



Diocese of the
MID-ATLANTIC
Anglican Church in North America



Policy Manual for the Protection of Children



Diocese of the
MID-ATLANTIC

Anglican Church in North America

November 2019

To the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry Members and People of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic,

I commend to you the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic Policy for the Protection of Children.

This thoughtful and comprehensive policy sets forth “best practices” and other requirements and standards for the protection of children in the churches and ministries of our Diocese. It is the cumulative result of the wisdom of experts in this field, as well as legal counsel and youth and children’s ministry directors.

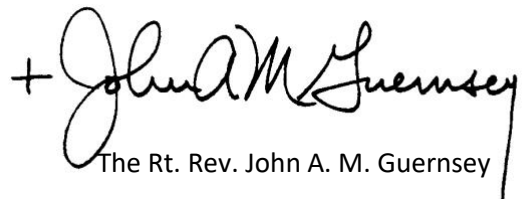
The reasons for such a policy are, unfortunately, manifold. The rates of abuse are horrific, and over 90% of juvenile sex abuse victims know their abuser in some way. Since it is impossible to identify a potential abuser by sight, the Church must intentionally provide our children with boundaries that will protect and nurture them.

Please read this policy carefully. It is vitally important that congregations, missions and mission fellowships follow its requirements and recommendations.

Variances to specific provisions of the policy may be granted by the Bishop or the Standing Committee with the advice and counsel of the Committee on the Protection of Children and the Chancellor of the Diocese.

If you have questions, or to apply for a variance, please contact the Administrator of the Diocese at 703-590-5470.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ 
The Rt. Rev. John A. M. Guernsey

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Table of Contents

Biblical Foundation and Purpose.....	3
The Diocesan Committee to Protect Children.....	4
Responsibility for this Policy.....	4
Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse.....	5
Child Abuse Defined	5
Minimum Standard.....	6
Screening Procedures	7
Training Procedures.....	11
Interacting Procedures	12
Monitoring Procedures.....	20
Responding and Reporting Procedures	23
Home Group Procedures	29
Diocesan Documentation Requirements.....	30

Resources Index

Reporting Resources

Tab – A: State Reporting Laws and Forms of Child Abuse (revised April 2018)	i
Tab – B: How to Report Abuse to Child Protective Services	iv
Tab – C: Sample Form for Report of Suspected Child Abuse	vi

Screening, Training, Interacting, and Monitoring Resources

Tab – D: Implementing Ministry Safe	xii
Tab – E: Sample Policy Acknowledgement Form	xiv
Tab – F: Sample Screening Statement.....	xv
Tab – G: Sample Five Steps to Keep Children Safe at (our Church)	xvi
Tab – H: Sample Supervisory Plans	xxi

Pastoral, Church, and Healing Resources

Tab – I: Pastoral Response to Known Sexual Offenders.....	xxvi
Tab – J: The Church’s Understanding of and Response to an Incident of Abuse	xxvii
Tab – K: A Model for an Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting.....	xxx

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Biblical Foundation and Purpose

The Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic accepts with deep gratitude and seriousness the trust given us by God to nurture and care for his people, especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of protection. This is nowhere more true than when caring for our children and youth. Current statistics regarding child abuse are alarming. One in every three to four girls and one in every six to eight boys are sexually abused before age eighteen. Physical and



emotional abuses continue to be serious problems in our society. The effects of such abuse can damage children at the core of who they are, and often follow them into adulthood. Abused children are children at risk. They often become adults who suffer from low self-esteem, who are unable to form and keep healthy relationships, and who struggle to maintain healthy boundaries. As the Church, we declare that we will work together to see that the proper love and care are extended to the children entrusted to us.

Jesus teaches explicitly that children are of much value in Kingdom terms, and that to cause one to sin has the gravest of consequences. Caring for our children and youth is a sacred trust.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:1-6 ESV)

Mark, in his Gospel account, adds the dimension of Jesus taking the children in his arms and blessing them (Mark 10:16).

As Christian adults we are called to establish a secure environment where the perfect love of God works to cast out all fear (1 John 4:18) and the nurture and love of God are made known to all, and in particular to our children and youth. In this way we can fulfill the biblical mandate to train up our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).

The purpose of this document is to give instruction to the clergy, laity, and churches of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic that will inform our decisions and methods with regard to safeguarding the children and youth entrusted to us and instruct us, providing minimum standards of care and vigilance.

May God be glorified in all we do.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

The Diocesan Committee to Protect Children

The Bishop in consultation with the Standing Committee appoints committee members. The Committee is responsible for the creation and promulgation of the diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children, under the authority and oversight of the Standing Committee and the Bishop in accordance with the Canons of the Diocese.

The Committee will from time to time update and revise the Policy in light of practical experiences, medical and other scholarly research, legal developments, and other relevant considerations.



Responsibility for this Policy

The Rector has overall responsibility for the administration of this policy within the church he/she leads and for providing all reports requested by the Diocese. In the absence of a Rector, the Priest-in-Charge, Lay Leader, or the Senior Warden will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas specifically delineating action by the Rector.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse

The Diocese will not tolerate any form of child abuse involving our clergy, lay employees, volunteers or other persons. Everyone who serves the church through educational, pastoral, recreational or other activities is expected to maintain the highest biblical standards in relationships with those to whom they minister, avoiding any form of misconduct against children. That commitment extends to sexual behavior.



No one in the employ or volunteer service of the Diocese or its churches who has a civil or criminal record of child abuse, or who has admitted committing prior sexual abuse of a child, will be permitted to serve with children or youth.

We are also committed to providing pastoral care to all involved with, and/or affected by, instances of child abuse. Pastoral care grows out of Christ-centered relationships and proceeds with an awareness of the spiritual and emotional needs of both the individual and the community. It may include providing guidance, support, consolation, and even confrontation in an effort to minister as we believe God would desire.

Child Abuse Defined

Child abuse, in practical terms, refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.¹ Each state and the District of Columbia has its own definition of what constitutes "child abuse" under civil and criminal laws, and each church in the Diocese should be familiar with the relevant laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. In general, the definitions of "child abuse" and "child neglect" in all states in our Diocese include the following elements (among others):

- Physical abuse
- Neglect (both physical and mental)
- Sexual abuse/Exploitation

Some general definitions of child abuse and resources for finding the relevant child abuse reporting laws and legal definitions in each jurisdiction in our Diocese may be found under Tab-A.

Child Abuse reporting laws specific to each state can be found on the DOMA website at www.anglicandoma.org/protection-of-children.

¹ Child abuse may also be a term defined by relevant state laws.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Minimum Standard

The Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic requires that, at a minimum, each congregation, mission, and church plant is expected to have in place the following procedures for:

	<u>Page</u>
Screening	6
Training	10
Interacting	11
Monitoring	19
Responding	22
Documentation	29

This minimum standard applies even if there are no children currently in attendance at church events.



DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Screening Procedures

One effective means of reducing the incidence of child abuse is to screen carefully all clergy and all lay workers, paid and volunteer, working in youth and children's ministries. The Diocese requires the following screening and background checks for all canonically resident and licensed clergy, and for all employees and volunteers who work with children:

Screening Clergy

The screening of clergy is the responsibility of the diocesan office. Careful screening of clergy is conducted initially during the ordination and search processes and includes:

- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks through Oxford Document Management Company or other diocesan-approved screening providers. Checks should be renewed no less often than every two years. It is the responsibility of all clergy to cooperate fully in all aspects of the screening process and to submit in a timely manner all documents needed to complete such checks
- ✓ Conducting personal and professional reference checks
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews
- ✓ Requiring the clergy person to state whether or not the clergy person and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in the Appendix under Tab-F.

Note: In addition, a full Oxford Document Management Company background check will normally be done every five years for all clergy in active ministry in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children



Screening Employees

The screening of employees is the responsibility of the individual church. Careful screening of employees includes:

- ✓ Reviewing signed job applications for those working in youth and children's ministries
- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed no less often than every two years
- ✓ Conducting personal and professional reference checks
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews
- ✓ Requiring each applicant to state whether or not the applicant and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in the Appendix under Tab-F.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Screening Interns, Fellows, and Day Camp Staff

The screening of interns, fellows, and day camp staff is the responsibility of the individual church.

Careful screening of these individuals includes:

- ✓ Reviewing signed applications for those working in youth and children's ministries
- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed no less often than every two years
- ✓ Conducting personal and other appropriate reference checks
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews.
- ✓ Requiring each applicant to state whether or not the applicant and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in the Appendix under Tab-F.



DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children



Screening Volunteers

The screening of volunteers is the responsibility of the individual church. Careful screening of volunteers includes:

- ✓ Requiring a six-month minimum attendance rule for volunteers in children's and youth ministries, except where the Bishop, in consultation with the Committee to Protect Children, has granted a variance.
- ✓ Reviewing signed volunteer applications for those working in youth and children's ministries.
- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks. Checks should be renewed no less often than every two years.
- ✓ Conducting personal reference checks.
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews.
- ✓ Requiring each applicant to state whether or not the applicant and/or other members of the household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample copy of this statement is found in the Appendix under Tab-F.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Training Procedures

Training is also an important deterrent to child abuse. Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, as well as learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse. They also must become familiar with safe practices specific to their church designed to reduce the potential for abuse occurring. The Diocese requires the following training:

Reading Requirements

All members of the clergy, all members of the vestry, and those staff members with direct supervision over youth or children must certify that they have read, understood and accepted the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic Policies on the Protection of Children. A sample acknowledgement form is included in Tab-E.

Workshop Attendance Requirements

Every two years, clergy, vestry, and those staff and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must either:

- ✓ Attend a diocesan-approved training workshop on the prevention of child abuse that includes safe policy practices specific to their church (Five Steps to Keep Children Safe), see Tab-G.
- or
- ✓ Complete the online Sexual Abuse Prevention Course and follow-up test provided by Ministry Safe and be trained in the safe policy practices specific to their church (Five Steps to Keep Children Safe). Instructions on the implementation of the Ministry Safe program are detailed under Tab-D.

Ministry Safe provides online training for individual volunteers and can be contracted to provide background checks for volunteers in your church. In addition we strongly urge churches to send leaders to be trained in how to provide a DOMA-approved workshop for their church and to better understand our diocesan child protection policy and the instances in which the use of Ministry Safe would be appropriate.

A copy of the certificate of completion that is presented at the end of the diocesan-approved workshop or the proof of completion of the Ministry Safe online training is sufficient to demonstrate compliance with this requirement.

Clergy are responsible to submit to the diocesan office evidence of completed training every two years. Each church is responsible to track and document the training/retraining of its vestry, staff and volunteers.

Trainers must go through the training every two years in order to stay current with diocesan policy and procedures.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Interacting Procedures

These procedures help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.



Communication

Verbal interactions between clergy, staff members, or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, clergy, staff members, and volunteers should avoid talking to children or parents in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, clergy, staff members, and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children. Concerns about children should be directed to parents, legal guardians, the appropriate ministry leader, or the clergy.

Clergy, staff members and volunteers should avoid engaging in any sexually-oriented communications with children, (except as noted in the following section in educational or abuse- reporting contexts) and should refrain from discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should report any sexually-oriented communications involving a child to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy.

Clergy, staff members, volunteers, and participants in youth and children's ministries should refrain from the use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs while they are responsible for the care or supervision of children.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Sexually-Oriented Materials

Staff members and volunteers may employ (subject to limitations imposed by the Rector or Rector's designee) age-appropriate materials when leading discussions dealing with human sexuality/sexual abuse prevention/sexual purity. Any prospective material should normally be made available for review for the parents of participants. Prior to introducing these materials, notice should normally be provided to parents in order to allow an opt-out should there be concerns or objections.

Social Media

Facebook and all social media avenues are important ways for youth ministry staff and volunteer leaders to connect with students. Their world is often constructed around social media, for better or worse. Having personal interactions in this venue allows adults to model appropriate behavior in social media, and it forms valuable connections with students.

The Diocese strongly recommends that each church have a proactive policy for social media and other forms of electronic communication in the context of children's and youth ministry.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (for example, Facebook's minimum age is currently 13).



Photography

Photos of children will not be used contrary to parental wishes. Churches should refrain from posting any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications without prior parental permission. This is easily handled by including a consent statement on programming registrations that are signed by the parent/guardian.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Physical Interaction

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. It is the diocesan policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.

This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In some circumstances physical restraint may be used to prevent self-injury by the child and/or harm to others or to property. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents, the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, and/or clergy.

Those who serve, whether as clergy or lay workers, paid or volunteer, maintain a powerful relationship of authority and trust with the people to whom they minister. Betrayal of that trust through violation of sexual boundaries causes great emotional and spiritual harm. Such misconduct is a denial of our calling as Christians and may be a violation of the law. We must take every step to prevent it, and to respond with swift justice should misconduct occur.



DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

The following standards of interaction with children shall be carefully followed at all times:

- ✓ **Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children's development and is generally suitable in the church setting.**
 - Appropriate physical affection includes:
 - high-fives
 - handshakes
 - fist bumps
 - thumbs up
 - head pat
 - side hug
 - smiling
 - pats on the back
 - Inappropriate physical affection includes:
 - wrestling
 - tickling
 - sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
 - kissing on the lips
 - full frontal hugs
 - commenting on children's bodies
 - forcing unwanted affection
- ✓ **Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden.** Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to 1) an immediate supervisor, and 2) the Senior Warden and/or clergy.
- ✓ **Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places.** It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- ✓ **Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing.** The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Youth and Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- ✓ **Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child.** A child's preference not to be touched must be respected at all times.
- ✓ **Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.**

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Restroom Use

Nursery-Aged and Special Needs Children

Because nursery and special needs children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- ✓ Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.²
- ✓ Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers; children should not be left unattended while being changed.
- ✓ Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

Toilet Training

- ✓ No child will be forced to toilet train.
- ✓ Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
- ✓ When children are assisted in bathrooms the stall door will be left partially open.
- ✓ Preschool-aged children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- ✓ Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- ✓ "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

Elementary-Aged Children

- ✓ Elementary-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) A same-aged-peer buddy system may also be used.
- ✓ Staff members and volunteers should take steps to avoid being alone with one child in the restroom. If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try verbally to assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

² Churches are encouraged to be sensitive to the fact that nationally one out of every three to four women has been the victim of some form of child sexual abuse, typically by a male offender. It is well documented by researchers that there are certain times in the lives of abuse survivors when they are more prone to triggers (internal or external reminders of the trauma). The birth of a child is often such a trigger. To build trust, churches may determine that diapering, toilet training and restroom monitoring will only be done by screened and trained female staff/volunteers or the child's parent/guardian.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

First Aid and Medication

If possible, medication should be administered by the child's parent. Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer as authorized by the parent. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over-the-counter medication.

When medically necessary, medication or first aid may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer consistent with the Supervisory Plan (see pages 20 and 21). Parents should be notified whenever medication or first aid has been administered.



DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

The Release of Children

Any time that a child has been entrusted to church staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.



Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care at the close of services or activities only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. It is presumed that a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately contact their immediate supervisor before releasing the child.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- ✓ Adult volunteer drivers must provide to the church copies of valid driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.
- ✓ It is understood that the adult driving the child must have undergone a background check including a DMV record check. Use of child safety seats that meet federal standards is required. Drivers and passengers must also follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines. Churches are advised to consult with their insurance provider regarding the minimum age for adult drivers. Under no circumstances should anyone under the age of 18 be allowed to drive children/youth as part of an event.
- ✓ At no time shall there be one adult and one child traveling in a vehicle (except in a parent/child or other familial situation). Automobiles will contain either one driver and two or more participants or two adults and any number of children (within the seat belt limitations of the vehicle; seatbelts are ALWAYS required). If there is an extenuating circumstance causing only one adult and one child to travel together in an automobile, permission must be obtained by a parent or legal guardian of the child. This permission should be written and signed by the parent/guardian or documented by the volunteer if only verbal consent is obtainable. The child or youth should be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in such circumstances.
- ✓ No cell phones, including hands-free devices, may be utilized by the driver while driving church-owned vehicles, unless in an emergency.
- ✓ Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be done as a group. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- ✓ Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- ✓ No one under age 25 may drive vehicles rented by a church unless explicitly allowed by the rental agreement.
- ✓ No drivers under age 25 may drive church-owned vehicles unless explicitly covered by the church's auto insurance policy.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Monitoring Procedures

Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred. Research confirms that off-site activities increase the risk of abuse. Vestry, clergy, staff, and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children's and youth activities in all settings at all times.

Monitoring practices include, but are not limited to the following:

- ✓ All children and youth activities shall be designed to be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals. No child will ever be left unattended in the building or on the property during or following a church activity.
- ✓ **Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children.**
- ✓ In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, the interactions should take place in a public place or where other persons are present.
- ✓ Watching for policy violations
- ✓ An open invitation for parents to visit at any time unannounced
- ✓ A careful review of new programs and/or significant changes to a program structure
- ✓ Keeping interaction with children in full view of others at all times. Keeping unused rooms locked where possible
- ✓ Keeping children and youth in supervised areas within the church building
- ✓ An onsite or offsite written Supervisory Plan shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children. The purpose of the supervisory plan for any given activity is to give direction to staff, both volunteer and paid, to ensure appropriate measures are in place to meet the diocesan standard for supervision. All staff for the activity need to be informed of the contents of the supervisory plan. It is recommended that a copy of the plan be provided to and signed by those responsible for supervision and that the plan be posted in a visible location. Please refer to Tab-H to view sample Supervisory Plans.



DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

On-site Supervisory Plans

shall include:

- ✓ A description of the nature of the activity
- ✓ The details of the registration process and registration form
- ✓ The personnel responsible for running the activity
- ✓ The following is the recommended ratio of adults to children, (recommendation based on Virginia standards):

Infants: 2 adults for up to 8;
1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 4 infants

Young toddlers: 2 adults for up to 10; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 5 toddlers

2 and 3 years: 2 adults for up to 16; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 8 2-to-3-year-olds

4 years: 2 adults for up to 20; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 10 4-year-olds

School age: 2 adults for up to 36; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 18 school-age child

Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group

- ✓ The physical environment
- ✓ Bathroom procedures
- ✓ First aid and medication procedures
- ✓ The reporting of discipline concerns
- ✓ The release of children



DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

For off-site activities, the Supervisory Plan shall include:

- ✓ A description of the nature of the activity
- ✓ The details of the registration process and registration form
- ✓ The personnel responsible for running the activity
- ✓ The following is the recommended ratio of adults to children (recommendation based on Virginia requirements):



- **Infants:** 2 adults for up to 8; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 4 infants.
- **Young toddlers:** 2 adults for up to 10; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 5 toddlers.
- **2 and 3 years:** 2 adults for up to 16; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 8 2-to-3- year-olds.
 - **4 years 2 adults:** for up to 20; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 10 4-year-olds.
- **School age:** 2 adults for up to 36; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 18 school-age child and
 - **Mixed age group:** ratio for the youngest child in the group
- ✓ The physical environment
- ✓ Bathroom procedures
- ✓ First aid and medication procedures
- ✓ The reporting of discipline concerns
- ✓ Offsite transportation plan
- ✓ Dining arrangements
- ✓ Sleeping arrangements
- ✓ Showering arrangements
- ✓ Staff members and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, a weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the Children's Ministry Director or Youth Pastor will detail procedures for showering or changing clothes in the supervisory plan for the scheduled event.
- ✓ The release of children

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Responding and Reporting Procedures

State laws generally require that certain categories of persons responsible for the care or treatment of children report to state authorities when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or is in danger of abuse or neglect. The specific laws - and thus their specific requirements - vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, some states require any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health and welfare has been or will be adversely affected by abuse or neglect to report immediately to authorities. Other states require only those who have special occupations, such as nurses, counselors, teachers, physicians, law enforcement officers, or the like, to report suspected cases of abuse.

Every church in the Diocese should be familiar with, and every person responsible for the care of children in the church should be made aware of, the applicable child abuse reporting requirements and procedures in that jurisdiction.

In addition to complying with any applicable legal requirements, churches should also have in place appropriate procedures for internal reporting to appropriate church leaders of any suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child and any suspicious or unusual information about a child.

Each church in the Diocese should review the applicable laws in its jurisdiction³ and should create a written response plan that is consistent with those laws.

The following section of the diocesan policy briefly outlines several response and reporting procedures:

1. Responding to the Child Victim
2. Reporting to Church Authorities
3. Reporting to Legal Authorities in Accordance with Applicable Laws
4. Release of Information
5. Internal Church Communication and Reporting

³ As a helpful resource, the Diocese makes available on its web site at the following URL, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>, links to the child abuse reporting laws in each jurisdiction covered by the diocese. However, such laws can change over time, and it is the responsibility of the individual church to make certain that it has identified and understands the child abuse reporting laws that currently apply to it at any specific time.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

1. Responding to the Child Victim

One of several ways in which the clergy, staff member, or volunteer may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that a child himself or herself shares. ⁴ If a child discloses abuse or neglect, the clergy, staff member, or volunteer receiving such a communication should attempt to:

- Respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk.
- If reasonably possible, ask a staff member, trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/youth's account. ⁵
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the child know that he/she is believed.
- Assure the child that any abuse was not his/her fault.
- If helpful, tell the child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse.
- Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure. Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint the child's recollection and account.
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child disclosed. This information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Abuse Form found under Tab-C.
- Be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened. Discussion about the information should be limited to appropriate church and legal authorities, as discussed further below.

2. Reporting to Church Authorities

Churches should also have in place appropriate internal procedures and mechanisms for reporting to appropriate church leaders any suspected child abuse or neglect, any other suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child, and any suspicious information involving a child. Such internal reporting allows church leaders to determine whether a legal reporting obligation has been triggered, whether further information is needed, and/or whether pastoral or other care for children and others should be offered.

At times, when the church leader receiving such reports puts together the separate pieces of information provided by different workers, the leader may discern a pattern or recognize information that triggers further investigation and/or a report to state authorities. (Such internal church reporting procedures are not intended to supersede any applicable legal reporting requirements.)

⁴ Reasonable suspicion that a child is abused or neglected may also occur in other ways. For example, a perpetrator may confess such abuse or neglect to a clergy member, or a church worker may observe physical or behavioral indicators of abuse or neglect in a child.

⁵ However, at times the child's communication may occur so quickly and/or unexpectedly that there may not be time to involve another responsible adult.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

It is critical to be prepared in advance by adopting an appropriate plan and following that plan if an incident or allegation of child abuse occurs. When there is reason to believe child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, act immediately. Do not ignore or fail to take seriously any reported incident.

- **Implement Your Response Plan.** The church should have in place an appropriate plan (even if only a very brief one) to use when responding to any allegation of child abuse. That plan may include a “response team” of individuals instructed with proper response mechanisms, along with additional procedures to implement throughout the church in responding to the allegation.
- **Report to the Rector (or another appropriate individual).** The individual(s) suspecting abuse or neglect should immediately notify the Rector and Senior Warden (or another person designated by the Rector or Senior Warden or otherwise identified in the church’s child abuse reporting procedures as authorized to receive such reports) of the suspected child abuse. The church should also identify in its response plan and other children’s ministry policies other persons who may receive such a report if the Rector or Senior Warden is the person who is the subject of the allegations or is otherwise suspected of having committed abuse or neglect.
- **Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties.** If the person accused of abuse is employed by or volunteering with the church, the Rector (or his designee) should immediately remove the person accused of abuse from the situation in which the accusation arose and from any duties where he/she will have any further contact with children. This can be done quietly and without fanfare but should be done quickly and without exception. An interim transfer to a position that has no contact with children is one possibility; a leave of absence (with pay if the person is an employee) may be another solution. The church leadership will determine whether the person accused of abuse will continue in ministry.
- **Notify Parents Where Appropriate.** If the person accused of abuse is not the child’s parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the household, the Rector or his designee should contact the child’s parents or appropriate guardians and offer support from the church.
- **Notify the Bishop.** The Rector shall notify the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic. The Bishop shall notify the diocesan Chancellor. The Bishop may request periodic updates of the investigation being conducted and subsequent actions taken at the local church level and/or may initiate his own investigation into the allegations of child abuse.
- **Notify the Church Legal Counsel.** In most circumstances, the Rector should notify the church’s legal counsel. Obtaining competent legal advice at the very outset of the matter will help protect the church from failing to comply with legal duties and/or being exposed to additional legal liability. In addition, if the investigation is conducted by legal counsel, the information gathered and conveyed to the attorney may be privileged from disclosure as a confidential attorney/client communication under certain state laws.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

3. Reporting to Legal Authorities in Accordance with Applicable Laws⁶

No allegations or complaints or reports of suspected abuse should be ignored. As discussed above, churches should be aware of and should comply with any applicable legal obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Further, even where reports are not legally required, voluntary reports of suspected abuse or neglect are legally permitted in all jurisdictions in the Diocese and should always be considered with the assistance of legal counsel.

If the church determines that a report is legally required or decides that it should make a permissive report even though one is not legally required, the contact information in the box may be helpful in reaching appropriate legal authorities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **District of Columbia:** Call the DC Child and Family Service Agency: **202-671-7233.**
- **Delaware:** Call **1-800-292-9582.**
- **Maryland:** Call **1-800-332-6347.**
- **Virginia:** The statewide toll-free child abuse hotline is **1-800-552-7096.**
- **West Virginia:** Call **1-800-352-6513.**
- **North Carolina:** You must call the individual county number for Child Protective Services. County numbers are found under Tab – B.

For states not listed,
call **Childhelp** at
1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453).

This information, although current as of the date of publishing, should be updated by the church annually. Please see Tab-B for more complete reporting information.

- **Cooperate with Investigating Legal Authorities.** Subject to advice of the church's legal counsel, the church should cooperate in the investigation conducted by the governmental agency to which the report has been made, as well as any other law enforcement agencies involved with the investigation.
- **Notify Insurance Providers.** Unless the church's legal counsel advises otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company. This is important for at least four reasons: (1) the insurance policy may require immediate notification for coverage to be effective; (2) the policy may pay for counseling or legal advice; (3) the policy may not provide coverage for lawsuits involving acts of sexual abuse; and (4) the insurance carrier, having dealt with similar cases, may be a source of helpful advice. Unfortunately, most insurance policies do not generally cover sexual misconduct or negligent hiring/supervision in sexual

⁶ The Rector or other appropriate church leaders should consult with the church's legal counsel for assistance in identifying and complying with the appropriate abuse reporting requirements within the required time frame under applicable state laws. For example, consultation with legal counsel may be important to determine: (1) whether a reporting obligation exists; and (2) whether the worker is protected from such an obligation by an applicable legal privilege (such as the clergy privilege).

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

abuse situations. Separate “riders” can be purchased, although some require strict preconditions to insurance coverage like screening, awareness, and prevention training.

- **Appropriately Document Actions.** Designated clergy should document any actions taken regarding the complaint and retain that documentation in confidential files. (The church’s legal counsel may have specific instructions for how such documentation should be prepared and maintained.) It should be noted that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the legal responsibility of the police or child protective authorities. It is not the responsibility of church leaders to prove that such an incident did or did not take place.

4. Release of Information

- **Carefully Consider Any Release of Information.** Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise), such as a specially trained management person, and instruct all other workers politely to direct all inquiries to that person. Use an approved, prepared statement to answer media inquiries and to convey news to members of the church. Such a statement should normally be reviewed by the church’s legal counsel. Don’t release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content. Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved by not releasing names or other identifying information, especially that concerning minors.
- **Maintain Appropriate Confidentiality** of any allegations and of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed and instruct them not to disclose any information regarding the allegations or your investigation to anyone other than law enforcement or child protective authorities. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality will: (1) protect the privacy and reputations of those actually or allegedly involved in the incident; (2) reduce the risk that defamation may occur; and (3) help preserve the attorney-client privilege, where otherwise applicable.
- **Reach Out to and Care for Any Victims.** One of your church’s primary missions is sharing the love of God with children. Offer whatever pastoral care and other help is appropriate and available to the alleged victim and his/her family.
- **Treat the Accused With Dignity and Support.** Since the accused has not been formally charged or convicted, he/she should be treated as innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Be supportive but objective.
- **Bring Closure to the Investigation.** If the accused is eventually convicted, then discipline or dismissal is generally appropriate. Counseling may also be appropriate. If charges are unsubstantiated, the decision about whether to restore the accused to full employment or volunteer service may depend on a number of circumstantial factors. Consult the Bishop and legal counsel for guidance. Of course, all personnel actions should be well documented in writing and kept in confidential files. Attorney-client privileged material should never be disclosed without first consulting your attorney.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the person accused of abuse, and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing in the local church.

5. Internal Church Communication and Reporting

In addition to the reporting obligations discussed above, clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall also promptly internally report to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy, an immediate supervisor, and/or to the Rector (or his/her designee) whenever the clergy, staff member, or volunteer:

- Is involved in or becomes aware of any sexually-oriented communications involving a child connected with the church; or
- Is involved in or becomes aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a child by a clergy person, a staff member, or a volunteer; or
- Is arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, is charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; commits an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) is diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
- Becomes aware that a member of his/her household has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
- Becomes aware that a person who is attending the church has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; has been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; has committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism.

Such information is important to enable church leaders to see that appropriate child protection mechanisms are in place in accordance with this policy.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Home Group Procedures

The Diocese and its churches do not have, and therefore do not exercise, control over home groups. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child. The Diocese provides some resources that may help empower and equip parents/guardians and the home groups of its churches as they exercise their care and responsibility. In home groups where children are present, even on an occasional basis, leaders are encouraged to read this policy, take diocesan-approved child abuse prevention training, and follow as closely as possible the provisions outlined in this policy, including the development of a supervision plan, which should consider the following:⁷

- Supervision by two screened and trained individuals. Supervision by a single individual is never a good idea.
- Physical environment should be inspected and prepared for child safety for the developmental age of those being served, (keeping in mind outlet coverings, sharp corners, sharp objects, unsecured furniture, access to outdoors, toxic materials, etc.).
- Restroom procedure. For any child who requires assistance, parents should be responsible for diapering and meeting other restroom needs.



⁷ “Home group” is defined for purposes of this policy as a small group meeting in a home for Bible study, worship, fellowship, etc. A church which holds its primary worship service in a home is, for purposes of this policy, considered to be a “church” and not a “home group.”

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Diocesan Documentation Requirements

Churches are responsible for obtaining and keeping documentation, in perpetuity, which includes evidence of the following:

- ✓ Employee and volunteer applications for those working in youth and children's ministries.
- ✓ National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks renewed every two years.
- ✓ Personal and professional reference checks.
- ✓ For drivers: copy of valid driver's license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of auto insurance.
- ✓ Interviews.
- ✓ Certification that the clergy, vestry, and all lay workers, paid and volunteer, working in youth and children's ministries has read, understood, and accepted the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic Policies on the Protection of Children.
- ✓ Diocesan-approved workshop or online course completion and certificate renewal every two years.
- ✓ Written supervisory plans.
- ✓ Reports of suspected child abuse, see Tab-C.
- ✓ Screening Statement, see Tab-F.
- ✓ All of the above should be kept permanently in a secured location. It is acceptable to securely save electronic copies of scanned documents.



Resources for the Protection of Children

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – A: State Reporting Laws and Forms of Child Abuse (revised April 2018)

In General

Child abuse, in practical terms, refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.

Each state and the District of Columbia has its own definition of what constitutes "child abuse" under civil and criminal laws, and each church in the Diocese should be familiar with the relevant laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. In general, the definitions of "child abuse" and "child neglect" in all states in our Diocese include the following elements (among others):

- Physical abuse
- Neglect (both physical and mental)
- Sexual abuse/Exploitation

This Appendix provides some general definitions of child abuse and resources for finding the relevant child abuse reporting laws and legal definitions in each jurisdiction in our Diocese.

In addition, substantial information about child abuse and neglect prevention, response, and reporting can be found at the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which is online at:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov>

A service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this site provides access to print and electronic publications, websites, databases, and online learning tools for improving child welfare practice, including resources that can be shared with families.

To access information about a particular state, visit this page on the site:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

Please note that although the information on the www.childwelfare.gov site is updated periodically, it is not always completely up-to-date. It is always important to check (or to have legal counsel check) the most recent laws and regulations in your state.

Child Abuse reporting laws specific to each state can be found on the DOMA website at www.anglicandoma.org/protection-of-children.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Additional Virginia Resources:

The Virginia Department of Social Services has provided some helpful additional information about child abuse or neglect. Congregations should also consult with the corresponding agency in their home jurisdiction for similar guidance. According to the Virginia Department of Social Services, child abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.

Physical Abuse: A physical injury, threat of injury, or creation of a real and significant danger of substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily functions. Such injury or threat of injury, regardless of intent, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by non-accidental means. Examples: asphyxiation, bone fracture, brain damage, skull fracture, subdural hematoma, burns, scalding, cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions, internal injuries, poisoning, sprains, dislocations, gunshot, stabbing wounds.

Physical Neglect: The failure to provide food, clothing, shelter or supervision for a child if the child's health or safety is endangered. Physical neglect may include multiple occurrences or a one-time critical or severe event that results in a threat to health or safety, such as a toddler left alone. Other types of neglect include abandonment, inadequate supervision, inadequate clothing, inadequate shelter, inadequate personal hygiene, inadequate food, and malnutrition.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offense in every state in the United States. Regardless of state, an abused child is defined, in part, as a child less than eighteen years old, whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care:

Commit or allow to be committed any illegal sexual act upon [that] child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, and prostitution, or to allow [that] child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

Sexual abuse encompasses acts of sexual assault and sexual exploitation by a parent or other caregiver. It includes a broad range of behaviors, such as fondling; oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse; indecent exposure; voyeurism; and sexual exploitation. It may consist of a single incident or of many incidents over a long period of time. Victims range in age from infants up to the age of 18.

Medical Neglect: The refusal or failure by a caregiver to obtain and/or follow through with a complete regimen of medical, mental, or dental care for a condition, which if untreated, could result in illness or developmental delays.

Failure to Thrive: A syndrome of infancy or early childhood that is characterized by growth failure, signs of severe malnutrition, and variable degrees of developmental retardation. Children are

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

considered to be in this category only when the syndrome is diagnosed by a physician and is caused by non-organic factors.

Mental Abuse/Neglect: A pattern of acts or omissions by the caregiver that results in harm to a child's psychological or emotional health or development.

Educational Neglect: The failure of the child's caretaker to ensure that the child attends school or an approved alternative program of study.

Bizarre Discipline: Any actions in which the caregiver uses eccentric, irrational, or grossly inappropriate procedures or devices to modify the child's behavior.

Federal Definition of Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual exploitation of children is defined is defined in the United State Code as:

18 U.S.C. 2251 – SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

It is forbidden for any person to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, or coerce any minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in, or to transport any minor in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent that the minor engage in, any sexually explicit conduct if such person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

It is forbidden for any parent, legal guardian, or person having custody or control of a minor to knowingly permit such minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct if the parent, legal guardian, or person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction will be transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed, if that visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – B: How to Report Abuse to Child Protective Services

Please note that the following numbers may not always work if the reporting party is not calling from the same state where the child is allegedly being abused.

For states not listed, or when the reporting party resides in a different state than the child, please call **Childhelp, 1-800-4-A-Child** (1-800-422-4453), or your local child protective agency.

- To report suspected child abuse in the **District of Columbia**, call the DC Child and Family Service Agency: **202-671-7233**.
- To report suspected child abuse in **Delaware**, call the toll free 24-hour report line 1-800-292-9582.
- The **Virginia** statewide toll-free child abuse hotline is **1-800-552-7096**.
- To report suspected child abuse in **West Virginia**, call the Abuse and Neglect hotline 1-800-352-6513.
- To report suspected child abuse in **Maryland** call **1-800-332-6347**.

To report suspected child abuse in **North Carolina** you must call the individual county number for **Child Protective Services**. You will find the number for your county at the following website:
<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/local-dss-directory>

Although the name of the person reporting the suspected abuse may be requested for follow-up purposes, the person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is generally NOT required to give his/her name. If the person reporting does provide his name and requests anonymity, there are legal mechanisms in place in each state to protect the reporter from having his/her name given to the alleged abuser, unless otherwise ordered by a court.

Information to Provide to Child Protective Services When Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

It is helpful for the person reporting suspected abuse to provide the following:

- ✓ The name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care.
- ✓ The names of other persons, especially children, living in the suspected victim's home.
- ✓ Address of the child's home.
- ✓ The child's age, sex, and race.
- ✓ The name of the school the child attends.
- ✓ The name and address of the alleged abuser, if known.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

- ✓ A description of the alleged abuse and or neglect, including how long it may have been happening.
- ✓ The relationship between the person reporting the abuse and the child.

Please refer to Tab-C for a sample Report of Suspected Child Abuse form to be used when reporting allegations of child abuse to Child Protective Services and other authorities.

Once completed, that form should be kept in a confidential file with the church.

Child Protective Services Procedure after Initial Report

If the Child Protective Services worker determines that the report of abuse is a valid complaint, then the complaint must be investigated. To constitute a valid complaint, all of the following criteria must be met:

- ✓ The child must be under the age of 18 at the time of the complaint.
- ✓ The alleged abuser must be the child's parent or caretaker at the time of the abuse.
- ✓ The report must be made in the city or county where (a) the child lives, (b) the abuse occurred, or (c) if neither of these is known, where the abuse is discovered and
- ✓ The circumstances must meet the state definition of abuse or neglect.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – C: Sample Form for Report of Suspected Child Abuses⁸

Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file

Information Regarding the Person Suspected of Child Abuse:

Name of suspected abuser: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Title/relationship to the church (if any):

Information Regarding Suspected Victim(s):

Name of suspected victim: _____

Age: _____ Male/Female: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

Name of any other suspected victim:

Age: _____ Male/Female: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

(Continued)

⁸ This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file

Information Regarding Incident(s) of Suspected Child Abuse:

How did you become suspicious of possible abuse?

Describe any physical evidence of the suspected abuse:

Describe each incidence of suspected sexual abuse, including the type of abuse, date(s), time(s), and location(s) of suspected abuse:

Name any eyewitness to each suspected abuse incident (additional information regarding witnesses is sought below), and describe how that witness viewed the event:

(Continued)

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Confidential: Keep in completed form in locked file

Information Regarding Witnesses to Suspected Child Abuse:

Name of witness: _____

Age of witness: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

Name of additional witness: _____

Age of witness: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church: _____

Information Regarding Person(s) to Whom Suspected Abuse was Reported:

Name and title of church official to whom the abuse initially was reported (for example, Sunday School teacher, Rector, etc.):

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Date that initial report was made:

Name and title of the person making the initial report to the church official:

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Relationship to the church (if any):

(Continued)

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file

Was the suspected abuse reported to Child Protective Services (“CPS”)?

If yes, state the date the report was made to CPS: _____

Name and title of person reporting to CPS: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Name of CPS worker contacted: _____

CPS contact’s telephone number: _____

Was the suspected abuse reported to police?

If yes, state the date the report was made to police: _____

Name and title of person reporting to police: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Police department and contact person: _____

Police contact’s telephone number: _____

Were the parents notified?

If yes, the date parents were notified: _____

Name and title of person notifying parents: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Parents’ names: _____

Parents’ address: _____

(Continued)

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file

Parents' telephone (home/work/cell):

Was suspected abuse reported to the Diocese via telephone?

If yes, the date report was made to the Diocese:

Name and title of person reporting to the Diocese:

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Diocese contact person: _____

Diocese contact's telephone: _____

Is a copy of this completed report being sent to the Diocese?

If yes, state date when report is being sent: _____

Name and title of person sending report to the Diocese: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Diocese contact person to whom report is being sent: _____

Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation:

(Continued)

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file

Information Regarding Person Completing this Form:

Name and title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home/work/cell): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – D: Implementing Ministry Safe

Training

A DOMA -approved workshop is the best way to train your volunteers. Not only does it teach the 5 steps to keep children safe, it also includes policies and practices specific to each individual church's situation and needs.

Ministry Safe provides on-line child sexual abuse awareness training. It is endorsed by the Anglican Church in North America. It can be used when a volunteer needs to complete training and no workshop is available. The DOMA Committee for Child Protection recommends that a person attend a workshop as soon as possible. Ministry Safe does not provide information specific to your church. Your church's policy will still need to be included and explained in any training.

Note: There is an annual cost for a church to join Ministry Safe. However, they give a discount to ACNA churches.

Every trained volunteer should understand your church's procedures, how they are to be implemented and sign an agreement to that effect. An example statement may be found below.

All clergy and lay volunteers should renew their training every 2 years.

Screening and Background checks

All clergy complete background checks through Oxford Documents. A Criminal Background and National Sex Offender registry check is done every 2 years and a full background check every 5 years.

All volunteers will also have a criminal background and national sex offender registry check every 2 years. It is the responsibility of each church to decide whom best to contract to complete this check.

Resources for Background checks

Oxford Documents: www.oxforddoc.com

Ministry Safe: www.ministrysafe.com

Both Oxford Documents and Ministry Safe offer several levels for background checks. They are willing and able to discuss which level would best fit your needs.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Statement of Agreement to Comply with [*Church name here*] Protection of Children Policy

I have read, understood and agree to comply with our church's policy, "Five Steps to Keep Children Safe".

1. Participant's Name Printed: _____
2. Participant's Signature: _____
3. Church/Organization Name: _____
4. Date: _____

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – E: Sample Policy Acknowledgement Form

I certify that I have read (check all that apply):

☐ the _____
(Name of church)
Prevention of Child Abuse Policy and/or

☐ the Diocesan Policy Manual on the Protection of Children

I further certify that I will abide by the provisions of this policy as long as I am an employee/volunteer of the church.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – F: Sample Screening Statement

Have you ever:

- Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Committed an act of child sexual abuse? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Has any other member of your household:

- Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Committed an act of child sexual abuse? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Printed Name

Signature

Date

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – G: Sample Five Steps to Keep Children Safe at (our Church)

Step One:

SCREENING is an opportunity to prevent a molester from ever having contact with children and youth in our programs. Our careful screening of employees and volunteers in youth and children's ministries includes:

1. Reviewing signed standard applications for all paid staff and for all volunteers in youth and children's ministries.
2. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry/Criminal Background checks and renewing them every two years.
3. Conducting personal and professional reference checks.
4. Conducting face to face interviews when necessary.
5. Requiring a signature stating that clergy, employees, volunteers and other adult members of their households have not been arrested for or convicted of child abuse or diagnosed with certain psychiatric conditions such as voyeurism or exhibitionism.
6. Requiring a six-month minimum attendance rule for all volunteers serving in children's and youth ministries

No exceptions in our screening standards will occur for people we know.

Step Two:

TRAINING puts the power to protect in everyone's hands and is an important deterrent to child abuse. Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, commit to the safe practices specific to **our church** and learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse.

Reading Requirements

All members of the clergy, all members of the vestry, and those staff members with direct supervision over youth or children must certify that they have read, understood and accepted the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic (DOMA) Policies on the Protection of Children and sign an acknowledgement form.

Workshop Attendance Requirements

Every two years, our clergy, vestry, staff and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must complete a DOMA approved workshop or the online Sexual Abuse Prevention Course and follow-up test provided by Ministry Safe.

Step Three:

INTERACTING GUIDELINES help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Verbal interactions between clergy, staff members, or volunteers and children should be positive, constructive and encouraging. Staff members and volunteers should avoid talking to children or parents in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

Facebook and all social media avenues are important ways for youth ministry staff and volunteer leaders to connect with students. Clergy, staff members and volunteers shall refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (for example, Facebook's minimum age is currently 13). **Our church's** proactive policy for social media includes. . .

Photos of children will not be used contrary to parental wishes. **Our church** will refrain from posting any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications without prior parental permission.

Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch.

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child and never be based on the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. It is the diocesan policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for the behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.

Appropriate interactions may include:

- Smiles
- Encouragements
- Handshakes and high fives
- Fist bumps
- Thumbs up
- Side to side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Arm around the shoulder
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Holding or picking up children who are 4 years old and younger

Other **our church specific** interactions that are appropriate include:

- "Remember-Chair" Time-Outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management
(**This is an example of terminology and interaction that may be church specific.**)

Inappropriate interactions include:

- Spanking, slapping, or any form of physical discipline
- Shaming or belittling a child or youth

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

- Meeting alone in non-public or isolated places
- Swearing in the presence of children
- Engaging in sexually oriented communications with or in proximity to children
- Use, possession or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs when in the presence of children
- Wrestling
- Tickling
- Sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
- Kissing on the lips
- Full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Commenting on children’s bodies
- Forcing unwanted affection
- Being nude in front of children

Other interactions that are inappropriate include (our church listing to be added):

- Contacting or “friending” a child or youth on “Facebook” or other social networking sites without the parent’s permission
- Showing favoritism or possessiveness
- Calling, emailing, or texting too often (singling a child out)
- Giving gifts to children without the parent’s permission
- Ridiculing the beliefs of a child or youth’s parent
- Allowing a child or youth to do things against the wishes of the parents
- Offering children or youth cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs
- Allowing children or youth to view pornography or to visit inappropriate internet sites
- Asking a child or youth to keep “secrets” from his or her parents
- Wearing provocative or revealing attire
- Staring while others are dressing
- Taking pictures while children are dressing or showering

Step Four:

MONITORING allows us to detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse when none has occurred. Research confirms that off-site activities increase the risk of abuse. **Vestry, clergy, staff and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children’s and youth activities in all settings at all times.**

Our monitoring practices include the following:

- All children and youth activities shall be designed to be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals at all times
- No child or youth will ever be left unattended during or following a church activity
- Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children or youth

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

- In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, the interactions should occur in a public place or where other persons are present
- Watching for and responding to policy violations
- An open invitation for parents to visit at any time unannounced
- A careful review of new programs and/or significant changes to a program structure
- Keeping interaction with children in full view of others at all times
- Keeping unused rooms locked
- Keeping children and youth in supervised areas
- An onsite or offsite written Supervisory Plan, that includes all items detailed on pages 20 or 21 of the DOMA policy, shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children. Those tasked with supervising youth or children for a specific program must understand their responsibilities as outlined and sign a copy of the specific supervision plan.

Under our monitoring umbrella, the following restroom policy is in effect during all children's programming:

- Children who require diapering will. . .

(Specific **our church** procedures that comply with DOMA policy on physical interaction)

- Children who are nursery aged and being potty-trained will. . .

(Specific **our church** procedures that comply with policy on physical interaction)

- Elementary aged children will . . .

(Specific **our church** procedures that comply with DOMA policy on physical interaction)

Special needs or children who are only four years old may be assisted by staff or children's ministry volunteers in compliance with policy.

- When children are present in the sanctuary, parents are expected to accompany their elementary aged child to the restroom or send them with an older sibling; we ask this knowing that restrooms are the most likely place for abuse to occur in an institutional setting.

Step Five:

RESPONDING quickly gives us the power to prevent or stop abuse and gives the child more time to heal.

If a child discloses abuse, remember to:

- Respect the child's privacy by finding a private, non-threatening place to talk (such as the workroom in children's wing)
- Ask a staff member or trained volunteer to join in listening to the child or youth's account if possible
- Keep calm, listen and avoid expressing shock or outrage
- Let the child or youth know that he or she is believed

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

- Assure the child or youth that the abuse was not his or her fault
- Tell the child or youth, if helpful, that they were brave to disclose
- Avoid questions that could make the child or youth feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint their recollection and account. Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child or youth disclosed. This information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Abuse Form for the Diocese and the CPS report if warranted
- Be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened

Remember to:

Report the abuse allegation to church authorities

(specific to our church)

Report to Legal Authorities **(in accordance with applicable laws)**

STATE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE NUMBER 1-800-???-????

LOCAL CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES NUMBER ???-???-????

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – H: Sample Supervisory Plans

On-Site Nursery

*The following provides an example of a Supervisory Plan for an on-site nursery at a local church. Each church will devise specific supervisory plans for all onsite and offsite programming that involves youth and children. **This plan is offered for information only.** It is an example of what a supervisory plan may look like. Each congregation will need to personalize such a plan to its own specific policies and procedures. This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.*

Personnel: Only screened staff and volunteers may work in the nurseries. No one under the age of ____ may be hired to work in the nurseries and no one under the age of ____ may volunteer in the nurseries.

A minimum of two screened and trained staff/volunteers must provide supervision at all times. Nursery staff and volunteers are not permitted to allow unscreened friends or family members to assist in the nursery.

Supervision: On Sunday mornings, either the Nursery Director or the Children's Ministry Director will check to ensure that the nurseries are fully staffed at each of the service/Sunday School times. The Nursery Director and Children's Ministry Director will conduct random visits to the nurseries during all programming times or appoint someone else to take on a supervisory role to observe staff/volunteer/child interactions. The Nursery Director will meet with staff to provide training and solve problems.

Ratio: No less than one staff/volunteer per five children at any time. Minimum of two staff/volunteers at all times.

Physical Environment: Windows on nursery doors will not be obstructed. Toys, books, and furniture and apparatus will be cleaned on a weekly basis. Rugs and other moveable items that could pose danger will be secured.

Bathroom Procedure: Children will be escorted to the bathroom in the toddler nursery by female staff and volunteers with one person assisting and another in close proximity.

Diapering will be conducted by female staff/volunteers in the observable diapering areas only.

Injury/Incident Reporting: Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report and advise either the Nursery Director or the Children's Ministry Director when a child is injured or hurt in any way. Incidents of conflict with parents should also be reported in the same manner.

Reporting Concerns: Concerns about the nurseries should be reported to the Nursery Director or Children's Ministry Director.

Release of Children: Staff or volunteers will release children only to those adults who have corresponding wristband identification with the child.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

I certify that I have read the _____ Supervision Plan and that I will abide by this policy and report any breach of it to _____.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sample Supervisory Plan:

Meeting at a High School

*The following provides an example of a Supervisory Plan for children Pre-K to 5th grade meeting at a high school. Each church will devise specific supervisory plans for all onsite and offsite programming that involves youth and children. **This plan is offered for information only.** It is an example of what a supervisory plan may look like. Each congregation will need to personalize such a plan to its own specific policies and procedures. This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.*

The procedures below are only for when children are out of the service and under our supervision during Kids' Classes. Before children leave the service and after they return, children are under the supervision of their parents/guardians.

Personnel: Only volunteers and staff who have completed Child Protection Training and been certified may work in the Kids' Classes Pre-K through 5th grade. A minimum of two screened staff/volunteers provide supervision in each classroom while the children are out of the service. Parents/ guardians/observers may visit the classrooms but may not provide supervision for anyone but their own children.

Supervision: When children are dismissed from the service, teachers, assistants, and children meet up in their appropriate groups in the hallway outside of the auditorium. Once the teacher and assistant are both present, the group can proceed to the classroom. If an assistant or teacher is not present, the Children's Ministry Coordinator or a staff person should be alerted, and the group should **not** proceed to the classroom until a CPT-certified replacement can be found. In the event that a replacement is not found, classes may be combined, or children may be returned to their parents.

Ratio: There will be a minimum of two staff/volunteers at all times. Over time, needs will be evaluated for adequate classroom supervision by the Children's Ministry Coordinator. If needed, a second assistant may be added to classrooms, or classes themselves may be split, combined, or re-configured to address supervision needs.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Physical Environment: After kids are dismissed from the service, they go to two main locations in a High School. Upstairs, there are high school classrooms for classes pre-K – 3rd grade. On the ground level, the 4th-5th grade “classroom” is actually the “little gym.” Occasionally, with knowledge of the Children’s Ministry Coordinator, teachers may direct their classes to an outside location such as the tennis courts, the “big gym,” or an upstairs hallway.

Bathroom Procedure:

All children pre-k – 3rd grade in a class will go to the individual bathrooms available in the upstairs teachers’ lounge –directly across from the pre-k classroom. The adult will wait in the hall outside the teachers’ lounge. The door to the pre-k classroom should be left open when a pre-k assistant is out of the classroom with children, so that the teacher in the classroom can also glance into the lounge area. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior lounge door open when entering the lounge area. The teacher can knock on the bathroom door and try verbally to assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom. If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she leave the lounge door open and the bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance.

First Aid & Injury: For a minor concern (e.g., paper cut), a first aid kit is available at the nursery. For a major injury, 911 should be called. At any time, a parent may be contacted using the cell phone numbers available on the attendance form, or an adult can be dispatched to the service to make contact with the parent(s). Staff or volunteers will report any incidents to the Children’s Ministry Coordinator when a child is injured or hurt. Conflicts with parents should also be reported.

Reporting of Discipline Concerns: Disciplinary problems should be dealt with proactively, when possible, and in a non-punitive way. The best way to deal with discipline problems is to avoid them. However, should a discipline problem arise, removing the child from the circle/activity is appropriate, but they should remain in the classroom. Afterwards, a teacher should speak to their parent and to the Children’s Ministry Coordinator.

Fire/Emergency: In the event of a fire alarm or other emergency, teachers should take their attendance forms with them. Children should be taken to the exit across from where they leave the auditorium out of the building using the normal stairwell. Children should be kept together and released individually to their parents, keeping track with the attendance form. In the event that children should not be taken down the same steps they normally use teachers should take their classes to the nearest safe stairwell and exit.

Reporting Concerns: All concerns about Kids’ Classes should be reported to the Children’s Ministry Coordinator through email or conversation. Concerns can also be reported to any staff member.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Children with Special Needs: Some children with special needs may require accommodations to go to and participate in Kids' Classes. Parents are encouraged to talk with the Children's Ministry Coordinator about possible accommodations.

Release of Children: Staff or volunteers release children back into the auditorium after classes.

I certify that I have read the _____ Supervision Plan and that I will abide by this policy and report any breach of it to _____.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sample Supervisory Plan:

Children and Youth at Family Camp

*Note: This is a sample supervisory plan for working with children and youth at an off-site location. Each church will devise specific supervisory plans for all onsite and offsite programming that involves youth and children. **This plan is offered for information only.** It is a sample of what a supervisory plan may look like. Each congregation will need to personalize such a plan to its own specific policies and procedures.*

Personnel: While at Family Camp all youth and children are to be under the direct supervision of either their parents or the Family Camp Children and Youth Staff. Staff persons will have completed DOMA approved training and screening requirements.

Supervision: There will be a minimum of two trained staff in attendance at activities when children and youth are under their supervision. Parents may not be in any enclosed space (dorm rooms, meeting rooms) with children other than their own children. In the event a child or youth asks for help from an adult other than their own parent or staff, a rule of three (at least 3 persons total) needs to be observed, and all doors to any enclosed space must remain fully open. All children and youth will be under the direct supervision of their parents from lights out until breakfast, and from 1:00 – 4:30 Saturday afternoon.

Ratio: There will be at least 2 trained adults for up to 12 children and youth. If more than 12 children and youth are in attendance, there shall be 1 additional trained staff person or parent for each 5 participants. Children younger than 3 shall remain with their parents.

Physical Environment: All activities will occur in the assigned indoor or outdoor space. No adults, children, or youth may enter any building at the retreat center other than those assigned. The only time children or youth may be in enclosed space behind closed doors or in isolated outdoor space (space not clearly observable by others) is when they are with their own parents or under the

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

supervision of at least 2 trained staff. No adult shall enter a bathroom area with any child or youth other than their own.

Reporting of Issues: All accidents, whether or not they result in physical injury, and all interactions resulting in the need for adult / staff intervention shall be shared with the Rector or the adult in charge of Family Camp and with the parents of the children and youth involved.

I certify that I have read the _____ Supervision Plan and that I will abide by this policy and report any breach of it to _____.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – I: Pastoral Response to Known Sexual Offenders

The church must make every reasonable effort to protect children. Special care must be taken when a church interacts with a person who is registered as a sexual offender, or self-discloses a history of sexual misconduct towards children, or self-discloses a struggle with sexual attraction toward children.

When such a person is known to be a participant in the church or its activities, the clergy shall inhibit that person from any contact with children and shall require (except as otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel) the offender to sign a contract/covenant that details expectations, defines boundaries and off-limits locations (e.g. children's areas, acolyte vesting areas), and establishes appropriate supervision (such as, for example, a bathroom escort) for the offender while on church premises and/or at church activities. The church shall have in place a plan to deal with any violation of the contract/covenant.

If the perpetrator is observed acting in an inappropriate manner with children or their families, the Rector or wardens shall inform the family /families of a potential danger to their child/children (unless otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel). Where appropriate, the Rector or Senior Warden shall consult the offender's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been met.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – J: The Church’s Understanding of and Response to an Incident of Abuse

Caring for the Congregation

Incidents of child abuse, and

the secrecy that often surrounds them, can cause devastating harm to the church as well as to the victims. Therefore, where current or past child abuse has been perpetrated by clergy, staff, or volunteers of the church, the church shall provide consultation to encourage the discussion of such incidents and to provide a means to facilitate healing within the church. Tab-I presents one suggested model of how this may be done: a congregational trauma debriefing model.

It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse or misconduct in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing within the congregation generally.

Traumatic events have well-documented effects, both immediate and delayed. When a congregation experiences a trauma, the impact is likely to be expressed through symptoms such as:

- Loss of energy or feeling of paralysis
- Distrust of leadership (often projected onto future leadership)
- Divisions within the congregation
- Some group members feeling isolated and withdrawing from the group
- Anger being displaced onto unrelated issues, or blown out of proportion
- A conspiracy of silence about the traumatic event
- Despair about the congregation’s future
- Distorting responsibility for the event
- Seeking a "quick fix" without thoughtful reflection
- Difficulty making normal and necessary decisions.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

All of these symptoms could be carried into subsequent years unless the trauma is processed, integrated into the life of the congregation and healed. A useful model for addressing and integrating a trauma is the "debriefing" model drawn from disciplines that do crisis counseling, such as emergency medicine, law enforcement, military science, crisis chaplaincy, and disaster agencies.

A trauma debriefing allows participants to integrate the reality of the event with their own responses to that event. The Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing Model set forth in Tab I is an effective means to communicate, process, and accept facts, allow feelings to surface, and then, through God's healing grace, head into the future unhindered by the past.

Guiding Principles for Healing in the Church

The following guidelines outline steps that can be taken to promote healing in the congregation:

1) Contact with the family

Before the process for healing begins, the Bishop or his representative should maintain regular contact with the Complainant(s) and describe to Complainant(s) the procedures to be used for promoting congregational healing.

2) Privacy Concerns

The privacy of the Complainant(s) must be balanced against the need for openness with the local church. Insofar as possible, the identity of the Complainant(s) and any details which may identify him/her should be kept confidential.

3) Providing Facts

The procedures shall take into account that church members usually know when "something is going on, and, in the absence of facts, rumor and speculation will grow.

4) Notifying Lay Leadership

The lay leadership should be advised promptly of the issues, since that group's participation is vital in planning and implementing the processes for church healing.

5) Trauma Debriefing

The healing and unity of a congregation are fostered when there is an open meeting, called a Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing ("Debriefing"), at which the Bishop or his representative presents as much factual information as possible.

Since the local church will likely include people who have experienced abuse or misconduct themselves, appropriate personnel trained in crisis ministry should be present and available on a small group or one-to-one basis immediately after the formal presentation. Also, local mental health resources (including sliding scale fee agencies) should be publicized so that members of the congregation know how to find these services. (Note that many communities have publicly-funded survivor services, which offer a variety of specialized resources.)

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

The debriefing generally should follow the process set forth in Tab I. The message should be, "The Church is a place for truth. We follow Jesus, who described himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

6) Church Spokesperson

The vestry, in consultation with the clergy, is encouraged to appoint a church spokesperson. The congregation, including church members and staff members, is urged to refer all media inquiries to the church spokesperson.

7) Interim Priest

If the circumstances require that an interim priest be engaged, that priest should have special training in trauma debriefing. The interim priest should have regular opportunities to report and consult with the Bishop, his designated staff person, and counselors.

8) Consulting Legal Authorities

Neither the clergy nor any other church worker should attempt to impede persons who wish to consult with legal authorities.

9) Continuing Pastoral Care

The clergy and/or vestry should consult with the Bishop about additional resources for the healing and care of the congregation.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Tab – K: A Model for an Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting

The following procedures are recommended for the Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting, but the church and the Bishop should consult in advance with their respective legal counsel (and, if counsel recommends, insurance provider(s)) before conducting such a meeting or undertaking any such actions:

A. Steps Prior to Meeting

- 1) **Select Leaders.** Carefully choose a Congregational Trauma Debriefing team and a leader or co-leaders who have had experience with a debriefing or trauma-related process. It is important that the Rector or his representative be a visible participant in the debriefing, but not in the role of leadership.
- 2) **Schedule and Notify.** Schedule the debriefing as soon as possible after the complaint becomes public knowledge. Ensure that all members of the congregation and church staff are notified of the debriefing by telephone, e-mail, overnight mail, or other fast and reliable method of notification. It is important to get a wide participation, so that all who experience the trauma also share the Debriefing experience.
- 3) **Choose Meeting Place.** Hold the debriefing in an appropriate place, preferably on the church's property, if there be such. Although an opening prayer is appropriate, this should not be a liturgical event.
- 4) **Address the News Media.** While the debriefing should not be confidential, it is important that no one be placed in jeopardy because of any disclosures made during that meeting. Therefore, it is preferable that the news media not be present for the debriefing but meet after the debriefing with the church spokesperson and the Bishop.

B. Agenda for the Meeting

- 1) **Open the Meeting.** The Bishop or his representative should welcome the attendees, as should one of the lay leaders. The lay leader then should introduce himself/herself, explain the debriefing process, and outline the guidelines for the debriefing. It is important to keep the debriefing to the specified procedures. Leaders should be prepared for a lengthy meeting.
- 2) **Present the Facts.** Subject to the advice of counsel, the general facts and approximate chronology of the trauma should be presented verbally, supplemented by written notations such as a summary handout, or by writing notes on newsprint during the factual presentation. The goal is to ensure that all those present have a common record of the traumatic event. Note that this is not a time for feelings to be expressed, and the group may need some direction to withhold those feelings until the next phase of the debriefing.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

- 3) ***Solicit Reactions.*** Once an appropriate record has been presented, the lay leader should invite church members to express their reactions to the facts. (Some church members may need to be directed to express their own feelings and not those of others.) No feelings, however trivial, intense, or unusual, should be discounted, and no effort should be made to fix, soothe, or smooth them over. The responses simply are to be collected and heard.
- 4) ***Examine Repercussions.*** Once reactions have been expressed fully, the leader should ask those present to turn their attention to the repercussions of the event and consider the congregation's future. This step bridges the trauma with the ongoing life of those involved in the trauma. It may be a time to explore some of the issues the congregation will face in the near future. As with the presentation of facts, the issues raised may be noted both verbally and with writings.
- 5) ***Seek Context and Perspective.*** Members of the congregation also should be invited to place the event within a context or perspective. There may be expressions of confusion, helplessness, or curiosity about how other groups have resolved an issue of this type. In this phase, people may have an awareness of paradox and pose some hard questions such as the following:
 - Why do bad things happen?
 - How can it be that such a talented priest/leader could be involved in misconduct?
 - Why do things like this happen in a church?
 - Where does the responsibility lie?
 - What about the resources of our faith?

Leaders have discretion whether to respond, or to simply allow others to speak.

C. Actions After the Meeting

- 1) ***Plan for the Future.*** The final step is planning. This could include a) scheduling a follow-up session one or two months into the future; b) discussing the ways in which the pastoral and sacramental needs of the congregation will be met; or c) describing the resources available to people who may need counseling or other specialized attention.
- 2) ***Provide Trained Counselors.*** For the immediate needs of those present, it is important that trained crisis professionals be available in the church building so that individuals or groups may process their feelings further. These professionals are present simply to listen and support people in integrating the trauma.
- 3) ***Debrief the Debriefing.*** After the debriefing, members of the Congregational Trauma Debriefing Team should meet to discuss their own experiences with the debriefing meeting, in order to do the following:
 - Plan the follow-up monitoring of the congregation in the future
 - Determine whether there are issues that will need further clarification

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

- Determine whether there are complicating factors, or factors that require special continuing attention
- Decide what the lay leadership of the congregation requires to address the issue further; and evaluate the debriefing meeting itself (or agree to do so at a later date).

Additional Information and Meetings

If new information comes to light after the first debriefing, further meetings may be held.

Additionally, regular follow-up sessions with the congregation should be held during the first year after disclosure of the incident(s).

Additional Church Responses

Additional appropriate church responses may include:

- Regular prayer for the Complainant(s), the Respondent(s), and the congregation
- Preaching on the subject of violation of trust and liturgical acts of corporate penance
- Securing a safe place for the Complainant(s) and the Complainant's family in community life
- In the event that incarceration or other punitive action follows legal proceedings, developing a means for the congregation to deal appropriately with the person who may be imprisoned.

Congregational Follow-up: The First Year

Even with the best of care, a congregation that has experienced sexual misconduct will likely need an ongoing program of support and assistance, especially in the first year. This year will be devoted to a healing process, in which the congregation slowly will integrate the reality of its experience into its future. If such integration does not take place, the congregation may suffer from prolonged loss of energy, despair about the future, loss and/or isolation of some members, distrust of lay and/or ordained leadership or of the Bishop, and difficulty making decisions or taking risks.

DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

Suggested Follow-up Activities

Follow-up with the congregation may take any of several forms:

- 1) Meeting with Bishop. A meeting between the Bishop or the Bishop's representative and the vestry in order to assess the healing process of the congregation
- 2) Staff Input. Obtaining input from church staff (including an interim priest where present) about their observations regarding the incident and the Debriefing process
- 3) Study Groups. Establishing study groups to consider the issue of healing from sexual abuse, perhaps by reading a selected book for discussion
- 4) Self-evaluation. Conducting a congregational self-evaluation, through the use of a questionnaire or survey instrument
- 5) Focus Groups. Creating congregational focus groups to address the issue of where the congregation stands in its process of moving ahead
- 6) Committee on Congregational Life. Forming a Committee on Congregational Life charged with assessing the needs and planning programs for continued healing
- 7) Professional Consultant. Appointing a professional consultant experienced with issues of child abuse to work with the vestry and affected congregation on the components of the healing process

Using the Trauma to Help Others

Some churches, having worked through a history of child abuse, take up a special vocation in a related area. Such steps signify that the congregation has moved into the redemptive activity of letting its own pain be a gift for others. Among possible actions:

- ✓ Helping Other Churches. Offering help to other churches confronted with the same issues
- ✓ Sponsoring Programs. Sponsoring seminars or programs on ethics and sexuality
- ✓ Church Building. Offering the church building for use by community groups to address issues of child abuse
- ✓ Developing programs for young people about protecting themselves from abuse