Protocols

(All screenings and trainings to be done through [www.praesidiumacademy.com](http://www.praesidiumacademy.com) – consult your parish Safe Church administrator for more details)

				Praesidium Training Courses – All are Safe Church, Safe Communities courses except Sexual Harassment					
Ministry Function	Praesidium Public Records Search Package	Application, Interview, Reference	IndyDio Policies: Signature of Receipt	Universal Training Courses <sup>2</sup> (5 Courses)	Pastoral Relationships	Power & Relationships	Promoting a Safe Environment: Employee Sexual Harassment Training	Abuse & Neglect	Bullying
Employees	Clergy or Premium	X	All employees, leaders, and volunteers who must be Safe Church certified are required to provide their signature indicating receipt of the Diocesan Safe Church Policies.	X	Depends <sup>3</sup>	X	X	X	X
Active Clergy (from bishop to seminarians)	Clergy	X		X	X	Recommended	X	X	X
Church contractors (1099)	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>		Depends <sup>3</sup>		Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>
Child/Youth Choir Director	Premium + Social Media Basic	X		X	X	Recommended	X	X	X
Choir Director	Premium	X		X	X	Recommended	X	Recommended	Recommended
Camp Director	Premium + Social Media Basic	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Youth Minister	Premium + Social Media Basic	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Youth Acolyte Leader	Premium + Social Media Basic			X		X	X	X	X
Choir chaperones	Premium			X		X	X	X	X
Church School Teacher	Premium			X		X	X	X	X
Counselor in Training	Premium	X	This signature should be obtained by the parish or organization's Safe Church administrator in either of the following ways:  <i>A digital signature through the Praesidium Policy Module</i>  <i>A digital signature via an online form created by the administrator</i>	X		X	X	X	X
Nursery Worker	Premium			X		X	X	X	
Youth Volunteers (<18)		X		X	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>
Other volunteers	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>		Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>	Depends <sup>3</sup>
Camp Counselor	Premium + Social Media Basic	X		X		X	X	X	X
Confirmation mentors	Premium + Social Media Basic	X		X	X		X	X	X
Lay Chaplains	Premium	X		X	X		X	X	X
Pastoral Care Teams	Premium	X		X	X		X	X	X
Youth Group Leaders	Premium + Social Media Basic	X		X		X	X	X	X
Drivers	Standard + MVR			X					
Church and Diocese Elected	Standard		X						
Treasurer	Standard + Credit <sup>4</sup>		X		X	X	X		
Vestry			X		X	X	X		
Wardens	Standard + Credit <sup>4</sup>		X	X	X	X	X		
Altar Guild	Standard Recommended		X		X	X	X		
Keyholders <sup>5</sup>	Premium		X		X	X	X		
Building Hosts <sup>5</sup>			X						
Eucharistic Visitors	Premium	X	<i>A wet signature given to the administrator.</i>	X	X		X	X	
Home Visitors	Premium	X		X	X		X	X	
Stephen Ministers	Premium	X		X	X		X	X	

<sup>2</sup> Universal training (5 courses) consists of the following Safe Church/Safe Community courses: (1) Introduction & Theological Background, (2) Organizational Rules & Policies, (3) Healthy Boundaries, (4) Inclusion; the remaining course (5) Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter is not a Safe Church/Safe Communities course, but is available on Praesidiumacademy.com

<sup>3</sup> See "Deciphering Depends" on the following page to help navigate what screening and training protocols should be followed.

<sup>4</sup> Credit checks are not currently available through Praesidium. Consider using a free website like Credit Karma to pull a TransUnion or EquiFax credit check and inspect for red flags. Written consent must be obtained prior to running credit checks on prospective workers. The Diocese abides by applicable law with respect to conducting credit checks.

<sup>5</sup> Keyholders and Building Hosts from outside, nonreligious organizations are allowed to take the following secular courses on Praesidium Academy in place of the Safe Church, Safe Communities curriculum: Policies: Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, Promoting a Safe Environment: Employee Sexual Harassment Training, Abuse Risk Management for Volunteers, Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter.

## Deciphering “Depends”

### 1. Is this person in a supervisory role?

If YES, is this role primarily pastoral in nature?

If YES, then

- A. Take Universal Training plus Pastoral Relationships.
- B. Conduct a public records search (at least the Praesidium Standard Package).

If NO, then:

- A. Take Universal Training plus Power & Relationships.
- B. Conduct a public records search (at least the Praesidium Standard Package).

If NO (not in a supervisory role), then proceed to question no. 2.

### 2. Does this person have more than occasional, supervised access to children/vulnerable adults?

If YES, then

- A. Take Universal Training plus Abuse & Neglect and Bullying
- B. Conduct public records search (at least the Praesidium Premium Package; consider a social media check if working with youth).

If NO, then proceed to question no. 3.

### 3. Will this person drive on behalf of the church?

If YES, then conduct a public records search and include driving record check (at least the Praesidium Standard Package + MVR).

If NO, then proceed to question no. 4.

### 4. Will this person be handling money without an unrelated party present?

If YES, then do a public records search and include a credit check (at least the Praesidium Standard Package + Credit Check).

**Appendix B: Acknowledgment of Safe Church, Safe Communities Policy and Certification of Screening and Training**

I, [REPRESENTATIVE NAME], on behalf of myself and as an authorized representative of [ENTITY NAME] (the "Visiting Entity"), state as follows:

1. I have personally read in its entirety the Safe Church, Safe Communities Policy (the "Policy") of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis (the "Diocese"), including without limitation, the *Screening and Training Protocols* as outlined in Section IV (Application and Screening) and Section V (Education and Training) as well as Appendix A of the Policy.

2. I acknowledge and understand that the Visiting Entity is obligated to meet all legal obligations and Diocesan standards, expectations, and procedures set forth in the current Policy, and as it may be amended from time to time by the Diocese.

3. I certify, on behalf of the Visiting Entity, that each and every employee, volunteer, and individual otherwise associated with the Visiting Entity who may be present on the Diocese premises (each a "Visiting Entity Affiliate" and collectively the "Visiting Entity Affiliates") shall, prior to entering the premises, be subject to and successfully complete a background check screening and training session which meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in the Policy.

4. I further acknowledge and understand that the Visiting Entity is required to maintain complete and accurate written records of screening and training of the Visiting Entity Affiliates. Upon request by the Diocese, the Visiting Entity shall promptly provide all documents, records, or other information relevant to screening and training of the Visiting Entity Affiliates, as reasonably necessary to verify compliance with the Policy or any applicable law.

[ENTITY NAME]

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title